



Knowing by Ear

LISTENING TO

VOICE RECORDINGS

WITH AFRICAN

PRISONERS OF WAR

IN GERMAN CAMPS

(1915–1918)

Anette Hoffmann

Knowing by Ear

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SIGN, STORAGE, TRANSMISSION

A series edited by Jonathan Sterne and Lisa Gitelman

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Photograph taken by a prisoner in Ruhleben camp, near Berlin, undated (detail). Maurice L. Ettinghausen Collection of Ruhleben Civilian Internment Camp Papers, Harvard Law School Library, Historical and Special Collections.

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Note on Sound Recordings

The original sound recordings discussed in this volume, most of which are held by the Lautarchiv of Humboldt University in Berlin, can be accessed in person at the Lautarchiv using the inventory numbers provided. Placing the recordings online is a sensitive matter, because the speakers who were recorded in German POW and internment camps did not give their permission for the use and circulation of these recordings, although in many cases they did make attempts to communicate beyond the camps and thus did expect to be heard. Currently the content of many of the recordings remains unknown or untranslated, which makes it difficult to decide which of the recordings can or should be made public. We expect that these questions will be discussed during the process of restitution.

As of 2021, the Lautarchiv is housed at the Humboldt Forum in Berlin. For more information about the Lautarchiv, see <https://www.lautarchiv.hu-berlin.de/en/sound-archive/>.

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Prologue

CATCHERS OF THE LIVING

We relate, know, think, world, and tell stories through other stories and with other stories, worlds, knowledges, thinkings, yearnings. —DONNA HARAWAY, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*

Theirs was an orderly arrival. They did not cross the Mediterranean Sea on overloaded, barely seaworthy, rubber boats. Then, thousands of young African men had been recruited or conscripted to fight in the armies of the Triple Entente during World War I. In France they were called *la force noire*.¹ In Germany, African men in particular were met with racist propaganda. As soldiers in French and British armies, however, they were not hindered from reaching European shores. Many had been forcibly enlisted to fight against the Central Powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary) in theaters of war in Europe. Some had come as *tirailleurs* (infantrymen from the French colonies), like the *tirailleur sénégalais* Abdoulaye Niang. Yet their experiences in Europe, their perspectives on this war, their accounts, stories, or narrative translations of what they saw have rarely surfaced in the colonial archive.² In other words: their trace is faint, predominantly visual, and formed by racist and racializing practices of representation in Europe (Diallo and Senghor 2021, 3).

For the phonographic recordings of German linguists, the Wolof speaker Abdoulaye Niang sang of France's policies of enlisting Senegalese men, who were then sent to join forces in Europe. For Jámafáda, a soldier from Dahomey (now Burkina Faso) who spoke Mòoré for the recordings that were produced in German camps, this was "the war of the whites." To him, as he relates on one of the acoustic recordings held at the Berlin Lautarchiv, the war was horrible and meaningless. He had been unable to find his brothers, who

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had been enlisted earlier, but was forced to march on. From South Africa, so-called war workers were sent to support the British army as members of the African Labor Battalions. On their way to Europe, six hundred war workers from South Africa drowned in the icy waters of the Baltic Sea when the SS *Mendi* sank off the Isle of Wight on February 21, 1917. The survivors took their narratives of the disaster back to South Africa. Reminiscences of these versions of the historical event later appeared in songs. The following song was performed for the recordings of the musicologist Hugh Tracey by the Reitz Bantu Choir. The lyrics were published in isiZulu and English in Tracey's book *Lalela Zulu: 100 Zulu Lyrics* in 1948; the composer's name is given as Siyiyo; the translator is not mentioned:

Iqanawe iMendi yathatheka khona e'wandle
 Yashona iMendi namadodana ase Africa.
 Kawufanekise ulwandle
 Kawufanekise inqhanawe nabantu!
 Washona uMendi, whashona uMendi,
 Washona olwandle
 Washiya inkedama
 Washona uMendi.
 Nawe manzi usibingelele
 Xolani bantu bonke
 Nithinina maAfrika?
 Musani ukulala obuthongo.

The ship "Mendi" went down at sea
 And sank there with the sons of Africa.
 Can you picture the ship with the people in it?
 Down went the "Mendi"
 Down into the sea.
 Many were the orphans that were left,
 With the sinking of the "Mendi"
 We fear you, waters of the sea
 Soften your hearts, you people.
 What do you say, Africans?
 Stay not asleep below! (10)

Elements of these narratives and songs that traveled back to South Africa with the survivors still circulated in the 1980s within the musical genre of *isicath-*

amiya in Johannesburg (Erlmann 1995, 137).³ Perhaps versions of Jámafáda's narratives traveled back to his country with him, too; perhaps they were shared and circulated. Abdoulaye Niang did not live to speak of his experience in Dakar. Jámafáda's and Abdoulaye Niang's recordings survived as ossified language examples in the Berlin Lautarchiv, together with hundreds of other acoustic echoes of prisoners and internees from World War I.⁴ In Germany their spoken and sung texts were not considered historical sources until very recently. As language examples that were no longer of interest to German linguists, most of the recordings of the Lautarchiv were not translated for close to a century. Critical engagement with these recordings and the mode of their production was initiated by Britta Lange more than a decade ago. Her monograph on the history and the recordings of prisoners of war (POWs) in the Lautarchiv was published in 2020 (see also Hilden 2022; Hoffmann and Mnyaka 2015).

Yet, in 2018, an exhibition on the Lautarchiv at the Humboldt Box—the pop-up museum that advertised the anticipated collections and the fiercely criticized concept of the Humboldt Forum in Berlin, then under construction⁵—once again told the history of the opportunistic operation of recording linguistic samples with POWs as a legacy of both pioneering academics and the invention of the phonograph. Read with Ursula Le Guin and via Donna Haraway, this kind of historiography can be understood as a particular genre, a heroic tale, or “prick tale,” as Haraway calls it, in which everybody apart from the heroic linguist(s) becomes “props, ground, . . . or prey” (Haraway 2016, 118; Le Guin 2019). For a long time, the speakers were omitted not only as actors from the historiographies of the war but also as contributors to the history of the Berlin Lautarchiv that keeps their acoustic trace.⁶ The speakers were not presented as heroes, the begetters of the story of this peculiar archive; nor were their stories deemed anything but language examples, the catch of colonial linguists. Apart from ignoring hundreds of spoken and sung texts that multiply and version the narratives of World War I, this tale has systematically erased the history of epistemic violence in colonial linguistics and musicology, not only with regard to the Lautarchiv. It also continues to absent particular historical sources that testify to the presence of African migrants in Germany and to their part in German history of the first decades of the twentieth century.⁷ Apart from their echo in the Berlin Lautarchiv, many of the speakers also left traces in other archives. These visual and textual records were distributed according to discrete areas of interest—to art museums, photographic collections, and anthropometric collections—or were published as linguistic texts. Only by means of reassembling this evidence, that is, by listening and reading across a variety

of archives and disciplines, do traces of particular speakers surface in the present (Harrison, Byrne, and Clarke 2013; Lowe 2015; Hoffmann 2023).

Thus, while the Lautarchiv holds the echo of their presence, it is but one archive within a larger network of archives, depositories, and institutions in different countries that hold traces of African soldiers, war workers, and other African men who got caught in Germany in the turmoil of World War I. Examples of the materials preserved include several paintings and drawings representing the Muslim scholar Mohamed Nur from Somalia, as well as the biographic details of his life that appear in a grammar of the Somali language (see chapter 2). The grammar did not appear under Nur's name. The paintings, created by German artists, refer to him by a pseudonym he may or may not have chosen. Body measurements and anthropometric descriptions of the Congolese-Belgian intellectual Paul Panda Farnana and of Abdoulaye Niang, found in an archive in Vienna, can be reconnected to Abdoulaye Niang's recordings in the Lautarchiv (see chapter 1). Other sources for the writing of this book are recordings of drumming by the Congolese-Belgian soldier Albert Kudjabo, which were aired on German radio in 1924; and correspondence on the character of the Togolese migrant Stephan Bischoff that survived in the Hamburger Staatsarchiv (see chapter 3). Another example is a small card from the registers of the Red Cross that identifies Josef Ntwanumbi, a merchant seaman from South Africa, as a civilian internee held in the Engländerlager (English camp) in Ruhleben (see figure 2.3; his name is given as Twanumbee).

Like the acoustic recordings, most of the written or visual traces are part of the debris of imperial knowledge production. Many of the images of African soldiers and migrants who got caught in the war belong to the realm of autopsy—in the sense of *auto-opsis*, or seeing with one's own eyes—a practice that constructed racial difference as visual evidence (Weninger 1927; Doegen 1941; Berner 2003; Lange 2013; Evans 2010b). Some images are the result of voyeurism. A postcard that shows Paul Panda Farnana in soldier's garb, standing at the door of a train stopped at a German station with a group of white people below, staring at him, is an example.⁸ The centenary of World War I prompted the (re)circulation of these racializing images. Again, the individuals subjected to this gaze, like Paul Panda Farnana during his journey through Germany on the way to an internment camp, are rarely identified; they almost always remain unnamed, are often beautified, and mostly racialized.⁹ The archival results and residues of practices of examination, visualization, and representations of foreigners in Germany, in which propaganda, exoticism, and imperial science are interwoven, do not permit

retroactive unraveling. All the traces I reassembled in this book are in some way connected to the zealous project of recording all the languages spoken by POWs in German internment camps during World War I.

The collection of acoustic recordings of POWs held at the Berlin Lautarchiv, which is the starting point of this book, was initiated not to conserve the histories of African soldiers, or of prisoners, or of civilian internees of World War I. Nor did German linguists of the Königlich-Preußische Phonographische Kommission (Royal Prussian Phonographic Commission; KPPK), which operated from 1915 to 1918, aim to document the prisoners' experiences of being interned in German camps while they awaited the end of the war. Despite the KPPK's limited focus on languages, the acoustic traces at the Berlin Lautarchiv are unique: they accumulate to a polyphone echo that resounds with the presence of prisoners and internees from all over the world. This echo prompted me to listen closely, to listen together with those who were able to understand and to translate the words spoken or sung, to learn to attend to the traces of the prisoners' presence by ear, and to begin to assemble the splinters of these traces in other archives.

Some of the one hundred recordings in nine African languages that were translated for my project by Phindezwa Mnyaka, Serigne Matar Niang, Fatou Cissé Kane, Johannes Ossey, Gilbert Katanabo Muhito, Faustin Sambu Avetsu, Constance Kutsch Lojenga, Dishon Kweya, and Bodhari Warsame¹⁰ allow one to read and listen to echoes of the Great War as historical sources that speak of experiences of imprisonment. They present subaltern enunciative positions and refer to colonial histories in what are now the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia, and Ghana. They also present unexpected comments on and critique of colonial politics or the violent practices of evangelization. The recordings I selected for this book are not all that is to be found at the Lautarchiv, as the work of Britta Lange (2020), Irene Hilden (2022), and Ignazio Macchiarelli and Emilio Tamburini (2018) shows. The recordings with speakers of African languages are part of a linguistic survey that also holds recordings from Asia and Europe.

My research on recordings with African prisoners began with a set of recordings in isiXhosa, which Britta Lange, acting as a temporary custodian of the Lautarchiv, had given me in 2011 to take to South Africa (where I was working at the time). The translations by historian Phindezwa Mnyaka, as well as several sessions of collective listening in workshops at the Archive and Public Culture Research Initiative at the University of Cape Town in 2012, made clear once again that paying close attention to musical and textual genres is crucial for the project of making sense of these historical sound

recordings. In particular, the apparent impossibility of finding out more about the singer Josef Ntwanumbi (spelled Twanumbee in the files of the Lautarchiv) initiated my long-term research into the Lautarchiv recordings with African POWs. The striking depersonalization of the prisoners in many of their traces in relation to the deafening propaganda that had dehumanized them seemed to call for more detailed research. This book is the result of following their available audiovisual traces over many years, not only to find out more about their journeys but also to learn what can be known by ear, whether and how acoustic sources speak differently in comparison with written sources, and what it means to listen to historical records in search of colonial history.¹¹ This research reflects my interest in the biographies of African prisoners and migrants in Germany during World War I, their journeys, and the narratives and songs they recorded. My earlier and ongoing work on sound archives, on orature from and in southern Africa, and on colonial history in relation to epistemic practices has provided a starting point from which to make sense of specific genres of orature and from which to unravel its metaphoric content (see Hoffmann 2009b, 2012, 2023).

As historical echoes of the presence of African soldiers and migrants in Europe in the first decades of the twentieth century, the Lautarchiv sources bear the trace of journeys from Aden on the Arabian peninsula, then British-ruled, to Germany with a *Völkerschau* (ethnological exhibit); they include narratives that speak of the experiences of colonial soldiers and poems that refer to the situation in Ituri, then part of the Belgian Congo, in the first decade of the twentieth century; or they comment on an event of German colonial violence against Yewe priests and a shrine in Ghana in 1913. In particular, the recordings with Mohamed Nur, Stephan Bischoff, and Albert Kudjabo provide fragments of a long history of migration to Europe, of the exploitation of African men as exotic bodies, and of their deployment as informants and also as teachers of African languages at the Seminar für Kolonialsprachen at the Hamburgisches Kolonialinstitut (Seminar for Colonial Languages at the Hamburg Colonial Institute).

I propose understanding the Lautarchiv as an oratory, in the sense of an accumulation of orature in the form of fragmented, polyphonic echoes of a war and the operations of colonial linguistics. These polyphonic echoes consist of orally transmitted stories, songs, narratives, and prayers. Some of these traveled from elsewhere or spoke of, or to, places and realities outside the camps and to topics that were unrelated to the aims of the linguists. The acoustic fragments accumulate into kaleidoscopic echoes of colonial histories, which open the possibility for other historical narratives and testify to other per-



P.1 Hermann Struck, *Portrait of Samba Diallo*, 1916. From Struck 1917, plate 92.

spectives (Pandey [2000] 2012). So far, historical voice recordings with non-European speakers appear in German museums mostly as ambient sound, or as acoustic wallpaper, gesturing toward an unspecified “exotic” world. In an attempt to present aspects of the polyphonic echo of POWs in a German museum as an assemblage of voiced utterances, I created the exhibition *Der Krieg und die Grammatik: Ton- und Bildspuren aus dem Kolonialarchiv* (War and grammar: Audiovisual traces from the colonial archive). This exhibition at the Museum am Rothenbaum — Kulturen und Künste der Welt (MARKK), Hamburg, on view from October 2019 to February 2020, framed the audiovisual trace of the Somali intellectual Mohamed Nur in a chorus of recordings of other internees and prisoners, but also made audible some recordings of the German Kaiser and the philologist Wilhelm Doegen (see plate 16).¹²

As a curatorial practice, this project translated into weaving together voice recordings from the Lautarchiv to form a new constellation of enunciations that then spoke to the opportunistic practice of knowledge production in German internment camps. In the sound installation in the first room of my exhibition, Jámafáda's and Abdoulaye Niang's recordings responded to the declaration of war by Kaiser Wilhelm II, which is listed as recording number one in the Lautarchiv. Yet the Kaiser, whose personal funds financed the operation of the KPPK, was not recorded in a camp. Nor does putting Jámafáda, Albert Kudjabo, and the German Kaiser into conversation undo what many of the prisoners and internees experienced in Germany. However, as a curatorial strategy of sympoesis, engaging with the recordings of the Lautarchiv follows Donna Haraway's suggestion to "stay with the trouble" of violent heritage (2016, 125). This allows their polyphonic trace to speak, as I will show in this book, beyond the violence of colonial knowledge production.

Fragment I

Samba Diallo: "The war of the whites" / "Catcher of the living"

TRANSLATED FROM BAMANANKAN BY ANKE NEHRIG

Jeneba Nahawa juru lasumaya
 Ko n ye wara dugu la, Nahwa
 . . . saya tena jon to, Nahawa
 Sayajuru tena jon to.
 Ah kelema puman don
 tubabu kele
 kele ma puman don, jenamamine,
 kele ma tulonke.
 . . . n ye wa la diarraforo la,
 kentiwara be mogo dumu na, jenamamine

Junuba Nahava, play the strings slowly
 When I was away, Nahava
 Death does not spare anyone
 The strings of death do not spare anyone
 The war knows nothing good
 The war of the whites
 It knows nothing good

Catcher of the living
The war is no game
I came to the lion's field
The lion eats the men
Catcher of the living

(Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv, Phon. Komm. 113)

In the collections of the Berlin Lautarchiv and Phonogramm-Archiv, there are at least two, perhaps three, speakers documented with the name Samba Diallo, although sometimes it is written as “Sambadialo.” The name is very common in West Africa. The singer of the song quoted here was recorded by the musicologist Georg Schünemann, in 1916. Diallo is identified as being thirty-three years of age and as coming from Bougounie—then French Sudan (now Mali). Apart from later being recorded again, this time by Wilhelm Doegen, Diallo was also measured, examined, and photographed by Rudolf Pöch and Josef Weninger. In Weninger’s 1927 publication, *Eine morphologisch-anthropologische Studie*, Diallo appears as “Samba Dschalo,” and as “no. 35.” He is presented as a Kautschuk trader who was married and had two children. Most likely he is the subject of a portrait by Hermann Struck (see figure P.1). He is not the speaker with the lip injury called “Mamadou Sambadialo,” who appears in chapter 1.

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CATCHERS OF THE LIVING

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Introduction

LISTENING TO ACOUSTIC FRAGMENTS

As I began developing parts out of pieces, I found that I preferred them unconnected—to be related but not to touch—to circle but not to line up, because the story of this prayer was the story of a shattered, fractured perception resulting from a shattered, splintered life.
—TONI MORRISON, “The Writer Before the Page”

Fragmentation—that maverick which breaks into Clio’s estate from time to time, stalls a plot in its drive to a denouement and scatters its parts. —RANAJIT GUHA, “Chandra’s Death”

The English term *fragment* is related to the Latin *fragmentum*: a remnant, something always already broken, or broken off from a larger entity. The related verb *frangere*, to break, gestures toward a force but also toward imperfection, to a notion of the incomplete, of detachment (as in breaking off), indicating missing parts and the irreversibility of loss but also, inevitably, to imagination and suspense, perhaps even desire. Toni Morrison states that, in her writing, she has given preference to fragments instead of giving in to the desire for the “whole thing,” like waking up from a dream and wanting to remember “all of it, although the fragment we are remembering may be—very probably is—the most important piece in the dream” (2019, 66). For historiographies, the question of whether the fragments we have found in the archives are the significant parts of a longer narrative, a discursive formation, is often hard to decide. The fragments that surface in an archive can have the character of a maverick, as Ranajit Guha describes in his essay

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“Chandra’s Death,” one of the foundational texts of subaltern studies (Guha 1987). Fragments may speak, like sherds of pottery, from another time, yet they often do not allow the weaving of a “complete” story. In the case of the Berlin Lautarchiv, acoustic fragments are held together by an overall plot: the opportunistic practices of knowledge production in POW and internment camps during World War I. Yet as a cohesive element for the actual recorded narratives, this plot is weak. It is a porous container that holds spoken narratives and songs, often only until one listens closely, or until the recordings are translated and yield meaning, which the archive so far has omitted.

Josef Ntwanumbi (“Twanumbee” in the archive records),¹ a merchant seaman from the Eastern Cape in South Africa, was interned as a foreign national in the Engländerlager (English camp) in Ruhleben, near Berlin. His voice recordings were produced at the Odeon recording studios in Berlin, in 1917. On one recording he compared his experience of captivity with the time of seclusion he lived through during the rites that accompany male circumcision, perhaps intimating a sense of *déjà vu* (see Fragment IV). In March 1917, Albert Kudjabo, a Congolese soldier in the Belgian army, was asked to drum on a Melanesian “speaking drum” that had been borrowed from the Museum für Völkerkunde und Vorgeschichte (Museum for Ethnography and Prehistory) in Hamburg and was brought to the POW camp in Soltau for this purpose (see plate 11); he also sang several songs (see chapter 3). In April 1917, the Somali civilian internee Mohamed Nur recorded fragments of a poetic, polyphonic debate on the Dervish movement in his country (see chapter 2). Also in Ruhleben, Stephan Bischoff presented a fable that criticized the European evangelizing mission in Africa.

These speech acts, songs, requests, enunciations, remarks, comments, stories, prayers, and pleas, held at the Berlin Lautarchiv, are part of the debris of colonial knowledge production bequeathed to us (the inhabitants of the present) in the form of the colonial archive. For this book, I take the colonial archive at large as an imbrication of the discursive sense of “archive”—which determines what can be said and what was said, written, published, filed, and has become knowledge (of various kinds) as part of “imperial formations” (Stoler 2016)—together with “archives,” as specific sites, collections, and institutions. The colonial archive, in this tentative definition, is based on the paradigms and epistemic constellations at work in exploring, describing, visualizing, and inventorying subjugated territories, resources, and people. This includes not only the research on a given people’s languages and their music but also the creation of racial fantasies based on the examination of their bodies (Weninger 1927). The colonial archive is predicated on, shaped

by, and thus intrinsically connected to “imperial formations,” their power relations, and their agendas (Stoler 2016). Both the colonial archive in general and specific archives, as depositories of collections of documents and materialized knowledge that have been created with and for the colonial project, actively direct the work of researchers studying colonial history (Lalu 2009; Lowe 2015; Trouillot 1995).

Colonial history, in this sense, is not merely the history of former colonies but the history of everything touched by imperial formations. The question of how to create meaningful historiographies in the present, historiographies that can escape the epistemic frameworks created by discourses and documentation based on coloniality, has seen much scrutiny and debate in the last decades (Hamilton et al. 2002; Hamilton 2013). And while the interest in audiovisual collections has grown, too, the debates around the colonial archive have, to my knowledge, rarely included acoustic collections (Hoffmann 2020a). Yet historical voice recordings may allow for an understanding of subaltern speaking positions from within projects of imperial knowledge production, as well as beyond this immediate situation.

On the now-digitized sound files of the Berlin Lautarchiv, one hears spoken lists of words, repeated syllables, examples of counting, example sentences, and instances of “free speech” (in the grammatical sense). Sometimes these recordings are interrupted by a cough, by muffled laughter, or marked by a sense of unease in a voice. Many of these recordings transmit preserved aspects of repertoires, ossified by their very configuration as examples of languages. Once listened to as carriers of meaningful words, and/or as texts, as performative utterances and not as linguistic samples, these sound recordings from the colonial archive may allow for the surfacing of disturbing splinters of conversations, constrained by the power relations of the projects that produced them. The belated attention to their existence as carriers of meaning beyond their function as linguistic specimens—for instance, as in the case of the hundreds of recordings with colonial prisoners of World War I at the Lautarchiv that are presented in this book—may lead one to expect a retrieval of “stories untold.” Yet what one can hear now often leaves listeners with bewildering fragments—echoes from the debris of imperial knowledge production. With regard to their semantic content, the archival composition of narratives, songs, counting, and all kinds of speech acts in one collection at the Lautarchiv, or in the much bigger Phonogramm-Archiv at the former Ethnological Museum of Berlin (now part of the Humboldt Forum), often seems arbitrary. The reason for this is a mix of language barriers, disciplinary paradigms, and disinterest in anything

but the desired object—representative samples, or specimens, of music or *langue* (not *parole*).

A typical example is the situation in which the linguists at the POW camp at Wünsdorf, who neither understood the languages they recorded nor regarded the moment of recording as a dialogue, acoustically documented and filed a soldier's urgent plea not to be deported to another camp (see my further discussion of this Lautarchiv recording, PK 1114/2, in chapter 1). The plea was registered in the written files as a "narrative in Wolof." The soldier's appeal did not prompt or necessitate a response from the linguist at the time. The recording remained untranslated for a century, yet it was studied in 1943 with a focus on the racial features of voice (Bose 1943/44). With regard to this and other recordings in the colonial archive, the epistemological and archival configuration is remarkably durable. And in this way, the obliteration of the soldier's plea was carried over to the twenty-first century, into the now-digitized files, which demonstrates that digitization does not magically rescue acoustic files from obscurity.

Although I have sometimes suspected intentional dissimulation, mostly there is no cause for the regular and flagrant disinterest and subsequent archival omission of the semantic meaning of these historical recordings other than the configurations shaped by colonial epistemologies and contemporary practices of archiving.² Neither does archiving a plea as a language example count as an error in the archival records. Instead, in the light of the rationale for the recordings of the Königlich-Preussische Phonographische Kommission (Royal Prussian Phonographic Commission, KPPK), this makes perfect sense. The KPPK, a group of philologists, linguists, musicologist, and anthropologists, had set out to record all languages spoken in the internment camps in Germany. The semantic content of the resulting recordings, the spoken text they preserved, was deemed irrelevant for the production of linguistic records. The textual content of the recordings was thus not taken into account in the ordering, registering, and archiving that these samples underwent in the process of their itemization.³ This means that the archival configuration that still exists in the present is the direct consequence of the specific epistemological approach undertaken by the original recordists. This written registration in many cases produced a permanent, yet not always irreversible, distortion of the semantic content of the acoustic objects. As a result of this process, it is impossible to retrieve a specific recorded utterance on the basis of the colonial register. The plea of the distressed *tirailleur*, for example, is archived as a "narrative" (*Erzählung*). However, the very nature of acoustic recordings, such as those with African prisoners of war, allows

recorded, spoken words to be available, despite having been epistemically configured as linguistic objects and often wrongly labeled. The recordings themselves, due to their existence in that particular medium, have not been overwritten by the transcriptions and interpretations of researchers.

The linguists' disinterest in the semantics of the performed speech acts was neither unusual nor specific to this particular project. While manuals for the phonographic "collecting" of music and languages had already been published in Germany from the late nineteenth century onward, the strategic move to release these recordings from their disciplinary sequestration does not tell listeners in the present *how* to listen to them (Ankermann 1914; Sarreiter 2012; von Luschan 1896). Although the manuals requested particular practices of record keeping—for instance, with regard to the place and date of the recording, the person recorded, the genre, and language—and although the manuals often requested the transcription of the spoken or sung text, these details are rarely reflected in the written record. In many cases the documentation of the recordings is sketchy, if not absent. And even with collections for which meticulous documentation has been delivered and filed—as in the case of the recordings produced by the KPPK in World War I internment camps—this does not mean the documentation will tell listeners in the present what they desire to know. Often, the unexpected, voiced interventions come without explanation. Prompted to speak into the phonograph, speakers often told stories, gave accounts, sang songs, or recited poems that were part of larger repertoires or archives that had traveled to Germany with the soldiers and migrants.

In the sense of their textual, discursive content, these recordings can be described as acoustic fragments because, like the textual snippets Guha has studied, they often deny the denouement of a situation or episode we witness as listeners. This fragmentary nature is reflected in the appearance of specific recordings, their translation, and the often-sparse information on their speakers, as illustrated in this book by Fragments I–V. These Fragments are short insertions between the chapters. They present texts about which and speakers about whom I was not able to find more than what the written files of the Lautarchiv documented, aside from, in one case, a snippet from the Red Cross documentation issued to POWs in Germany; or in another case, a drawing created by the artist Hermann Struck; or in yet another case, comments on a recording or speaker penned by a member of the KPPK. These insertions signal an echo of a speaker that does not tell an entire story, yet they gesture to the speaker's historical presence with a trace even more faint than those of the speakers who appear in the chapters of this book.

The circumstances of the creation of these recordings, together with the at times enigmatic content of recorded speech acts, resonate with Michel Foucault's description of archival snippets he happened to stumble upon in the archives: those vignettes that were "brief, incisive, often enigmatic" and that threw a spotlight on the "lives of infamous men," or that, perhaps, made them "infamous" in the first place (Foucault 1967, 161). There are, however, major dissimilarities: the acoustic fragments—which are the object of our close listening and the starting point for my project of reassembling archival traces—were not produced to document or address disobedience, the trespassing of laws, or violations of the social mores of a time; nor do they speak to contested definitions of sanity. Few contain life stories or biographies, which became the signature of later attempts to create oral archives of social history. Instead, the recordings selected for this book were produced in the attempt to account for, systematize, and describe the grammar, phonetics, and lexicography of different languages. Additionally, although all speakers were registered in personal files in the written archival records, and sometimes their images or imprints (in photographs, casts, or body measurements) were also entered into the archives of anthropometrical documentation, on the recordings, one hears people speak and sing (mostly) in their own voices. These "voices" one hears are *recorded* voices; they are produced, not collected (Sterne 2003). They are *mediated* echoes of voices (Hoffmann 2023). *Voice* in this case does not refer to the political voice, that omnipresent metaphor.

Particularly in orally transmitted texts, the voice of the speaker is often not congruent with the political voice of a subject (as in "having a voice"). Yet, intentionally or not, even as a recording, the human voice carries meaning beyond words, which is an effect that may evade the neutralization, or reduction, of the acoustic trace in linguistics (Schrödl and Kolesch 2018). Voice generates an excess of meaning that cannot be reduced to that which can be transcribed (Dolar 2006; Weidman 2015). Understanding voice as a phenomenon on the threshold of *aesthesis* and *logos*, as always gesturing *and* speaking, and thus carrying both semantics and an affective quality, as Doris Kolesch and Sybille Krämer (2006, 7) write, presents voice as a vehicle of speech that imbues it with a moment of unruliness or potential ambiguity (see chapters 1 and 3). Still, the presence of a recorded voice does not necessarily signify subjectivity. Narrative agency is that which may well speak beyond or outside the meaning of a speech act that was recorded as a linguistic example, yet it is often intrinsically linked to a polyphonic source of an oral repertoire. Therefore, I suggest understanding these voice recordings as echoes that reverberate with what was once said or sung, yet that still carry meaning beyond text, even if the

speakers remain unknown, and the unknown source of an echo may disturb the listener's sense of direction.

Although every acoustic fragment is shaped and mediated, often effaced and deformed by the practices that led to its capture, not every fragment speaks to the epistemic practices directly: whereas some of the recordings with POWs may speak of imprisonment, of recruitment politics, of the war, and of the ones left behind and missed, other speakers leave aside this situative frame of reference and tell a story that takes flight from the misery of imprisonment, the trenches, the biting cold of German winters, the drama of the Great War. In this way, the acoustic fragment may speak from a position beyond the set of practices that led to its production as a recording, complicating the identification of the frame and referring to a repertoire or discourse that has not been, and could not have been, captured in its entirety (see chapters 2 and 3).

The project of translating about one hundred of these recordings in African languages intensified my understanding of the arbitrariness of their compilation in the Lautarchiv, where they are kept as acoustic fragments that transmit resonances, echoes, of which the source (the speaker) may or may not be known. Reassembling the traces of the speakers, as well as writing this book, was held together by the practice of close listening, together with translators who did not hear these spoken texts as language examples but instead attended closely to the genres and performativity of those spoken and sung texts. Listening, reconnecting, and translating (or retranslating)—but also the discussions that accompanied the process of interpretation—became a strategy for reactivating these acoustic fragments. Apart from learning more about genres of orature, this process has complicated my understanding of voice. A striking example of the shift of meaning that came with close listening can be found in the recordings on which So, a West African deity, spoke through Ruhleben internee Stephan Bischoff. These particular recordings demonstrate that close listening, translating, and reassembling acoustic fragments with their contexts from outside the archive may destabilize Western notions of evidence and the indexicality of voice. The recordings in which a deity speaks from a colonial archive also present an echo in which the sound archive overlaps with what Toyin Falola (2016) has called ritual archives, which may hold incantations and invocations and, thus, spiritual aspects of African histories that Falola does not expect to be present in the colonial archive.

The recorded echoes of voices I attend to in this book transmit the repercussions of content that float in a sea of acoustic traces, from remote

places at times—if we take the metropolitan sound archive as the core of the endeavor—or from the center, Berlin. They were recorded for reasons that have little to do with the discourses, repertoires, or oral archives that resonate in and through them. While acoustic fragments indelibly bear the watermark of the power that generated them—the productive power of the archive, or the field of imperial knowledge production—they are not entirely created by the processes that prompted and conserved them (Stoler 2009). Although the initiator of the project now housed at the Lautarchiv, Wilhelm Doegen, saw himself as the creator of the recordings, attentive listening makes clear that the recording technique has *not* created the genres, the poetry, or the songs that were archived. It itemized them and stabilized them and thus, in a way, snatched them from the ephemeral quality of voice into the realm of concrete, collectible, sounding objects fixated in a potentially endless loop of repeatability. Recording as archiving has, in this way, arrested the versioning practices of orature, which have, for instance, actively altered and reshaped the narrative snippets that recall the sinking of the SS *Mendi* in 1917 (see the prologue). As acoustic recordings, sequestered in a German archive, these pieces of orature have been separated from the circuits of retheorizing that filter, reimagine, and alter them, over time, in the flow of oral performances and by means of musicking.

While voice recordings in the archive are part of the debris of colonial knowledge production, they are also fragments, or components, of larger entities: they may be splinters of the fabric of a discursive field, elements of a repertoire of songs and stories. The term *repertoire* here does not gesture toward sequentiality—as in an earlier, “primitive” version of an archive—rather, as Diana Taylor (2023, 22) suggests, these repertoires exist synchronously to practices that entail writing; they are not the lesser sisters of an all-encompassing archive, nor do they generally constitute an antihegemonic challenge to the archive as the locus of the “writing culture” of power. Repertoires, although they do contain nonverbal practices—such as in dance, performance, and a range of culturally informed and ingrained gestures—are not the antipode to the archive as a repository of text and images. Much of my engagement with voice recordings is preoccupied with words and texts in recorded, performative forms. Much of what was documented as examples of musical expression, or as samples of linguistic research material, is indeed also text, albeit never exclusively. Related to or coming from genres that belong to a specific repertoire of orature, acoustic fragments may encapsulate elements, themes, and topics that can also be found in written texts or in collections of artworks and photographs. As part of a repertoire, or as

an element of a discourse, I suggest understanding the semantic content of many acoustic fragments as belonging to a hive, a flock of utterances that were once the interconnected (tightly or loosely) yet flexible parts of a formation. It was the claw of power of which Foucault speaks—here, that of colonial knowledge production—directed by the will to know “native languages” and to systematize the languages of the world (as seen from the colonial center)—that fished these fragments from the midst of an oscillating swarm of utterances and severed them from it. In the archive these fragments have ossified; but at times a glimmer of what once was a (re)sounding swarm remains. The historical recordings of the Lautarchiv preserve abbreviated and medially formatted pieces of orature, songs, or narratives. These are acoustic snapshots of a specific moment of voicing and performance. Yet, all recordings are produced—not collected. This means that although they may have initially belonged to a discursive formation, they were not taken away from orature or from the repertoire of a group of speakers or a location. The materialization of the acoustic snapshot thus did not deprive the repertoire of a vital element. The swarm of utterances that makes a discursive formation (orally or in writing) did not lose a component.

Today, together with thousands of other recordings in other archives and collections, the recordings of the Berlin Lautarchiv constitute a massive collection of resonating relics that can be heard as echoes of the presence of African men in Germany during World War I. This book follows some of their acoustic traces to other archives, along the paths of historical narratives, through networks of researchers, to the imbrication of their research on languages and concepts of race in German linguistics. By means of reassembling acoustic, visual, and written traces with close listening—which was often collective listening (Hilden 2021) together with the work of translation—the single narrative often told of the Lautarchiv becomes invalid: it is not the history of white men and their apparatuses, nor is it another story of pioneering practices of research and archiving. The project of my research was to read acoustic traces of the presence of African soldiers of World War I in Germany as aspects of colonial history that predominantly surface in the recorded orature in this particular German archive. These echoes often begin to speak clearly only in connection with other traces the speakers have left in different archives. In this way, the journeys of the speakers surface in the interstices between recordings, along archival networks, and in the shadows of other practices of research that had, by then, already learned to parasitize on war and colonization.

The chapters in this book are arranged around speakers as historical persons. Each chapter follows the traces its speakers’ recordings have laid

Lfd. Nr.

PERSONALBOGEN

Lautliche Aufnahme Nr: *P. 1116* Ort: *Borko*

Datum: *8. VII. 17*

Zeitangabe: *12 Uhr 20 Min*

Dauer der Aufnahme:

Durchmesser der Platte: *27 cm*

Raum der Aufnahme:

Art der Aufnahme (Sprechaufnahme, Gesangsaufnahme,
Choraufnahme, Instrumentenaufnahme, Orchesteraufnahme): *1. Zählen bis 8.*

2. Erzählung

Mosi (Zugangs)

Name (in der Muttersprache geschrieben):

Name (lateinisch geschrieben): *Jamafada*

Vorname:

Wann geboren (oder ungefähres Alter)? *erläutert es.*

Wo geboren (Heimat)? *Bahumma*

Welche größere Stadt liegt in der Nähe des Geburtsortes? *Fatigurma*

Kanton — Kreis (Ujedz):

Departement — Gouvernement (Gubernija) — Grafschaft (County): *Mosi*

Wo gelebt in den ersten 6 Jahren? *Bahumma*

Wo gelebt vom 7. bis 20. Lebensjahr?

Was für Schulbildung? —

Wo die Schule besucht? —

Wo gelebt vom 20. Lebensjahr? *Mai 1914 Ostafrika*

Aus welchem Ort (Ort und Kreis angeben) stammt der Vater? *Bahumma*

Aus welchem Ort (Ort und Kreis angeben) stammt die Mutter? *Bahumma*

Welchem Volksstamm angehörig? *Mosi*

Welche Sprache als Muttersprache? *Mosi*

Welche Sprachen spricht er außerdem? *Mosi, ein wenig Französisch*

Kann er lesen? — Welche Sprachen? —

Kann er schreiben? — Welche Sprachen? —

Spielt er ein im Lager vorhandenes Instrument aus der Heimat? —

Singt oder spielt er modern europäische Musikweisen? —

Religion: *Heide* Beruf: *Fürst*

Vorgeschlagen von: 1. *Munkof*

2. *Wildebeeren*

Beschaffenheit der Stimme:

1. Urteil des Fachmannes
(des Assistenten): *gut*

Munkof

2. Urteil des Kommissars: *gut*

*Mittelstimmige mit hervorragender
Persönlichkeit. Wildebeeren*

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1.1 Personal file of Jamafada. Berlin Lautarchiv.

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out to other archives and museums, and each chapter seeks to connect its spoken and sung texts to historical events. Abdoulaye Niang, Mohamed Nur, Stephan Bischoff, and Albert Kudjabo lead us through the history of the Lautarchiv. Their audiovisual traces speak of war and colonialism, of the exploitation of their presence in science and art, but also of their navigation of their roles to their own ends; of genres of speaking, singing, and drumming; of their migration to Europe; and of the wish to leave it. These songs and spoken texts, which sometimes seem to, and perhaps actually did, comment on the recordings of others, present archival echoes that have remained faint and yet add to the kaleidoscopic trace of the presence of African soldiers and internees in Germany from 1911 to 1922.

Fragment II

Jámafáda: “The war is horrible”

TRANSLATED FROM MÒORÉ BY ANONYMOUS

Ma ba riki maa kissi nassara kiengue guiabre. Guiabre ka noomeye. Guiabre da kassog ye. Ma kiengue, ma ka yein maa koendama. Maa koendama nda kiengue guiabre. Ma baass sarwissi fada n’gourma. Ma kaa yein yee. Ma yok kiende, ma na kaa yein ma koendamyé yii menguiye. Diilfaa, n’mii kuiyan mii kaa kui ma ka yein la. Ma yok kiende yok kiende ma ra ka yein. Guiabre daboosogyé. Kuili yooma tan ma ka yein ma n’ma, ma ka yein ma n’ba. Ket nena, ka yein kasruima. Ma kietin kiena ring ka yein ye. Ma n’da yi yok kiende yooma tan ma ka yein ma poa ye ma ka yein biiye. Mii ma na beekay, ma kui ma ka kui. Guiabre san saa ma kuili, ma na kuili meyein. Guiabre ka saa ma kuikai saa.

My father has sent me to the Whites to go to war. But the war is dreadful. So I went, but I did not see my older brothers who had been recruited for the army already. I have not seen them there. I marched, but I did not meet them. So I ask myself whether they are dead or still alive, because I have not seen my older brothers. The war is horrible. Since three years I have not seen my mother and my father. So far I have not seen any one of my older brothers. I am still in this uncertain situation; I have no perspective. Since three years, since I have left I have not seen my wife and my child. I do not know whether I can weather this. If I could only survive and return to my home, if the war

could end. If I could go home and see my family. If this war doesn't end and I die here, everything ends.

(Berlin Lautarchiv, PK 1116/2)

Jámafáda spoke Mòoré and came from Fada N'Gourma, which was then French Sudan (today it is Burkina Faso). In his personal file at the Lautarchiv (PK 1116), Wilhelm Doegen estimated Jámafáda's age as twenty-one and stated that he had been a soldier since 1914. Jámafáda's narrative was recorded in Wünsdorf, in the so-called Halbmondlager (Half Moon, or Crescent, camp) where mainly Muslim prisoners were interned. Yet Jámafáda was registered as heathen (*Heide*). After meeting Jámafáda in Wünsdorf, Carl Meinhof described him to Felix von Luschan as intelligent and remarked that his appearance could be of interest for the anthropologist. Doegen published his anthropometric photograph, which focuses on the scarification of his face (and is therefore not included here) with no indication of his name.

Jámafáda's account of his recruitment at his father's request and his search for his older brothers, who were also in the French army, was recorded as an example of Mòoré for the Lautarchiv. The account was filed as "eine Erzählung" (a narrative), with no indication of its content.

In 2010, Jámafáda's text appeared, probably translated for the first time, in the documentary film *Boulevard d' Ypres/Ieperlaan*, directed by Sarah Vanagt.⁴ For my project, Jámafáda's narrative was retranslated by a Mòoré speaker who wishes to be anonymous due to his precarious situation as a refugee in Germany. In 2019, Jámafáda's voice recording interrupted a speech of the German Kaiser Wilhelm II in my exhibition *Der Krieg und die Grammatik: Ton- und Bildspuren aus dem Kolonialarchiv* (War and grammar: Audiovisual traces from the colonial archive), at the MARKK, Hamburg (see plate 16). In 2020, his narrative was published in Britta Lange's book *Gefangene Stimmen*, which later appeared in translation as *Captured Voices* (2022).

Notes

PROLOGUE: CATCHERS OF THE LIVING

- 1 See, for instance, Mangin 1910; Fogarty 2014; Lunn 1999; Diallo and Senghor 2021; and Diop 2014, among others.
- 2 On the World War I correspondence between Senegalese soldiers and their friends back home, see Descamps et al. 2014. See also Bakary Diallo's book, *Force Bonté* (1926), and the writings of Lamine Senghor, which have been republished with annotations and an introduction by George Robb (Diallo and Senghor 2021).
- 3 There have been several recent publications on the SS *Mendi*, and efforts to engage its history. These include a conference at the Centre for African Studies at the University of Cape Town in 2017; the play *Did We Dance: Ukutshona ko Mendi*, written by Lara Foot and directed by Mandla Mbothwe, shown at the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town (2012); and Fred Khumalo's novel *Dancing the Death Drill* (2017). See also "SS *Mendi*," *South African History Online*, accessed June 6, 2023, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/ss-mendi>.
- 4 In this book I mostly refer to the names of the POWs as I have found them in the Lautarchiv. Many, if not most, of the names were distorted in the writing of the German linguists. I have adjusted only three names: Abdoulaye Niang, whose name was (incorrectly) written as Abdulaye Niang; Mohamed Nur, who appears as Muhammed Nur in the writings of the Maria von Tiling and in the files of the Lautarchiv; and Josef Ntwanumbi, who appears as Josef Twanumbee in the Lautarchiv.
- 5 The Humboldt Forum (<https://www.humboldtforum.org/de/>) is a museum in Berlin that now houses the collections of the former Ethnological Museum of Berlin and Museum of Asian Art, together with two sound archives, the Berlin Lautarchiv and the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv. Opened in 2021 and located on Museum Island, the building's facade replicates that of Berlin's historic Prussian castle (Berliner Schloss), which was demolished in 1950 by East Germany, after being damaged during World War II. The new museum has been massively criticized—beginning with controversy over the political implications of mimicking a Prussian castle on the grounds of the building that replaced it, the Palast der Republik, used for cultural and political events by East Germany, and itself demolished in 2002. More recently, a critical debate addressed the colonial history of the enormous ethnographic collection and the flimsy, often contradictory, and at best uninformed concepts used in presenting these objects in the Humboldt Forum. At the time of writing, the public discussion around the Humboldt Forum—which was initiated by activists organized under the umbrella group No Humboldt 21—continues. The debate revolves around the politics of repatriation, the

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rightful ownership of artworks and human remains from formerly colonized countries, curatorial practices, and the inclusion/exclusion of the societies from which these objects were taken (or stolen) in decisions related to those collections. See, for example, Hilden, Merrow, and Zavadski 2021; Förster 2010.

- 6 Now housed at the Humboldt Forum, the Lautarchiv of Humboldt University in Berlin holds recordings dating as early as 1909. For an official history, which does not credit the speakers discussed in this book as creators of the archive, see <https://www.lautarchiv.hu-berlin.de/en/introduction/history-and-perspective/>.
- 7 The new exhibition on the Lautarchiv at the Humboldt Forum, which opened in 2020, does not fundamentally alter the approach that foregrounds the historical invention of the recording device and the aims of the Royal Prussian Phonographic Commission for understanding the Lautarchiv's history. Britta Lange's work and my work on sound archives are quoted prominently on the walls in a section of the exhibition that speaks of the Humboldt Forum's collection. Our request to focus on the content of recordings, the speakers, and the methods of the production of the sound collection does not feature in the museum.
- 8 The postcard bears the caption, "Der erste kriegsgefangene Kongoneger (auf dem Transport von Namur nach Deutschland)" (The first Congolese negro prisoner of war [on the transport from Namur (Belgium) to Germany]). See *Dortmund postkolonial*, January 17, 2016, http://www.dortmund-postkolonial.de/?attachment_id=4100.
- 9 Paul Panda Farnana's experiences in Germany appear through the lens of Willy van Cauteren's memoir (1919). For practices of depicting African POWs, see Burkard and Lebrecht 2015.
- 10 Anke Nehrig's translations (see Fragment I) were produced for the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv and were kindly given to me by the archive in exchange for other translations. The translations from Mòoré (see Fragment II) were created by a refugee in Germany who wants to remain anonymous.
- 11 On knowing by ear as acoustemology, see Feld 1996, 2015. On knowing (imperial) history by listening, see, for instance, Birdsall 2012; Ochoa Gautier 2014; Morat 2014; Missfelder 2012; Smith 2001; Rosenfeld 2011; and Hirschkind 2006. On technologies of hearing and modern cultures of listening, see Sterne 2003, 2015; Schmidt 2000; Rice 2015; Nancy 2007; Bijsterveld 2008; Erlmann 2010; Mhlambi 2008; and Bull and Cobussen 2021, among others.
- 12 See "Der Krieg und die Grammatik: Ton- und Bildspuren aus dem Kolonialarchiv," MARKK, accessed June 6, 2023, <https://markk-hamburg.de/ausstellungen/der-krieg-und-die-grammatik/>.

INTRODUCTION: LISTENING TO ACOUSTIC FRAGMENTS

- 1 Many of the names of persons recorded for the Lautarchiv were misspelled. Throughout this book, I use spellings that follow current-day accepted standards that reflect the naming and spelling practices of the men's respective languages.

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- 2 For new (or recent) work on archiving sound, see the following: Ajotikar and van Straaten 2021; Birdsall and Tkaczyk 2019; Bronfman 2016; Garcia 2017; Kalibani 2021; Robinson 2020; Yamomo and Titus 2021; Yamomo 2020; Hoffmann 2020a; Lange 2020.
- 3 This does not hold true for all early recordings. In his 1904 article “Einige türkische Volkslieder aus Nordsyrien und die Bedeutung phonographischer Aufnahmen für die Völkerkunde” (Some Turkish folksongs from northern Syria and the meaning of phonographic recordings for ethnology), Felix von Luschan delivered translations of the songs he had recorded in 1901. For him, the texts and meaning of the content were important. Von Luschan writes, “Leider bin ich nicht in allen einzelnen Fällen sicher, den eigentlichen Sinn jedes Liedes richtig erfasst zu haben” (Unfortunately, I am not sure in all cases whether I have grasped the actual sense of the song) (1904, 183). Ironically, many of the “Turkish songs,” which were recorded during his work on an archeological project in the Middle East, were sung by an Armenian boy. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from German in this volume are my own.
- 4 For information on the film, see “Boulevard d’Ypres/Ieperlaan,” Centre Vidéo de Bruxelles, accessed September 22, 2023, <https://cvb.be/en/movie/boulevard-dypres-ieperlaan>.

CHAPTER 1. ABDOULAYE NIANG: VOICE, RACE, AND THE SUSPENSION OF COMMUNICATION IN LINGUISTIC RECORDINGS

- 1 The exhibition at the Humboldt Box was called [*laut*] *Die Welt hören* ([loud] Listening to the world) (2018). From 2011 to 2019, the Humboldt Box served as a showcase for the Humboldt Forum, then under construction.
- 2 The Odeon Lindström Company was founded as International Talking Machine Company in Berlin in 1903. By 1906, it had more than 10,000 records, including (then already) so-called World Music, in their sales catalogues.
- 3 For more on the Berlin Lautarchiv and on practices of recording in German POW camps, see Lange 2011a, 2011b, 2015, 2020; Hilden 2015, 2021; Kaplan 2013; Macchiarelli and Tamburini 2018.
- 4 On the question of the standardization of languages, which includes the creation of entities such as languages or dialects and was related to colonial politics with regard not only to epistemological practices but also to territories of influence, see, for example, Deumert and Mabandla 2018; and Irvine 2008, among others.
- 5 Serigne Matar Niang is not related to Abdoulaye Niang. He lives in Cape Town and kindly agreed to translate the recordings in 2013. His engagement with the recordings of Abdoulaye Niang led him to search for relatives of Abdoulaye Niang on the island of Gorée, which lies off the coast of Dakar, Senegal, in April 2018. So far, traces of Abdoulaye Niang’s family have not been found.
- 6 See, for example, the essays in Das 2011. See also Eschenberg 1991; Fogarty 2008; Roy, Liebau, and Ahuja 2011; Hoffmann 2014a; Diop 2019; and *1914–1918 Online*: