

Dear friends and relations,

Firstly all good wishes for 2011 to all of you!

It has been some time since I wrote a Newsletter on Schmelen Kleinschmidt matters but recent news, as already indicated in an email, spurred me into action once more.

[This newsletter has no attachments; no picture inserts and no bold letters – something that interfered with the successful transmission to various recipients of the newsletters]

1. The place where Zara died and was buried.

On 21 December 2010, Ursula Trüper and I set out on what was my third trip to find Zara's grave. We could hardly expect to find a marked grave and tombstone but with various descriptions from that period and people with local knowledge of the terrain, we thought we could narrow it down to the actual place.

Zara died, probably of tuberculosis (consumption), after a wet and cold winter in Cape Town in April 1831. She and Hinrich had travelled to Cape Town from Komaggas to have pages of the New Testament, which they translated into Nama, printed. Their stay in the Cape was prolonged when the London Missionary Society printers told them that they had to send to London for the punctuation terms Zara and Hinrich had invented, the representation of the different 'click' sounds they identified in the Nama language. These new vocabulary symbols had to be cast in lead, something that could only be done in London. Once printing could start Zara was the only one to do the proof reading of the *Haka Kanniti* – the first Bible in Nama, containing the four Gospels. The achievement of Zara and her husband was groundbreaking at the time. Present at the launch was the Governor-General of the Cape, Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole (1828-1833). He offered the Schmelen support should they ever require it, something Hinrich availed himself of a little while later – the subject for a possible future newsletter.

On their way back, not far out of Cape Town, Zara's short life came to an end. Her dying words are said to have been: my work on earth is done. Zara was born around 1793 and died in April 1831, not yet forty years old. The Rhenish missionary Gustaf Zahn from Tulbagh area came to bury Zara. Hinrich and two of their children with them carried on north a few days later. For several reasons a tombstone was probably never erected here, one being that the family did not live here. Equally possible for the lack of an engraved tombstone is the period in which she died here. These are the earliest settler days up the west coast and engraved stones appear this far north only a decade later.

Zara died at the place known as Botma's Hof, where Lodewijk and Johanna Botma farmed. They were known as friends to the missionaries, something that could not be said about most other white farmers who saw missionaries as

bothersome meddlers in the loathesome labour practises of the day. Recall that slavery had not yet been abolished and the Khoi, San and Oorlam, who were not part of the slave system were treated as less than human with hunting parties often going out to exterminate whole San communities. The reason for the Botma motivation is not known, but there were other white farmers who also looked kindly on the work of missionaries.

Another travelling missionary's grave at Botma's Hof is that of Abraham Albrecht, brother to Christian Albrecht, the first missionaries who tried, but failed to establish themselves across the Orange River (or then also known as the Great River or Gariep), in what was then referred to as Great Namaqualand. Their objective to serve the spiritual needs of the Bondelswarts (!Khami=nun), Oorlam people acculturated in the Cape to settler ways but forced ever further north as intruding settlers took away their traditional pastures. Abraham Albrecht died at Botma's Hof in 1815 on his way back to Cape Town.

Hanna Kleinschmidt, the daughter of Zara, writes about her mother: "Myne overledenen Moder was ene bekeerde en vromme Namaquain uit de gewesten van Orange Revier." (My mother was a converted and pious Nama woman hailing from the Orange River area) (Letter of Hanna Kleinschmidt to Rhenish Missions Society, RMG 2598 researched by Ursula Trueper)

Several people have been looking for Zara's grave in recent times. A Finnish party told us they could not locate the exact place but stopped near what they thought was close to the graveyard, and said a brief prayer.

A few months ago I had gone with Kenneth Makatees, a relative through Frederika Schmelen, the third of the Schmelen daughters and thus related to Zara in the same way as those are who hail from Hanna (or Johanna), the second daughter, who married missionary Kleinschmidt. Kenneth had already done much spadework, but our search was, in the end, up the wrong valley. I then went by myself and got somewhat closer, but once more failed to narrow the options down to the Botma's Hof graveyard. This time, on the 21 December, Ursula Trüper visiting from Berlin (and the author of the book *The Invisible Woman - Zara Schmelen, African Mission Assistant at the Cape and in Namaqualand*) and I travelled 160 km north-west from Cape Town, following the ox-wagon route of an earlier century as best we could establish. Our first stop was at Gouda, probably a day's journey by wagon from Wellington or Paarl. Instead of turning east into Het Land van Waveren, later re-named Tulbagh, we stuck to the west of the Winterhoekberge. The road took us past the former mission station at Saron, crossed the Vierentwintig Revieren and just beyond it turned left to Halfmanshof. (I had wrongly clambered around the farms here previously and in my quest had taken up contact with the local farmers). This time we were equipped with a rough map of the farms of the area as they were known in 1850 – seemingly the first proper recording of its kind provided by the helpful Mo Ellis at the Porterville, Jan Dankaert Museum.

We knew we had to find the Heuningberg (Honey mountain or hill – which abounds with bees to this day), but Heuningberg had some 30 odd farms on it, not one of which had the name Botma's Hof. We drove westwards across the farm Avontuur and then thought we had found it, but no, boundaries and names have changed and we were no closer. An old man walking next to the road told us to carry on until we came to an empty stone house on the

left. We should turn left and follow the farm roads until we got to the farm Heuningberg. First we came to Heuningfontein – no luck here. Then, more and endless fields that grow wheat in winter and now were reduced to a dry, brown and golden stubble where sheep were grazing. We also knew we had to get close to the Berg River, mentioned in Gustaf Zahns account, the missionary who buried Zara. And indeed we were nearing the Berg River. Various drifts through the Berg River are used to this day, but no sign of what we were looking for. The sun had reached its zenith and the temperature had reached the mid thirties. Shade is hard to find. What would it have been like in an ox-wagon?

We now stopped at an unpretentious farmhouse and were told that it was one of two farms with the name Heuningberg located, - on the Heuningberg. The old lady who offered us a sweet yet welcome glass of juice suggested we go back to the first Heuningberg farm. We would find an abandoned farmhouse – the owner had recently emigrated to Australia. More climbing over fences, but no hint of what it was we were looking for. A labourer baling wheat told us he knew of an old and untended graveyard. Our eyes were untrained and we drove right past the overgrown bush next to a small river course. – Back to Heuningfontein but the people we asked could not help, when the farm manager, Frans van Wyk of the farm Heuningberg west happened to arrive. As is usual in these parts he radioed one of his farm hands to meet us along the way. Two vehicles now escorted us back on the path we had just come along; a sudden turn across a stubble field, some 200 meters from the road and we came to an enclosure of graves. A quick look at the dates and names showed us this was not what we were looking for, but the old farm worker then pointed us to some 20 or 30 graves, not visible because of the tough, dry bush, just beyond the enclosure, Mr. van Wyk looked at the sandals we wore and said casually: just be careful; there are lot's of Cape Cobra around here. The labourer, followed by Ursula and me in tow now found the graves, completely overgrown, some with tombstones, mostly illegible due to a hardy lichen growth all over them. Other graves are marked by wrought iron frames around them, but most have no marking other than a clay cover that is crumbling as you touch it.

Was one of these Zara's? We did not have the tools or the energy in this heat to clear the area of bush so that the graves can be properly seen. It would also take an expert to deal with the lichen so that the inscriptions can be read. The dates that we could identify took us to the time of Zara's passing. But what else told us we had found the right place? Mr. van Wyk explained: We were next to a small river course fed by a strong fountain a few hundred meters higher up the Heuningberg, next to the graves was a wheat field that once was the outspan place for ox-wagons when they overnighted here coming from the south or the north. At the edge of this field are several heaps of old building rubble and remembers people saying these served the ox-wagon travellers; the farm house itself would have been higher up near the source of the spruit; And lower down from this field was a drift where ox-wagons and horses could cross the Berg River.

Further confirmation can be found in the historian Karel Schoeman's book, 'De Kort sendingloopbaan van Sophia Brugmann 1805-1812', Cape Town 1994 in which he identifies this farm to be in the Porterville District.

All the evidence thus points to this one spot and we can say with some certainty that this is the place we were looking for.

To take this forward we should, if possible, arrange for the graves to be cleared of bush and weeds and record how many there are and which have inscriptions that can be identified. The broken fence around them also needs replacing. Through Mr. van Wyk we will be provided with access to the émigré owner of the land as we want to ask him to allow us to erect a plaque or memorial board that marks not merely where Zara lies, but that tells us of her pioneering work as a Nama woman at the beginning of the 19th century, who together with her husband composed the first grammar of her mother-language and then in translating the gospels and having them printed for functional use in little and great Namaqualand. This makes her a noteworthy and remarkable woman of her time in the whole of Southern Africa. Ursula has already drafted a text that might be suitable and since then we have also had a very generous offer of Menan du Plessis, who has recently completed her PhD on the Nama language, who will translate the text for the memorial into Nama. The memorial board should appear in three languages: Nama, Afrikaans and English.

Achieving this would be a very tiny contribution to claim back the culture and language of a people that the colonial period all but completely whipped out.

To locate it here is appropriate because it is the only tangible place, other than Komaggas about the sparse information that is available to us about Zara.

In proceeding with this we should feel obliged also to confer with other people with an interest or stake in this history.

Should anyone want to visit the site they should write to me in advance and I will gladly provide a detailed description of how to get the place we finally found.

2. The 200th Anniversary of the arrival of Hinrich Schmelen.

15 September 2011 will mark the 200th anniversary of the arrival of Hinrich Schmelen at the Cape. He never once returned to Europe. The small village in Northern Germany, Kassebruch, near Bremen, is planning to commemorate the event (possibly with an exhibition) organised by local historian Jutta Siegmeyer and a group of interested local people. (And in 2014 we still intend to organise an event that will mark the 200th anniversary of the marriage between Hinrich and Zara, to be held in Komaggas, South Africa.)

3. A new Zara in the family.

On 6 November a Zara Eva Walsh was born in Perth, Australia. Her proud parents are Tusha and Karl. Zara Eva is a great, great, great, great, great granddaughter of Zara Schmelen, spanning 8 generations. Tusha, her mother, is the daughter of my brother Immo and his first wife Heidi. Young Zara's other given name Eva, is after our mother, 94 year old Eva Kleinschmidt who lives in Swakopmund and is very proud to have become a great grand mother – for the first time.

That is all for now.

Best wishes to you all,

Horst - and Ursula Trüper, currently on a visit to Cape Town, Swakopmund and Komaggas from her native Berlin.