



Dear Rebmann friends,

Allow me to update you about my biography of Gerlingen-born Johannes Rebmann, the 19th-century missionary and linguist, who was a founder of Christianity in East Africa, and who was at the cradle of Chichewa lexicography because he was first in reducing that language to writing, in his *Dictionary of the Kiniassa Language* (1877).

At last, both new editions of the Rebmann biography, the English one and the German one, have become widely available.

\* *Johannes Rebmann: A Servant of God in Africa before the Rise of Western Colonialism* (originally VTR, 2011), second edition, revised and enlarged (May 2018), 333 pages, published by Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft (VKW) in Bonn, ISBN 978-3-86269-152-4. The book has been co-published by Wipf & Stock in Eugene, Oregon, USA.

\* *Johannes Rebmann: Ein Diener Gottes vor dem Aufkommen des westlichen Kolonialismus*, 386 Seiten, Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft (VKW), ISBN 978-3-86269-163-0.

-Click here for the English and the German versions:

Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft, <https://vkwonline.com/search?q=rebmann>  
Deutsche Buchhandel, <https://www.buchhandel.de/suche/ergebnisse?query=Johannes%20Rebmann>

-Click here for the English version:

Wipf & Stock, <https://wipfandstock.com/johannes-rebmann.html>

Amazon.com, [https://www.amazon.com/Johannes-Rebmann-Servant-Western-Colonialism/dp/1532657625/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1536244341&sr=8-1&keywords=Johannes+Rebmann&dpID=51mDPyK-EnL&preST=SY291\\_BO1,204,203,200\\_QL40\\_&dpSrc=srch](https://www.amazon.com/Johannes-Rebmann-Servant-Western-Colonialism/dp/1532657625/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1536244341&sr=8-1&keywords=Johannes+Rebmann&dpID=51mDPyK-EnL&preST=SY291_BO1,204,203,200_QL40_&dpSrc=srch)

Rebmann was a mid-19th century German missionary who worked for the English Church Missionary Society (CMS) and was instrumental in starting the Church in the Mombasa region, East Africa. He compiled proto-lexicons in the Kinika and Kiswahili languages. Together with a Malawian (ex-) slave, Salimini, he made the first-ever lexicon in Chichewa, which is as you know a very important language in south-central Africa.

See the dictionary's website [www.chichewadictionary.org](http://www.chichewadictionary.org) and click the button 'Johannes Rebmann' for introductions in German and English and reviews in English, German and Dutch.

See also my article in the September-October 2018 issue of the *Journal of Global Issues & Solutions*: 'Johannes Rebmann, 1820-1876: In Spiritual and Linguistic Perspectives'

<http://bwwsociety.org/bwwsociety.org/journal/current/2018/sep-oct/j-rebmann.htm> / <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/johannes-rebmann-1820-1876-spiritual-linguistic-steven-paas/>

Johannes Rebmann played an important role in the history of dictionaries of Chichewa or Chinyanja. His collection of Chichewa-English vocabulary in the 1850s, was printed in 1877 as the *Dictionary of the Kiniassa Language*. He shares his place in history with Salimini, a Malawian slave who served him as informant. Rebmann and Salimini belong to the earliest fathers of Chichewa Lexicography. Apart from the linguistic aspect of Rebmann's work, I am impressed by his spiritual characteristics. As a missionary in the Mombasa area from 1844 to 1875, he was instrumental in founding the Church in East Africa and in preparing mission to Central Africa, including Malawi. I am convinced that we all can profit from taking away the veils of history that have hidden Rebmann.

The study is meant as a scholarly presentation of facts and aspects of Rebmann's life and work. As such it is a monograph and a biography. It does not only tap the German literary sources, but also the more numerous Rebmann documents in English. We trust that the Rebmann Biography will throw more light on the missionary, his spiritual and linguistic work, and his place in the pattern of 19th century relationships between Europe and Africa.

Chapter 1 is an introduction, surveying available literature. Chapter 2 pictures the setting of German Pietism that fed Rebmann. Chapters 3-8 describe the course of his life. Chapters 9 and 10 deal with his work as a linguist, particularly as a lexicographer. Chapter 11 reviews the various aspects of his work as a missionary. Chapter 12 is an evaluation of the impact Rebmann had on developments after him. The two Appendices to the book are especially related to chapters 9 and 10, about Rebmann's linguistic significance.

Steven Paas