

## What Debora's letters do

Laqua-O'Donnell, Simone

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# KNOW: A Journal on the Formation of Knowledge

## What Debora's Letters Do: Producing Knowledge for the Basel Mission Family

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## What Debora's Letters Do: Producing Knowledge for the Basel Mission Family

Simone Laqua-O'Donnell, University of Birmingham

Born to a family of pietist missionaries and later marrying a missionary herself, Debora Hoch-Pfleiderer's life was shaped by the absence of people and the distance between countries and continents. For long periods, letter-writing was the only way for Debora to communicate with her family and friends in India, Switzerland, and Germany. The earliest surviving letters from Debora are from 1871, when she was eleven years old. They were sent from the Basel Mission children's home to her parents in India. As decreed in the children's ordinance (*Kinderverordnung*), released by the Basel Mission committee and Inspector Joseph Josenhans in 1853, Debora and her sister Friederike were sent back "home" to Europe to begin their school education there.<sup>1</sup> The objective behind this forced separation of children and parents was primarily twofold: the acquisition of specific skills necessary for a life in Europe, on the one hand, and learning how to become part of the home culture, on the other.<sup>2</sup> In the context of migrant children and knowledge, it is therefore interesting to note that Debora, as well as the younger siblings that undertook the same journey after her, were repatriated to be taught the practical and cultural knowledge that would enable them to be good missionary children.

Back in Europe, the children either grew up in the Mission children's home in Basel (which was divided into a boys' institute and a separate girls' institute), in educational institutions across the south of Germany, or with relatives in Germany or Switzerland. Many first had to learn how to speak German correctly since they had been brought up on a mix of German and the local language that surrounded them in the mission field. Six-year-old Debora and Friederike, almost five, spent the first three years at the house of their grandparents in Swabia, southwest

Germany. In 1870, their parents returned from India on furlough and the family moved to Basel.<sup>3</sup> Debora was allowed to attend the local school (*Stadtschule*). In 1872 her parents went back to India and left the now eight children behind in Europe. Only their newborn son Immanuel, a so-called child of solace (*Trostkind*), traveled with the parents to India. Some of the siblings stayed with relatives while others began to board at the Mission's children's home. The Pfleiderer children did not see their parents for eight years. Debora never forgot the pain of this separation and the time that followed. "Even in her old age," a granddaughter remembered, "she would get quite bitter" remembering it.<sup>4</sup> Debora therefore primarily experienced her relationship with her mother and father through letters. This continued even after her parents finally returned to Europe in 1880. One year later, Debora began her journey to India as a future missionary wife and the bride of Mark Hoch.

With the emergence of child studies in the 1990s an increasing number of scholars have focused their research on children, looking for their voices and trying to capture their experiences.<sup>5</sup> Historians have also taken up the call to research children as historical actors with their own (contingent) agency and have begun to study their sources with fresh attention to this underexplored group.<sup>6</sup> Scholarship that places children and knowledge in the same analytical frame, however, is still rare.<sup>7</sup> This is particularly true for knowledge produced by children, not about them. One reason for this lies in the fact that historians usually rely on the archival trail to find their historical subjects, but primary materials produced by children are hard to find in archives. That is because the organization of archival material reveals a generational bias: although every human life stored in an archive was once a child, the records stemming from that childhood will be subsumed into the adult life or that of the family they belong to. The second reason is intimately tied to the previous: it is the common perception of children as unfinished adults-in-the-making, and of their thoughts and actions as ephemeral and trivial. This perception

may have also contributed to why children have not received the attention they deserve in the history of knowledge. Again, we have all been children once and so were our historical subjects. It seems negligent not to make the effort to include this group of people into the history of knowledge, however challenging it may be.

### Children's Place in the Production of Knowledge

At first, though, Debora's letters seem to reveal little that qualifies as knowledge. During her childhood days, Debora's correspondence typically talks about school; the improvement of her skills in handicraft and other female accomplishments; the health of her siblings; cases of illness amongst relatives and acquaintances; special events, such as excursions or birthdays; visitors received and visits undertaken; her religious instruction; her expenses; detailed overviews of her performance at school and answers to any specific questions from her parents. Her letters follow the epistolary expectations of the time and therefore seem repetitive in contents, giving little room for self-expression. There is evidence that many letters were read by the head of the girls' home, "d[ear] Aunt" Constantia Scholz, who would frequently add a few hasty sentences to report on Debora and Friederike's behavior to the end. The importance placed on the adherence to convention in nineteenth-century literacy education and on conformity in Debora's Pietist environment therefore make it difficult to discern the child's agency and her place in the production of knowledge. Examining the letters in their full chronological depth, though, shows that Debora increasingly gained in agency over the years by, for example, deciding on the contents of her letters: she made choices about which topics and events to describe to her parents, which ones to cover in more or less detail, and which ones to leave out entirely. Behind this

decision stood a process of negotiation between Debora as author and an acquired knowledge of the expectations of her parents as readers and as figures of authority.

As Maurice Blanchot reminds us, “The everyday is what we are first of all, and most often.”<sup>8</sup> After reading Debora’s letters in their entirety, it becomes clear that it is precisely their ordinariness that makes them so valuable for our investigation of children and knowledge. They are important because they capture the everyday life of a missionary child in all its routine. Debora’s letters offer a view on the everyday as it unfolds and let us observe how knowledge is gained and made over the span of her youth and early adolescence. As Anna Nilsson Hammar has pointed out, “[i]f what is experienced as everyday life, that is as routine or ordinariness, is in flux, then it surely makes sense to ask for the role of knowledge in this process.”<sup>9</sup> The correspondence makes it possible to investigate the place of knowledge in the making of missionary culture and the role of children within that process of making.

But what concepts of knowledge will help us capture the knowledge processes involved in the making of everyday missionary culture? Which ones best describe the kinds of knowledge relevant in the everyday of this child? Examining the materiality, textuality, and functionality of the letters reveals a variety of knowledges at play: personal knowledge, tacit knowledge, experiential knowledge, social knowledge, practical knowledge, everyday knowledge, and others. Bringing knowledge, children, and the everyday together creates two further challenges. The first: The knowledges listed above overlap in their definition and applicability, which leaves us with a sense of vagueness. The second concerns methodology: The everyday is difficult to tame, there is just so much of it. What can be used as evidence? Writing about knowledge as a process of personal development is difficult to do. Because I am interested in the processes of and behind the making of knowledge (“what Debora’s letters do”), I will begin this article with a broad conceptualization of knowledge that defines it as “relevant and actionable information acquired

through experience and education.”<sup>10</sup> I will then seek to differentiate more carefully between the different kinds of knowledge while showing what they achieve in the context of mission and migration: making family happen, making mission possible, and preserving family history.

### Making Family Happen

Although many letters from missionary children survive, Debora’s letters are unique in their number and chronological completeness. The Basel Mission archive contains a collection of about five hundred letters covering four decades (1871 to 1911) written by Debora and her husband Mark to her parents and to their son Fritz. Over 150 letters were written by young Debora before her marriage to Mark. The correspondence is incomplete because we do not have the letters sent back by her parents. The letters were sent in a fairly steady rhythm of about one letter a month, sometimes in fortnightly or even weekly intervals if special events required faster correspondence. Since paper and postage were expensive, Debora carefully used the space at her disposal, often resorting to cross-writing. Because letters were precious and paper dear, her first letters were written in pencil before she graduated to pen and ink. Was the handwriting readable and pleasing to the eye? Did she make spelling mistakes? Were her sentences well-constructed, her vocabulary appropriate? Debora’s parents would have valued her letters not only for their contents but also because they were proof of a range of epistolary achievements in penmanship, literacy, and composition, and thought to demonstrate her moral qualities, too. Displaying a mastery of letter-writing therefore allowed the girl to demonstrate practical knowledge in the form of a skill as well as knowledge about proper social decorum.

The contents of the letters allowed parents and children to have ongoing conversations across time and space in an atmosphere of perceived proximity. Debora was very good at

considering her reader. When she tells her parents about the Christmas festivities at the Mission house, she draws in her mother asking: “Do you remember, dear Mother, how last year the girls walked around the Christmas table and sang songs? This is how we did it again.”<sup>11</sup> She always wanted to know more and peppered the letters to her parents with requests for more detail: “Brother Samuel has sung a song for the very first time (Oh, come, little children). But tell me, how is little Immanuel? Is the climate no harm to him?”<sup>12</sup> Debora herself also made sure to answer all the questions she was asked and made time for conversation. “Please write more, dear Mother, about the girls that attend your school?”<sup>13</sup> This provides the illusion of propinquity to her parents. She spent a lot of energy in her letters on bringing the different members of the family closer together, to build emotional bridges between them, despite their geographical distance. In many of her letters, she writes a couple of sentences about each sibling to update her parents about their welfare: “Immanuel looks well and had red cheeks from the wind. ... Hermann was more quiet than usual but when I asked him about it, he said there was no reason.”<sup>14</sup> Debora wrote about the people at the mission house in Basel, their activities, her siblings and kin, and then asked a lot of questions about her parents’ life in India. The knowledge provided by Debora’s letters about the lives of their children gave Debora’s parents the necessary peace of mind to carry out their missionary activities in India. The correspondence also allowed Mother and Father Pfleiderer to perform a kind of asynchronous “parenting-from-afar.”

In the context of kin and migration, much importance rested on Debora and her epistolary activity: the existence of the letters was essential for the well-being and functioning of the family. Their contents bound distant family members together and their materiality gave presence where no real presence could be had: the letters were family.<sup>15</sup> Debora’s correspondence provides the social and emotional glue for kin and kith in distant places. Following David Warren Sabean’s processual view of family, we could then say that Debora’s ordinary letters made family



happen.<sup>16</sup> In the nineteenth century, Sabeen writes, “many families dispersed across Germany or Europe or even across continents. Correspondence, visiting, and the exchange of children played central roles in knitting their extended families together.”<sup>17</sup> This was also the case for the Pfleiderers. We already know that visitors had an important place in their correspondence and that they often welcomed guests in their homes in India and Europe. In Basel, the children were expected to make regular visits to exchange news and letters within the family’s network. Debora kept a diary to make sure that she could accurately inform her parents on any issue of interest in her monthly letters. Visiting and correspondence formed the basis of social intercourse and confirmed the place of the family in their disparate social network. During their marriage, Debora and Mark would invite their guests to record their names in a visitors’ book (*Fremdenbuch*) together with the date of their visit and where they came from. Sometimes a guest would add a little poem or proverb to mark the occasion. To keep on top of her extensive epistolary exchanges, Debora also kept a letter book (*Brief Buch*), in which she noted down to whom she had written and when. The letters were also not private: they were shared, read aloud, and circulated amongst family and friends. It can be said, then, that migration opened a new communicative space in which those who left and those who stayed behind endeavored to optimize the exchange of information and knowledge. Over the course of her life, Debora occupied an essential part in this.

### Making Mission Possible

Missionary families were not an assumed presence, but were gradually integrated into mission. In its early days, the Basel Mission did not encourage marriage because it was thought to be too

much of a distraction. It promoted the ideal of the celibate missionary instead. In 1837 a set of rules concerning marriage was published:

Because the wife of a missionary is called not only to share the sacrifices and dangers of the mission life with him but also herself to perform her share of the Mission's work, it is also necessary to require of her that she possess the physical, spiritual, and motivational capabilities appropriate to the Mission Calling. The obligation of the Committee is to see that we do not accept wives in the Mission who do not possess this capability. Therefore, not only the marriage, but also marriage to the specific person intended by the missionary, depends on the permission of the Committee. This permission will be given only after the Committee has formed a judgement about the qualifications of the intended.<sup>18</sup>

The presence of missionary families was therefore not uncontentious.

Equally contested was the decision to separate missionary children from their parents. When Debora and Friederike made their childhood journey back to Basel, the practice of repatriating children had been in place only for the past ten years. And when the children were admitted to the Basel Mission children's home in 1872, the house had just had its tenth anniversary. The girls therefore belonged to an early generation of children that was institutionalized in this manner. Debora's letters give a detailed account of her life there, telling her parents about the structure of her day and daily routines, cases of illness at the home, changes in teaching personnel, the division of tasks, the provision of food, the contents of her lessons, her progress in different subjects, and the talks given to the children by visiting missionaries. Overall, the letters give the Pfleiderer parents the knowledge that their delegated care arrangement

worked. The regular arrival of their daughter's letters, their even script and well-composed contents attested to that. Debora never mentioned the physical punishment she received at the hands of the "dear aunt" Constantia Scholz, the strict regime and lack of physical affection, and the pain of separation. Instead of expressing the terrible homesickness she suffered, she wrote, "[W]hile reading your letters I am always completely with you in India."<sup>19</sup> We do not know if Debora's parents ever sought to probe more deeply into the absences in Debora's letters. But it is clear that this carefully filtered correspondence fulfilled its purpose since her parents continued on in the mission field for another eight years.

There was a range of powerful emotions that were censured in Pietism and children were encouraged to suppress them. Expressions of anger, fury, or rejection were not tolerated. There are no anxious tears in Debora's letters, no feelings of loneliness or alienation, and certainly no sense of struggle or rebellion against the decisions of the adult world. Her correspondence remains even-tempered throughout the many years of writing even though her short memoir attests that these feelings existed at the time:

In the Autumn of 1872 it was time to say goodbye again to the d. parents ... How hard was leaving home for my twelve-year-old self, we had been so happy there, and even more so, when it was made known [we were to go] to the girls' home! Many tears were cried, I was scared and had to be amongst so many girls in an institution! I didn't know Aunt C. Scholz yet. In the beginning, everything went fine; we were forgiven when we did not do something right, because we were new and did not know better; but soon, and the longer the more I suffered heavily from the strict rule of Aunt Sch.—The older I got the more I missed my d. parents and the bitter homesickness afflicted me often.<sup>20</sup>

Following the Pietist script, these forbidden emotions were conquered through introspection and transformed into tests of obedience from God:

But despite all this I thank my God and Savior for these three years (1872–75), which turned into a great blessing for me. God’s spirit worked on me and brought me the knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) of my own evil heart. Until then I had believed to be a good girl, I often became aware of my own sinfulness during that time and the confirmation classes that I was given by Inspector Josenhans ... fell on fertile ground.<sup>21</sup>

Going by her reminiscences, Debora sometimes found it difficult to manage her emotions in real life; in her letters she succeeded by omission.

It is likely that even if the Pfleiderer parents realized their children suffered badly from the pain and trauma of their forced separation it would have been seen as an emotional education. Pietism generally and the Basel Mission in particular placed a premium on the submission to authority, self-control, and personal sacrifice. This obviously conformed to the Mission’s belief that the Committee acted as an extension of God’s authority and that missionary parents should trust in its fatherly care. It was therefore expected that the individual subordinated her personal needs to the requirements of the collective. This was especially true for the young. It was a lesson that provided the children with the emotional knowledge to survive in an environment deeply committed to missionary evangelicalism.

[Insert fig. 1 approximately here]

Different kinds of knowledge were therefore necessary to make a good missionary child: practical knowledge as evinced in the acquisition of skills and education, emotional knowledge to know how to rule over one's heart and mind, religious knowledge to master life's challenges on the path to salvation. The proper religious and cultural socialization was crucial for gaining "missionary knowledge": the tacit and explicit knowledge of how to be a missionary son or daughter. The Basel Mission made sure the children in its care were socialized into the mission from a young age and consciously framed the mission as family. In its publications it used the term *Missionsfamilie* to describe the organization. The children in the Mission's children's home spent much time preparing their contribution to the annual mission festivities (*Missionsfest*), which drew in people from the broader transregional Pietist network. In addition, the language of spiritual brotherhood was employed to support group cohesion. As we have read, young Debora called the headmistress of the boarding school her "dear aunt" in her letter although they were not related. The same is true for other people she refers to in her letters. In times of need, children were also circulated amongst the members and supporters of the mission. Adolescent girls were often called upon to lend temporary household and childcare support to other missionary families. Debora acted as an "apprentice mother" on several occasions. This way she learned domestic skills and acquired knowledge of how to be a missionary wife.

The unique blend of knowledges that missionary children gained through their socialization, experience, and learning made them very attractive to the Basel Mission: significant numbers of new recruits (in the form of missionaries and missionary wives) came from missionary families. Of the 213 girls who grew up in the Basel Mission girls' home from 1853 to 1910, 40 (18.8 percent) married missionaries,<sup>22</sup> while some of the boys joined alternative mission societies or chose careers complementary to mission work, like pastors or teachers. Debora's brother Immanuel joined the Basel Mission, and Debora and her sister Friederike

married missionaries. Unbeknownst to Debora, she had been included in a pool of suitable female candidates to become missionary brides that were suggested to the Basel Mission by its network of Wurttemberg Pietists. Debora was obviously well-known to the Committee and easily passed the “suitability test.” She intimately knew about the “sacrifices and dangers of mission life,” she had been raised to “perform her share of the Mission’s work,” and she certainly brought the “spiritual and motivational capabilities appropriate to the Mission Calling.”<sup>23</sup> In addition, she brought some dormant language skills, cultural sympathy, and experience of the hardships of mission. Her practical and experiential knowledge made her and other missionary children a valuable asset to the Mission for its own regeneration and recruitment which, in turn, helped to make mission possible.

### Preserving Family History

The Pfleiderers are assiduous preservers of family history. The family’s history can be traced back to the sixteenth century, and ever since much energy has gone into detailed genealogical research and the collection of family memorabilia. And what happened to Debora’s letters? How did they make the journey back from India to Europe? It is likely they were returned to her after Debora’s parents had died and later might have aided the reflections required for the writing of her memoir, an expected practice in Pietism. After her passing, the letters were handed down from her son Fritz to her granddaughter Dorothea Hoch (1917–1996). Over a hundred years after they were written, they were given to the archive of the Basel Mission. Dorothea Hoch had obviously decided that Debora’s letters should be at home in the institutional repository of the Basel Mission and become part of its official past.

By the time the letters reached the Basel Mission archive they had already been included in a couple of historical narrations of the Pfleiderer family: Debora's brother Immanuel referred to them in a memoir of his sister which he wrote after her death "for the children and siblings of his sister."<sup>24</sup> They were also used in two more recent publications. One is a book on the six generations of Pfleiderer women who became missionary wives or female missionaries, written by Rosmarie Gläsle. The other is an academic study of missionary brides.<sup>25</sup> All three pieces of writing are unified in their attempt to give women greater recognition in the literature on the Basel Mission. Immanuel Pfleiderer wrote in 1947 explaining the importance of the domestic role of women for mission. In his interpretation, Debora's housekeeping facilitated her husband's vocation. Her missionary agency was bound up with the mission house and the many tasks she completed in that space. Sixty years later, Gläsle wrote her book in a conscious attempt to reconnect with her foremothers. To achieve this, she revisits the six Pfleiderer woman who joined the Basel Mission between 1851 and 2002. In her quest to "give them a voice" she relies on Debora's letters and memoir, Immanuel's overview of his sister's life, the official history of the mission published by Wilhelm Schlatter between 1914 and 1919, orally transmitted family stories, and her own experience as a missionary in China.<sup>26</sup> Debora's letters had a multitude of afterlives and to this day continue to answer the questions posed by subsequent generations.

Since the 1980s there has also been a systematic effort to curate a family archive. Primary materials of particular interest to the family have been digitized and distributed amongst the many branches of the family. This has led to discussions in the family paper (*Familienblatt*), which serves as a communication network where the family reconnects, and information gets exchanged. In the 1870s and 80s Debora's letters served a similar function. They have become part of the foundation on which the shared knowledge about the Pfleiderers' past is built. Her individual acts of remembering (in the letters, in the diary, in her memoir) feed into the memories

of the groups that touched her life: the Pfleiderers and the Basel Mission. The material legacy that has survived the hazards of time can help to answer questions of identity (“Who am I?”, “Who are we?”). Debora’s grandson, Hanns Walter Huppenbauer, described this “identity work” to me: “My family’s history is like a big backpack that can be packed and repacked according to one’s need. Knowing my history makes me feel connected.”<sup>27</sup>

Of course, this is not a straightforward process, and the answers to these questions are shaped as much by what survives as by what is lost, by the knowing and the not-knowing. Each generation negotiates which values, facts, or historical events are worth being recalled and which are not.<sup>28</sup> Material is censored, suppressed or celebrated based on decisions of value. When I first encountered the letters in the archive, they were thick bundles, securely wrapped with cord, stored in chronological order, and divided into annotated envelopes that held different periods of Debora’s life (childhood years, marriage and first years at the mission station, on furlough in Basel, return to India, etc.). These annotations were added by one of Debora’s descendants, her great-granddaughter, Rosmarie Gläsle. As I later learned, the decision to give the letters to the Basel Mission archive was not uncontroversial amongst Debora’s descendants and arguments were put forward for the protection of privacy and the removal of selected materials—in effect, for some soft archival censorship. This makes us aware of the limits to our knowledge and raises the interesting question: how much do we need to know before we are allowed to call it knowledge?

## Conclusion

This article has explored how children, migration, and knowledge can come together in one analytical framework. The analysis has engaged with complex questions about children and



agency, children in the historical record (where and how to find them), and children and knowledge. Although I looked at a particular case, Debora Hoch-Pfleiderer and her letters are not special: separated families and the circulation of children are common phenomena. A comparison of her childhood with other similar ones, such as the children of colonial officials, the children of the *Kindertransport* scheme who fled from Nazi-occupied countries, or even children at boarding school, might therefore prove fruitful. Such an investigation would also help us to correct the predominant perception of children as passive victims of migration. If we understand migration as a process that extends beyond first settlement, children have agency in this process.<sup>29</sup> Debora's agency was expressed in her letters and through her epistolary activities. It is difficult to gauge how much of that epistolary agency also reflected autonomy in real life. We have to remember that her letters were not considered private. Aunt Constantia Scholz threw a watchful eye over the lines from time to time and other missionary families participated in their digestion, too. The sharing of correspondence was standard cultural practice during the nineteenth century, but the Basel Mission particularly encouraged the mutual supervision between the brothers and sisters in the mission field.<sup>30</sup> Debora's agency was therefore very much shaped in relation to others. This should not be seen as a deficiency. To the contrary, children's dependent states sharpen our analytical eye to the relational and structural conditions under which knowledge is produced.

Debora deployed her letters to let her parents know about life in Europe, to secure social ties, to situate herself in mission circles, and gradually take her place in the adult world. Her letters were important for the family and valuable to the missionary enterprise more generally. Letter-writing also helped Debora to gain perspective on her life as a missionary child and the changeability and insecurity that characterized this highly mobile childhood. Missionaries and their families particularly embodied the Christian idea of a "migratory life" with "no permanent homeland on earth." The final transition would bring a "permanent homeland" and reunion in

another world.<sup>31</sup> Throughout her childhood, Debora was repeatedly uprooted and sent to stay with kin, usually without much choice in the decision. The repetitiveness of writing these letters brought a steady rhythm to her life and the ordinariness of their contents brought a stability of experience which she otherwise lacked. The letters capture the everyday life of a missionary child in her own words and follow a biblical model of accounting promoted by the Basel Mission: “Use the time well, for anyone unwilling to work should not expect to eat.”<sup>32</sup> This maxim was deeply ingrained in Pietist belief and governed the life at the children’s home where time was tightly regulated and routinized. This leaves us with a cumulative account of Debora’s days, one could perhaps also say knowledge of her days, which shows how missionary culture was made every day.

It is difficult to grasp children’s place in the production and transmission of knowledge. Twelve-year-old Debora’s letters to her parents at first seem to offer little that qualifies as knowledge. Reading the letters chronologically though, it becomes clear that they allowed young Debora to shape her place in the world. As the oldest of the family’s fifteen children, she had to act particularly responsibly: her letters carried weight in the wider kinship circle and her reports of her siblings were carefully absorbed by her family. Gender also came into play: Debora was aware of her responsibilities as the oldest child and fashioned herself in her writing as an obedient, biddable, dutiful girl. In doing so, she followed the cultural expectations placed on a girl and missionary daughter by her Pietist environment. Ultimately, this produced a correspondence of simple language, even tone, and conventional content. But not one without knowledge, as I hope to have shown. In order to gain access to the knowledges produced by children we need to make room for the ordinary and appreciate the everyday. Not to do so would be negligent indeed.

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<sup>1</sup> The 1853 ordinance on the education of children determined that all missionary children of school age had to be sent back to Europe to receive their education there. See Archive of the Basel Mission (hereafter abbreviated as ABM), QT 10.5,4, 18.03.1853. This was normal practice for most European Protestant missions.

<sup>2</sup> Immanuel Pfeleiderer, *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben*, ed. Albrecht Frenz and Gertraud Frenz (Stuttgart: Staatsanzeiger-Verlag, 2002), 31.

<sup>3</sup> Debora's parents, Gottlob Pfeleiderer (1829–1898) and Johanna Werner (1839–1882) had sixteen children: Debora (1860–1945), Friederike (1861–1897), Hermann (1862–1936), Karl-Mose (1864–1938), Hans (1866–1939), Ernst (1868–1927), Christian (1869–1934), Samuel (1870–1903), Immanuel (1872–1949), Martha (1873–1974), Johanna (1874–1967), Maria (1875–1952), Paul (1877–), Wilhelm (1878–), Nathanael (1879–1946), anonymous (1881–1881).

<sup>4</sup> Rosmarie Gläsle, *Pauline und ihre Töchter: "Missionsbräute" als lebenslange Weggefährtinnen Basler Missionare in Indien und China* (Neuendettelsau: Erlanger Verlag für Mission und Ökumene, 2009), 80.

<sup>5</sup> E.g., Peter B. Pufall and Richard P. Unsworth, eds., *Rethinking Childhood* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> Mona Gleason, "Avoiding the Agency Trap: Caveats for Historians of Children, Youth, and Education," *History of Education* 45 (2016): 446–59. The question of autonomy, of course, comes up from two directions in this piece. First, how much autonomy did Debora, both as a child and as a missionary wife, have in writing her letters? And how much would any epistolary agency reflect agency in her life outside of these letters?

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); David Pomfret, *Youth and Empire: Trans-*

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*Colonial Childhoods in British and French East Asia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015); Ellen Boucher, *Empire's Children: Child Emigration, Welfare, and the Decline of the British World, 1869–1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Emily J. Manktelow, *Missionary Families: Race, Gender and Generation on the Spiritual Frontier* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), esp. chap. 6.

<sup>8</sup> Maurice Blanchot, “Everyday Speech,” in *The Infinite Conversation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 238.

<sup>9</sup> Anna Nilsson Hammar, “Theoria, Praxis and Poiesis: Theoretical Considerations on the Circulation of Knowledge in Everyday Life,” in *Circulation of Knowledge: Explorations in the History of Knowledge*, ed. Johan Östling, Erling Sandmo, David Larsson Heidenblad, Anna Nilsson Hammar, and Karl Nordberg (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2018), 104–24.

<sup>10</sup> K. Cabrera-Suarez, P. de Saa-Perez, and D. Garcia-Almeida, “The Succession Process from a Resource-and Knowledge-Based View of the Family Firm,” *Family Business Review* 14 (2001): 37–48.

<sup>11</sup> ABM, QT 10.5,4, 30.12.1872.

<sup>12</sup> ABM, Q 10.15c, 2.1.1873

<sup>13</sup> ABM, Q 10.15c, 6.4.1873

<sup>14</sup> ABM, Q 10.15c, 1.10.1872.

<sup>15</sup> Miles Ogborn, “Epistolary History,” *History Workshop Journal* 71 (2011): 253–59, at 258.

<sup>16</sup> David Warren Sabean, *Property, Production, and Family in Neckarhausen, 1700–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 101–8, 121.

<sup>17</sup> David Warren Sabean, “Kinship and Class Dynamics in Nineteenth-Century Europe,” in *Kinship in Europe: Approaches to Long-Term Development (1300–1900)*, ed. David Warren Sabean, Simon Teuscher, and Jon Mathieu (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 306.

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<sup>18</sup> ABM, Komitee Protokolle 1837, Bd. 14: Komitee-Sitzung (27.12.1837): “Grundsätze der evangelischen Missions-Gesellschaft zu Basel hinsichtlich der Beurtheilung und Behandlung der Frage über die Verehelichung ihrer Sendboten im Heidenlande.” Sources show that even in 1927 the “marriage question” had still not be brought to rest and the Basel Mission turned to the Rhenisch and Berlin Mission societies for specific advice.

<sup>19</sup> AMB, Q 10.15c, 12.03.1974.

<sup>20</sup> Staatsarchiv Basel-Stadt, Debora Hoch-Pfleiderer, *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben*, undated.

<sup>21</sup> Staatsarchiv, Hoch-Pfleiderer, *Erinnerungen*.

<sup>22</sup> Dagmar Konrad, “Lost in Transition: Missionary Children of the Basel Mission in the Nineteenth Century,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 37 (2013): 219–23, at 222.

<sup>23</sup> ABM, KP 1837, Bd. 14: Komitee-Sitzung (27.12.1837).

<sup>24</sup> Staatsarchiv Basel-Stadt, PA 770 11,1,7 (1947). Immanuel Pfeiderer, *Debora und Mark Hoch-Pfleiderer: Ein Lebensbild* (Esslingen, September 23, 1947).

<sup>25</sup> Gläsle, *Pauline und ihre Töchter*; Konrad, *Missionsbräute*.

<sup>26</sup> Wilhelm Schlatter, *Geschichte der Basler Mission* (Basel: Verlag der Basler Missionsbuchhandlung, 1914–1919).

<sup>27</sup> Conversation with Hanns Walter Huppenbauer, November 20, 2017.

<sup>28</sup> David Gross, *Lost Time: On Remembering and Forgetting in Late Modern Culture* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 77.

<sup>29</sup> Loretta Baldassar, Joanne Pyke, and Danny Ben-Moshe, *The Italian Diaspora in Australia: Current and Potential Links to the Homeland*, Report of an Australian Research Council Linkage Project (2012), 32.

<sup>30</sup> Jon Miller, *Missionary Zeal and Institutional Control: Organizational Contradictions in the Basel Mission on the Gold Coast, 1828–1917* (Oxford: Routledge, 2003).

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<sup>31</sup> Konrad, "Lost in Transition," 222.

<sup>32</sup> Miller, *Missionary Zeal and Institutional Control*, 106.

