Gunnar Broberg

In the Shadow of Thunberg and Sparrman

Hendrik Jacob Wikar at the Cape

Sweden has had many encounters with South Africa. Already in the middle of the seventeenth century there is a remarkable description on the newly established Cape Province, its settlers and natural history written by Nils Matsson Kiöping – yes he was from Köping – and published several times in that century and the next. At the turn of the eighteenth century we find a dissertation in Uppsala presided over by the professor of physics Harald Vallerius treating the geography of the Cape.[1] During this period there had been a number of Swedish immigrants to South Africa, among them Olof Bergh who wrote a much later published account and who established a Swedish dynasty at the Cape. Before 1800 about fifty Swedes had settled in South Africa.[2]

During the Linnaean era, collaboration between the Swedish and Dutch East India companies made travel to South Africa more feasible.[3] Linnaeus wrote to his friend and patron Count Carl Gustaf Tessin that "There is no place in the world with so many rare plants, animals, insects, and other wonders of Nature as Africa, and it seems as if they have been concentrated to the Cape."[4] In *Plantae rariores africanae* (1760) he states that where the world seems to end there "Africa monstrifera" has contracted the natural miracles. Linnaeus corresponded with the governor of the Cape Colony, Rijk Tulbagh, whom he named the genus *Tulbaghia* after.[5] He tried to send students there – Pehr Kalm, Peter Forsskål, Mårten Kähler and Engelbert Jörlin – but unsuccessfully.[6]

Some words on Carl Henric Wänman, who was charged with defending Linnaeus' dissertation *Flora capensis* (1759), a fairly simple piece of Linneana but full of enthusiasm for the Cape region. Wänman had never been to South Africa but would soon become physician on ship bound for East India. Before leaving in 1766 Linnaeus showed him his Cape herbs and presented him with a memorandum on what to collect during the journey: as many insects as possible but not butterflies and shells from the shores of Cape. On

his return he was met enthusiastically by Linnaeus but lacked the astuteness to present the master with gifts. After journeying he wanted a MD-grade without defending a thesis. Linnaeus forced him – with good reasons – to write a dissertation *De morbis nautarum Indiae* (1768) on scurvy and syphilis. But it was too short – two and a half pages! – and Wänman did not pass, a very rare incident. According to Linnaeus: "Wänman defended his thesis but very poorly. He could not speak Latin and misplaced nominative and object forms so the Faculty did not accept him."[7] But by means of an appeal to the crown-prince – royal interference – Wänman was accepted. He donated his collection to the Queen Louisa Ulrica as a token of gratitude for favours rendered.[8] Plants worked as currency, in return you could get research fundings, academic degrees and faculty positions.

Daniel Scheidenburg visited the Cape, where he had relatives and in April 1769 the Livonian Johan Gerhard König visited Governor Tulbagh with a letter of recommendation and they discussed work on plants and insects. König was given all possible support. The gardener Andreas Auge would send specimens which König analyzed but after a month he was compelled to return to his ship. König remarks in his letter to Linnaeus that he would like to stay some years in the Cape region, "ich wünschete einige Jahren mich umzusehen". And again "hier wünschete statt einer Stunde die Ich mir nur aufhielte einen Jahr lang zu seyn".[9]

Largely forgotten is Dietrich Wilhelmij (also spelled Diedrich Wilhelmi), who therefore deserves a lengthier discussion. Although his name sounds Dutch he wrote to Linnaeus in 1761 from Stockholm in Swedish, albeit somewhat broken and difficult to translate correctly. His first letter starts with an autobiographical detail: "I have been in the service of the Dutch East-India Company for more than fourteen years and during this period stayed for a spacious time at the Cape, between 1749 and 1756. [...] I married, lived in India but was called back home to Europe."[10] Upon arriving in Sweden Wilhelmij sent for his wife and their two sons to come to Stockholm. By October 1761 they had been living in the Swedish capital for three years. Turning to Linnaeus Wilhelmij explained that his relatives at the Cape would be prepared to follow his requests: "I myself have been on the African mountains so further inland than perhaps any nation has been, at first through Hottentott country, later on through Kaffraria, all the way to the land of the Tamboegysser, Tamboegiesland or Thembuland 100 Swedish miles from the Cape."[11] But coming home he had the bad luck to lose his collection of natural specimens

when a ship with 360 men on board exploded. Later he suffered a similar calamity in Stockholm during the fire in 1759 when lost his journals – "a greater loss than all my lost money".

In a now missing letter Linnaeus appears to have asked about the possibility of educating a Hottentot boy as a naturalist. Wilhelmij was strongly dismayed: "But my dear Sir! This does not work. The Hottentots are the strangest nation I have seen under the sun – and I have met most of them in Asia, Africa and America. They are a difficult people to learn to know as you cannot learn their language."[12] Wilhelmij related how a very young Hottentot had been stolen away by Europeans. When he returned to his people at the age of nine or ten he was unable to learn his own mother tongue and was forced to flee from them to save his life. "Thus, no use could be expected from a Hottentot", he explained. The Hottentots might seem peaceful but refuse to be subjugated. And it is impossible to get history specimens from them. Instead Wilhelmij had plans for his friends at the Cape, who were familiar with Linnaeus and who were prepared to furnish him with rarities.

The case of a young student named Jörling was brought up – Wilhelmij is referring to Engelbert Jörlin who was interested in going to the Cape. But Wilhelmij could not recommend him to such a dangerous undertaking, rather he should stay home instructing small children. Barely one out of a hundred could make it, he knew this from own experience. Jörlin travelled in 1761 to Gothenburg in order to convince the authorities but was met with the answer that the ships would no longer anchor at the Cape. He also went to Holland hoping for an opportunity but was likewise discouraged.[13] In still another letter, from 10 May 1762 Wilhelmij reported that he had recommended Jörlin to his friends in South Africa "in the best manner" – obviously Linnaeus had asked him to do so.[14]

Concerning himself Wilhelmij wrote: "I can flatter myself for when leaving Sweden in 1738 I never asked for help from my father here in the city [Stockholm] which I would have counted as a great disgrace."[15] The entomologist Carl Clerck mentioned in 1758 to Linnaeus that "Wilhelmy" had recently returned from Caput bonae spei and was living in the southern parts of the city. He had sent a letter which Linnaeus wants translated into Swedish as he had forgotten his Dutch. Wilhelmij is identified as assessor in the chamber of commerce.[16] In 1760 we find him as one of about twenty assessors in Stockholm in the population register, after the fire the year before. He lived with his wife, two children and two maids Hedwig and Lisa in Östra kvarteret

no. 40 but he has also bought a new house (the old one then burnt down) in Katarina norra.[17]

Wilhelmij's correspondence with Linnaeus ended on a tragic note. He and his Africa-born wife had a third child who was weak and ill. And on April 17, he reported, the Good Lord had taken away his five year old son Henrik after a short illness. His oldest son Jacob Henrich, who was eight years old and born in Africa was melancholy ("intet mera så förnögd") because the two boys had loved each other so much that they could not be away from each other for a moment. And Jacob Henrich had difficulty in pronouncing Swedish, for which his mother was to blame because, while Wilhelmij spoke Swedish, she never used anything else than Dutch. He then asked Linnaeus to help him to find a residence in Uppsala and enquired after the potential cost of such a move. However we do not know what Linnaeus answered was nor what happened to young Jacob Henrich.

The 1770s saw a peak in Swedish travel to South Africa. Carl Peter Thunberg, Anders Sparrman and the captain Carl Gustaf Ekeberg, all made the journey and wrote well known journals. Sparrman gave a sleepy picture of the botanical interest in the colony. A Cape physician had asked to see his herbal, a request Sparrman enthusiastically accepted: "The African Aesculapius knowing scarcely the names, much less the use, of any one plant [...]. I endeavoured to rouse him out of his dream by communicating to him my thoughts of the virtues of such and such an herb [...]. My visitor all this while was neither polite nor intelligent enough to give his assent to what I said, but continued yawning." Changing topic to commerce the conversation became more lively "for this worthy physician's income depended more upon *Koopen* and *Verkoopen* – buying and selling – than upon the Muses."[18] The traveller experienced perils, adventures and hardship. Thunberg made all in all three journeys by oxcarts and on horseback, three expeditions, spanning roughly 5,000 kilometres in four months, as described in his travelogue. In the preface to his *Flora capensis* (1807) he explained: "With this object [to study the wonderful riches of the Cape flora] I undertook several journeys, often fraught with hardships and dangers. [...] I met the dangers of life; I prudently eluded ferocious tribes and beasts, and for the sake of discovering the beautiful plants of this southern Thule, I joyfully ran, sweated and chilled [laetus cucurri, sudavi et alsi]."[19]

Gift giving, once observed by the anthropologist Marcel Mauss as a universal phenomenon used to establish friendly connections could be exemplified

infinitely. For example the loyal Thunberg sent specimens to Linnaeus, who replied: "I am more grateful than I can express for the many wonderful, rare and new plants that Herr Doctor has been pleased to send me from his Paradise. I have never been given such joy and delight from any botanist", Thunberg proudly quotes the last sentence in his autobiography.[10]

No less than three printed Cape floras were published in Sweden before 1800, by Linnaeus in 1759, by Bergius in 1767 and by Thunberg in the *Prodromus plantarum capensium* (1794–1800). Thunberg followed up with a *Flora capensis* (1807–1813). The herbarias and museums were filled with zoological and botanical specimens, such as the quagga (*Equus quagga quagga*) at the Swedish Museum of natural History in Stockholm. Peter Jonas Bergius' *Descriptiones plantarum ex Capite Bonae Spei* (1767) in 360 pages was based on collections made by the director of the Swedish company Michael Grubb. Bergius wrote a panegyric dedication to Grubb, soon ennobled af Grubbens, but the truth is that the donator had bought the whole collection from the gardener Auge at the Cape. This is a clear case of competitive nature of collecting and science. The Cape was a perfect arena for the natural historian but Linnaeus was left on the outside, steaming with anger.

Hendrik Jacob Wikar from Gamla Karleby

Now I turn to the main figure of this essay, Hendrik Jacob Wikar, his varying whereabouts and elusive character.[11] In South African archives he is mentioned as Wijkar, Wickard, Wickaar, and Wikar. The relation of his travels into present-day Namibia, written in 1779, was published in 1935. There is also a reprint of the 1935 edition from 2010, but so far no Swedish edition. There are two full manuscript versions and a more personal one, briefer than the others and published in *Het Zoeklicht* (1926) giving some extra information, in what is called *Relaas*. Thus two Dutch editions, one English and one German translation. All this makes the question of "original" source text tricky. Clearly, what was published in 1935 is not a clean transcription but an elaboration of Wikar's now lost diary. He for instance writes about marriage rituals and eating: "But what I do not know, I did know when I was among them and wrote down 'throw away' in my note book, but now it has slipped from my memory."[12]

The editor E. E. Mossop claims that Wikar had arrived from Amsterdam and Gothenburg in 1773 as a soldier, which did not necessarily entail military duties as for nearly two years he worked as "schrijver" at the East India Hospital in Cape Town.[13] He earned nine gulden per month, took to gambling and card playing. "He neglected his work and became indebted to various friends to the extent of one hundred Rixdollars." One of his debtors publicly insulted him in the street. "Overcome by shame, and desperate, he deserted from the Company's service April 4th, 1775. He resolved to disappear inland, 'not anticipating,' he says, 'all the peril and wretchedness I must encounter during the 4 years and 6 months that I remained undetected.'"[14] According to Thunberg, when a slave flees and hides, especially in the mountains, and later on is found, he is beaten up by his master or the police but when a Christian flees from the service of the company he is hanged. The money which the former contains saves him from death, while decided laws does not save the latter. In addition, Thunberg confessed that he was heavily indebted and that he saw no other solution than to leave on a tour, for which he had to borrow money, from the politie-secreteraren Bergh, grandson of the Swedish settler mentioned in the introduction.[15]

Wikar fled beyond the settled districts of Kamiesberg, but what really happened between April 1775 and September 1778 is unclear. The last half year is documented in his journal which he together with a map he is supposed to have drawn of the Orange River served as pardoning documents on his return to the Cape. The attribution has for good reasons been questioned by Greger Granwik: the handwriting does not correspond. The map is thus a revision carried out by Wikar's friend Olof de Wet of Stellenbosch, a relative of Bergh.

A few words about Wikar's biography. He was born in 1752 not in Gothenburg but in Gamla Karleby. His father was a surveyor while his mother was the daughter of an important provost, Henrik Johan Carlborg in Närpes. Two of his mother's sisters married surveyors. And when his father died early in his life she remarried another surveyor (but when her second husband died she married a clergyman). Hendrik Jacob's aunt was married to the surveyor Israel Wänman, brother of the respondent to Linnaeus *Flora capensis*. Obviously this was a small world.[16] In Gamla Karleby Anders Chydenius, an important figure, was vicar, a religious pietist but in economical matters a liberal often pointed to as the Nordic predecessors of Adam Smith. He was an influential politician in the diet in 1765, when Karleby became a staple port with navigation rights opening up Ostrobothnia for trade. Wikar might have met him as a student at the gymnasium at Vaasa. Certainly he must have felt the attrac-

"Wikar's map" on the Orange River, obviously a copy from a lost original. The Journal of Hendrik Jacob Wikar (1779), *192*.

tion of the sea and distant countries! Not just Gothenburg and Stockholm but also Vaasa should be on the naval chart of Scandinavia.

Wikar matriculated into the Ostrobothnian student nation at the University of Turku in 1769, but must have left very soon. He belongs to the group "disappeared", a group in Turku for the period 1722–1808 numbered 34 out of which at least eight left for abroad.[17] According to an estate inventory, he had as a guardian the city official Roening, who left him an inheritance of 2,000 daler in 1771 (the protocol says Hindr. Johan). The money remained unwithdrawn, which suggests that Hendrik Jacob may already have left.[18] Maybe he left because of trouble with the authorities, as would later prove to be the case in the Cape, when he fled from civilization. He must have left rather soon as he is recorded as being at the Cape in 1771. That, in turn, must have entailed that he had knowledge of Dutch and his likely route would have taken him through Gothenburg and Amsterdam.

Maybe Wikar went with a friend. Standing at the bar in the Cape together with him and several other persons, was one Hendrik Matthijs Hassel. We are thus presented with two adventurous young men who left Finland for the Cape, perhaps owing some trouble with a girl, fighting at night or some other minor offense. Nothing more is known about Hassel and what happened to him later on.[19] One might add that Wikar had a three year younger brother Johan Israel, who according to a note was away on foreign journeys and who, when he later moved from Närpes, was referred to as lieutenant.

Wikar's journal

Often one points to the first lines in modern novels as the most exciting. Here are Wikar's: "When, after encountering many dangers, I reached the Great River, I found some Hottentots".[20] "Many dangers"? "The Great River"? "Some Hottentots"? "But since the water rose instead of subsiding, the Hottentots informed me that they had resolved to go towards the rising sun" that is to say eastward. The group consisted of eight men, five women, two children and Wikar. He introduced himself as having been born in this country, and explained that he was looking for a farm for himself up the Great (i.e. Orange) River. They accepted him as member of the group, "they treated me well and were even distressed lest any misadventure should befall me".[21] "It was bitterly

cold, and, clad as I was only in shirt and trousers, I thought I should have to spend the night just sitting by the fire; but the bushmen made me a warm bed, so that I was able to sleep."[12] Later on, he assured a suspicious tribe that he did not come with evil intentions or to engage in trade "but merely to see their country".[13]

Wikar's travel was divided into two stages. The first which spanned over a four year period we know nothing about. "On my second expedition, begun on the 1st April, 1779, I went four stages higher up the river" and made many visits to different tribes and kraals, friendly or hostile, along the river.[14] There are detailed observations of ethnographical nature, including some very intimate descriptions of customs relating to masculinity, marriages and sexual relations as well as languages question, the click sounds, music, and food. Descriptions of hunting take up several pages, especially hippos but also rhinoceroses and elephants. Wikar described the "naäs" or aardwolf (*Proteles cristata*), a species Sparrman is otherwise credited to have been the first to have described in 1783. He counted as many as twenty giraffes – kameelpeerds – rarely or never seen south of the Orange River. Clearly, Wikar was interested in mineralogy as well. He found iron and copper ore and collected "crystals" – diamonds.[15] He pieced together a small herbarium and he prepared a Baboon skin as gift to the governor.[16] Rhino- and hippo-hunting received particular attention: "we were riding with our eyes fixed on the ground, so as not to lose the spoor of the wounded animal. Intent on this we unexpectedly came upon six rhinos; not six yards separated us from them."[17] Only a small hook-thorn bush stood in between. How the Hottentots hunt the rhinoceros is given a fascinating description.[18] The killing of a lion at night is vividly described.[19]

Wikar listed the big game hunt during the two expeditions: two elephants, two rhinos, one buffalo, one giraffe and ten hippos.[20] On 11 April 1779 he shot a giraffe, which he measured, described and skinned. "And if it should please the Lord God and the noble Government to enable me once more to travel along the Great River, merely out of interest and for the sake of honour I should like to see whether I could not bring a giraffe alive to the Cape."[21] Such a thing had happened in ancient Rome. According to his *Relaas* his collections consisted of the skin of a giraffe, "Een kleyne Herbarium met bloemen waaronder eenige onbekante species", some blue crystals, some other crystals found on the river-banks, black crystals, agate stones, three elephant tusks, assegais, arm rings, and an ivory spoon he had carved himself, and his journal. As he had so little paper he wrote "en abbreviatuuren" in order to later write "in ordentlyke styl".[22]

Wikar seems to have been interested in birds, here describing the European night jar during its migration to Namibia: "It was only round about this part of the evening that I heard the bird with the sustained note, but I did not manage to catch sight of it. The Hottentots say that it is greyish in colour, bigger than a finch, but smaller than a starling. It calls first 'quack, quack,' a few times, then 'tjirr' on a note sustained while you may count 4 or 500."[43] Wikar kept a rock lizard alive for fourteen days by feeding it ants and mosquitos. Somewhat astonished he notes that the hare is considered as a sort of "trickster" – with anthropologist Paul Radin's concept.[44]

The ethnography of the Hottentots, Blips, Eynikkoas, Namnykoa, Nomakkoa, Gyzikoa and other tribes is treated in detail. Language difficulties entice Wikar into slander. "At present I am among the half-breed Baboons, for they are as unapproachable for conversations as baboons. As soon as they become aware of anything they go and sit high up on the rocks and in the mountains just like baboons."[45] This is almost the only case in which he seems to mock the natives. Wikar's descriptions of the different tribes encountered and their habits, especially transitional rites are very detailed especially in the case of pubertal and marital i.e. sexual matters, including cliterodectomy. He also wrote on finger mutilation in connection with marriage and was a very keen observer of ethnomedicine.[46] "Now I am learning to live in Bushman style when the necessity arises. I am getting to know edible roots like the one they call 'haap'."[47]

Obviously, Wikar was a very open-minded traveller. He may have been so by inclination but was certainly so out of necessity as he was dependent on the friendship of the natives. To him the Blips are especially admirable. They were shrewd and intelligent, practiced handicrafts and trade but were also sorcerers.[48] A long passage described the music of a tribe in an especially positive manner. "In the flute dance there is first a melody and the most important part is the song of lament by a woman"; the rhinoceros dance "has a certain resemblance to one of our 'contra' dances which is accompanied by song, not by music."[49] In matters of trade Wikar tried to convince the Kourangi tribe that the Europeans were the cleverest but they refused to believe him despite his use of coral beads, scissors and tobacco as arguments.[50]

The good relations between Wikar and the Hottentots are the more remarkable when compared with those of other travellers. Once, the chief of the Bushmen named Ouga offered to adopt Wikar as his chosen friend, to which Wikar agreed. Instead of cattle he could only give tobacco in return which appears to have sufficed. "I must testify before God and man that he was not

only a brother, but even like a father to me in all my sorrow and misery and when I was starving and in danger of death."[11] Elsewhere he writes: "my brother companion, Captain Ouga" and "my faithful brother companion Ouga".[12] Also the Hottentot Claas Barend is his Brother and Friend. Later on, they suffered such desperate hunger that "my travelling companion" Claas Barend was compelled to kill a pack animal, a young ox. Hottentots can keep themselves alive without food but "my Hottentot travelling companion" took pity on me.[13] And Wikar was accepted into the different kraals where he exchanged gifts, ate and had a good time with his hosts. He paid in corals and tobacco.[14] By the Aukukoa tribe Wikar was met with wonder because of his horses, for "they were more afraid of a horse than of a rhino or a ferocious wild animal."[15] He found himself in several very dangerous situations, such as an attack by the Bushmen: "If I had not had the Hottentot with me I should have had at least one or two arrows in me". Wikar for once took on a religious tone and thanks "the Lord for His all-wise and merciful guidance throughout my life."[16]

Wikar only implicitly touched on his background with the exception of one very delicate admission.

> I had an extraordinary personal experience with this tree which I cannot help relating. One day my brother companion Ouga brought me some honey which he said we might make beer of, but which he forbade me to eat. I did not quite understand why, and I did not take much heed, but I had hardly eaten a spoonful when my throat began to burn like fire, and not two minutes later my whole body became affected, and, by your leave, with apologies, I began to purge and got rid of worms looking like tape quite three fathom long [circa five metres!], and even longer, whereupon I fainted and the Hottentots poured water on me until I recovered consciousness; then I began vomiting so much that I had to lie down all that afternoon from weakness and faintness. *I had been troubled with worms from childhood, so that sometimes I did not know which way to turn for the pain of my body*, but since this occurrence, the Lord God be thanked, I have felt no pain. When it was all over, the Hottentots told me that the bees had sucked the flowers of the tree I have mentioned, and that was why the honey was so poisonous.[17]

This tapeworm from Ostrobothnia had also emigrated to the Cape!

Before his second journey he had sent a petition (smeekbrief) to the Governor Joachim van Plettenberg, asking humbly for pardon and forgiveness. This petition was given to a Hottentot to hand it over to the nearest European farmer. Later he wrote that "he had made a collection of natural objects

and rarities," and kept a journal of ceremonies, customs and beliefs of three hitherto unknown tribes.[48] In one of his more informal notes he mentions drawing up the map of the Orange River: "Ik hebbe ook eene Cart geformeert van den Lopp des Grooten Riviers". Without a compass or other instruments as a "veldsman" (man of the field) he always knew the direction of the wind, the position of the sun, etc. "Een veldsman weet tog altydde stricken der wind al is 't zo precise en accurate diet, genoeg hy denkt waar de Zon opkomtheeft hy Oost, 's middags de Zon op zyn hoogte zynd en de schaduwe van hem regt afgaande heft by noord, waar de Zon ondergaat west. Van deeze Costume heb i kook myn gebruyk gemaakt in 't formeeren van myn eenvoudige Cart".[49] In reference to the map he noted:

> As I had wandered up and down the Great River long enough, I wanted to make a map of the river, as well as I was capable of doing it, which you will find at the back of this; but though I have done my best, I do not pretend that it is true and accurate, since in the first place I have no knowledge of such matters, and in the second place I had no compass; but where the sun rose I took to be the east, and where it set the west; having these to begin with I took it that a line drawn at right angles through this would give north and south, and further I took north to be where the sun reaches its zenith at noon.[50]

Thus the map which is reproduced in the 1935 edition must be a copy. Wikar explicitly noted in the *Relaas* that it was a copy of the map that he gave to the governor. That entailed that there were several misspellings.[51]

Wikar was probably the first European to describe the Augrabies Falls, the fifth highest in Africa, 191 meters high:

> there is a tremendously big waterfall [...]. When the weather is favourable one can hear the noise like the roar of the sea from a distance of one stage away; and half an hour above this waterfall the current is very strong, for the Namnykoa tell me that when by accident the hippos get into the current they cannot battle against it and are carried down so that they fall down the cataract, breaking their backbones and they are then hauled out by the Hottentots.[52]

Herds of cattle have perished in the waterfall. Augrabies means "place of big noises" and is now a national park.

On Wikar's return home, lower down the Orange River a Hottentot brought him a letter with a passport enclosed making it possible to him to

return to the Cape by order of the Governor. He took leave of his Hottentot comrades "not without deep emotion, you may be sure."[63] On 11 July 1779, he started his way back and fourteen days later he reached a farm. There he also met the wagons of Captain Robert Jakob Gordon, who would soon give De grote Rivier its Dutch patriotic name. Wikar showed him his curiosities and passed along information on what could be of use to that gentleman. He also recommended "my old travelling companion, Claas Barend".[64] In Gordon's company was also the botanist William Patterson who wrote in his diary: "At noon we met a peasant who had come from the Great River, and was travelling towards the Cape, accompanied by a deserter who had been seven years absent, and had travelled over a great part of the country. This poor fellow was a native of Sweden, and made many sensible reflections upon his misfortunes in Africa."[65] Seven years was an exaggeration. The poor fellow's "sensible reflections" would have been most instructive to hear.[66]

Here the relation ends, dated The Cape, 18 September 1779. Gordon and Patterson could have profited from his advice, but otherwise it seems unclear what use they could have made of Wikar's journal and map. It is reasonable to believe, however, that the map was perceived as the justification for his pardon. After some time as burgher in Stellenbosch he disappeared, God knows where.

Some conclusions

Wikar's journey could be seen as a counterpart to Linnaeus *Iter laponicum* 1732. His route was perhaps somewhat shorter, but not by much. Both men went into the wilderness, most often alone, and met the indigenous people. Both were positively inclined, both had the necessary physical strength to carry out such an undertaking, but while Linnaeus's experiences were refined through a classical Ovidian tradition of composition, Wikar is less literary, writing more like a modern anthropologist. And both connected the ends of the world, north and south, and their inhabitants.

Wikar, Wänman, and Wilhelmij were international men, at least two of them had a university background. Wikar wrote in a direct manner but could suddenly remember his earlier reading: "For, if what I remember reading is true, that this animal was shown alive to the people in Rome in ancient times" – i.e. the giraffe.[67] We can note the language question: the burgher

Wänman spoke poor Latin. The Dutch Wilhelmij's written Swedish was not flawless. The Swede Wikar wrote and spoke Dutch but could not learn the Khoisan languages and used an interpreter.[68] His Latin seems to have been non-existent. Linnaeus had forgotten Dutch and did not understand the endless letter – twenty pages – on König's travel. Still, their nationalities are unclear: Wikar was both Finnish, Swedish, Dutch and has a Hottentot "father". Wilhelmij was Swedish, Dutch, South African, and Indian. Both Cape Town and Stockholm were international, multilingual cities.

Networking of different sorts was necessary. At the same time nationalism flourished. Bergh supported both Thunberg and Wikar (through de Wet). Perhaps one could speak of family networks. Furthermore, it is possible to view professions as networks. Usually we think of the clergy as the backbone of older Swedish science and culture – both Sparrman's and Thunberg's fathers were Lutheran vicars – but I would like to consider the role played in this context by surveyors, an interesting group of rather well-educated professionals. Familial and national bonds mattered as is indicated by Wilhelmij's sad story and the way in which Wikar (and Thunberg) was helped by the Bergh relatives. For the historian not only biography but also genealogy should matter.

Of course, when reading travelogues one must consider not only who wrote them but for whom they were written. The Cape administration must have been interested in the northern territories. The possibilities that accompanied expansion northward – hunting, agriculture, and mining – were alluring. Wikar recounted that he "enquired most carefully where the Blip obtained copper and iron. They do not know for certain and the Blip keep it a secret".[69] Elsewhere he noted: "I wanted to sow some watermelon and pumpkin pips as an experiment".[70] Wikar had nothing to say about popular topics as the Hottentot apron or whether the men were monorchids. In contrast to earlier writers, he did not dwell upon the question whether the natives were filthy, greasy, dressed in entrails. Nor did he write a botanical description, a *Flora capensis* or *namibiensis*. He collected plants but that was not the purpose of his expedition. He was reluctant to put himself in focus. Above all, Europe did not function as the paradigm against which other societies were judged. All this in differentiated his journal from the efforts of Sparrman and Thunberg.

All the explorers mentioned in this article were part of the process of colonial expansion, helping to pave the way for the spread of European settlements and colonial institutions. The question on race and racism may sometimes be unfair to our travellers. Obviously they took very different

standpoints with Wikar at one end of the scale and Thunberg at the other. Thus, it is not possible to reduce Wikar's almost exclusively positive portrayal of his companions to the fact that he wrote for another public. In the Cape Colony the Calvinist morality reigned in many aspects of life – except for the open habit of keeping native concubines. Another traveller of the 1770s, Jacob Wallenberg asked: "Which do you find darkest, her skin or their action?"[71] All this offers a very different picture than the one given in Mary Louise Pratt's influential *Imperial Eyes* from 1992. She chose to focus on Sparrman although Thunberg would have better supported her thesis. Obviously the time was marked by a wide and complex array of opinions and sensibilities.[72]

Perhaps Wikar is to be found in contemporary fiction. Afrikaner dissident André Brink, *An instant in the Wind* (1976; Swedish translation 1978) tells the story of the white woman Elisabeth Larsson, wife of the Swedish explorer Erik Alexis Larsson and her difficult journey home after her husband's death. She travels through the Cape Province together with the slave Adam Mantoor who escaped from a prison camp sometime in the 1750s. It is a novel with a strong romantic appeal but Brink is also playing with the archival documents – genealogies, diaries, and notebooks. It is the story of Adam and Eve leaving Paradise. In Wikar's version he is Elisabeth and his friend the Hottentot Claas Barend is Adam. The novel charts Adam's and Elisabeth's increasing dependency on one another, how the "I-thou" relation is gradually transformed into something approaching a "we".

Notes

Revised lecture at the Thunberg-symposium in Uppsala 7 October 2011. For comments thanks to David Dunér, Gregor Granwik and Matthew Norris.

[1] Harald Vallerius (pres.), *Caput Bonae Spei*, resp. Simon Melander (Uppsala, 1705). The dissertation is mainly based on descriptions by Blaeu and Dapper.

[2] Olof Bergh, *Journal*, ed. E. E. Mossop (Cape Town, 1932). For a survey, see Kurt G. Trägårdh, "Svenskar som utvandrat till Kapprovinsen från slutet av 1600-talet till början av 1800-talet", *Släkt och hävd* 1968. See also Alan H. Winquist, *Scandinavians and South Africa: Their Impact on the Cultural, Social and Economic Development of Pre-1902 South Africa* (Cape Town, 1978).

[3] In Holland Herman Boerhaave once had encouraged Linnaeus to make the journey but in vain: "Boerhaaven [...] sökte förmå Linnaeus gå öfwer till Caput Bonæ Spei at där samla örter 2 åhr till Academie trädgården i Leyden, och at sedan gå et åhr till America; där han ville laga at Linnaei skulle få frij resa och Professors character med des wärkeliga tienst, då han kommo tilbakas; men Linnaei brud i Sweden höll honom där ifrån." Carl Linnaeus, *Vita Caroli Linnaei: Carl von Linnés*

självbiografier (Stockholm, 1957), 71, 107.

[6] Carl Linnaeus to Carl Gustaf Tessin, in *Carl von Linnés svenska arbeten* I, utg. Ewald Åhrling (Stockholm, 1879–1880).

[7] Carl Linnaeus to C. Rijk Tulbagh 1764; Linnean Correspondence, L3514.

[8] On Kähler, see Theodor Westrin in *Historisk Tidskrift* 1894, 262 ff.

[9] Wänman defended his thesis "Men ganska uselt, at than varken kunde tala latin, icke adjectivum et substantivum äller nominativus praecedit; Hwarföre han af faculteten blef improberad". Quoted from Telemak Fredbärj, "Wänman, en misskänd Linnélärjunge", *SLÅ* 1960, 20.

[10] Johan Fredric Sacklén, *Sveriges läkarehistoria ifrån konung Gustaf den I:s till närvarande tid* 2 (Nyköping, 1823–24), 69. Wänman made a second East India tour and worked later, like Sparrman, as Medicus pauperum in Stockholm before he became physician in Finland responsible for Nyland, where he obviously made a humanitarian contribution. He is an exponent of the misfortuned travelling and a victim of the tensions around Linnaeus.

[11] Carl Linnaeus to Johan Gerhard König, 26 February 1769. Linnean Correspondence, L4181.

[12] Dietrich Wilhelmij to Carl Linnaeus, 21 September 1761. Linnean Correspondence, L2953.

[13] Dietrich Wilhelmij to Carl Linnaeus, 5 October 1761. Linnean Correspondence, L2984.

[14] Dietrich Wilhelmij to Carl Linnaeus, 10 May 1762. Linnean Correspondence, L3074.

[15] Fritz Stenström, "Engelbert Jörlin: Ännu ett blad i Linnéanernas historia", *SLÅ* 1933, 10 ff.

[16] Dietrich Wilhelmij to Carl Linnaeus, 10 May 1762. Linnean Correspondence, L3074.

[17] Dietrich Wilhelmij to Carl Linnaeus, 10 May 1762. Linnean Correspondence, L3074.

[18] Carl Linnaeus, *Bref och skrifvelser af och till Carl von Linné* I:5 (Stockholm, 1911), 285. The authorities were positive to immigration of experienced persons like Wilhelmij not so much paying attention to non-Lutheran religion (Wilhelmij lived close to Maria at Sankt Paulsgatan 21, van der Nootska palatset, also called the Dutch church).

[19] Stockholms stadsarkiv, Mantalslängd 1760. One tobacco-dealer Hindric Wilhelmi, possibly his brother, seems also to be one of the many suffering by the fire.

[20] Anders Sparrman, *A voyage to the Cape of Good Hope*, ed. Vernon Forbes (Cape Town, 1975), vol. I, 82 f. Cf. *Anders Sparrman: Linnean, världsresenär, fattigläkare*, eds. Gunnar Broberg, David Dunér & Roland Moberg (Uppsala, 2012). On Thunberg see Marie Christine Skuncke's rich biography, *Carl Peter Thunberg: Botanist and Physician: Career-Building Across the Oceans in the Eighteenth Century* (Uppsala, 2014). See further the volume edited by Bertil Nordenstam, *Carl Peter Thunberg: Linnean, resenär, naturforskare 1743–1828* (Stockholm, 1993); Mia Karsten, *Carl Peter Thunberg: An early investigator of Cape Botany* (1939–1946); Otto Fagerstedt & Swerker Sörlin, "How tedious it is to be a bureaucrat: A biographical collage of Anders Sparrman: Traveller, botanist, and practitioner of magnetism in the last days of the Enlightenment", *Artes internationale* 1996; and – in fiction – Per Wästberg, *The journey of Anders Sparrman* (London, 2010). Per Brinck on Swedish zoologists working there up to 1950, "Swedish Exploration of South African Animal Life during 200 Years", *South African Animal Life: Results of the Lund University Expedition in 1950–1951* (Uppsala, 1955), vol. I, 11–61. Texts are in the publication of the massive English translations of by IK Foundation.

[21] Carl Peter Thunberg, *Flora capensis, sistens plantas promontorii Bona spei Africes, secundum systema sexuale emendatum redactas ad classes, ordines, genera et species, cum differentiis specificis, synonymis et descriptionibus* (Uppsala, 1807), preface; Linnaeus, *Vita Caroli Linnaei*, 183: Museum "Capenses numerosae a Burmanno, numerosae a Tulbag gubernatore C.B.S., Multae a Sparrmanno, omnes a Thunbergo, ut et multae a Koenig." Linnaeus also corresponded with Lady Ann Monson (he wrote a passionate love letter to her) and the botanist Francis Masson, in James Edward Smith, *A Selection of the Correspondence of Linnæus and Other Naturalists* II (London,

1821). His late dissertation *Planta aphyteia* (June 22, 1776) treated a parasite found in South Africa by Thunberg who interpreted it as a fungus while Linnaeus in his dissertation rightly claimed it to be a flowering plant (cf. Linnaeus, *Bref och skrifvelser* I:2, 362 ff.).

[20] "Jag kommer med så mycken tacksägelse, som jag någonsin kan framhära, för de många härliga, raraste och nyaste växter, Hr Doctoren täckts sända mig utur sitt paradis. Aldrig har jag haft mera fägnad och hugnad av någon botanist." Sverker Sörlin & Otto Fagerstedt, *Linné och hans apostlar* (Stockholm, 2004), 190.

[21] He is at the end of the alphabet in the shadow of Sparrman and Thunberg on for Swedish language rare letter W. But there you also find Carl Henrik Wänman and Dietrich Wilhelmij. I could have included Jacob Wallenberg, in the next century Johan August Wahlberg, Johan Fredrik Victorin, and Gustaf de Vylder. See Per Brinck, *Swedish Exploration of South African Animal Life during 200 Years* (Lund & Uppsala, 1955); on botany see Tycho Norlind in *Fauna och Flora* 1969.

[22] Hendrik Jacob Wikar, *The Journal of Hendrik Jacob Wikar (1779)* (Cape Town, 1935), 91 f.

[23] On the hospital, see Thunberg I, 252 f., 277 (negative judgements on the quality of medicine).

[24] E. E. Mossop, "Introduction", in Wikar 1935, 2. In Swedish Wikar was probably first mentioned in Gunnar Broberg, *Homo sapiens L: Studier i Carl von Linnés naturuppfattning och människolära* (Uppsala, 1975), 248. In Finnish Seppo Sivonen, "Henrik Jacob Wikar", *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 1 (1983). There are some translated pages (106–114) in Lasse Berg, *När Sverige upptäckte Afrika* (Stockholm, 1997). In Finland the writer and Africa expert Gregor Granwik has done research into Wikar's background as well as life in South Africa, "Henrik Jacob Wikar – afrikaresenär", *Siirtolaisuus – Migration* 2010:3, 31–34.

[25] Carl Peter Thunberg, *Resa uti Europa, Africa, Asia, förnättad åren 1770–1779: Resan til södra Europa och Goda Hoppets udde i Africa, åren 1770, 1771, 1772, 1773* I (Uppsala, 1788), 550. His words are somewhat difficult to interpret: "Jag hade redan det förflutna året försatt mig uti ansenlig skuld, och ingen annan utväg fans, än at vidare öka densamma nu, i synnerhet, om jag skulle blifva ständsatt, at företaga en kostsam resa inåt landet, och icke ligga i Cap, en otiosus spectator."

[26] There was a clerical family by that name, one had even chosen to write a dissertation on Baltic seals, phocae, where you find a variety called Wikar! Torsten Rudeen (pres.), *De phocis in Sinu Bothnico capi solitis*, resp. Jacobus Wijkar (Åbo, 1707).

[27] Sven-Erik Åström, *Ständsamhälle och universitet: Universitetsbesöken som socialt fenomen i Österbotten 1722–1808* (Helsinki, 1950), 194 f.

[28] Hjalmar Björkman, *Bidrag till Jakobstads historia* (Jakobstad, 1935), 54, 65.

[29] One possible link is to Hendrik Hassel, professor of rhetoric at Åbo Academy. According to Granwik (letter September 2016), Hassel/Hasselgren was the son of his mother's sister and agent for a trading firm in Amsterdam.

[30] Wikar 1935, 21.

[31] Wikar 1935, 23.

[32] Wikar 1935, 39.

[33] Wikar 1935, 125.

[34] Wikar 1935, 171.

[35] Wikar 1935, 51.

[36] Wikar 1935, 51, 55 f.

[37] Wikar 1935, 97 f.

[38] Wikar 1935, 103, 113.

[39] Wikar 1935, 173.

[40] Wikar 1935, 175.

[41] Wikar 1935, 187.

[42] Wikar, "Relaas", *Het Zoeklicht* IV, February 1926, 57, 59.

[43] Wikar 1935, 73 f.

[44] Wikar 1935, 139 f.

[45] Wikar 1935, 55.

[46] Wikar 1935, 191.

[47] Wikar 1935, 57. The question of the identity of the different tribes mentioned exceeds this survey. See for instance H. D. Anders, "Mar-

ginal notes to Wikar's journal". *Bantu Studies*, March 1937.

[40] Wikar 1935, 149 ff.

[41] Wikar 1935, 169 f.

[42] Wikar 1935, 167.

[43] Wikar 1935, 39.

[44] Wikar 1935, 163, 193.

[45] Wikar 1935, 97.

[46] Wikar 1935, 125.

[47] Wikar 1935, 139, cf 161.

[48] Wikar 1935, 163.

[49] Wikar 1935, 181 f., my italics.

[50] Mossop, "Introduction", in Wikar 1935, 3.

[51] Wikar 1926, 59 f.

[52] Wikar 1935, 195 f.

[53] Anders Sparrman makes a similar reservation on mapmaking in his Journey, *Resa till Goda Hopps-udden, södra pol-kretsen och omkring jordklotet, samt till hottentott- och caffer-landen, åren 1772–76* I (Stockholm, 1783), 136: "Man bör således ej vänta, det min land-charta eger en fullkomlig geometrisk noggrannhet, egna observationer med en compass, och andras berättelser äro de grunder, på hvilka jag den uppdragit. Det är imedlertid den enda och bästa men eger, samt torde ej vara litet till hjelp för många andra." (You should not expect my map to have geometric exactitude, nor own observations done with compass. I have drawn it from observations made by others. Still, it is the best so far and should be helpful for many.)

[54] Wikar 1935, 113 f.

[55] Wikar 1935, 197.

[56] Wikar 1935, 199.

[57] Wikar 1935, 200 f.

[58] Wikar 1935, 197 ff.

[59] Wikar 1935, 187 f.

[60] Wikar 1935, 125.

[61] Wikar 1935, 155, cf 81.

[62] Wikar 1935, 123.

[63] "Hvilket tycker ni är svartast, hennes hud eller deras gärning?" Jacob Wallenberg, *Samlade skrifter* II (Stockholm, 1999), 258.

[64] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel writing and Transculturation* (London, 1992), 24–37 (Linnaeus), 50–57 (Sparrman).

Summary

In the Shadow of Thunberg and Sparrman

Hendrik Jacob Wikar at the Cape

By Gunnar Broberg

This essay treats some Swedish travellers to the Cape during the eighteenth century, Carl Henric Wänman, Dietrich Wilhelmij and, especially, Hendrik Jacob Wikar. Wikar was of Swedish-Finnish descent, a student of Turku University, who spent several years on the run in Northern South Africa mapping the Orange River in order to become pardoned by the governor. Wikar's journal, published in 1935, shows him as an unprejudiced traveller who got along very well with the indigenous inhabitants. His case offers a very different picture of the early traveller than the one often given. His biography after the return to Cape Town is so far unknown.

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