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OBITUARY
PATRICK ALLAN LIFFORD HARRIES
(1950–2016)

Nigel Penn

Patrick Harries died suddenly, on 2 June 2016, just days after turning 66. He was in the first year of what he hoped would be a vigorous, productive retirement, having returned to Cape Town after fifteen years as Professor of African History at the University of Basel and a brief Fellowship at the Institute of Advanced Studies in Nantes. At the time of his death he was one of South Africa's foremost historians with an international reputation as an Africanist who was developing new fields of research whilst creatively combining the disciplines of history and anthropology. He was also renowned for his inspirational teaching and the generous encouragement he gave to generations of students, both at Basel and at his previous university, the University of Cape Town.

Patrick was born in Cape Town and educated at Rondebosch Boys High School. Here he excelled at rugby and athletics without (according to his sister, the novelist Anne Harries) showing any obvious signs of wishing to follow an intellectual career beyond a boyhood love for George Henty's historical novels. Indeed, without a matric pass in mathematics or a third language, university entrance was effectively barred to him. Post-matric, after an obligatory period of military service, Patrick made what was then an adventurous choice for a young white South African – to travel overland through Africa to France. It was during this time that his interest in African history was kindled and that he experienced, at first hand, the last days of the Portuguese empire in Mozambique. In France he learnt French, whilst working in factories and playing on the wing for a rugby club. By the time he returned to Cape Town he was able to pass matric level French and embark on a university career.

At the University of Cape Town (UCT) Patrick signed up for courses in African history and anthropology. In the former he was lucky to

study under Robin Hallett, one of the pioneer Africanists of the post-colonial era, who instilled in his students the belief that Africans had both a history and an agency in history. Patrick's circumstances were such that he was obliged to work, part-time, as a night porter at a hotel in order to pay his university fees. The result was that he frequently fell asleep during lectures and battled to excel at assignments. He was only saved from an inevitable slide into academic oblivion by the intervention of Sir Richard Luyt, UCT's vice-chancellor, who encouraged Patrick to apply for a bursary – which he duly obtained – and which freed him from the demands of non-academic labour. The importance of providing financial support for promising students was a lesson that Patrick remembered all his life and encouraged him to spend vast amounts of energy, throughout his academic career, in finding bursaries for students and raising funding through initiating research projects. Somehow he would find the time to fill in the reams of forms required and was not only able to encourage students to take up exciting research projects but to obtain the financial support required to do so. Later he would estimate that whilst at the University of Basel, between 2002 and 2015, he had raised around \$2.85 million for teaching and research.

Between 1972 and 1979 Patrick graduated from being a student (BA with distinction in African History) to being a junior lecturer in the history department. Typically for Patrick, but unusually, compared to other South Africa historians, his focus of study was the transnational, the movement of migrant workers across the borderlands of South Africa and Mozambique. In some ways this topic reflected the interest that radical historians of the time had in Marxist and labour history, but Patrick was already responding to deeper currents within the historical materialist paradigms of the moment. "Nowadays," as he once said to me, "we are all cultural historians," meaning that any historian worth his or her salt must pay attention to the traditions, value systems, ideas and institutions of the people he or she was studying. But in the 1970s and 80s not everyone was a cultural historian. Patrick's cultural sensitivity was shaped not only by his understanding of how English Marxist historians, such as E. P. Thompson, had introduced an awareness of cultural practices into their analysis of the making of class consciousness, but also by his conviction that historians of African history needed to absorb the knowledge of anthropologists. Throughout his academic life

he fostered close relationships with anthropologists and found an intellectual stimulation in their theorizations and practices. Thus an anthropological understanding of African societies complemented his appreciation of the Marxist techniques of writing history from below. What did this mean in practice? In a series of articles written between 1977 and 1982 Patrick marked out his historical terrain. These were articles that dealt with the experience of migrant, Mozambique labourers as they moved from Mozambique to South Africa during the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Although these articles used a predominantly Marxist framework of analysis in discussing the workings of the developing capitalist economy in the mines and farms of South Africa, what struck the reader at the time was their interest in the culture of the Mozambicans themselves. It was clear that these migrants were not just victims of capitalism but agents of their own destiny and makers of a new culture – a hybrid of traditional African customs and the new working class culture being forged in the mines of Kimberley and Johannesburg or in the sugar cane fields of Natal.¹ It is also noteworthy that the abiding influence of slavery, as a shaper of labour relations in the region, was highlighted in these articles about labour migration. Of significance too for the future was an early indication of an abiding interest, an article on “The anthropologist as historian: the work of H-A Junod”.² What all of these articles had in common was that they grew out of the work Patrick was doing on his Ph.D., at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, and which was completed in 1983.³

With a SOAS Ph.D. and a lectureship in the History Department at the University of Cape Town (UCT) Patrick was now able to develop the teaching of African History within that department whilst refining

1 “Labour Migration from the Delagoa Bay hinterland to South Africa, 1858–1896,” in Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, Collected Seminar Papers, 1977; “Trade, Production and the Causes of Labour Migration”, in Collected Papers of the Africa Seminar, University of Cape Town, 1978; Mozbiekers: the history of an immigrant community in the Western Cape: 1877–1881,” in Collected Seminar Papers, Cape Town History Workshop, University of Cape Town, 1979; “Slavery, surplus extraction and social incorporation: the nature of free and unfree labour in south east Africa,” in *Journal of African History*, 22(3), 1981, pp. 309–330.

2 “The anthropologist as historian: the work of H-A Junod,” in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 8(1), 1981, pp. 37–50.

3 “The origins of migrant labour from Mozambique to South Africa: with special reference to the Delagoa Bay hinterland, ca 1862–1897”. (Ph.D., University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1983).

and developing his research interests. In apartheid era South Africa questions of identity were of pressing concern to radical historians who sought to challenge the government's assumptions that the country was divided into races or, even, tribes and that each tribe had its historical area or homeland. With his interest in the border areas of north-eastern South Africa and south-western Mozambique, as well as in the dynamic identities of the people who moved across these borders (the Gaza or Tsonga), Patrick was drawn to explore issues of land and identity in what was then known as the northern Transvaal and northern Zululand. He was able to raise funding for, and interest students in, fieldwork in what is now the Limpopo Province of South Africa. Altogether about 140 hours of oral history and song were collected on tape (now stored in the Harries archive at the Basler Afrika Bibliographien in Switzerland) and a number of articles (and student theses) flowed out of this work.⁴

Whilst these works were being produced Patrick was constantly enriching his understanding of the subject of his doctoral thesis with a view towards its ultimate publication. He was always a focused reader and an assiduous taker of notes, annotating the books he read in pencil and filling reams of paper with his distinctive handwriting. The more he read about Mozambique the more he came to appreciate that a major source of information about southern Mozambique in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was contained in the archives of the Swiss Mission, housed in Lausanne and Neuchatel. He was awarded a fellowship by the Swiss Confederation Fellowship (ESKAS) in 1984–85 and was a visiting professor at the University of Lausanne in 1992. These visits enabled him to undertake research in

4 For instance see “History, Ethnicity and the Ingwavuma land deal: the Zulu northern frontier in the nineteenth century,” in *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, Vol. VI, 1983; “Poverty in Gazankulu: three case studies”, paper delivered to Carnegie Conference on Poverty in South Africa. Published as part of the conference proceedings; “Plantations, passes and proletarians: the colonial state in Natal and the origins of migrant labour”, in *Journal of Southern African Studies* 13(3), 1987, pp. 372–400; “A lost corner of the Transvaal: reconstructing the history of a relocated community through oral history and song,” in Belinda Bozzoli (ed.) *Class and Community in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1987); “The roots of ethnicity: discourse and the politics of language construction in south-east Africa,” in *African Affairs*, No. 346, January, 1988, pp. 25–52; “Exclusion, classification and internal colonialism: the emergence of ethnicity amongst the Tsonga-speakers of South Africa,” in Leroy Vail (ed.) *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (London and Los Angeles, 1989, pp. 82–117.

the mission archives and had a number of important consequences for him. In the first place, they re-affirmed for him the importance of Henri-Alexandre Junod, a missionary amongst the Tsonga who had also been a major figure in anthropology. As Patrick reflected on the ways in which Junod represented, or explained, the Tsonga, he came to appreciate that the Tsonga had also shaped the ways in which Junod thought. Even more radically, Patrick would ultimately argue, Swiss identity itself had been shaped by the discourse of those missionaries who had encountered Africa – Switzerland’s dark other. Whilst the development of these ideas would await their full articulation in the future, Patrick’s sojourn in Switzerland was fruitful in other ways. It was here that he met the woman who would become his wife – Isabelle Vauthier – and it was as a result of this immersion in Swiss culture that Patrick’s own identity grew another dimension, furnishing him with practical experience in the complexities involved in cultural assimilation.

Reconsidering the processes of cultural assimilation and adaptability led Patrick to a more sympathetic understanding of the world of migrant labourers and hostel dwellers on the South African mines. Whereas conventional Marxist writing on migrant labour in the mines stressed the exploitative nature of the relations of production, even likening the compound system to a form of prison labour, Patrick took a more nuanced, anthropological approach. He insisted that identity was both a class and a cultural construction and emphasised the attempts made by migrant African labourers to perpetuate continuities between their indigenous culture and the new, capitalist, industrial culture of the mines. Thus dance societies and freshly invented rites-of-passage helped to integrate newcomers into the new society. Significant here was the adaptation of the sexual customs and gender roles of traditional, heterosexual, African men to the completely different circumstances of single-sex (male) hostels, where senior “husbands” would expect wifely services from younger novices in relationships that mirrored more conventional ones back home. Less controversial, perhaps, and with possibly more important long-term effects, was the acquisition of literacy and Christianity by certain men, alongside the monetary wealth that they had obtained as wages. Patrick argued that although the compounds were restrictive and paternalistic institutions they nevertheless allowed workers to create a new culture in conditions of relative security, since men were housed and fed in

safety and could save their earnings without fear of theft or the loss of their savings to the temptations of strong liquor or prostitutes in the burgeoning and insanitary shanty towns nearby. The compounds, then, were the cradles of the new South African working class.

These ideas found expression in a series of articles in the nineties but above all in his book of 1994, *Work, Culture and Identity: Migrant Workers in Mozambique and South Africa, c.1860–1910*.⁵ In all of this work, Africans were shown to have exercised their own agency, journeying thousands of miles on foot across the dangerous South African low veld (inhabited by lions) and the high veld (inhabited by Boers) in order to earn fabulous wages (higher than those offered to miners in Europe at this time) to buy commodities that they valued (guns, iron-hoes, blankets etc.). Returning men transformed their home societies by being the bearers of literacy, Christianity and capitalism and possessing an authority that grew out of their greater wealth and experience and that challenged that of the chiefs and the stay-at homes or *mamparas*.

In 1993, just before the appearance of his book, Patrick was appointed Associate Professor in the History Department at UCT. He held this post until 2000 when he left to take up the position of Professor of African History at the University of Basel. During this period Patrick worked very hard as a teacher and lecturer, inspiring both his students and his colleagues with his intellectual enthusiasms. More and more he turned his attention to the ways in which Africa had been represented by its historical and anthropological interpreters. These included not only historians and anthropologists, but also travel writers and missionaries, linguists and natural scientists. The example of Junod seemed to encompass all of these categories and was ever before him. What systems of classification had Junod employed to declare that the Tsonga were a distinct people, or tribe, with distinct customs and who spoke a distinct language? In what ways were his systems of classification influenced by his ideas about natural science and the classification of plants and insects? Whilst Junod's influence remained central to Patrick's investigations he now pursued a number of related

5 "Symbols and Sexuality: Culture and Identity on the early Witwatersrand goldmines", in *Gender and History*, 2(3), 1990, pp. 318–36; *Work, Culture and Identity: Migrant workers in Mozambique and South Africa, c.1860–1910* (Heinemann, N.H., U.S.A.; James Currey, U.K., and Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, 1994).

avenues of research as his early work on ethnicity and identity, approached through the work of cultural anthropologists, now began to fuse with a growing awareness of the influence of the global “literary turn” in historical studies. He was particularly interested in those works that dealt with the “invention of tradition”⁶ and histories of science that were critical of the assumptions present in the discourses of Western knowledge.⁷

Though his work was now receiving attention at an international level, reflected in the fact that he was invited to conferences and residencies in institutions of higher learning in Switzerland, France and Germany, recognition was harder to achieve at home. It is no secret that Patrick would have liked to have been appointed to the Chair of African Studies at UCT, but that Chair had just been vacated by Mahmood Mamdani, a man who had been immensely critical of the content and quality of the teaching of African History at UCT. The fall out from this affair made it virtually impossible for the university authorities to appoint Patrick to such a position nor even, it seems, to promote him to the rank of full professor. It was for these, and other reasons, that he was pleased to take up the post of Professor of African History at the University of Basel in 2001.⁸

6 Patrick’s debt to Terence Ranger is acknowledged in his “Terence Ranger at the University of Cape Town,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 41(5), 2015, pp. 1106–1110.

7 “Through the Eyes of the Beholder: The Africa of a late nineteenth-century Africanist,” *Social Dynamics*, 19(1), 1992, pp. 1–10; “Imagery, Symbolism and Tradition in a South African Bantustan: Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Inkatha and Zulu History,” *History and Theory*, 34(4), 1994, pp. 105–125; “Language, Classification and Power: The early history of the Tsonga language,” in Rajend Mesthrie (ed.) *South African Sociolinguistics* (Cape Town, 1995), pp. 154–175; “The Imperialism of Truth: Colonialism and the Natural Sciences”, in collected seminar papers of the Basler Afrika Bibliographien, Basel, 1996; ‘Under Alpine Eyes: Constructing landscape and society in late pre-colonial south-east Africa,’ in *Paideuma*, 43, 1997, pp. 171–191; “Missionary Endeavor and the Politics of Identity in Switzerland,” in *Le Fait Missionnaire*, No. 6, 1998, pp. 39–69; “Christianity in Black and White: The establishment of the Protestant churches in Mozambique,” in *Lusotopie*, 1998, pp. 317–33; “Field Sciences in Scientific Fields: entomology, botany and the early ethnographic monograph,” in Saul Dubow (ed.) *Science and Society in Southern Africa* (Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 11–41; “The Swiss Mission and the theory and practice of race,” in *Le Fait Missionnaire*, No. 9, 2000, pp. 41–54; “Missionaries, Marxists and Magic: Politics and the power of literacy in south-east Africa,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 27(3), 2001, pp. 405–427.

8 In hindsight it was a terrible lack of judgment by UCT since Patrick went on to become internationally renowned in the field of African studies in Europe, Africa

Amongst the “other reasons” Patrick was pleased to be at Basel was that it meant that his Swiss wife, Isabelle, could return to her roots. Together, she and Patrick brought up their daughter, Emily, as a trilingual citizen of a cosmopolitan, multicultural society that has always been renowned as being both a “refuge and sometimes the cradle of intellectual heresy”.⁹ Compared to South Africa, Switzerland and the University of Basel were relatively well funded, and Patrick was able to utilize these resources, generously and creatively, to organize a succession of conferences and to bring visiting Africanists to attend seminars or spend residencies in Basel. He was also able to send Swiss students to South Africa as post-graduate researchers or participants in joint Swiss-South Africa projects. Basel was also the home of the Basel Mission Archives – a vast and rich library of global missionary history. In addition, the city housed the Carl Schlettwein Stiftung, which has close ties to the University of Basel and a wonderful library, the Basler Afrika Bibliographien, dedicated to Namibian and southern African publications. Perhaps one should also mention that Patrick had a love for cheese – a passion that could be most imaginatively indulged in Switzerland.

Despite these attractions, Patrick did not find it easy to make the transition from Cape Town to Basel. The strain of trans-continental relocation and the effort of preparing new lectures and seminars (three to four new courses per semester) told. Though Patrick was permitted to lecture in English (and many students chose his courses in order to test whether their English measured up to international academic standards) it was challenging for him to function in an essentially German-speaking, rather than French-speaking, area of Switzerland. Soon after he arrived Patrick suffered a severe heart attack, which he survived thanks to excellent Swiss medical care, but the warning was clear: slow down.

and America. But becoming Professor of History at Basel was no small thing. I used to console Patrick with Nietzsche’s pronouncement to the famous historian, Jakob Burckhardt, on the latter’s appointment to a professorship at Basel. “I would rather be a Professor at Basel than the Lord God Almighty.” Nietzsche, though probably insane at the time of this utterance, had been a professor at Basel so knew what he was talking about. Quoted by Ronald Hayman, *Nietzsche: A Critical Life* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1984), p. 335.

- 9 The phrase is H. R Trevor-Roper’s from his introduction to *Jakob Burckhardt: Judgments on History and Historians* (Routledge Classics, Oxford, 2007), p. xv. Trevor-Roper, though an admirer of Burckhardt, was notoriously no admirer of African history, maintaining, in fact, that it did not exist.

It is doubtful whether he took this advice because a stream of articles flowed from his pen whilst he threw himself into his self-imposed task – to make Basel the centre of a vibrant network of African studies.¹⁰ He won major funding grants from the Swiss National Fund, the Swiss National Science Foundation and the Swiss-South Africa Joint Research Project. (An application for funding a project on the history of science in southern Africa was with the South African NRF at the time of his death.) This enabled the hosting of several important conferences and the funding of scores of students whilst he personally supervised 17 Ph.D. theses as well as more than 30 M.A.s. He acted as co-supervisor or reader for many other theses from all over the world and served on a great many advisory committees and research councils. He was on the steering committee of the Centre for African Studies at Basel where his vision was to suggest that Switzerland had, in fact, had a profound engagement with Africa and, more controversially, that Africa had had an influence on Switzerland.

This was one of the themes of the book that reflected the fruit of Patrick's long engagement with Junod and his more recent immersion in Swiss history, *Butterflies and Barbarians: Swiss Missionaries and Systems of Knowledge in South-East Africa*.¹¹ The book was not only the work of a pre-eminent African historian, but, clearly, an historian of Switzerland. Patrick had read deeply in the histories of the Swiss cantons and of the Jura. In his father-in-law's library he had found obscure works on Swiss church history and the religious debates of the Swiss clerics of the nineteenth century. The result was that Patrick was able to recreate the intellectual world and the cultural background of the Protestant Swiss missionaries who went to Africa in authoritative

10 Between 2001 and 2006 Patrick wrote a number of entries for Keesing's *Annual Register*, on Mozambique, Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He also wrote articles on missions and Christianity for a variety of Swiss, French and German publications that were published in French and German translations. A notable consolidation of his thought on missionaries as anthropologists was contained in "Anthropology", in Norman Etherington (ed.) *Missions and Empire* (Oxford: OUP, 2005), pp. 238–260. A life time's interest in the Algerian war of independence, and a love of cinema, found expression in the excellent essay "The Battle of Algiers: Between Fiction, Memory and History", in Vivian Bickford-Smith and Richard Mendelsohn (eds.) *Black & White in Colour: African History on Screen* (Cape Town, 2006), pp. 203–22.

11 *Butterflies and Barbarians: Swiss Missionaries and Systems of Knowledge in South East Africa* (James Currey, Oxford; Ohio University Press, USA; Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg; Weaver Press, Harare, 2007), 303 pp.

detail. He provided, in effect, a table-turning *tour de force* by writing an anthropological study *of* the Swiss missionaries before turning to a discussion of the anthropological studies *by* the Swiss missionaries. The main subject of *Butterflies and Barbarians* is the making of the mind of an anthropologist, in this case, Junod's. Strictly speaking, Junod's interests were far wider than anthropology, and it would be more correct to see him as being a polymath, a man fascinated by the natural sciences in general, as well as being, of course, a Christian missionary. The book is about how and why Junod produced the type of knowledge that he did, that is, it is a cultural history of knowledge production. But it is not just about how Junod imagined, or constructed, knowledge systems about Africa. It is also about how knowledge about Africa shaped the consciousness of Junod, and other missionaries, and how their identity was shaped by the encounter with all that seemed to be its opposite. The Junod who emerges from the pages of Patrick's study is not an unsympathetic European colonialist seeking to exercise power over Africans by enchainning them within the discourse of western science. He is, rather, an intelligent, sensitive individual, fascinated by African systems of thought and appreciative of the magnificent diversity of creation; an un-dogmatic servant of: "Science, that goes out across the continents, gathering its rich harvest of facts, studying geographic and climatic phenomena, collecting new animal forms, observing the customs and languages of primitive races, all in order to one day reconstruct the admirable set of facts, to understand if not the reason behind, at least the way in which humans and things are arranged on our marvelous planet" (p. 146).

With his work on Junod completed, Patrick now turned his attention to more general work on the cultural history of knowledge production and the history of science, always, however, keeping the focus on Africa. He also retained his particular interest in anthropology and what were becoming known as the "field sciences," that is, sciences where data collection and observation happened in the out doors rather than in the laboratory. These studies were to be an enduring interest until the end of his life and drew him into a series of fruitful collaborations with scholars in the same field. He produced, or co-produced, several publications on the subject with others, hopefully, in press or soon to be forthcoming.¹² An indication of Patrick's senior

12 "From the Alps to Africa: Swiss Missionaries and Anthropology", in Helen Tilley and Robert Gordon (eds.) *Ordering Africa: Anthropology, Imperialism and the Production*

status as a South African scholar at this time was that he was asked to contribute to the Cambridge History of South Africa.¹³

Increasingly, however, Patrick was drawn to a topic that had always been part of the history of labour in Mozambique – slavery. One of his first published articles had been on the community of the descendants of Mozambican slaves in the Cape and he now began to do the necessary research to take the topic further. Mozambican and East African slaves had formed approximately half of the total number of slaves (70,000) that had been transported to the Cape during the era of slavery. But the Cape was not the only destination for such slaves. After the 1780s the rise of sugar and coffee plantations in Mauritius and Reunion created a demand for slave labour on these islands. There was also a substantial traffic in slaves from the East African coast to the Americas at this time. The real development of the trade, however, took place when Portuguese merchants based at Mozambique Island, began to service the slave labour needs of Brazil. Despite British opposition to the trade after 1807 an estimated 500,000 slaves were transported around the Cape between c.1780–1860. Some of these slaves, as re-captives or survivors of shipwreck, disease and disaster, were landed at the Cape. The story of these people had yet to be told. Nor had the history of the ebb and flow of the Mozambican slave trade been recorded in detail. These were the themes that Patrick began to write about.¹⁴

of Knowledge (Manchester, 2007), pp. 201–224; “Arnold van Gennep”, in Robert Gordon et al. (eds.) *Fifty Key Anthropologists* (Routledge, 2010); with David Maxwell (eds.) *The Spiritual in the Secular: Missionaries and Knowledge about Africa* (Grand Rapids, USA, 2012), introduction, pp. 1–29, and “Natural Science and Naturvoelker in Africa: Missionary Adventures in Entomology and Botany,” in *The Spiritual in the Secular: Missionaries and Knowledge about Africa*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012) pp. 30–71; “Warfare, Commerce and Science: Racial Biology in South Africa,” in Nicolas Bancel, Thomas David, Dominic Thomas (eds.) *The Invention of Race: Scientific and Popular Representations* (Routledge, 2014), pp. 189–202; “Missionaries and the Production of Bodily Knowledge”, preface to S. Weichlein and L. Ratschiller (eds.) *Der Schwarze Körper als Missionsgebiet: Medizin, Ethnologie, Theologie in Afrika und Europa 1880–1960* (Cologne, 2016), pp. 7–14; forthcoming with Martin Lengwiler (eds.) *Topologies of Knowledge: Europe, Africa and Science in the 19th and 20th centuries*.

13 “From Colonial Hegemonies to Imperial Conquest, 1840–1880,” with Bernard Mbenga and Norman Etherington in R. Ross, C. Hamilton and B. Mbenga (eds.) *Cambridge History of South Africa*, Vol. I (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 319–91.

14 “Making Mozambique: History, Memory and the African Diaspora at the Cape”, in Allen Isaacman, Ned Alpers and Benigna Zimba (eds.) *Slave Routes and Oral*

Patrick's ultimate ambition was to write a book whose working title was "the forced immigration of Africans from Central Africa, Mozambique and Angola to Cape Town, c.1770–1870". This goal seemed to be a realizable project for his planned retirement in Cape Town in 2016. Patrick had retired from Basel in 2015 as a much loved teacher and mentor, as well as a respected and influential historian.¹⁵ He had helped to place Basel at the centre of a network of knowledge about Africa and inspired generations of students with a desire to continue to research and teach African studies. Although Patrick had learned to love the black streets of Basel¹⁶ (which he always walked with a brisk pace), the green valleys of the Jura, the blue shores of Lac Lemman and the many varieties of Swiss cheese, it was always his plan to retire to his beloved Cape Town. Before taking up the position of Honourary Research Associate in the Historical Studies at UCT, however, he had the opportunity to take up a fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Studies (IEA) in Nantes during 2015. Nantes, a city that was the most important French slaving port during the era of the slave trade, was an appropriate setting in which to plan his future research. After the hard years of teaching in Basel the atmosphere of pure research in the IEA seemed to him to be "intellectual paradise." But it could only be a temporary respite.

By Christmas 2015 Patrick was back in the Cape. He and his family spent the Christmas holidays with us in Arniston (a fishing village

Traditions in Southeastern Africa (Maputo, 2005), pp. 91–123; "The Hobgoblins of the Middle Passage: the Cape of Good Hope and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade", in U. Schmieder, K. Fullberg-Stolberg and M. Zeuske (eds.) *The End of Slavery in Africa and the Americas: a comparative approach* (Munster, 2011), pp. 27–50; "Negotiating Abolition: Cape Town and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade," in *Slavery and Abolition*, 34(4), 2013, pp. 579–597; "Middle Passages of the Southwest Indian Ocean: A Century of Forced Migration from Africa to the Cape of Good Hope," *Journal of African History*, 55 (2), 2014, pp. 173–190; "Slavery, Indenture and Migrant Labour: Maritime Immigration from Mozambique to the Cape, c.1780–1880," in *African Studies*, 73(3), 2014, pp. 323–340; "Mozambique Island, Cape Town and the organization of the Slave Trade in the Southwestern Indian ocean, c. 1797–1807," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 42(3), June 2016, pp. 409–427.

- 15 Fittingly, Patrick's farewell lecture in Basel was entitled "History and Anthropology: A Dance to the Music of Time," 11 December 2014. Tributes to Patrick from his students and colleagues are to be found in Veit Arlt, Stephanie Bishop and Pascal Schmid (eds.) *Explorations in African History: Reading Patrick Harries* (Basel, 2015).
- 16 A book that helped Patrick to fall in love with his adopted city was Lionel Gossman's magnificent *Basel in the Age of Burkhart: A Study in Unreasonable Ideas* (Chicago, 2000).

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near Cape Agulhas for, apart from cheese, fish was his great love). He then turned his attention to finding a new home. Meanwhile he re-discovered the vibrancy of Long Street. He breakfasted in the Company Gardens. He watched three films a week at the Labia cinema. He caught up with old friends and delighted, once more, to be back in Cape Town. Impatiently, he awaited the arrival of his books and papers from Basel. The idea was to procure funding for a Centre for the Study of the Slave Trade at UCT and to get funding for a project on the history of science in southern Africa. Alas, these plans have not yet come to fruition.

Days after his 66th birthday on 31 May, just before catching an inter-continental flight to attend a conference in France, Patrick suffered another heart attack. Characteristically he was in full stride at the time, walking a familiar Cape Town street. Sadly, a bit slower than when he last played as wing three-quarter for Rondebosch High School Rugby Team, Patrick was unable to side-step Death's low tackle and fell headlong, short of that now forever unreachable try line. Happily, however, he did not die with the ball but passed it on – to me, to you, to all his students and to his future readers.