

Outline of research interests for CWEH meeting on “collaborative research on the meteorological and botanical history of the Indian Ocean, 1600-1900”, 5th-6th December 2012, University of Sussex

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Historical Ecologies of East African Landscapes (HEEAL)

From 2008 to 2010, I was a postdoctoral research fellow on the project “Historical Ecologies of East African Landscapes” (HEEAL) at the Archaeology Department of the University of York. Directed by Dr. Paul Lane and funded by a European Union Marie Curie Excellence Grant, HEEAL is a four year project studying the historical ecology of east African landscapes over the last 500 years through a combination of archaeological, historical, ethnographic and palaeo-environmental research. In particular, the project investigates evidence for the presence, nature and extent of human-induced environmental change in eastern Africa and aims to relate these changes to contemporary and historical perceptions of African landscapes. It is structured around six interrelated sub-projects exploring the intensification of herding and the emergence of specialised hunting; the environmental and social consequences of intensive agriculture; the historical ecology of the 19th-century caravan trade; the geocology of the Pare Mountains; the bioarchaeology of the ivory trade; and – my own project – 20th century landscape change, perceptions and policies. I conducted ethnographic, archival and photographic research into land use practices, conservation policy and landscape change in the Pare Mountains in Northeastern Tanzania. This research pursued several lines of enquiry: (1) the nature and causes of landscape change over the course of the 20th century, focusing in particular on the legacies of colonial and post-colonial conservation and tree-planting measures; (2) the intersection of local environmental values and legal frameworks with regard to land management practices and forest ecology, with comparative perspectives on sacred groves, communal forests and government reserves; and (3) memory and perceptions of landscape change. I am currently in the process of writing up and publishing this material.

My own work included the compilation of 20th century meteorological records in the Pare Mountains, and I would be very interested in contributing to and having access to a longer term and geographically larger database on the meteorological data of the Indian Ocean. There is also much potential for linking in the archaeological research conducted by other members of the HEEAL team with this collaborative network.

Resilience, Collapse and Reorganisation in Social-Ecological Systems of East- and South Africa’s Savannahs (RCR)

I am also currently involved in the large collaborative research project [*Resilience, Collapse and Reorganisation in Social-Ecological Systems of East- and South Africa’s Savannahs*](#), funded by the German Research Foundation and led by the Institute of Ethnology at the University of Cologne, 2010-12 (coordinated by Professor Michael Bollig). Contemporary research shows that Africa is the continent most comprehensively affected by global climatic change and environmental transformations, but also that societies, economies and environments are also massively impacted by forces of internal mobility and differentiation, violent conflict, economic globalisation and global environmental governance. The project consists of three large clusters organised around different themes and regions. My own project, *The political ecology of colonial natural resource use patterns and environmental knowledge at Lake Naivasha, Kenya*, is part of cluster B1, *Violent Regulation and*

Social-Ecological Transformation of Wetland Ecosystems in East Africa. My project examines, firstly, how highly unequal power relations between settlers and squatters at Lake Naivasha shaped water and land use patterns from the 1920s onwards; secondly, how these in turn affected the Naivasha wetlands ecology and the vegetation and soil of surrounding areas; thirdly, what environmental and political disputes and discussions were evoked at the time; and fourthly, how these developments in the colonial period shape the politics and ecology of Lake Naivasha today.

In respect to this project (for which, due to several maternity leaves, I have not yet fully begun my own research), I wonder whether the larger RCR project might be linked up to the Indian Ocean collaborative network; I would be very happy to facilitate this.