

5th AEGIS Thematic Conference

of the Collaborative Research Group Africa in the Indian Ocean

**A Passage to/from Africa:  
rhythmic exchanges in the Western Indian Ocean**

**PROVISIONAL PROGRAM**

Venue: Aula Magna del Rettorato – Palazzo Bonaventura, via Saffi 2

**DAY ONE – 4 APRIL**

9.00 - 9.30 Introduction by Francesca Declich

Greetings of prof. Giorgio Calcagnini - Rector of the University of Urbino

Greetings of prof. Giovanni Boccia Artieri - DISCUI Department Director

**Panel 1** : 9.30 -11.15 (Anthropology)

Chair: Francesca Declich (Università degli Studi di Urbino)

1. **Iain Walker** (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology): *On Being servile in Ngazidja*

On the Comorian island of Ngazidja, slave ancestry remains a determinant of social status. People of servile descent live in distinct quarters of the major towns, and in servile villages in rural areas. Although they no longer face obstacles to economic success or political participation, they remain excluded socially. Ritual marriages that grant men access to power in the customary sphere are consistently endogamous and servile people, and particularly men, are forbidden from contracting customary marriage with those of free descent, since such marriages would grant them power over the descendants of their ancestors masters. This paper considers how servile people attempt to contest the social order and struggle for access to customary power, and asks why and whether this is necessary. It asks why, having accepted the equality of servile populations in so many fields of action, the free population remains resistant in this particular sphere.

2. **Daniela Waldburger** (University of Vienna): *Violence on Mayotte – the role of languages on a multilingual island in the EU*

*“calling Shimaore its own language versus a Comorian dialect is as much a political choice as a linguistic one”<sup>1</sup>*

Mayotte is the destination of many so-called “illegal” migrants from the three other Comorian islands. Socio-culturally and linguistically, the four islands are very similar, but Mayotte's political identity is French. The Mahorais, though many of them are descendants of Comorians who moved to Mayotte a long time ago, are fighting for the privileges they think they are entitled to as French citizens. Therefore, the othering of people from the other islands has become an important strategy for the Mahorais to position themselves as French and distance themselves from people from Grande Comore, Anjouan and Mohéli. The latter live on Mayotte, often

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<sup>1</sup> Mori, Miki (2023): The acoustic characteristics of implosive and plosive bilabials in Shimaore. In: *Journal of the International Phonetic Association*, p. 1–27. DOI: 10.1017/S0025100322000184.

“illegally”, usually through “illegal” exploitative jobs and even more without a job and without any administrative or financial perspective. These young “illegal” people increasingly use violence as communication. Violence becomes a language of survival and confrontation with the the Mahorais and the administration. In this context, language and violence must be considered against the background of the linguistic situation. ShiMaoré, ShiBushi and French are the codes of the Mahorais while the other Comorian varieties are stigmatised for political reasons. Arabic as the language of religion connects the Comorians and the Mahorais. However, languages fulfil different roles in different contexts in the daily life of Mayotte. «*Arrête avec ton français là, parle ShiMaoré!*»<sup>2</sup> says the mother to her daughter in the second episode of TV series *Colocs!*<sup>3</sup>. ShiMaoré’s ambiguous role as a sign of Mahorais identity but also as a language to disqualify the “outsiders within”, its role as lingua Franca between Mahorais speaking ShiMaoré and speaking ShiBushi is just one of the many topics that need to be analysed in the context of the outbreaks of violence that occur time and again.

3. **Safia Ally Msami** (University of California, Irvine): *Haba na Haba Hujaza Kibaba: A Sartorial Look into the Afterlives of Swahili Daughters on the East African Coast*

Zanzibar’s House of Wonders features Sultan Barghash bin Said’s Camera Obscura room where nostalgic, yet ever-present, images of Swahili daughters wearing intricately designed Kangas were captured. This paper takes into consideration the historical makings and contemporary underpinnings of the Kanga, a clothing material embraced to decorate the bodies of Swahili women which is inevitably bound to the Indian Ocean Slave trade. Today, the Kanga remains a staple in dissecting womanhood as it is often gifted and exchanged during coming-of-age ceremonies and celebrations. Additionally, its history on the Swahili coast proves its significance in representing the eternal spirit of resistance, rebellion, and solidarity amongst slaves and colonial subjects. My approach considers the vitality and mobility of the Kanga, as attached to the Swahili woman’s body, to speak to the question of racial capitalism, space/place production, and gender as a means to further discuss the absorption of Africanness in the making of an Arab background on the Swahili coast and hinterland. With consideration, Hortense Spillers notes that the signification of the body as property plus speaks to the process of becoming property from “flesh,” as the “zero degree of social conceptualization,” suggesting that there is a disconnection between the “body” and the “flesh.” This separation is that before the “body” there is the “flesh,” which does not escape concealment under the brush of discourse, or the reflexes of iconography” (Spillers, 1987, 257). Simply put, thinking with the flesh, which is eventually covered by the body and Kanga is to find a way to foreground embodiment as a significant political store which allows for understanding Swahili women’s worlds from embodied and emotional experiences (Pinto 2017, 34). In this regard, I bring to the forefront the re-enforcement of the Arab backdrop in East Africa, which can be understood as a cyclical phenomenon with interminable ends, but that is necessary in the production of being and becoming Swahili. A driving inquisition then is to unfold these processes of absorption to further understand the ways in which WaSwahili women negotiate and produce space and place in attempts of finding and building community along the coast and hinterland, and how the Kanga is a key site for such realities to become actualized. In other words, I ask what story of difference and belonging on the Swahili coast can be told when the Kanga is placed in the center of East Africa’s making.

4. **Gill Shepherd** (London School of Economics and Political Science): *Using alliance and genealogy to conduct trade*

The Swahilis around whom Swahili society crystallised, had to be both Arabs and Africans at once. Their specific niche was to act as middleman traders, exchanging goods from the African interior such as gold and ivory, and coastal goods such as tortoiseshell, with goods brought by dhow from elsewhere such as celadon

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<sup>2</sup> Stop with your French, speak ShiMaoré! (Translation DW)

<sup>3</sup> Accessible via <https://la1ere.francetvinfo.fr/mayotte/>

pottery and blue and white porcelain from China. This trade was managed through strategic marriage alliances locally, as well as by patrilineal links which stretched far across the Indian Ocean. The societies which built up around key local alliance marriages, and the offspring which they produced, were relatively easy to maintain and continue to this day. The long-distance patrilineal links were a good deal harder to keep going, and depended on the continued perceived value of alliance marriages in particular locations, by members of these international lineages. The key actors were *sharifs* (descendants of the Prophet) and especially those in lineages which specialised in international trade. Two or three of these lineages have been crucial in maintaining the genealogical knowledge which, almost like a freemasonry, could act as gatekeepers in control of those who would like to take part in East African coastal trade and in trade further afield. Maintainers of these genealogies are to be found in key towns, recording the births and deaths of relevant local *sharifs*, and periodically forwarding the information to the holders of master genealogies in South Arabia. This system has been in existence since at least 800 A.D and the author herself discovered remnants of it as far afield as Indonesian Papua only a few years ago.

**COFFEE BREAK (offered)** – first floor Via Saffi, 42 (front of blue room)

**Panel 2 : 11.45-13.30 (History)**

Chair: Iain Walker (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology)

1. **Manuel Ramos** (CEI-ISCTE, Lisboa): *Gone with the Monsoon: notes on the history of Christianity in the Indian Ocean*

The scattered relics of Saint Thomas the Apostle are a testament to the manifold localised reverberations of the millenary trade, political and religious networks that not only extend throughout the southern regions of Eurasian continent but also implicate East Africa. His legendary evangelizing travels to the Southernmost tip of the Indian subcontinent, and the posterior wanderings of his scattered bodily remains, have laid the foundation to a multiplicity of narrations and beliefs through which it is possible to map the extension, complexity and longevity of a loose community of traders that have encroached in, and melted into, diverse forms of political hegemony in the Western Indian Ocean. To better understand the present-day traces and manifestations of his cult, be it in South India, in Syria, In Southern Europe, or in Africa, it is important to disentangle the layered – and contested – oral, written and physical memories of the apostle, and the various appropriations of his legend.

2. **Matteo Salvatore** (American University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates): *Enslaved Ethiopians in the Western Indian Ocean: Evidence from the Portuguese Inquisition*

By the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, the combination of protracted religious conflicts and political instability turned the Ethiopian highlands into an important source of slave labor for traders catering to slave markets in the Arab-Ottoman world and South Asia. This paper looks at the experiences of two enslaved Ethiopians who came to the attention of the Portuguese Inquisition in Goa and Lisbon to identify common patterns of enslavement, resistance, and manumission in the Western Indian Ocean world and beyond.

3. **Hideaki Suzuki** (National Museum of Ethnology, Japan): *Uniqueness of East Africa, Similarity of the Western Indian Ocean: A Case Study of Mangrove Poles*

Given the Western Indian Ocean World as not a geographical entity, rather than that, as a component of various encounters and subsequent relationships, mangrove poles are one of the remarkable trading items to create such a similarity. This paper examines how similar life-space has been created by mangrove poles exported from the East African coast in various locations across the western Indian Ocean such as Madagascar, East African coast, the Persian Gulf as well as the Indian sub-continent. Combining historical data with architectural and archaeological observations (by my own and the previous studies), the paper clarifies how mangrove poles,

or mangrove pole trade have created the western Indian Ocean-wide similarities in living space, despite of local differences, and also it points out the background of subsistence of mangrove pole trade. Furthermore, it also shows that how this historical trade of mangrove poles contributes to the creation of historical identity, especially in the Persian Gulf.

4. **Wolbert Smidt** (Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena): *Ancient traders' networks in the northern Ethiopian highlands and the Afar lowlands: trade routes and their communities*

Traders networks and communities in the northern Ethiopian highlands and the adjacent Afar lowlands can be understood as a result of internationally and interregionally active communities, who were interconnecting the southern Red Sea and Indian Ocean spheres. Research has traditionally focused on elite sites of the Ethiopian highlands, such as the impressive sites of the Aksumite kingdom and its Ethio-Sabaeen predecessors, and the religious interconnection with Byzantium, but much less on their international maritime trade connections across the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. Studies of ancient sources such as the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea show that the ancient entities of the northern Ethiopian highlands cannot be understood with their Southern Arabian and Indian Ocean connections. The vocalisation of the Ethiopian Geez script has been influenced by Indian writing systems, silk became an elite product deeply influencing the self-image of Ethiopian leadership, the presence of Indian traders in the Red Sea ports such as Massawa are attested in ancient sources. Research has also traditionally focused strongly on highland cultures, while recent studies shift the focus on the complex networks of the Afar lowlands and their ancient trading ports such as Tagorri / Tadjoura, situated at the joint of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. In this paper, the focus lies on the - traditionally Muslim - trading communities in the Tigrayan highlands and the Afar networks of the lowlands, especially in the Tadjoura sultanate: The highland traders' settlements are on the one hand located along the ancient north-south Red Sea route, often at ancient Aksumite or Ethio-Sabaeen sites, but in the same time linked to the Afar lowlands and their networks reaching up to Tadjoura. Therefore, this paper suggests that the trading networks of the northern Ethiopian highlands cannot be understood without the Afar lowlanders, and that both communities are deeply marked by trade and information exchange via the Indian Ocean.

### TIME OFF FOR LUNCH

**Panel 3** : 14.30 -16.15 (Global colonisation)  
Chair: Gill Shepherd (London School of Economics)

1. **Erika Mattio** (University Complutense of Madrid/ University Bicocca of Milano): *Salt, lithium and ships*

Djibouti is the new Chinese landing place in the Horn of Africa. Its strategic position makes it the perfect candidate to be a port, military base and soon aerospace base for China. Traveling in an interdisciplinary project, we investigate the Chinese strategy of the Belt Road Initiative between Djibouti and Ethiopia, moving around the two countries in search of the most attractive elements for the global market: salt, lithium and ships. A rhythmic passage between the Indian Ocean and the Ethiopian Coptic areas. The project studies the Chinese presence in the Horn of Africa. The work is multidisciplinary, qualitative and quantitative with an ethnographic investigation, a sociology analysis of the work of the Belt Road Initiative, netnography and the creation of a podcast for period investigations.

Keywords: China, Africa, Work Sociology, Etnography, Belt Road Initiative

2. **Diana Stoica** (West University of Timisoara, Romania): *Eastern African land-transportation and the challenges to Afro-globalization. Reflections on the case of Tanzania and Mozambique*

This presentation seeks to draw attention to the stage of development of land transportation in the continental parts of Tanzania and Mozambique, its impact on mobility, and the philosophy of movement, highlighting the challenges to Afro-globalization. The analysis is conceptual, taking as a principal concern to reflect upon, the outcomes of land transportation metamorphosis in defining the attitudes and capabilities to mobility in the region and the resulting challenges to the conceptualization and perspectives on Afro-globalization. This view is qualitative, capitalizing on the cultural effects of the land transportation development, from a philosophical perspective, sustained by African writers debating on mobility through direct or indirect approaches to Africanism and Globalization, like Achille Mbembe, Mahmood Mandami, Chukwudi Eze, but the list is not limited. Finally, the aim of this research project is not only to show the impact of a practical infrastructure issue on a social attitude toward mobility and, stemming from this, towards the potentialities of Afroglobalization, but also to debate solutions to improve actual mobility through land transportation, as a sign of social change and resistance to colonial type power relations.

3. **Raffaele Maddaluno** (La Sapienza University, Rome): *The oceanic rhythms of resistance and transformation in the Comoros islands. Challenges and potentialities beyond Blue Economy policies*

Based on fieldwork in the Comoros archipelago, the paper looks back at the impact of ocean governance and Blue Economy policies in the Indian Ocean, particularly for what concerns the economic and political conditions of a small archipelagic state such as the Union of the Comoros. The renewed focus on the Indian Ocean (Schnepel, Alpers 2018; Srinivas et al. 2020) and the issues driving the growing Blue Economy policies (Doyle, 2018), allow us to experience and understand the intrinsic potential of the ocean as an imaginative and concrete expression of the rhythmic movement and exchange between center of power and island peripheries. Indeed, the everyday practices of the islanders reveal their deep implication with the Indian ocean, a relationship whose values and assumptions differ substantially from the logics of ocean conservation and governance policies endorsed by international organizations. The historical perspective and the ethnographic material intertwine in this paper with a theoretical reflection on the rhythmic exchange in the Western Indian Ocean, between land and sea; between islander and continental shore. This presentation aims to reflect on the expectations for an 'oceanic future', where the ocean permeates and pervades the imaginaries and practices of the communities and actors immersed in it. In global processes, the condition of intrinsic unruliness of the maritime milieu is a concrete and alternative force able to shape people's ambitions. This dynamism also triggers forms of resistance and inedited modes of interrelation with the environment, on both a local and a global scale.

4. **Barbara De Poli** (Ca' Foscari University): *New Cultural Transfers in the Zanzibar Archipelago: The Italians in Unguja (1990 – 2024)*

Zanzibar is a multicultural hub that in centuries has served as a transit and settlement point for Bantu, Persian, Arab, Indian, and – more recently and to a lesser extent - European populations. Its deeply mixed and stratified nature symbolizes the Swahili world. In the late 20th century, the Italian community joined the more well-known secular cultural components, and it has since become increasingly visible and culturally and economically relevant. Italians have been present in Zanzibar since the late 19th century, albeit in a purely representative capacity. However, it was not until the early 1990s, when the local government began promoting Unguja as a tourist destination, that Italians began to arrive in significant numbers. They were the first, and for nearly a decade, the primary group to respond to the Zanzibar government's call for new investors and tourism professionals. The initial Italian presence on the island grew rapidly and currently, approximately 900 Italian enterprises are working, primarily in the tourism sector.

Italians have played a crucial role in tourism and technical/professional training for over thirty years, making major contributions to the socio-economic growth of Unguja and initiating significant cultural transformations. The presence of Italians on Unguja has led to cultural hybridisation in both directions. Italian food, know-how, and language have spread on the island, while tourism and employment in the new tourism sector and allied industries have redefined (not without contrasts) the social relations of the inhabitants. Many Italians who have made the island their home have learned Swahili, worked daily alongside locals - with whom some have formed families - and adapted to the pace of island life.

The aim of this paper is to reconstruct the history of the presence of Italians in Unguja from the 1990s to the present day. This includes their economic role on the island, as well as more sociological aspects of this phenomenon: their degree of integration, particularly their relationship with the Swahili language and the local population. The essay will be based on secondary sources regarding the economic growth in Zanzibar, social change and tourism. The data provided by the Italian Embassy in Tanzania, the Italian Consulate in Zanzibar, and the Italian trade office will be used. But the most significant source of information will be the numerous interviews that I'm currently conducting in Unguja with different professional categories of Italians who emigrated in the island at different times. The historical memory of those who arrived in the early 1990s, helped build the first hotels and infrastructures on the island, and witnessed the rapid changes in the years that followed will be indispensable.

**COFFEE BREAK (offered)** - first floor Via Saffi, 42 (front of blue room)

**Panel 4 : 16.45-18.30 (Religions)**

Chair: Giorgio Banti (University of Naples "L'Orientale"/  
ISMEO - International Association for Mediterranean and Oriental Studies)

1. **Preben Kaarsholm** (Roskilde University, Denmark): *Rhythmic exchanges between religion and culture: Sufi ritual encounters in KwaZulu-Natal and Northern Mozambique*

In August 2023, the Zanzibari Amakhuwa community in Durban celebrated the 150th anniversary of the first arrival in Natal of the “liberated Africans” intercepted by the British Royal Navy, from whom the community originated. Guests of honour were a delegation from Angoche in Northern Mozambique, including a cultural group of male and female dancers and singers. At both the “religious” and the “cultural day” of the celebrations program Mozambican and South African groups gave performances side-by-side within an extended range of genres, including Makua versions of Sufi ritual like dhikr and mawlid-ya-hum. The paper will discuss this encounter between different traditions within Indian Ocean Africa of performing the same rituals, and the debates that have also traditionally taken place around them as being part of either ‘religion’ and devotion or ‘culture’ and entertainment.

2. **Saada Wahab** (The State University of Zanzibar): *Diversification of religious Practice and their Migration Trajectories among the Indians in Zanzibar*

A passage from India to East Africa (specifically Zanzibar), which was followed with temporary or permanent settlement of the migrants at the local setting has been influenced by several important factors including religion. This paper will examine the fundamental difference between the Hindu, Muslim and Christian Indians in Zanzibar in relation to their migration trajectories in the 19th century. Specifically, it will examine how religious diversity among Indian migrants influenced each group’s migration narratives, in terms of both their journeys to Zanzibar and their living situations there. The paper demonstrates that there is no linear or homogenous explanation for the diaspora history of Indians in Zanzibar. Instead, there is heterogeneous patterns in which religion and faith became essential aspects in shaping a diverse set of diasporic trajectories and stories among different Indian groups.

3. **Tanvi Kapoor** (New York University): *Mourning as Devotion: The Uncanny Shi'i Mosque in Zanzibar*

In Zanzibar, patience (*subira* in Swahili, from the Qur'anic *ṣabr*) is a religious virtue. Yet to be made to wait, especially in state institutions, is also experienced as an exercise of power. This paper refracts the contemporary mourning culture at Zanzibar's only referral hospital through a history of Shi'i mourning rituals on the Swahili Coast. At the referral hospital, people emphasize *subira* at the time of death and associate excessive crying with Islamic sin (*dhambi*). At the Twelver Shi'i mosque ten minutes away from it, people associate crying with a sacred quality and see it as a sign of true piety. Reciters begin their sermons lauding members of the Ahl al-Bayt (immediate family of the Prophet) for characteristics such as *ṣabr /subira*, especially during the Battle of Karbala in 680 CE. The sermons climax as the reciters burst into tears describing the agony of this *ṣabr /subira*, compelling everyone else to cry as well. It is as though they are proclaiming that excessive *subira* demands mourning, even if in retrospect and removed generations from the event. How have such oppositional conceptions of *subira* and mourning solidified in Zanzibar, a place with an otherwise long history of cross-sectional devotion to 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib? This paper argues that these oppositional conceptions evince the peculiar formalization of Shi'i identity in Zanzibar, which proceeded along ethnic lines with the migration of the western Indian caste of the Khoja in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Ultimately, it proposes that this formalization process colluded with reformist debates regarding intercession (*tawassul*), centuries-long denunciation of ancestral rituals as *ushirikina* (idolatry), and an increasingly genocidal state to change the relationship between the living and the dead in Zanzibar.

4. **Martinho Pedro** (Universidade Pedagógica de Maputo, Moçambique): *Da confluência de sistemas religiosos antagónicos à paradoxal formação de um comunitarismo local até 1920 no Canal de Moçambique Ocidental*

Depois da formação do islamismo como religião ecuménica e universalista no século VII engendrou-se um conflito com o precedente cristianismo que, porventura, tinha idênticas características. A primeira convergência dos dois credos no Próximo Oriente e na Bacia do Mediterrâneo, envolvendo o norte da África e a Europa Meridional, encerrou um conflito que prolongou-se por vários séculos, antes que a Europa Cristã enveredasse pela conquista de novos espaços coloniais. A homologação das conquistas de países católicos por parte do papado, prescrevia a continuidade do antagonismo/conflitos abertos com o novo concorrente, principalmente com a abertura da via marítima para a Ásia, abarcando o Oceano Índico Ocidental. Entretanto, e paradoxalmente, ao que as evidências indiciam, esta última região, fundamentalmente a situada ao sul da latitude do Rovuma, parece ter testemunhado conflitos menos violentos, propiciando até a presença de um certo comunitarismo/diálogo religioso que jamais chegou a demandar alaridos, pelo menos até as primeiras duas décadas do século XX, um carácter que, numa perspectiva histórica e em uma base documental, pretende-se explicar com a presente proposta de comunicação.

Palavras-chave: Confluência religiosa; Periferia; Comunitarismo; Canal de Moçambique.

## DAY TWO - 5 APRIL

**Panel 5** – 9.00-10.45 (Arts, literature, music)  
Chair: Manuel Ramos (CEI-ISCTE, Lisboa)

1. **Silvia Neposteri** (Università di Pavia): *A crossroads of cultures. The sorabe manuscript tradition in the South-East Malagasy coast*

Madagascar has been described as “an island in a crossroads of influences” in the Indian Ocean («île au carrefour d’influences», Martin 2011). Indeed, Madagascar would geographically seem closer to the African influence, as a marginal insular context in front of an enormous continent; however, such a perspective would be reductive and would prevent the researcher to properly understand his language, traditions, cultures, history, past, present, and future. On the contrary, to consider Madagascar as a crossroads in the Indian Ocean is crucial and essential to any scientific meditation on it. The evidence that the Malagasy language does not belong to any family of African languages, but to the family of the Austronesian languages (especially to the South Borneo Island in Indonesia), is just a concrete, effective example. The *antemoro* manuscript tradition is a veritable fruit of this cultural crossroads across the Indian Ocean and Madagascar, result of the migration waves of the Islamic groups reaching the South-east Malagasy coast from XIII up to XVI century. It’s a particularly interesting and unique written tradition called *sorabe* (“great writing”), an *ajami* transcription of the *antemoro* dialect through the adaptation of the Arabic alphabet to the Malagasy language phonemes. The *sorabe* manuscripts concern, on one side, medical and magical contents about divination, astrology, geomancy, and the use of pharmacological plants (a true melting pot of Indian, Arabic, Indonesian elements, etc.), and, on the other side, transmit myths, history, and genealogies of the ancestors of the so called “noble” groups, keeping special religious and political prerogatives. The *sorabe* tradition represents not only a multicultural legacy, but, above all, the possession of sacred books, the ability of writing and the secret knowledge represent a huge heritage of symbolic capital and a real tool in the hands of few powerful clans, able to create, produce and reproduce an alive socio-political system, based on purity, discrimination, and violence. The contents of the recently edited HB 6 arabico-malagasy manuscript of the Académie des Sciences d’Outre-Mer will be a support to deepen these points with concrete examples (Neposteri S. *Voici l’histoire de nos ancêtres Anakara*, Paris, Geuthner-ASOM, 2023). The aim of this meditation is to contribute in order to reconsider the importance of the Indian Ocean influence for Malagasy studies and for the research on the arabico-malagasy literature, and, hopefully, to give value to Madagascar from an Indian Ocean studies perspective.

2. **Dyoniz Kindata** (Leuphana Universität Lüneburg, Germany): *Rhymes of Empire Building and African World Making: Poetry and Print in Kiongozi Newspaper in German East Africa 1885-1918*

Poetry, particularly in the form of *shairi* or *tendi*, holds great cultural, heritage, and historical significance in East Africa, especially within the context of the Indian Ocean. However, the experimental poets featured in the *Kiongozi* newspaper (the guide/leader) during the late 19th and early 20th centuries have received limited attention and investigation in the Swahili literary canon. This article specifically focuses on two poets, namely Mwabondo Mwinyi Matano from Tanga and Rai Yuja from Bagamoyo in what was then German East Africa (now Tanzania). Both, as a Quran and government teacher, engaged in unique literary genre experimentation and introduced innovative elements of poem compositions. Their poetry not only reflects the colonial communitarian relations and the concept of *ustaarabu* (civilization and progress) mediated through *Mashairi* (poems) but also contributed to the creation of a new community that empowered the grassroots language of power in an African language. By applying close reading, the article aims to achieve two main objectives: firstly, to analyze the poems as a form of aesthetic experimentation and construction of historical narratives portraying communal social experiences. Secondly, it seeks to examine the role these poems played in the broader project of empire building as an *analytic unit* within the newspaper pages, serving both as a mode of critique and appraisal. Furthermore, the research incorporates fieldwork conducted in October 2023 at the Tanzanian National Archives in Dar Es Salaam and Tanga, providing additional insights into the lives of these



poets. Ultimately, this study demonstrates that newspapers, as a public medium, not only generate audiences but also serve as a platform for literary experimentation, nurturing writers and poets who contributed to *Kiongozi* and later, *Mamboleo* newspaper in British Tanganyika.

Keywords: *Kiongozi* Newspaper poets, empire building and world-making, print, German East Africa

3. **Jasmin Mahazi** (Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Germany): *Bahari yetu na mahadhi yake – Our ocean/genre and its rhythms*

Music and dance performances, called *ngoma*, which were practiced for centuries in all towns along the Swahili coast - at which warfare and diplomatic decisions were composed, proclaimed and enacted through poetry - played a large role in socio-political inter-city-states' relations. Subsequently, *ngoma* and the texts composed there are relevant for history-making and historical knowledge. Music and dance practices have thus been acknowledged to play a central role in historical and socio-cultural processes. The theme of trans-oceanic exchange within and influences on *ngoma* performances has also been dealt with academically within the framework and understanding of the local practice of expressive art. *Ngoma* music and dance performances at which cultural, political, religious and historical knowledge, as well as social, ethical, philosophical, linguistic and rhetorical knowledge is imparted, however, have not yet been considered and studied explicitly as places where knowledge is deliberately transmitted and produced. Nor has music-making and performed speech arts been recognized as knowledge practices in Swahili Studies. The project "*Bahari yetu na mahadhi yake – Our ocean and its rhythms*" is an attempt to enter into an inter-epistemic dialogue. This paper will introduce this project that includes ethnographic work on the Swahili genre of wedding songs as well as the co-curation of an exhibition. Hence, we will delve into examples of oral texts as well as museum objects of the Ethnological Museum of Berlin.

4. **Ellen Hebdén** (University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USA): *Feminine Beauty, Strategic Mobilities and the Expansion of Tufo Dancing in Mozambique*

Tufo is a 'traditional' dance in Mozambique's northern coastal provinces born out of movements and migrations across the Indian Ocean. In the early 1930s, tufo was introduced on Mozambique Island through Swahili coastal religious networks and underwent several changes in this new context: it was gradually secularized, politicized, and became a women's dance, with many of its many defining aesthetics becoming referents of 'traditional' feminine beauty. While today tufo is widely considered to be a national heritage practice associated with Makhuwa women from Ilha de Moçambique and Maputo's Mafalala neighborhood, in the past decade, tufo's popularity has increased and the network of clubs has expanded into new regions. Drawing from ethnographic and interview data collected during 14 months of performance-based research with tufo groups in Zambézia's coastal Pebane District, I focus on feminine beauty as a lens through which to examine tufo's growth in the district, particularly as it relates to other forms of mobility, like social advancement and travel. I draw on two performance examples to show how participants utilize their embodied knowledge of beauty practices for more strategic ends, such as, to catch the attention of a potential patron, to energize the event atmosphere, or to intercept cash tips given by audience members. Feminine beauty, I argue, is instrumentalized on stage in innovative ways, becoming a technology of mobility for both women and men in the context of tufo, which contributes to the genre's popularity and growth.

**COFFEE BREAK (offered)** - first floor Via Saffi, 42 (front of blue room)

1. **Catherine Odari** (Spelman College, Georgia): *Re-examining the Colonial Times: The Role of Indians and Indian-Owned Newspapers in the Reinterpretation of the Kenyan Anti-Colonial Struggle.*

The scholarship on Sub-Saharan African nationalism in the past has focused primarily on the Black anti-colonial struggle (both violent and non-violent), and the challenges of nation-building in the post-colonial era. Moreover, in their construction of nationalist narratives, scholars have relied heavily on sources from colonial archives and the writings of African nationalists. Given this focus, these studies have neglected to include the critical roles that non-indigenous groups played in the decolonization process. Using Kenya as a case study, this paper examines how Indian-owned newspapers like *The Colonial Times* and the *Daily Chronicle* covered the anti-colonial struggle and helped to connect leaders of anti-colonial movements both in Kenya and India. The paper argues that the inclusion of Indian-owned newspapers in the study of African nationalism sheds new light on the roles Indians played in fighting for independence and changes how we make sense of African nationalism. G.L. Vidyarthi, a Kenyan-born Indian and a group of Asian writers and editors, for example, launched *The Colonial Times* in 1933 in Nairobi to condemn colonialism, report on its brutalities, and highlight the anti-colonial struggles in both Kenya and India. This transnational connection facilitated the exchange of ideas between Kenyans and Indians, helped shape their anti-colonial agitations, and forged solidarities between the two groups in the fight for independence, thereby interrogating the Black anti-colonial struggle narrative that is predominant in scholarship.

2. **Hatice Ugur** (Marmara University, Turkey): *From Italy to Zanzibar: The Trans local Network of an Anarchist in 1905*

This paper explores the intriguing narrative of an Italian anarchist, Hasan Abdullah, who traversed Europe and ultimately settled in Zanzibar through the Ottoman primary sources for late 19th and early 20th centuries. There, he underwent a transformation, converting to Islam, and later journeyed to Ottoman port cities in the early 20th century. Abdullah's story serves as a representation of cultural encounters and highlights the complex and interwoven relations between the Ottoman and East African worlds. His mobility as a way of life, straddling the margins of the Ottoman and British Empires in Africa, sheds light on the challenges and significance of being an anarchist in a Muslim society. While details about his societal impact remain scarce, Abdullah's conversion in Zanzibar and subsequent desire to serve the Ottoman Empire highlight the transcendent nature of individual experiences, bridging the Indian Ocean, Zanzibar, and Mediterranean cities, including İzmir and Istanbul, and transcending imperial borders within a single biography.

3. **Mailys Chauvin** (LAM-CNRS Sciences Po Bordeaux): *Return mobilities of Zanzibar exiles in the 2010s and the reshaping of a common world*

Several factors contribute to the return of post-revolutionary exiles to Zanzibar in the 2010s (exile retirement, post-Maridhiano political evolution, tourism development). In fact, returns actually take the form of multi-year back and forth movements (*va-et-vient*) between the Gulf, Europe, northern America and Zanzibar, as well as more complex circulations between the three main poles that structure post-revolution zanzibar diaspora. Throughout the 2010s, the city of Zanzibar has become a pivot of these mobilities. Urban places have been reappropriated contributing to the rerooting and reconnexion of zanzibaris dispersed in these regions of the worlds and residents. This article aims at informing the spatial, social and symbolic dimensions of this encounter from the beginning of the 2010's and the role of urban places and sociabilities in this process by emphasizing on Zanzibaris exiles from Oman, Dubai, UK, Danemark and Germany. It then seeks to analyze how returnees mobilities and

reconnexions contribute to reshaping of a common world among dispersed zanzibaris between the Gulf countries, northern Europe and east-african cities, links with/and functions of/ exile countries in their lives through the specific experiences and challenges that characterize the itineraries of this generation. Finally, it hope giving elements of understanding on how return mobilities contribute repositioning the self in a common world that can play the function of a home during the last period of their lives, renewing identity affiliations (at different levels : homeland, emigration states, diaspora), reinterpreting of the past and planning the future.

## TIME OFF FOR LUNCH

**Panel 7 :** 14.15-16.00 (Archaeology)

Chair: Behnaz Mirzai (Brock University, Canada)

1. **Stefania Manfio** (Stanford University): *Maritime archaeology and slave shipwrecks in Mauritius*

This paper focuses on the island of Mauritius, which had remained uninhabited and untouched until the arrival of Europeans. Mauritius' history is closely tied to colonialism and European influence, and this island holds a rich resource in historical maritime archaeology as everything needed to establish a colony - including the population - had to be brought in by sea. The presence of an extraordinary number of wrecks, over 800 historically recorded, confirms the great potential of this island.

Analyzing slavery through the lens of shipwrecks makes a significant contribution to the understanding of free and unfree labor migration. The 'vessel' was a vehicle of culture contact, and the study of the artifacts found in the shipwreck can give us significant information on life at sea. Accordingly, exploring the shipwreck's social, craft, and biographical aspects contributes important new evidence, helps contextualize the period of slavery, and offers new decolonizing perspectives.

This paper presents two slave shipwrecks discovered in Mauritius. The *Victoire* (1804) was built and in use during the French period when the slave trade was legal, and the *Coureur* (1821) sailed during the English period when the trade had been abolished. Despite their close proximity in time, these wrecks represent two separate chapters in the slave trading, Mauritius's history, and colonialism.

2. **Martin Kijava** (Independent researcher, Dar es Salaam): *Dissecting Restoration-Interpretation of Kunduchi Ruins*

Cultural Landscapes implicate political, spiritual and ideological dimensions (culture) that reflect how people think about landscape and how they are connected to personal and social entities (Refaat, 2015). Kunduchi ruins are located at the coast of east Africa Indian Ocean alongside new Bagamoyo road at the northern parts of Kinondoni District in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Kunduchi Ruins hold spectacular views and are rich in history not only of Africa but also past global trade between the African continent and the outside world. Sassoon, (1966), reports that fragments of 15th Century East African culture that embrace Chinese, Arabic, Indian, and Pakistan pottery and architectural designs as well as the evidence on Swahili civilization can be testified by Kunduchi ruins. Kunduchi ruins are known to present the Peak of Swahili Civilization. Presently, the narratives at Kunduchi are not very popular and need to be improved upon so that would be visitors more successful identifies themselves with the site. While the historical interpretation of the site is known, but there is need to enrich the present interpretation by searching the library about comparable truth in order to expand on any features that may not be explicit. On the other hand, general conservation and management status of the site has been neglected for a long time. In particular the ruins are in despicable deterioration conditions. Aside from the poor state of conservation there is confusing interpretation that leads to drastic ambiguity between the oral tradition and the written history of the Site about interpretation and presentation. Addition to that there is occasional conflict of interest between the local custodians and government authority at the site.

Furthermore, aware of Dar es salaam mega city plan which calminates the year 2030,it is feared that the Kunduchi Ruins might be swallowed by this aggressive urban sprawl and disappear.

3. **Celso Simbine, C zar Mahumane and Hil rio Madiquida** (Eduardo Mondlane University): *The Archaeology of Trade on Mozambique Island, CE 1100 – 1800*

During the first millennium CE, since 700 CE, a vibrant interconnectivity system of long-distance trade for the exchange of commercial goods took place along the Eastern Africa Coast. This interconnectivity resulted in the emergence and development of Swahili trade centers located from Ras Hafun in Somalia to Chibuene in Mozambique. The assemblage of historical and archaeological studies carried out has witnessed the early economic, cultural, and socio-political role of Swahili centers on the East African Coast and abroad. However, the case of Mozambique Island is still unknown, because up to now no substantial archaeological material related to the first millennium CE occupation has been found. Additionally, ongoing terrestrial and underwater archaeological investigations carried out on Mozambique Island revealed archaeological material dating from the 16th century CE onward, when the island became Carreira das Indias, and the most important Swahili trade center on the East African Coast. Consequently, when these transformations occurred on the island, they influenced the changing of the local economy of the redistribution system to the capitalist economic system. Thus, this paper aims to discuss the results of the analysis of historical data and archaeological material excavated on the terrestrial site of the island to understand the regional and international impact on the economic, cultural, and sociopolitical systems, and cultural identities of the Swahili community of Mozambique Island.

4. **David Maina Muthegethi** (Kenyatta University, Kenya): *Women Artisans: New Frontiers of gendered spaces in Gedi City State*

Gede City state experienced economic development from 11<sup>th</sup> century current era though intensification of Indian Ocean trade, rapid urbanization and diversification of subsistence patterns. The implication was development of artisan class that engaged in metal working, ceramics manufacturing, cotton spinning and beads making. These commodification of ceramics, metal objects, cloth and beads were aided by trade between Gede community and people from the hinterland. Thus, Gede community exchanged goods such as beads, metal objects, cloths and ceramics for ivory, animal skins and precious stones. These goods from hinterlands were exchanged with foreign merchants hence making Gede a mercantile City. Nonetheless, these new opportunities were contested by different social identities and became new frontiers where gender identities were expressed. This paper interrogates women artisans in Gede as demonstrated in archaeological record. To that end, an excavation of beads manufacturing area was undertaken and data correlated with ethnographic and historical sources concerning Swahili Civilization. Key findings shows that women were active participant in Gede mercantile economy. This was reflected during expansion of the city from 14<sup>th</sup> century. The new city included gendered spaces which shows women accessed public spaces that were used to negotiate for economic, social and political power.

Keywords: Artisans; Commodification; Diversification; Indian Ocean; Mercantile; Swahili Civilization

**COFFEE BREAK (offered)**

First floor Via Saffi, 42 (front of blue room)

1. **Behnaz Mirzai** (Brock University, Canada): *African Healing and Cultural Traditions in the Persian Gulf Region*

The trade in African slaves led to the formation of diasporic communities of Afro-Iranians along the shores of the Persian Gulf. The relationship between slavery and diaspora highlighted cultural continuity. Enslaved Africans imported from east and northeastern Africa created cultural features central to their identity. The practice of spirit possessions such as *zār*, *gowāt* and *līwā* derived from Africa spread wherever the enslaved settled. Afro-Iranians, status as minorities in the host society was a driving force to sustain and reconstruct their cultural heritage. The objective of this paper is to examine various diasporic aspects of Africans in Iran, in particular spirit possession cults as evidence of cultural survival. I argue that the practice of spirit possessions such as *zār*, *gowāt* and *līwā* associated with Africa not only should be seen as a healing process, but also as a factor which bonded members of Afro-Iranian communities.

The approach to discuss this topic is multidisciplinary relying on documentaries, field work, interviews as well as published and unpublished sources.

2. **Zahir Bhalloo** (University of Hamburg): *From Bushehr to Zanzibar: Shi'i Ritual Mobility and Rhythmic Exchange in the Western Indian Ocean*

My paper examines how a type of Shi'i mourning ritual, the beating of chests by individuals while moving in a circle, and its associated rhythmic devotional chants in Persian, was introduced by Iranian sailors from the Persian Gulf port of Bushehr in southern Iran, among the Twelver Shii Indian Khoja minority from Gujarat residing in Stone Town Zanzibar, in the early 1950s. The southern Iranian Persian rhythms of this circular ritual practice and its chants was adapted into Urdu among the Twelver Khojas of Zanzibar and East Africa as *saf matam*. I demonstrate that a similar exchange appears to have occurred both in the Arabian peninsula among the Twelver Khojas in Matrah, Oman (Lawatiya), and in Bombay, where the practice and chants in Persian are termed *bushehri matam*. Together the ritual practice and its chants provide a striking example of rhythmic exchange in the Western Indian ocean made possible by the monsoons and mobility of Bushehri sailors in seagoing dhows between the Persian Gulf, Arabian Peninsula, Western regions of the Indian subcontinent and East Africa.

3. **Salvatory S. Nyanto** (University of Dar Es Salaam), *Dances, Patronage and Belonging in Post-Abolition Unyamwezi, Western Tanzania*

Dances in nineteenth and twentieth-century Unyamwezi were central in negotiating freedom, patron-clientage and belonging. They were an integral part of social life in Unyamwezi because they shaped culture, identity, and affinity. Notwithstanding their position in slave communities, studies about slavery and post-slavery have attracted relatively little attention in history, anthropology and archaeology for the past two decades of production of knowledge in East Africa. For the most part, attempts into which the formerly enslaved people used dances and songs to shape patron-clientage and social life remain to be told in the East African historiography. This paper attempts to fill that void by probing into the place of dances and songs to the making of patronage-client relations and kinship between formerly enslaved people on the one hand and between formerly enslaved people and communities on the other in Unyamwezi. The paper hinges on a myriad of sources to show that an understanding of post-slavery Unyamwezi should consider how former slaves articulated freedom, support and belonging through songs and dances.

Keywords: Dances, Patronage, Belonging, Post-Abolition Unyamwezi, Western Tanzania

4. **Stephen Okumu Ombere** (Maseno University, Kenya): *We are still a kinship: Designing relatedness among migrating fishermen in Coastal Kenya*

Kinship has historically been central to the social science disciplines, but what sort of future does it have for “mobile populations”? Kinship involves much more, however than relations through descent and marriage, social structure, and rights and obligations between kin. The study of kinship has rested on a distinction between the “biological” and the “social.” But recent technological developments have made this distinction no longer self-evident. Indeed, kinship is also an ideology of human relationships; it involves cultural ideas about how humans are created and the nature and meaning of their biological and moral connections with others. Mobility has a decisive influence on a wide range of social, political and economic processes and has a great significance for the organization of society. The coastal region of Kenya is home to a significant population of fishermen who depend on fishing as their primary source of livelihood. Mobility and movement play an increasing role in the lives of these fishermen. Notably, the fishing industry in the coastal region has traditionally been characterized by a close-knit social structure, with strong ties of relatedness and kinship playing a significant role in shaping the social fabric of these communities. However, in recent years, the fishing industry has been faced with a multitude of challenges, including declining fish stocks, changing environmental conditions, and increasing competition for marine resources. These challenges have forced many fishermen to seek alternative sources of income, leading to the migration of fishermen from coastal communities to other parts of Kenya. Migrating fishermen often join new fishing communities in different regions, where they must establish new social and economic networks. In doing so, they are faced with the task of navigating and negotiating relationships, solidifying their status as members of these new communities while also maintaining ties with their home communities. This process of establishing relatedness and kinship in new environments requires careful negotiation and adaptation to create a sense of belonging and community. This article is based on qualitative research conducted in Kilifi County Kenya among families that had migrating fishermen. I conducted in-depth interviews, phone interviews, and informal conversations with 10 families and fishermen along the fish landing beaches of Kilifi County between 2017 and 2019. It emerged that fishermen relied on existing kinship ties and familial connections to forge new relationships in the new community. Thus, leveraging their existing family networks, fishermen established themselves within the social fabric of the new community and built social capital, thereby facilitating their integration into the new environment and strengthening their sense of relatedness. Socio-cultural practices also played a critical role in maintaining kinship and retaining relatedness. For instance, shared practices, rituals, and traditions served as a means of connecting migrating fishermen to their home communities, reinforcing their sense of identity, and sustaining a sense of relatedness and kinship across geographical boundaries. The findings show the relevance of kinship ties and how they help fishermen adapt to the new situations encountered on other beaches. It therefore means that relatedness formed by fishermen during migration- which is a way of life, provides resources that are an essential part of the culture of mobility and have an impact on the local set-ups. The findings are also a reflection of how the adaptive strategies employed by migrating fishermen serve as a testament to the enduring nature of relatedness and kinship in the face of social change and migration.

Keywords: Anthropology, fishermen, kinship, migration, relatedness, social change.

**SOCIAL DINNER (offered)**

Piazza della Repubblica - Collegio Raffaello (La cucina di Taty)

## DAY THREE - 6 APRIL

**Panel 8** – 9.00-10.45 (History/Anthropology)

Chair: Preben Kaarsholm (Roskilde University, Denmark)

1. **Beatrice Nicolini** (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano): *The Epistolary Intrigues of Napoleon: Unraveling Anglo-French Rivalry in the Gulf and Indian Ocean*

Thanks to the ‘noteworthy intercepted letters by Napoleon,’ penned on January 25th, 1799, from Cairo, Egypt, during the French Egyptian Campaign, a compelling examination of political, military, and strategic communications surfaces. These missives elicited profound reactions from various exponents of the time, subsequently triggering political actions and decisions that would significantly reshape regional policies and dynamics in the expanse extending from Persia to India, as well as across the Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Notably, these historical occurrences bear relevance to contemporary political landscapes and socio-economic considerations. The looming specter of European invasion threats and regional rivalries heightened British apprehensions. This concise exploration delves into intriguing documents housed in the India Office Library and Records in London, UK, and the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères in Paris, France. In the face of persistent French threats, both preceding and following Napoleon’s era, the ‘noteworthy intercepted letters’ presented novel possibilities for strategic and military alliances against Great Britain to leaders in the Indian and Arabian regions. The ensuing political ramifications prompted the formulation of fresh British policies and alliances with regional leaders in the Gulf, all aimed at thwarting the imminent French threat. The political ramifications precipitated the development of novel British policies and alliances within the Gulf region, involving collaboration with local leaders in an effort to thwart the perceived French threat. However, this strategic approach tended to overlook the nuanced local circumstances and exhibited a disregard for Indian Ocean regional balances and assertions.

2. **Abdelhakim Belhacel** (Université Paris Nanterre): *Understanding the Omani rule in East Africa in the 19th Century through the monsoon system*

The connections between India, East Africa, and the Persian Gulf in the modern period, driven in particular by Arab, Swahili, and Indian Muslim merchants, are relatively well known. The monsoon system had long enabled considerable navigation and trade in the Western Indian Ocean. This paper will examine the importance of the monsoons in Omani warfare and commerce in East Africa. The monsoons and the connections they create will be our point of entry to better understand the functioning of the (second) Omani empire in East Africa in the 18th and 19th centuries. We will shed more light on the importance of the monsoons in the Omani Empire's trade in East Africa, a well-known phenomenon, and also describe the political role of these seasonal movements, showing how the two were frequently intertwined. As the verses of the Swahili poet Muyaka reveal, the northern monsoon not only brought merchants to East Africa, but also potential invaders. This was the route taken by the Omani conquerors feared by Muyaka. The monsoon indeed enabled the Omanis to connect their domains in Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, and to move warships and troops between the two theaters of operation. But the monsoon could also act as a barrier, making navigation dangerous or even impossible in certain directions, depending on the time of year. How, then, to ensure the political coherence of an empire whose political centers (Muscat and Zanzibar) are cut off from each other for much of the year, and whose peripheries cannot be protected from invasion or insurrection for long months on end?

This communication examines the seasonality of Omani power in the northern part of its African territories (Banaadir). We will also look at the difficulties posed by the monsoons to the Omani sovereigns in maintaining their empire and their attempts to overcome these challenges, notably the search for troops in Madagascar by

the Omani sovereign sayyid Sa'īd as well as the adaptation of the rhythm of their military campaigns to the monsoons. We will also examine the Omani sovereigns' early interest in steamships, which enabled them to free themselves from the seasonality of the monsoon, and the effects of these on their power in Africa and Arabia.

This talk will be based on European diplomats' and travelers' accounts and on archival research that I have recently carried out in archives in England, France, Oman, India and Zanzibar. For the present study, I also rely on Malagasy-language correspondence between sayyid Sa'īd and the Madagascar Kingdom and Arabic-language correspondence of Omani sovereigns. This communication will be part of the thesis I am currently writing at Université Paris Nanterre and Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne, entitled "The Omani domination in East Africa 1804-1884: networks, powers and hybridizations". In this thesis, I am endeavoring to bring together African history, Indian Ocean studies, and the history of the Arabian Peninsula.

3. **Samson Peter Malekela** (Stella Maris Mtwara University College, Tanzania): *Slave trade and slavery in 19th century towns of Mgao and Mikindani in southeastern Tanganyika: resistance, agency and memories*

Slavery is a complex socio-economic and political aspect which played significant role in sharpening many communities in the world including those located in the East African Coast. Mikindani and Mgao (Mongalo) are the 18th and 19th century two important towns nested along the coast of southeastern Tanganyika (Present-day Tanzania mainland). These coastal towns to large extent are the results of the processes of slavery and slave trade activities among others, which converged different actors from diverse origins mainly Africa, Asia and Europe to Indian Ocean World (IOW). Trade and agricultural activities in these areas and beyond exploited a lot of resources from Tanganyika such as labour, gold and forest products like ivory, bee wax and honey. How slavery and slave trade were perpetuated and resisted by the Africans in Mikindani and Mgao and its memory is relatively less studied and documented. Therefore, this paper focuses on examining how slavery was resisted, the African agency and the related memories in the two coastal towns. The study employs both, primary and secondary sources. Oral accounts and archival sources will serve as primary sources where as, documentary reviews from books and journal articles will constitute secondary sources. Findings suggests that Africans experienced and contributed a lot to development of slavery and its abolition leaving behind tangible and intangible landscapes of memory. Slavery and slave trade was resisted through diverse strategies such as runaways, socialization and migration. More importantly, it has been revealed that road to freedom among slaves was not linear due to the fact that of them were not just granted emancipation by Europeans or missionaries rather by their ingenuity via different avenues to social social mobility.

KeyWords: Agency, Slavery, Mgao, Resistance, Memory, Slave Trade Mikindani

4. **Marie-Pierre Ballarin** and **Hervé Pennec** (Université Côte d'Azur, Urmis; CNRS, GIS Études Africaines, IMAf): *Slavery and Post-slavery in African Indian Ocean Island Societies: current state of research*

Over the past couple decades the study of slavery and of many forms of slave trade has attracted increasing attention among scholars of Africa. This can be attributed to the increasing visibility, in various African states, of social and political conflicts rooted in the vestiges of slavery and servility. The social, religious, and political ideologies that entrenched hierarchies within African communities are being contested, and the memories of oppressed groups are entering the domain of public debate. However an attentive look at the results of research on slavery reveals an imbalance in terms of production of knowledge about the different parts of the world affected by slavery and the slave trade. The areas most represented in scholarly studies are North and South America (United States, Brazil), and the Caribbean region (insular and coastal). Yet, Atlantic models do not necessarily fit African or Indian Ocean experiences. While the slave trade was a modern phenomenon in the Atlantic, the longue durée of slavery in the Indian Ocean, and the intertwining of traditional forms of servitude



with colonial slavery created other dynamics that affected the East African and Indian Ocean societies. Trade routes and forced migrations have then contributed to the emergence of multi-faceted societies that still bear the marks of this painful history. The aim of our proposal is to discuss the project to draw up a white paper on contemporary research on slavery and post-slavery in this part of the world highlighting the different themes addressed recently by researchers from the African continent and their European counterparts. Without being a classic book, the project will instead take the form of a report which allows us to present the current studies and the networks behind them, as well as reflecting on the gaps and perspectives. This conference, held within the framework of the CRG Africa in the Indian Ocean, will be an opportunity to think, share, make proposals, and strengthen the network of academics and scholars working hard on this topic extremely relevant for this region.

### **TIME OFF for a COFFEE at a bar**

**Panel 9 – 11.15-13.00 (Representations)**  
Chair: TBA

1. **Elcídio Rui Macuácuá** (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Eduardo Mondlane University):  
*Cultural Connections and Identity in the Indian Ocean between Macuas on the Mozambique Island and Mayotte*

The history of slavery and the slave trade among African peoples and the history of enslaved populations, freed people and their descendants, often mixed race, rooted in the societies to which they were transported. In the case of the Island of Mozambique and Mayotte Islands, this study will focus on identifying the identities of the cultural roots in the place of destination where the enslaved people from Mozambique were transported, with a greater focus on the Indian Ocean Islands specifically (Islands of Mozambique and Mayotte). It also seeks to establish historical and cultural relations between the Macua people of the Island of Mozambique and Mayotte.

The macuas, who were forced to leave their lands and taken to different parts of the Indian Ocean, certainly carried with them elements of their cultures, languages, music, habits and customs. But for their descendants, already born in captivity, Mozambique may have become a distant memory. However, Mozambique's condition should lead us to reflect on this connection, even if these origins may have been diluted over time and do not evoke good memories.

The culture of Mozambique Island and Mayotte resulted from the crossing of populations over the centuries, and from a very rich mixture, with Swahili culture as the main melting pot. This mix is also reflected in music, singing and dancing. The islands have a great musical and choreographic tradition linked to Arab-Muslim culture. Music is a way of expressing strong feelings, but also a way of living faith.

The central argument of this article, the Indian Ocean represents a space of cultural interconnections not only under Asian and European influence, but also in relations with other spaces around the Indian Ocean and island African communities, in the case of the Island of Mozambique and Mayotte. Thus, the article in question allows us to expand our understanding of the historical processes existing between the Indian Ocean Islands and provides an important contribution to the study of cultural and identity connections in this region between "macuas" on the Island of Mozambique and Mayotte Island. Methodologically, the study is based on a literature review, interviews and research into archival sources.

Keywords: Cultural Connections, Identity, Macuas, Island of Mozambique, Mayotte.

2. **Rufus Maculuve** (independent researcher/ Artist, Maputo, Mozambique): *A sonic approach to vernacular archives and cultural memory of the fishing communities of Mozambique Island*

Mozambique Island, located off the coast of northern Mozambique, is a UNESCO World Heritage site known for its rich cultural history. This island is a melting pot of diverse cultures influenced by African, Arab and Portuguese traditions. With its rich history as a major trading port, the island has served as a space of cultural interactions, resulting in a vibrant tapestry of customs, languages, religious practices and artistic expressions. The fishing communities of this island are deeply connected to the surrounding Indian Ocean, and carry their own distinct cultural practices and knowledge that are passed down through generations. The island's historical significance, coupled with its diverse cultural landscape, makes it an ideal setting for exploring the role of vernacular archives and cultural memory within fishing communities, and further understanding the intricate interplay between heritage, identity and the sonic practices that shape their collective stories. Despite the island's cultural significance and a lot of research having been done in this place, the intersection of vernacular archives, cultural memory and sound remains an under-explored area. On the other hand, the study of vernacular archives and cultural memory through sound, is critical for understanding how communities remember and interpret their pasts, as a lot of knowledge is embedded within these sources. The adoption of a sonic approach stems from the recognition of the significant role of sound in shaping cultural practices and collective memory. Sound possesses the unique ability to capture the intangible and ephemeral aspects of cultural heritage, offering valuable insights into lived experiences, emotions and social dynamics. Sterne (2003) and Feld (2012) have emphasized the importance of sonic methodologies in uncovering hidden cultural meanings and engaging with the sensory dimensions of human experience. Stories, songs, rituals and everyday sounds, allow thinkers to tap into the collective memories of communities and understand their realities. And this paper composes the soundscapes of the Mozambican Island, based on songs by fishermen and choco women<sup>4</sup> (anthropophony), as well as the interpretation of environmental sounds (geophony) by the communities. Archives in general are multifaceted, are shaped by politics and power dynamics, highlighting the importance of understanding their contextual underpinnings in shaping societal collective memory, they also play a role in addressing collective trauma, giving voice to marginalized communities, and challenging dominant narratives, Manoff (2004) and Caswell (2014). According to Wood (2010), they document lived experiences of marginalized groups and catalyzing social justice initiatives. These perspectives underscore the dynamic and influential nature of archives in shaping and preserving diverse aspects of societal memory.

Halbwachs (1925) asserts that memories are socially constructed and maintained, transcending individual isolation. Nora (1992) delves into the formation of national identity and cultural heritage, noting the impact of various institutions and practices subject to broader political and social forces. Jan and Aleida Assmann (1994) explore cultural memory's role in shaping individual and collective identities, highlighting the complex interplay of social contexts, personal experiences, and historical events. Recent scholarship, such as Ernst's (2011) examination of digital technologies' implications on cultural memory preservation and Garde-Hansen and Hoskins' (2011) exploration of media's role in shaping cultural memory and identity, expands the discourse to encompass the evolving landscape of memory studies. Methodologically, a sonic ethnography was employed, through the sonic practices of fisherman and choco women, encompassing both anthropophonic elements such as songs and narratives, and geophonic sounds like wind. An immersive fieldwork was done, in combination with 360° and stereo recordings, capturing the richness of sonic environments. The collected audio recordings and interview transcripts underwent thorough analysis, utilizing qualitative and interpretive methods to uncover recurring themes and meanings. The initial findings reveal compelling narratives within the fishing communities, with a particular emphasis on work songs that convey both explicit and implicit meanings on various subjects. For example the song "Salamama", invites one to rest after a long and laborious working day (text), while it is also an invitation to intimacy (subtext). Wind and tide readings conducted by

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<sup>4</sup> Women who collect molluscs when the tide is low.

the “Nahota”<sup>5</sup>, represents a unique sensorial knowledge, which bases its readings mainly on sounds, and has been passed on through oral traditions for generations. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the cultural dynamics within Mozambique Island's fishing communities, and underscore the significance of a sonic approach in exploring vernacular archives and cultural memory.

3. **Patrícia Ferraz de Matos** (Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal): *Fluid like water: histories, representations and current challenges in the relations between Macau (China) and the (Lusophone) world*

This paper results from a reflection on harbour cities and the way in which water, more than just a geographical barrier, can be a privileged means of communication, as well as a means of circulation for people, things and resources. The location chosen for analysis is Macau in its relations with China and the Lusophone world. It starts with the history of Macau and its relationship with the so-called Portuguese colonial empire. Some representations of Macau and the Macanese, produced in Portugal during the colonial period, in the twentieth century, with their possible prejudices common in that context, will be analysed, although some may still have repercussions today. The documents analysed include periodical press and events aimed at the popular masses, such as exhibitions, and other events portrayed in the colonial propaganda. The current context in which China seeks to open up to the entire world, sometimes precisely through Macau, also exploring its relations with Portugal, and with the Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa (i.e. former Portuguese colonies) is good for thinking about colonial and decolonial perspectives, current challenges, in terms of shared heritage, language, power strategies, cultural relations and labour (with the employment, in the past and today, of many Chinese workers in Angola and Mozambique, for example).

4. **Ute Fendler** (University of Bayreuth): *Oceanic Artists: polyrhythmic passages across the Indian Ocean*

With the most recent turn in Humanities towards the ocean as a method (Menon et al., 2022) and blue humanities (Mentz, 2023), concepts like fluidity, tidalectics and polyrhythm shift the foci towards the complex and changing connections across the Indian Ocean. This paper will take these concepts as a starting point to suggest a corpus of artworks created by artists from Goa, Mozambique, Mauritius and La Réunion that all explore the close interdependence of history and the oceanic tides that allow - and force - migration of people, goods, and cultures. The examples will illustrate the cooperation between the artists and the ocean using the changing forces of the water and the waves on objects (from ships and shipwrecks as in the case of Goan artist Subodh Kerkar or Mozambican sculptor Pekiwa for example) as well as the larger connecting lines in the history of slavery and indentured labour (the oeuvre of Jack Bengh-Ti from La Réunion and Mauritian artist Krishna Luchoomun) or traveling stories (as in Yara Costa's installation and sound archives). All these artworks create a larger relational imaginary of the rhythmic exchanges in the Western Indian Ocean.

## TIME OFF FOR LUNCH

Saturday afternoon 14.30: Visit to Ducal Palace  
Meeting in front of the main entrance h 14.20

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<sup>5</sup> Sea master, who is able to read winds, tides and captain a boat.

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