



ZIAF Annual report 2023



# Centre for interdisciplinary African Studies Annual report 2023 20 years of the ZIAF



Centre for interdisciplinary African Studies  
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Centre for  
interdisciplinary  
African Studies





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Annual report 2023  
20 years of the ZIAF**



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## Foreword

20 years of ZIAF: since 2003, the ZIAF research activities has been coordinating the diverse Africa research of Goethe University and its partner institutions in a competence network. The centre acts as a communication and network infrastructure for all Africa-related activities at Goethe University. Last year, the centre was evaluated for the first time by a group of external experts on behalf of the University's Presidential Board. During the evaluation in November 2023, it became clear in various rounds of discussions with junior researchers, experienced project managers and representatives of the dean's offices how highly regarded the ZIAF is within Goethe University. The principle of "bottom-up" was highlighted as something particularly positive. The

attractiveness of the ZIAF is also reflected in the dynamic growth in membership. In 2023 alone, twelve new members were welcomed, including four professors (Barbara Alge, Heinz Drügh, Stefan Michels, Anja Middelbeck-Varwick).

In addition to the successful projects in the four main research areas presented in this issue, the ZIAF has created a unique selling point both nationally and internationally through projects that are not to be understood as pure research projects. Rather, the focus is on promoting young German and African scientists and facilitating cooperation in Africa and between African scholars from different countries. Such networking projects include the Volkswagen Foundation Fellowship Programme (since 2012), the DFG Point Sud Programme (since 2009), the Gerda Henkel Foundation's Pilote African Postgraduate Academy (PAPA, since 2019), the Maria Sibylla Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa (MIASA, BMBF, since 2018) and numerous multinational field schools in the fields of palaeobiology, climate change, ecology and mycology (VW Foundation, GIZ, since 2009).

The evaluation was not only an opportunity to take stock of activities to date, but also an impetus to identify new development prospects. Nevertheless, the four existing main research areas are still considered to be highly relevant for the medium to long-term perspective. Their diversity, which includes natural sciences and humanities disciplines, is one of the strengths of the ZIAF in national and international comparison. They are therefore to be further expanded and more closely interlinked. For example, there are plans to develop an SFB proposal in the field of Transregional Studies from 2024, in close cooperation with the Interdisciplinary Centre for East Asian Studies (IZO) and the Gutenberg University Mainz. Based on the Frankfurt projects of the DFG Priority Programme "Entangled Africa", a DFG package proposal for exploratory research in will be developed and submitted at the end of 2024. With the DFG projects on the Köhler Archive and the planned exhibitions in the national museums of Dakar and N'Djamena, the focus on "Handling collections and research data" in the area of transferring research findings will be substantially expand-

ed. An interdisciplinary group from the humanities and natural sciences will be working on a proposal for a DFG Research Training Group on the topic of "The Future of Collections" in 2024.

In the course of its existence and within the framework of several structured programmes, the ZIAF has modified its understanding of research in Africa, on Africa and on Africa-related studies several times. Reflecting on how research can be conducted in, with or in relation to Africa is an orientation service that goes beyond the dimension of a single project and is therefore a priority task of the ZIAF. Thus, the ZIAF will continue to support critical and reflexive debates on Africa as a topic of scientific research. We are confident that ZIAF will have a long and successful future and hope you enjoy reading this report.

**Prof. Hans Peter Hahn**  
ZIAF Managing Director





## Centre for interdisciplinary African Studies

Since 2003, ZIAF has coordinated the diverse Africa-related research activities of the Goethe University Frankfurt and its partner institutions in a competence network. This also includes research with and on diasporic individuals and groups. At present, around 60 researchers from ten faculties and institutes are involved in ZIAF, representing a broad disciplinary spectrum: African Studies, English Studies, Archaeobotany, Archaeology, Biology, Catholic and Protestant Theology, Eco-nomics, Geosciences, Film and Media Studies, Human Geography, Linguistics, Medicine, Musicology, Palaeobiology, Physical Geography, Political Science, Romance Studies and Social and Cultural Anthropology. Partner institutions

include the Frobenius Institute, the Senckenberg Research Institute and Natural History Museum Frankfurt, the Hessian Foundation for Peace and Conflict Research (HSFK), and the Institute for Social Ecological Research (ISOE). ZIAF coordinates the networking of Africa-related research within the framework of the Rhine-Main Alliance of the universities in Frankfurt, Darmstadt, and Mainz.

### Aims of the ZIAF

- Promoting cooperation between the natural sciences, humanities and social sciences
- facilitating the exchange of knowledge between Africa, Europe, and the countries of the Global South;
- acting collaboratively with its African partners,
- initiating innovative new research projects, and fosters a network of national and international institutions from research, business, development cooperation, and culture.

- strengthening the interdisciplinary, transregional, and cross-national activities of early career researchers (ECR).

### Circulation of knowledge

ZIAF sees itself as a forum that promotes the circulation of knowledge between Africa, Europe, and the countries of the Global South. Knowledge generated in Europe about African countries and regions is to be made available to African scholars, as is knowledge produced by African scholars in Germany. This is done, for example, by inviting African colleagues to the Goethe University, where the focus is not only on joint research work but also on presenting the results at public events.

A new focus of ZIAF Goethe University's Africa-related collections. In addition, both the collection objects and the jointly generated knowledge will be made increasingly accessible to the African public. This shall be realized via exhibitions, lectures, con-

ferences, and media products. ZIAF is committed to the FAIR and CARE principles in its handling of research data.

### Collaborative action

ZIAF follows the principle of collaborative action with African partners at all levels. This begins with the development of the project idea and ideally also extends to the administration of its funds. In order to improve conditions at all levels ZIAF is actively involved in dialogue with major national research funding organisations such as BMBF, DFG, DAAD, and various foundations, as well as in national and international professional associations (VAD, CrossArea, AEGIS). Of particular importance are ZIAF's long-established network programmes with various partner institutions in Anglo-, Francophone, and Lusophone Africa for the promotion of graduate and doctoral students in Africa. Among other things, they deal with fundamental questions in the hu-



manities and social sciences from an African perspective. This also includes transregional research approaches that addresses Africa's global interconnectedness, for example with Asian countries. Another focus of ZIAF is the implementation of academic events in Africa, which are carried out in partnership from conception to implementation.

#### Grown partnerships

ZIAF also sees its role in maintaining and stabilising partnerships and networks beyond the duration of projects. The members of ZIAF are convinced that long-term structures based on concrete joint projects are the best basis for a sustainable partnership at eye level. ZIAF's cooperation partners in Africa include renowned universities such as the University of Addis Ababa and the University of Ghana as well as regional institutions such as the Point Sud Research Centre in Bamako, non-governmental research organisations, and networks in Anglo-, Fran-



cophone, and Lusophone Africa. It is important for the reliability of partnerships that they are maintained and nurtured even in times of political crisis, as in the case of the partner organisations in the Sahel.

#### Support of innovative projects

ZIAF sees itself as a think tank for new ideas and approaches. It uses its resources to promote the collaborative development of interdisciplinary research ideas and projects together with African partners, also with a view to disseminating knowledge in Africa. The members of ZIAF are organised into four research foci, which are also interlinked.

#### I. Transregional studies

This research focus deals with interactions between Africa, Europe, and Asia. The aim is to systematically explore, conceptualise and theoretically locate transregional "in-between spaces" that question previous spatial categorisations.

#### II. Cultural history and ecological change

The focus is on settlement history, economy, and the formation of political structures, as well as prehistoric art in its social, cultural, and ecological context. Research is conducted on the development of the cultural landscape under the influence of man as well as on climate and vegetation history in interaction with cultural development.

#### III. Language, discourses, communication

This area is devoted to linguistic analysis and sociolinguistics and focuses on questions of language and cultural change, such as the role of media and the change in communicative practices in migration processes. In addition, complex discursive processes in the context of political power relations, social institutions, economic action, and religious beliefs are also studied.

#### IV. Sustainable resource management

Bio- and geoscientific research on sustainability deals with plant resources, the degradation of landscape ecosystems in times of climate change, and the environmental impacts of mining and infrastructure projects. Questions on the future availability of raw materials, political transparency, and good governance are also addressed.

#### Courses with a connection to Africa

In line with the mission statement of the Goethe University's, ZIAF promotes research-based learning in internationally oriented teaching. The interdisciplinary field schools and summer schools, which have been running for many years are ideal instruments for cooperation between African and German teachers and students. ZIAF is striving to further expand its Africa-related courses, especially with regard to the involvement of African partners.



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## Main research focus: 20 years of ZIAF – understanding African Studies

In 2023, the ZIAF looks back on 20 years of successful work at Goethe University. This anniversary should be taken as an opportunity to reflect on the self-image, past, present and future tasks of African Studies in general, but also on the ZIAF in particular.

### A reflexive take on 'Africa' as a field of study

Against the background of several successful acquisitions of large, structured research programmes and in awareness of its own potential to generate substantial research funding on Africa-related topics for the Goethe University in the future, it makes sense to take another closer look at the perspective

on the continent, on the specific nature of the subject of the research, as "Africa", and on the self-image of the researchers involved.

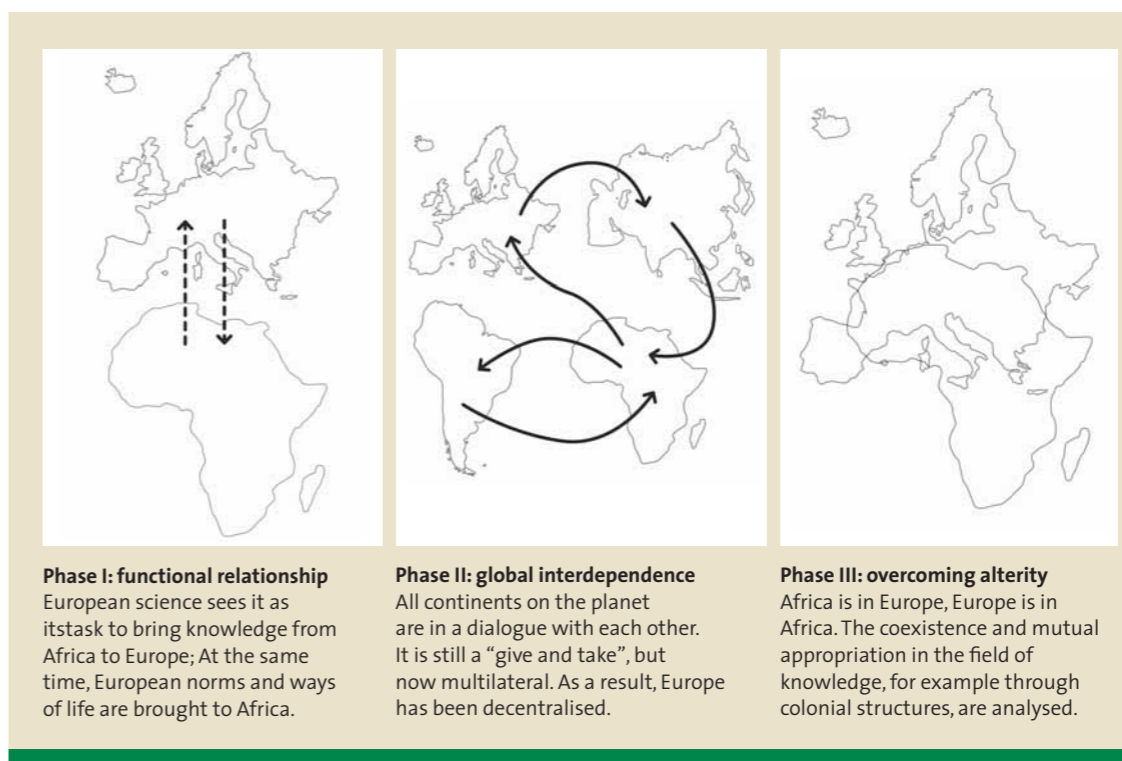
The starting point of ZIAF's work was the idea that the African continent had not been sufficiently researched (Phase I). This statement applied to all disciplines and motivated all activities in the research field of African studies throughout the 20th century: the aim was to fill gaps in research and to document phenomena that had previously received little or insufficient attention. African studies aimed at increasing knowledge about Africa in Europe. The link between the object of research and the actors was defined by achievements in research: better results meant more resources for research, more recognition and the opportunity for more research stays in Africa. The number and quality of publications by these actors, mostly located in Western journals or publishing houses, were regarded as the central criterion for success. What was special about the research based in Frankfurt in the years around 2000 was the strong collaboration between very different disciplines, particularly between the humanities and natural sciences.

The BMBF-funded programme entitled "Africa's Asian Options" (AFRASO) brought about a certain innovation. The focus was no longer just on the continent as such, but on the perception of a global interdependence: Africa was understood as part of a globalised world, in which transcontinental rela-

tions consisted not only in the study of the other continent (European science serves the study of Africa), but also in the interdependence with other continents, especially with Asia.

Africa as an object of research was no longer only seen in terms of its difference to Europe, but also in terms of its relationship to Asia and the other continents, long established in historical research in the field of studies labelled as Black Atlantic. The idea of a global embedding was taken to the next level (Phase II): In this framework Africa was not longer

conceived as isolated. Influences from Africa were not exclusively and not always dominantly defined by European, but also by Asian impulses. This resulted in a more complex perspective on the continent; the image of Africa became more differentiated. Current research on Africa has further developed its priorities with regard to the continent. From today's perspective, it is no longer sufficient to consider the coexistence of the various continents with its peoples and cultures, and to describe the continent's unique characteristics. Rather, in the last 15







years, the focus has shifted to the question of which knowledge and positioning has triggered or even strengthened knowledge about Africa in Europe. Africa-related scholarship today rejects the idea of a clear spatial or cultural boundary between one continent and the other. Rather, it examines how cultural phenomena of the one are contained in the debates of the other, and how they have affected the self-confidence and identity of societies. In the process, it is discovered that African cultures play a much greater role in Europe than is recognised.

### Ongoing revisions of African Studies

What is provisionally referred to here as Phase III is based on the assumption that the connections – as well as the routines of demarcation – between the societies of the two continents are much older and more intensive than has previously been assumed in science. In Europe, traces of African-relat-

ed knowledge practices have existed for a very long time, even in places where they were hardly ever expected before. They include documents about travellers and their archived legacies, about the import and export of goods, ideas, languages and norms. In the context of the emerging disciplines in the humanities, so-called “scientific collections” play an important role. The discovery and re-evaluation of such sources of knowledge applies equally to the natural sciences and the humanities. There is not only an impressive variety of forms of the presence of African culture in Europe, but also a broad spectrum of ways of talking about Africa or with people in Africa.

At the centre of this new research approach is the search for Africa not only within the borders of the continent, but basically everywhere and in particular in the history of ideas of the scholarship that emerged in Europe. Spatial borders have been replaced by arguments of solidarity, but very often



also by arguments and strategies of ideologically based demarcation and segregation. The coexistence of the two continents was rarely viewed under the premise of equivalence and mutual recognition. Much more often, there was the idea of superiority, as expressed in colonial ideology. Paradoxically, it was assumed that the cultures and societies of Europe were superior and at the same time that the natural resources (minerals, flora and fauna) on the African continent were superior. Both are just examples of prejudices, but each in its own way characterised the relationship between the two continents.

As a consequence, dealing with Africa in Africa and at the same time in Europe also means taking a critical look at Africa-related discourses. Examples of this discourse-oriented research, co-initiated by ZIAF in Frankfurt, can be found in the DFG-funded “Point Sud” programme, which has been running

successfully for over 10 years, as well as in the Merian Institute for Advanced Studies on Africa (MIASA), which was established in 2019. The endeavour to understand speaking about the Other, i.e. the construction of alterity, also motivated the establishment of a German-French doctoral programme (DFDK) entitled “Representing the Other”.

### Future Perspectives

This new research approach is to be further strengthened in the coming years by a research programme on research collections at Goethe University. The project will not only focus on the question of what motivated the creation of such Africa-related collections and which questions the collections were supposed to answer in the course of their research. The aim of the planned research project is also to develop concepts in dialogue with scholars from the Global South as to how such collections with references to both continents can be jointly studied and collaboratively processed in the future.



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## I. Research field: transregional studies

Transregional research deals with the new interactions between Africa and other world regions. Transregional research is concerned with the systematic exploration, conceptualisation and theoretical questioning of ‘inbetween spaces’. Examples are corridors of transnational migration, zones of transnational social encounters, spaces of transnational social and political action or spaces of transnational imaginaries. How such spaces are stabilized institutionally and infrastructurally and how they transform conventional spatial orders are concrete questions of transregional studies.

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## CEDITRAA – cultural entrepreneurship and digital transformation in Africa and Asia

CEDITRAA is an interdisciplinary project in the BMBF's area studies funding line which studies the digital transformation of the culture industries in Africa and Asia with a focus on Nigeria and South Korea. CEDITRAA brings together researchers at the universities of Frankfurt and Mainz and connects ZIAF to its Mainz counterpart, the "Zentrum für Interkulturelle Studien" (now Georg Foster Forum) for the first time.

### A new world order of cultural production

Since 2021 a team of researchers from economics, ethnology, African Studies, Korean Studies, Sinology

and cinema studies have studied various aspects of what Pakistani writer Fatima Bhutto has called a "new world order of cultural production". Just as new contenders like China, India or Brazil challenge the political and economic hegemony of the United States, megacities like Lagos, Istanbul, Mumbai, Seoul or Djakarta have emerged as new global centres of cultural production. Driven by a combination of affordable digital technologies, entrepreneurial ingenuity and cultural distinctiveness (plus, usually, a dose of hands-off government policy), Nollywood films, Afrobeats artists like Whizkid and Burnaboy, Korean K-Pop and K-Dramas now challenge the century-old ascendancy of the cultural industries in the United States and Europe. CEDITRAA focuses on music and film in Nigeria and South Korea and combines field work with digital methods and cultural analysis.

### Three major conferences in 2023

In 2023 CEDITRAA team members organized three major international conferences. On June 9 to 10 and as part of the #Archival Assembly festival organized by "Arsenal Institut für Film und Videokunst Berlin", project leader Vinzenz Hediger hosted an international symposium together with Arsenal's and #Archival Assembly's artistic director Stefanie Schulte Strathaus at Silent Green in Wedding, on the topic of "Accidental Archivism". Building on current work on Nigeria's film heritage, "Accidental

Archivism" brought together scholars, curators and archivists from all parts of the world, particularly from Egypt and Nigeria, to discuss the challenges of film archiving in the Global South, and to discuss and devise new methods to use digital platforms to make the film history of African countries visible. "Accidental Archivism" was accompanied by the publication of an eponymous anthology of essays, which is available in open access. On July 6 to 7, CEDITRAA PIs Cornelia Storz and Vinzenz Hediger together with CEDITRAA project coordinator Bertram Lang convened an international Symposium entitled "In Hallyu we trust? Revisiting 'soft power' in the New World order of cultural production". A cooperation between CEDITRAA and ConTrust, an interdisciplinary research project funded by the Hessian Ministry of the Arts and Sciences and hosted by the research centre Normative Orders, the conference was flagged a cooperation of IZO and ZIAF. "In Hallyu we trust?" took the form of an inter-

disciplinary workshop involving cultural and media studies, economics, political sciences and anthropology and put research on Asia in dialogue and perspective with scholars from Nigeria and working on questions of soft power in Africa. It also included a highly successful Asia Forum keynote event with Korean producer Dong Yeon Won. And finally, from September 12 to 14, 2023, CEDITRAA members Matthias Krings, Ute Röschenhaler, Artemis Saleth and Tom Simmert together with Patrick Oloko convened a conference entitled "Digital encounters: Afrobeats and the global mainstreaming of African music" at the University of Lagos, which was co-funded by CEDITRAA and the Thyssen foundation.

### PUBLICATION

Schulte Strathaus, Stefanie and Vinzenz Hediger (eds.) *Accidental Archivism. Shaping Cinema's Futures with Remnants of the Past*. Lüneburg: meson press 2023 (open access: <https://meson.press/books/accidental-archivism/>)

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Pan Atlantic University Lagos, Nigeria; Zentrum für Interkulturelle Studien (ZIS), University Mainz

### DURATION

4/2021 – 7/2024  
(first project phase; approval of second phase pending)

### FUNDING

Federal Ministry of Education and Research

### WEB PAGE

<https://ceditraa.net>





## II. Research field: cultural history and ecological change

Because of the rarity of written sources, Africa has often been called a “history-less continent”. The opposite is the case. The material legacies of Africa’s past cultures brought to light and interpreted using archaeological methods, reveal the continent’s diverse and fascinating past. The focus is on settlement history, economy and the formation of political structures, as well as prehistoric art in its social, cultural and ecological context. Palaeoecology investigates the formation of cultural landscapes under the influence of humans, as well as climate and vegetation changes in the interplay with cultural development. Geographical foci are West and Central Africa, and Ethiopia.

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## Cultivated landscapes – land-use and cultural landscape development in north-hemispheric African savannas

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German Research Foundation (DFG)

### WEB PAGE

<https://www.dainst.blog/entangled-africa/en/p05-cultivated-landscapes-en/>

The Shea tree of African savannas provides an important global resource – shea butter is a globally traded ingredient in body lotions, in confectionery and chocolate. In traditional West African systems, useful trees such as Shea are managed in the fields in-between the crops. There is no separation between orchards and fields as there is in Europe. Instead, cultivated landscapes consist of a mosaic of fields interspersed with trees, and fallow land in various stages of regeneration. These landscapes are often referred to as parks or parklands because they are reminiscent of English parks. Shea parks are at least centuries old – Ibn Battuta, an early explorer of West Africa, described them already in the 14th century – but when exactly the system started to develop is still unknown, as is whether it developed independently in different regions or spread from a core area, with the movement of people or ideas.



At present, archaeobotanical data point to a core area of shea park development in central West Africa, but the evidence is patchy because few archaeological sites have been systematically sampled for archaeobotanical remains. Furthermore, analyses often focus on crops rather than on trees. This underlines the importance of increased archaeobotanical research in Africa. Fortunately, interest in archaeobotany is growing; last year, several African early career researchers visited the Frankfurt lab to discuss their research and consult the reference collections. A publication on the archaeobotany of traditional farming systems also aims to raise interest in archaeobotanical methods. It intends to inspire educators to develop teaching about African farmscapes and to promote the importance of traditional farming systems as a rich resource for sustainable and resilient land use.

### PUBLICATION

Höhn, A., Mushayikwa, E. & Schoeman, A. (2023) Earth, Water, Air, and Fire – Thinking about Farming and Farmscapes. *Afr Archaeol Rev* 40, 493–505. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10437-023-09542-9>



## Connecting the middle Niger through borrowed words and shared objects: archaeo-linguistic network analysis and modelling of cultural entanglements between the Sahara and the forest zone (AD 700–1500)

This research project investigates cultural contact and interaction along the middle reaches of the Niger in the period prior to 1500 from a joint perspective of historical linguistics and archaeology. In our approach, we map entanglement via dynamic networks and analyse historical regional interaction in an interdisciplinary and multimodal network model as well as via the stratification of historical language and cultural contact. In doing so, we draw on recent developments in historical loanword and network research and develop new possibilities for cooperation between historical linguistics and archaeology. In its exploration of the middle Niger as a connected cultural sphere, our approach provides a joint perspective on one of the most dynamic and diverse areas of West African history.

The second phase, begun in October 2022, extends the area of research to the Lower and Upper Niger. Our main interests are the so-called Mandé expansions and the question of contact between Manding varieties (Bambara- Maninka), and Manding and Northern Mande cultures (e.g. Bambara-Soninke, Soninke-Bozo). We are particularly focused on archaeological and linguistic evidence for trade and for exchange in practices and knowledge of agricultural practices.

In 2023, archaeological excavations and linguistic fieldwork were carried out on the Upper Niger in Guinea, at the site of Niandankoro. This collaborative work with students from the universities of Kankan, Dakar, and Bamako, is the first in-depth archaeological work to have been undertaken in this area since the 1970s, and we are eagerly awaiting dating and the results of specialist reports.



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### DURATION

10/2019 – 9/2025

### FUNDING

German Research Foundation (DFG)

### WEB PAGE

<https://www.dainst.blog/entangled-africa/projekt-9-lehnwoerter-und-tauschobjekte/>



## Kanem-Borno's first Islamic capital *Njimi* rediscovered

Hosted at the Frobenius Institute at Goethe University, the research project “The Lake Chad Region as a Crossroads” as part of the DFG-funded priority programme ‘Entangled Africa’ (SPP 2143) is making a major contribution to our understanding of the Archaeology and History of sub-Saharan Africa. Whilst the project’s main goal is the search of yet unknown evidence of contacts of the Kanem-Borno Sultanate (8th to 19th c.) at Lake Chad with other African regions, it is also producing surprising results at other domains.

One of these relates to the rediscovery of Kanem-Borno’s long-sought first Islamic capital *Njimi* (12th to 14th c.). Historically, the existence, name and location of that place in Kanem, i.e., east of Lake Chad, are attested by manuscripts of two North African Arab geographers – Al-Idrisi and Ibn Said – who lived in the 12th and in the 13th centuries. Despite some previous attempts by European researchers to identify *Njimi* on the ground, the capi-

tal’s placement and character remained uncertain until recently.

Within the scope of the Frankfurt project in Kanem, research activities encompassing regional surveys and mapping as well as large-area excavations are revealing the settlement system of the Sultanate in the 12th to 14th centuries. That work uncovered a cluster of 90 fired-brick sites, none of which however has the size of a town or city. With an area of only 3.2 ha, the largest location detected is Tié, the ruins of which lies at the centre of the site cluster. Excavations at Tié exposed a series of structural remains, the most telling being a rectangular fired-brick building (17x23x5m) with massive external walls and a series of rooms built around a courtyard. A compelling architectural element is the use of a high quality white lime plaster on the inner walls. As white plastering south of the Sahara is thus far only known from Gao, the capital of Kawkaw Empire in Mali, we are sure to have rediscovered Kanem-Borno’s medieval capital *Njimi*.



## The Tumuli zone of central West Senegal: geophysical and archaeological investigations into a buried cultural landscape

Thousands of burial mounds dot the landscape of Senegal, with a particularly concentrated presence in the central West of the country. Despite this abundance, archaeological evidence of human occupation in this region has long eluded researchers. The aim of the current project was to address this problem through the use of advanced geophysical prospection methods, which has since led to the identification of a large number of buried remains of past human activity around the tumuli.

The investigation focused on two prominent burial mound clusters near the contemporary locales of Kael and Thiékène, situated south of Mbacké in Senegal. Renowned for their numerous and often truly monumental earthen tumuli, these structures likely date back to the late first to early second millennium CE. Over time, the effects of erosive processes have concealed many ancient burial

mounds and archaeological remains associated with i.e. settlement and crafts, making the use of geophysical prospection desirable. Throughout the project, extensive areas covering hundreds of hectares were thus surveyed using geomagnetics (gradiometry), revealing a diverse array of archaeological structures. Subsequent excavations confirmed human habitation in the region for at least the mid-Holocene, approximately 5000 to 6000 years ago. The peak of human activities occurred however during the Iron Age and Protohistoric period, spanning the last approximately 2000 years. An exhibition planned for 2024 in Dakar, generously supported by the ZIAF, will present the results of the project to shed light on the rich and deep history of human presence in this part of Senegal.

### PUBLICATIONS

Magnavita, S. 2017. First geophysical exploration in the tumuli zone of Central Senegal: A multidimensional approach. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa* 52 (1), 100–122.

Magnavita, S. & Mertz-Kraus, R. 2019. XRF and LA-ICP-MS studies of gold and silver artefacts from a 12–13th century CE tumulus in Senegal: implications for the medieval African gold trade. *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 23, 416–425.

Magnavita, S. 2023. Earthen Tumuli Archaeology in West Africa. In: *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Anthropology*. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190854584.013.515>

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### INSTITUTIONS

Institute of Archaeological Sciences; Department of Pre- and Protohistory

### PARTNER

### INSTITUTIONS

IFAN-UCAD Dakar, Senegal; DAI Berlin, Department of Cultural Property Protection

### DURATION

1/2019 – 12/2024

### FUNDING

German Research Foundation (DFG)





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#### PARTNER

INSTITUTION  
IRSH Niamey, Niger

#### DURATION

10/2022 – 10/2025

#### FUNDING

German Research Foundation (DFG)

#### WEB PAGE

<https://www.dainst.blog/entangled-africa/en/p13-tracing-connections-en/>



## Tracing Connections: Chemical composition analysis of archaeological pottery as indicator of interregional contacts in Western and Saharan Africa before AD 1300

This new project aims to provide unbiased evidence for interregional contacts between archaeological regions in West and Saharan Africa during the first to early second millennium AD by means of chemical analyses of pottery. It is part of the DFG Priority Programme SPP 2143 “Entangled Africa” and provides a scientific research assistant with the opportunity to undertake the study as part of his doctoral research.

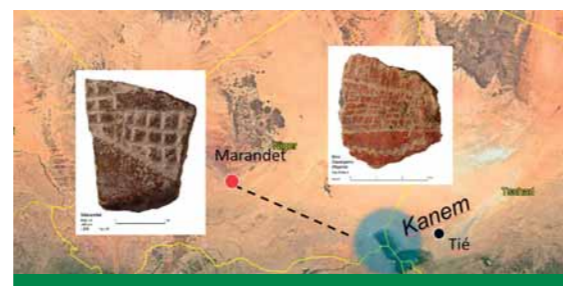
Archaeological studies on interregional contacts within Africa have so far been based primarily on the archaeometric analysis of prestige goods or so-called exotica (e.g. glass, metals). A number of artefacts examined so far seem to confirm the evidence from written sources that various major historical sites in West Africa and the Sahara – such as Gao, Essouk-Tadmekka and Marandet – were once

connected by trade routes to and from North Africa. The new project moves away from the analysis of exotica and shows that pottery, as the most common artefact class in archaeological sites of this period, is equally well suited to tracing previously undocumented connections between neighbouring regions.

The research is centred around the archaeological site of Marandet in central Niger, where previous fieldwork has already established an extensive pottery inventory and evidence of far-reaching trade connections. It will make further use of archived pottery assemblages from elsewhere in Niger as well as from neighbouring countries. The pottery will be investigated mainly by means of portable x-ray fluorescence analysis (pXRF), a non-invasive methodology.

#### PUBLICATION

Magnavita, S. & Idé, O.A. 2022. Far-travelled fragments. Archaeology wants to trace intra-African connections by analysing pottery. In: Perspectives on Africa. Forschung Frankfurt 1, 2022, 82–85.



## Plant environment and resource exploitation in SW Ethiopia > 50 ka to the present

The highlands of SW Ethiopia are discussed as a refuge for humans during arid periods of the Late Quaternary. Our project aims to reconstruct the paleovegetation and assess its utilization potential with an interdisciplinary approach, combining vegetation modeling with archaeobotanical and ethnobotanical investigations.

In 2023, a project workshop and field visit to the archaeological sites in the SW Ethiopian highlands intensified the fruitful interdisciplinary exchange. Our modeling indicates that Afromontane forests covered a larger area during the Late Glacial Maximum at 22.000 BP (years before present) than today, and were more stable than expected. Proxy data from charcoal, phytoliths and  $\delta^{13}C$  isotopes from two rock shelters in the SW Ethiopian highlands corroborate this. They also show that humans used fire for landscape management from 50.000 BP onwards, intensifying after 5.000 BP. Due to reduced occupation,

the forest recovered after 2.000 BP. The ethnobotanical data indicate a diverse plant food spectrum with rich potential, especially for staple foods in the Afromontane forest zone, indicating that human populations might have been able to live permanently in these forests.

In 2023 the wood anatomy collection for teaching and research was expanded and Ethiopian partners were trained again in Frankfurt on wood anatomy, charcoal identification and the ethnobotanical database PlantBITES. Three graduate students from AAU finalized successfully their ethnobotanical studies of Afromontane forests.

#### PUBLICATIONS

Bodin, S., Neumann, K., Hensel, E.A., Vogelsang, R., Demissew, S., Casas-Gallego, M., Hahn, K. 2024. Afromontane forests and human impact after the African Humid Period: wood charcoal from the Sodicho rock shelter, SW Ethiopian Highlands. Vegetation History and Archaeobotany. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00334-023-00977-3>

Casas Gallego, M., Hahn, K., Neumann, K., Demissew, S., Schmidt, M., Bodin, S.C., Bruch, A.A. 2023. Cooling induced expansions of Afromontane forests in the Horn of Africa since the Last Glacial Maximum. Scientific Reports (2023) 13:10323. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-37135-8>



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Palaeoanthropology Section/Research Institute Senckenberg; Institute of Ecology, Evolution & Diversity/ZIAF

#### PARTNER

#### INSTITUTIONS

Addis Ababa University; University of Cologne; Stony Brook University; University of Florida; University of Cambridge

#### DURATION

6/2021 – 10/2024

#### FUNDING

German Research Foundation (DFG)

#### WEB PAGE

<https://gepris.dfg.de/gepris/projekt/446948552>



### III. Research field: language, discourses, communication

Cultural practices are closely tied to language and communication. Without them, meaningful action is inconceivable in the entire range of human activities and interests, including the preservation of established knowledge as well as creativity and cultural innovation. Various ZIAF researchers are active in the study of language and culture, and particularly interested in the intersection of these domains. We engage in linguistic analysis and sociolinguistics, questions of language and cultural change, the role of media, and the transformation of communicative practices in migration. Cultural and social studies examine political power relations, social institutions, economic action and religious beliefs that result from complex discursive processes. These are also reflected in the various collections at Goethe University – an increasingly significant area in our Africa-related research. The research field “language, discourses, communication” is dedicated to these phenomena.

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- German-French doctoral programme:  
“Representing the ‘other’: museums, universities, ethnology” ..... **32**
  
- Berber speakers in the Rhine-Main region:  
migration, minority status and masculinity ..... **34**
  
- IMAGEUN – in the mirror of the European neighbourhood (policy):  
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## Potentials of a collection – tracking, perceiving relationships and sharing

The Oswin Köhler Archive houses the world's largest collection of documents on the culture and language of the Khwe in Namibia's Bwabwata National Park, comprising vernacular texts, photos, films, audio recordings, ethnographic objects, plant samples, drawings and dossiers. The German scholar of African Studies, Oswin Köhler (1911–1996) compiled it between 1959 and 1992.

The Khwe are one of the indigenous and currently marginalized former hunter-gatherer groups in southern Africa. Tracking as the origin of science, ontologies focussing on relationships, and social practices of sharing are recognized as key cultural



achievements of San and other hunter-gatherer communities.

The project intends to apply these approaches, principles and values to dealing with the collection by three interlinked work packages and in cooperation with Khwe.

### Tracking

The work package examines the impact of the main protagonists and circumstances of the collection's origins. Tasks in 2023 included: a) the translation, annotation and edition of the Khwe correspondence between Oswin Köhler and his field assistant Ndo Tinene (to be published in early 2024), b) interviews of contemporary witnesses in both Namibia and Germany, partly drafted and conducted by Khwe, c) the collaborative analysis of photos showing the work and life settings in Köhler's research camp, d) interviews on the provenance of individual objects, e) a workshop unit on tracing work routines and ideas in the documents, and f) archival research.

### Perceiving relationships

The work package questions the categories applied by Oswin Köhler in the vernacular encyclopaedia "The World of the Khwe Bushmen" and looks at the relations between different beings from a Khwe and a regional comparative perspective. Tasks in 2023 included a) an analysis of the literature on San ontologies, including the Khwe material documented

by Oswin Köhler, b) interviews with and by Khwe on human-non-human relationships, and c) a workshop unit on the categorisation of humans and non-human beings.

### Sharing

The work package investigates how Khwe as descendants of the community of origin interpret the documentation of their cultural heritage and how the collection can be used by them. Tasks in 2023 included a) the collaborative design of interview questions and interviews conducted by Khwe on questions of work packages 1 and 2, b) discussions of the database model and the future of the collection, and 3) the design of products for the Khwe community.

### ZIAF-funded visit of Khwe in Frankfurt

A highlight was a three-week visit of Khwe guest researchers in Frankfurt in August 2023 (see page 74). The four visitors, one woman and three men, decided on working mainly with the historical photo-

graphs and creating a picture book as well as six roll-up posters for a mobile exhibition to extend the already existing mobile exhibition of nine roll-up posters, designed on ethnographic objects and plant samples during an earlier ZIAF-funded workshop with Khwe in 2019. Further activities included the visit of an exhibition on collaborations between the Oswin Köhler Archive and Khwe in the Schopenhauer Studio of the University Library J.C. Senckenberg (see page 65).

In order to involve more Khwe in the process, future workshops and discussions will take place in Namibia. At the request of the visitors, a further application for funding by ZIAF, aiming to use the existing workshop products for educating Khwe youth and engaging Khwe youth and elders in discussions on their cultural history and identity, was accorded and a final mission to Namibia takes place in February 2024.

A big loss was the premature death of Snelia Mangonga (1982–2023) who died in a car accident in Namibia shortly after her visit to Frankfurt.



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Oswin Köhler Archive

### PARTNER

**INSTITUTION**  
Bwabwata Khwe  
Custodian Committee

### DURATION

5/2021 – 4/2024

### FUNDING

German Research  
Foundation (DFG)

### WEB PAGES

<https://gepris.dfg.de/gepris/projekt/454798691?language=en>

[https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/125540445/Khwe\\_Potenziale\\_einer\\_Sammlung](https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/125540445/Khwe_Potenziale_einer_Sammlung)

[https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/62950201/Oswin\\_Koehler\\_Archive\\_OKA](https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/62950201/Oswin_Koehler_Archive_OKA)



# THE MUSEUM AS A PLACE OF KNOWLEDGE?

GERMAN FRENCH DOCTORAL SCHOOL  
"REPRESENTING THE 'OTHER': MUSEUMS, UNIVERSITIES, ETHNOLOGY"

## German-French doctoral programme: "Representing the 'other': museums, universities, ethnology"

### What is a museum?

As pioneering institutions in the 19th century, as places of accumulation of objects, representation of cultures, and laboratories of the innovative engineering, museums have been highly valued and affirmed. Which of these characteristics are still valid in the 21st century? The definition of the museum, the self-image of this institution as well as the priorities in the everyday agenda are currently becoming increasingly unclear. The French-German doctoral school takes as the starting point of its research programme the question of the legitimacy

of representational structures in museums. Can narratives and contents shown in museums and exhibitions today still be considered representative of a place, a region, a nation or a culture?

Especially with regard to the representation of colonized societies and cultures, the answers are rather critical. The idea of "representing the other" by means of ethnographic objects was dubious from the outset, and today it has lost its legitimacy. In addition to the principle investigators (Egidia Souto and Jean-Louis Georget, Sorbonne Nouvelle, Université Paris III, and Hans Peter Hahn), the DFDK currently comprises 10 young academics working on various topics relating to museums, their collections, histories and narratives. The DFDK has set itself three priorities for the first funding phase (2023–2026): in addition to questioning museums, the forms of representation implicit in a collection will also be examined and, thirdly, the forms of representation at universities are studied.



### Conference on "Museums as places of knowledge"

Following a kick-off event in April, last year's work programme included an international conference at Goethe University in November. Scientists from three continents discussed the following question: "Are museums places of knowledge?" The answers were rather sceptical, and there was broad agreement that – not only in the history of museums – representation was always more important than knowledge. Museums claim to be places of knowledge, but their statements about societies, the explanations they provide and causalities, presented in exhibitions, are rather orientated towards the predetermined cultural structures shaped by ideological "world views" based on Eurocentric, colonial and national ideas.

Right down to the level of analysing individual display cases or selected collection items, it can be shown that museums tend to show partial knowl-

edge or knowledge in fragmentation and thus do not or only partially fulfil their self-defined role as "places of knowledge". During the conference we were also able to get to know examples of different discourses and concepts of museums in African and Latin American countries, some of which differ from the debate in the European context, and it will be an interesting task to continue these discussions in the future.

### Research stay in partner countries

In addition to providing financial support for such conferences, the DFDK offers students mobility: doctoral students from Germany spend time in Paris and French participants in Frankfurt. These opportunities were used intensively to familiarise themselves with museum practice and discourse in the other country.

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### INSTITUTION

Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology

### PARTNER

### INSTITUTIONS

Université Sorbonne Nouvelle

### DURATION

1/2023 – 12/2026

### FUNDING

Deutsch-Französische Hochschule (DFH/ufa)

### WEB PAGE

[https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/126088232/DF\\_Doktorandenkolleg](https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/126088232/DF_Doktorandenkolleg)



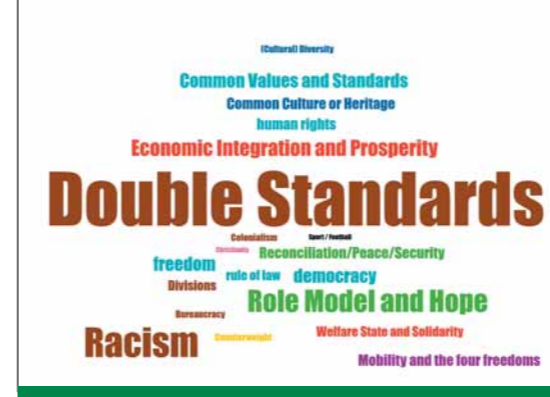
## Berber speakers in the Rhine-Main region: migration, minority status and masculinity

Language is a central aspect of migration and cross-cultural contacts. International mobility requires language learning. When language experts speak of second language acquisition, they tend to zoom in on formal teaching in classroom settings. In practice, most migrants learn languages informally without supervision. These processes are difficult to observe, which is why we know relatively little about them.

Our research project investigates the communicative practices of young Berber-speaking men (whose preferred self-chosen designation is Imazighen, sg. Amazigh) who relocated to Germany. We are part of a research cluster on minority studies, language and identity. The cluster looks at how identity is ascribed – through self or other – to members of minority groups from the Middle East and North Africa. A central tenet of the research cluster is that all linguistic practices including language learning

are entwined with processes of identity ascriptions, language ideologies and social networking strategies pursued by those who move between language ecologies and various linguistic settings.

We are particularly interested in learning about the experience of Imazighen. Belonging to a minority in their countries of origin, they are multilingual, usually proficient in several varieties of Berber and Arabic, as well as French and often Spanish and English. Does their experience of being a minority language speaker (both in the country of origin and after migration) present an additional challenge to them? Or does this experience afford them specific strategies of un-monitored language learning? Our research cluster is gradually drawing to a close. Our focus in 2023 has been on disseminating our findings, e.g. at a major international conference “Language, society & identity in diverse ethnolinguistic contexts” that we held in Frankfurt in June 2023. Our academic exchange involved participants from major European agencies and research centers on minority language issues.



## IMAGEUN – in the mirror of the European neighbourhood (policy): mapping macro-regional imaginings

In 2023, we harvested the results of our previous research in the context of the project IMAGEUN. After an intense year of data acquisition in 2022, we analysed the empirical data and developed a first comprehensive overview of the results. As regards the African dimension of the project, the Tunisian case study offered an insightful perspective of Tunisian public figures’ perceptions of Europe, the EU and, more generally, their geopolitical position. On the one hand, it became clear how they view Tunisia as an interface between Africa, the Arab World and Europe. In this context, we could also observe how geopolitical imaginings are fundamentally characterised by geographical proximity, i.e. regional imaginings such as “Maghreb”, “North Africa” or “Mediterranean” are much more present than larger regionalities such as pan-African, pan-Arab or pan-European.

On the other hand, with regard to Tunisians’ ideas about Tunisians’ relations with Europe, we can observe how the perception of Europe as hypocritical is clearly the most dominant. This refers to European “double standards” as regards human rights and a self-proclaimed commitment to normative values – often a central aspect in European rhetoric vis-à-vis Tunisia, but equally often violated in European border and migration management. Nevertheless, in light of an increasing autocratic government in Tunisia, also the notion of Europe as a space of civil liberties and good governance remains an important association.

### PUBLICATIONS

Rouland, Betty, Veit Bachmann and Kmar Bendana. 2023. The ignorance of dignity: The contagion of populism in Tunisian-European relations. *Political Geography* 106: 102960

Bachmann, Veit. 2023. Contesting the integration narrative: Shifting perceptions of Europe. *European Urban and Regional Studies* (online early)

Maffi, Irene, Betty Rouland, and Carole Wenger. Les voyages reproductifs vers la Tunisie: l’intime au prisme des pratiques de l’assistance médicale à la procréation. *L’Année du Maghreb* 29 (2023): 39–61

Rouland, Betty and Irene Maffi. forthcoming. *Soins transfrontaliers en santé reproductive au Maghreb: un paysage reproductif en devenir?* Paris: Karthala.

Regular blog on contemporary Tunisian history and culture by Kmar Bendana: <https://hctc.hypotheses.org/>

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Department of Human Geography

### PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

Institut de Recherche sur le Maghreb Contemporain/Tunis; Université de Manouba/Tunis, Kadir Has University/Istanbul; Université de Paris; Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne; ENS Lyon; Université de Rouen; Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg; University College Dublin

### DURATION

1/2021 – 6/2024

### FUNDING

German Research Foundation (DFG); Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR)

### WEB PAGE

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### INSTITUTION

Institute for African Studies

### DURATION

1/2020 – 4/2024

### FUNDING

LOEWE research funding programme, Federal State of Hesse

### WEB PAGE

<https://sprache-identitaet.uni-frankfurt.de/>





## IV. Research field: sustainable resource management

Sustainability and cross-generational development are central social challenges in the countries of the Global South. In Africa, rural and urban areas are considered as increasingly vulnerable socio-ecological systems in the course of climate and land use change. Biological and geoscientific research at ZIAF deals with plant and fungi resources and their sustainable use, the degradation of landscape ecosystems, and the environmental impacts of mining. Questions on the future availability of raw materials, on actor analyses, political transparency and on good governance illustrate the complexity of the scientific context.

Diversity and uses of fungi in tropical Africa:  
edible mushrooms in Benin (FunTrAf) ..... **38**

Quartz islands I & II: island biogeography and  
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between Togo and Nigeria ('TONI') ..... **41**



### Diversity and uses of fungi in tropical Africa: edible mushrooms in Benin (FunTrAf)

Fungi are highly diverse and poorly known in comparison to other groups of organisms. While approximately 140,000 species are known to date, the actual number is estimated to range between 1.5 and 3.8 million. Particularly in the tropics, the number of undiscovered species is very high but also highly endangered by human activities. The *FunTrAf* project, in collaboration with the University of Parakou in Benin, aims to unveil the largely unstudied fungal diversity in West Africa. This project focuses on taxonomy, ethnomycology, and the cultivation of fungi in tropical West Africa.

### The world of tropical mushrooms: diverse, undiscovered, and essential

Our collaboration with Prof. Nourou S. Yorou's tropical mycology research group at the University of Parakou has led to significant progress. As one of our most important achievements, we were able to establish a research station in Benin, equipped with infrastructure essential for myco-logical research beyond the project's duration. The research station is operational since 2023 and is being used by the members of the research group on tropical mycology, with first results in molecular genetics and fungal cultivation. Several new fungal species across several taxonomic groups have been described based on morphological and molecular characteristics. These findings are used to justify nature conservation efforts in Benin. First successes were also

achieved in mushroom cultivation. These results will be passed on to the local people of Benin. Thereby a new, sustainable food source shall be established.

### Continuing the journey – diversity and uses of tropical African fungi: edible mushrooms of Benin *FunTrAf\_2*

The *FunTrAf* project is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) from 2020 until 2024. During this time, various Master's and Bachelor's theses have been completed and several PhD theses will be presented soon. These activities resulted in a large number of publications that have brought us closer to our goal of discovering the hidden world of tropical fungi. This knowledge has been passed on at various international conferences in recent years and has led to many international

contacts. The *FunTrAf* project ends in March 2024 and we hope to receive an additional, 2-year funding for *FunTrAf\_2*.

#### PUBLICATIONS

Olou BA, Hègbè ADMT, Piepenbring M, Yorou NS (2023) Genetic diversity and population differentiation in *Earliella scabrosa*, a pantropical species of Polyporales. *Scientific Reports* 13:23020.

Codjia JEI, Sarawi S, Olou BA, Piepenbring M, Yang ZL, Yorou NS (2023) *Amanita stubbosa*, a new non amatoxin nor phallo-toxin-containing species within *Amanita* sect. *Phalloideae* (Amanitaceae, Agaricales), from West Africa. *Phytotaxa* 592(3):267–278.

Bermúdez-Cova MA, Krauß A, Sanjur A, Tabé A, Hofmann TA, Yorou NS, Piepenbring M (2023) Diversity of hyperparasitic fungi on Meliolales (Sordariomycetes, Ascomycota): new species, records, and molecular data from Benin and Panama. *Mycological Progress* 22:65.

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Institute of Ecology,  
Evolution and Diversity

#### PARTNER

INSTITUTION  
University of Parakou,  
Benin

#### DURATION

10/2020 – 2/2024 and  
3/2024 – 3/2026

#### FUNDING

Federal Ministry of  
Education and Research  
(BMBF)





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University of Hamburg,  
Germany; University of  
Cape Town, South Africa;  
Cape Nature, South Africa;  
SANBONA, South Africa

**DURATION**

1/2019 – 7/2022 (project I)  
1/2024 – 1/2027 (project II)

**FUNDING**

German Research  
Foundation (DFG)

**WEB PAGE**

[https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/86114704/  
Quartz\\_Island\\_Project](https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/86114704/Quartz_Island_Project)



## Quartz islands I & II: island biogeography and ecology of distinct terrestrial habitats

There are many terrestrial habitats that are not surrounded by water but are nevertheless isolated like islands. This includes the quartz islands in southern Africa, which are being investigated for their unusual flora as part of two research projects. The first project was successfully completed this year with the dissertation of the PhD student of the first project (Eibes, submitted). In the first project, the quartz islands in the Knersvlakte in the Western Cape of South Africa were analysed with regard to their island biogeographical character in order to better understand patterns of plant diversity and endemism. Similar to true islands, larger and more habitat-diverse quartz islands harbour more plant species. In the follow-up project funded by the DFG, the island biogeographical and ecological studies will now be extended to other quartz island archipelagos in southern Africa. Two PhD students (one at GU) will now study drivers of diversity and en-

demism on all quartz archipelagos, which are located along a broad climatic gradient, ranging from the southern tip of Africa to southern Namibia. In addition, the collaboration with colleagues from UCT (RSA) will be continued in order to merge the island biogeographical patterns with the phylogenetic investigations from the first project.

**PUBLICATIONS**

Eibes, P.M., Schaffrath, F., Oldeland, J., Thormählen, W., Schmiedel, U., Irl, S.D.H., 2022. Testing the concept of edaphism for the quartz island flora of the Knersvlakte, South Africa. *South African Journal of Botany* 151, 555–564. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sajb.2022.10.015>

Oldeland, J., Eibes, P.M., Irl, S.D.H., Schmiedel, U., 2022. Do image resolution and classifier choice impact island biogeographical parameters of terrestrial islands? *Transactions in GIS*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tgis.12920>

PM Eibes (Doctoral Thesis, submitted 10/2023). Habitat island biogeography of quartz islands: taxonomic, functional and spatial characteristics of an unusual edaphic island system in South Africa.



## SDG Partnerships 2023 – 2026 between Togo and Nigeria ('TONI')

The 'TONI' project funded by BMZ/DAAD aims to expand collaborations between Goethe University and the Université de Kara, Kara (Togo) and the First Technological University (Tech-U), Ibadan (Nigeria) into an international North-South-South university network with a strong focus on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in terms of strategy and content.

The interdisciplinary project objectives are always holistic in nature and are intended to further develop and strengthen existing and future Master's degree programs with regard to their SDG relevance. The intended networking is aimed at the regular and institutionalized exchange of students, workshops and excursions and the mutual participation and recognition of SDG-relevant courses at the participating partner universities. In 2023 a joint student excursion for 21 participants was organized in Togo, and three German interns from Goethe Uni-

versity have been working four weeks in Togo and Nigeria on the implementation of SDG's in the Global South.

Specific objectives are to improve the structures for graduate education at the partner universities in Kara (Togo) and in Ibadan (Nigeria) through the establishment of a joint SDG Masters. Students and lecturers from Togo and Tech-U (Nigeria) will be trained to work in development cooperation, making collaborative publications and will attend training courses using the management tool 'Capacity Works'. In future, partner universities in the Global South will offer more SDG-related qualification programs that are adapted to the local context and the state of the art and integrate them into their teaching. This will result in an improvement in the central governance and management structures at the partner institutions in Togo and Nigeria, and will help to overcome the language barrier between the Francophone and Anglophone scientific worlds.



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**INSTITUTION**

Institute of Physical  
Geography

**PARTNER  
INSTITUTIONS**

Université de Kara (PREDES);  
Kara (Togo); First Techno-  
logical University (Tech-U);  
Ibadan (Nigeria)

**DURATION**

4/2023 – 12/2026

**FUNDING**

Federal Ministry for  
International Cooperation/  
German Academic Ex-  
change Service (BMZ/DAAD)

**WEB PAGE**

[https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/137477075/TONI\\_Projekt](https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/137477075/TONI_Projekt)



## Network programmes: innovative approaches and promotion of young researchers

ZIAF manages and supports interdisciplinary programmes to promote networking with African and European partners and to generate innovative research perspectives (DFG programme Point Sud). A central component of this is the promotion of young researchers across disciplines and countries (e.g. fellowship programme in the humanities and social sciences, Volkswagen Foundation and PAPA, Gerda Herda Henkel Foundation). Another focus is the collaboration in the Maria Sibylla Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa (MIASA), which, in addition to the classical tasks of supporting fellows, does also have an Africa-wide event programme organised by ZIAF.

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## MIASA: a flourishing science hub in Africa

The Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa (MIASA) at the University of Ghana in Accra was further consolidated in 2023 as an important platform for innovative exchange and research in and about Africa through a variety of activities. The aim of MIASA is to increase the global visibility of research in the humanities and social sciences from sub-Saharan Africa and to reduce global asymmetries in knowledge production on the topic of sustainable governance. In this regard, ZIAF is responsible for designing and organizing the majority of MIASA's events in Accra and at the sites of the Point Sud network, which collaborates with MIASA. Moreover, Prof. Mamadou Diawara will become German

director of MIASA for two years from January 2024. Another scholar from Goethe University who intensively engaged with MIASA is Prof. Hans Peter Hahn who became a senior tandem fellow and worked together with his Ghanaian colleague Prof. Kodzo Gavua on the restitution of ethnographic objects.

### Writing science

From 25 to 29 April 2023, the third writing workshop on “Peace, democracy and climate change” for young African scholars took place in Accra, organized by MIASA and ZIAF. 18 post-doctoral scholars in the humanities and social sciences from eight African countries were supported by a team of mentors and editors from Ghana in planning their first scientific publication and designing a publication strategy. The writing workshop was characterized by a high level of practical relevance. With the help of break-out sessions, the post-docs worked concretely on their article manuscripts.



### An encouraging half-time balance

ZIAF and MIASA jointly organized the international Mid Term conference marking the end of the first half of the main funding period from the 19 to 21 September 2023 at the University of Ghana in Accra. The conference showcased the scientific achievements of MIASA since 2018, but also paved the way forward. Former and current fellows and PI's of the institute convened panels and round tables on MIASA related topics like “Sustainable Peacebuilding”, “Interreligious Relations”, “Land Governance” and “Restitution”. The presentations highlighted the results by the numerous Interdisciplinary fellowship groups and fellows of MIASA, but by inviting additional scholars from all over the world who work on these topics, new insights were generated which will inform future MIASA activities.

### Traditional institutions as peace keepers?

From 30 November to 2 December 2023, the MIASA

international conference on “The role of traditional institutions for promoting sustainable peace in Africa” was held in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), jointly organized by MIASA and the Goethe University with the hosting Institute for Societal Sciences (INSS) and the Centre for Democratic Governance (CGD) in Ouagadougou who are members of the network Point Sud, thus strengthening the collaboration between MIASA and the network. The invited 35 scholars (out of 350 applications) from all over Africa, Europe and the US discussed the question if traditional chiefs, religious leaders as well as traditional practices and courts contribute to peacebuilding or rather amplify or initiate conflict. The presentations showed the context driven ambivalence of traditional institutions in conflicts, but also a revival of these institutions as being seen as the guarantors of social cohesion by a growing number of African scholars. This revival is also embedded in the current debates on decolonizing science in Africa.

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### PARTNER

### INSTITUTIONS

University of Ghana; University Albert-Ludwigs Freiburg; GIGA Hamburg; German Historical Institute Paris; Network Point Sud

### DURATION

9/2020 – 9/2026

### FUNDING

Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)

### WEB PAGE

[www.ug.edu.gh/mias-africa](http://www.ug.edu.gh/mias-africa)







## DFG programme and network Point Sud

The Point Sud programme supports Africa-related events in the humanities and social sciences. These are selected by a steering committee through an annual call for proposals. The main goal of the programme is the exchange and networking of scholars from Germany, Africa and other parts of the world. In addition, the promotion of young researchers plays a central role. The programme is organized in a network that includes the Goethe University and the Point Sud Research Center in Bamako, Mali, as well as other institutes in Burkina Faso, Gabon, Ghana, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal, South Africa, and France.

### Handing over the baton

The Point Sud programme is currently in its 15th year. Since 2009, 79 workshops and conferences with more than 2,370 participants from all over the world have been organized at our partner locations in Africa. The programme has successfully promoted academic dialogue, especially between scholars from Germany and Africa, and has established itself as a platform for innovative research questions and new formats, for example by involving representatives of civil society, artists and activists in academic debates. It has also contributed to the production of knowledge on an equal footing, as scholars from Germany and Africa jointly develop the scientific content of each event. This long-term success wouldn't have been possible without Prof. Mamadou Diawara, who led the project from the beginning. After his retirement in April 2023, Prof. Diawara officially passed the baton to Prof. Mirco Goepfert as the new programme director. The programme will benefit greatly from Prof. Goepfert's research expertise not only in Africa, but also in Iran, as the programme has a deliberate South-South focus. Prof. Diawara will remain on the programme's steering committee as director of Point Sud in Bamako.

In addition, Dr Nadine Siegert, Director of the Goethe Institute in Lagos, Nigeria, is a new member of the programme's Steering Committee. The programme will benefit from her extensive expertise in the arts and culture sector in Africa, which is playing

a growing role in the programme's events. Prof. Anke Hoefler has left the committee after several years of unwavering commitment.

### Successful catch-up

In 2023, ten workshops were held at various locations throughout the network. Most of these were events that had to be postponed due to the pandemic. This tour de force was only possible thanks to the support of the DFG and, above all, the host partner institutions in Africa. This was an impressive demonstration of the vitality of the Point Sud network.

All events were organized in a hybrid format. This made it possible to involve a larger number of researchers and to increase the visibility of the programme. The project thus made an important contribution to the digitization of science in Africa.

As always, the 2023 events covered a wide range of topics, including Afrotopias, migration, social media,

land governance, eco-justice, religious infrastructures, mental health, minor forms of poetic expression, and memories of the colonial past. What these workshops had in common was a critical analysis of theories and concepts historically developed in Europe and tested for their applicability to social and political realities in Africa. The theoretical discussions in some of the workshops were deliberately linked to the highly relevant debates on the decolonization of knowledge production in and about Africa.

The achievements of the Point Sud programme led to its inclusion as a best practice example in "Talking Science: Fostering International Collaboration" platform by Science Europe, a Brussels-based association of major research funding organizations. All projects listed respect core principles such as academic freedom and reciprocity.

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### PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

Point Sud, Bamako; CARTE, Dakar; CEA, Maputo; CGD & INSS, Ouagadougou; IAS Accra; University of Winneba; LASDEL, Niamey; IEA Nantes; STIAS, Stellenbosch; University Omar-Bongo, Libreville

### DURATION

1/2021 – 12/2025

### FUNDING

German Research Foundation (DFG)

### WEB PAGE

[www.pointsud.org](http://www.pointsud.org)





## The fellowship programme: conclusion and a new beginning

From 3–5 April 2023, the Volkswagen Foundation invited around 100 fellows, reviewers, coordinators and representatives of other funding organizations to Kenya to attend the final Grantees meeting of the long-standing initiative “Knowledge for Tomorrow”. Since 2003 the initiative has aimed at the development and sustainable reinforcement of research in Sub-Saharan Africa and is open to all disciplines. A primary objective was to provide junior researchers in Africa with an opportunity to enhance their skills and academic qualifications and to open up future prospects in their home countries. ZIAF has been actively involved since 2012 by managing the cohort of fellows in the social sciences. The meeting in

Naivasha aimed to discuss fundamental issues in three thematic blocks organized by the Fellow groups, dealing with the “Historicity of knowledge generation and the interplay between humanities, social, and natural sciences”, the topic of “Creativity and the freedom of research” as well as “Capacity, team, and consortium building for collaborative research”. The Volkswagen Foundation also presented its new sponsorship programme, as did other organizations, like MIASA from Accra, which was represented by its director from Ghana, Professor Grace Diabah.

### Fit for the future

The group of social science fellows coordinated by the ZIAF organized the round table of the thematic block “Fit for the future – building capacities, teams and consortia for collaborative research”. The group started the discussion with a focus on supervision and mentorship. They underlined that the main difference between the two lies in the close personal relationship that develops over time as the mentee’s career develops. They pointed out that mentorship is crucial to the career development of young scientists in Africa. The fellows stated that their career paths are a clear example of what targeted mentoring can achieve. Within an average of six years, many young scientists have risen to the rank of professor, and in addition, many of them now hold high-ranking management positions in

universities. The fellows propose to pool the experience gained over the years of the programme. Bringing together disciplines, backgrounds, and experiences will not only be beneficial for the young scientists but also for the mentors themselves. The fellows state that they have now reached a “critical mass” to build a “Pan-African social science mentoring network”. The network is to work with both physical and digital exchange and include German mentees as well as African mentees. The former mentors of the scholarship holders should also be involved in order to create a dense network of expertise.

### Surprise: new call

In November 2023 the Volkswagen Foundation surprised the fellows and coordinators with a final call for proposals. Funding will be provided for a series of up to three consecutive summer schools that build on each other and take place in sub-Saharan Africa. Funding will be provided for events that offer the

opportunity to develop new ideas and research perspectives and to discuss topics and approaches that are relevant to the African continent.

The summer schools are intended to provide selected young researchers with new insights and knowledge that is important for the further development of a particular field of research. The general idea is not only to broaden the knowledge of the participants but also to allow them to establish contacts and disciplines beyond national borders and individual fields. The three schools will be planned independently by the fellows, with support from the coordination office. The package application for a maximum of €200,000 will then be submitted until June 2024 by the ZIAF, which will also be responsible for managing the funds and logistics.

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### INSTITUTION

ZIAF

### DURATION

9/2018 – 9/2023

### FUNDING

Volkswagen Foundation

### WEB PAGE

<https://www.volkswagenstiftung.de/de/news/aktuelles/afrikanische-wissenschaftlerinnen-schaffen-wissen-fuer-morgen>





## Pilote African Postgraduate Academy (PAPA) – the way forward

PAPA was created in 2020 to promote and contribute to true African scholarship. It drew from the distinction between basic and applied research to target early career scholars who have recently accomplished their doctoral theses and are based at Universities in Africa. The goal is to foster a community of early career scholars who understand the value of scholarship for its own sake, cultivate their interest in conceptual understanding, and promote a strong commitment among them to the importance of using knowledge acquired in Africa to contribute to the further development of science in general. To achieve this, PAPA provides training for 15 scholars coming from various francophone coun-

tries in advanced research methodology and, most importantly, creates an intellectual environment within which laureates engage with fundamental epistemological issues in a critical dialogue with their disciplines, Area Studies, and their identity as scholars.

### Reaching out to the public

PAPA was supposed to end in 2022 but due to COVID, the Gerda Henkel Foundation accorded a prolongation by one year. In September 2023, the last PAPA Academy workshop in the “Hampaté Bâ workshops series” was held in Bamako. These workshops aim to draw attention to the main challenge posed by research, namely the basis of our knowledge. For the first time, an activity was organized by the fellows at the Université des Sciences Sociales et de Gestion de Bamako entitled “Afrika Nko en débat/The colonial library in debate”. The meeting aimed to discuss the book *Afrika N’Ko* in a round table with fellows, mentors, and teachers from Mali, and to promote the activities of PAPA and Point Sud to other Malian universities and research institutes invited to the meeting. The focus of the public debate was on the breakthrough that *Afrika N’ko* is bringing to how scientific production in and about Africa is conceived.

### Rounding up and evaluating

At the end of the workshop, the individual laureates

shared their intellectual agendas, providing information on their scientific activities and projects. They also gave their views on the future of the PAPA programme. In the presence of the mentors, strengths and weaknesses were highlighted by the laureates. Mentor-laureate collaboration and selection criteria were the main points discussed. In discussing the results, it became clear that questioning methods, theories, and concepts had opened the way to a new boldness in changing the way the fellows would relate to local epistemologies.

### Looking forward

In their conclusion, Elisio Macamao and Mamadou Diawara affirmed that in order to make an original contribution to the researcher’s respective discipline, the researcher must critically distance her/himself from applied research and reject the practice of reducing African researchers to mere data collectors. They admit that one could argue that

a chronic lack of resources prevents African researchers from doing basic research. But this objection masks a lack of ambition and a desire to keep African researchers as mere assistants. Another objection would be that Africa faces pressing problems that require applied rather than basic research. However, experience shows that the relentless search for solutions to African problems leads to various biases and analytical demons. Although it may seem pointless, basic research is indispensable according to Diawara and Macamo. It makes it possible to make Africa a real object of study. One possible way forward is to extend the programme beyond Francophone Africa to Anglophone and Lusophone Africa. The network of universities participating could be extended beyond Point Sud (Bamako) to include a Portuguese-speaking university and an English-speaking university. The future name of the programme could be “The African Academy of Advanced Studies”.

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### PARTNER

INSTITUTIONS  
Centre for African Studies, University of Basel; Centre Point Sud

### DURATION

1/2020 – 12/2023

### FUNDING

Gerda Henkel Foundation

### WEB PAGE

<http://pointsud.org/pilot-african-postgraduate-academy-papa/?lang=en>





## Teaching

In line with Goethe University's mission statement on teaching, we emphasise research-based learning accompanied by internationality. This means a development that – starting from the teaching of topics relevant to Africa – is increasingly oriented towards teaching and learning with African partners. In practical implementation, this is expressed in a broad spectrum of activities and measures. Joint curriculum development, teaching research, study excursions and bilateral international mobility between Africa and Europe are just a few examples.

Digital possibilities have changed didactic concepts and now make teaching more flexible in terms of time and space. This not only benefits our students but also facilitates international cooperation. We are thus increasingly successful in making scientific cooperation with Africa part of everyday life, not only in research but also in academic teaching.

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## Bachelor of Arts in “African Languages, Media and Communication”

Two years ago, in the winter semester 2021/22, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and Goethe University Frankfurt accepted the first students on a newly designed BA degree programme entitled “African Languages, Media and Communication”. In addition to learning two African languages, students are trained to analyse language (structure), narratives and discourses about Africa, including those that have emerged in the (colonial) history of the discipline of African linguistics. The BA programme can be studied as a major or minor subject and begins in the winter semester. In both cases, students choose another subject – for example, so-

cial and cultural anthropology, music and media studies, Romance studies, etc. – to complete their double Bachelor’s degree and academic training. The BA programme is the result of a long-term commitment within the framework of the Rhine-Main University Alliance (RMU). Students, academics, non-academic professionals, university management and administrative staff have joined forces across the borders of Rhineland-Palatinate and Hesse to make this possible in the context of intensive exchange. Contrary to the trend of declining numbers of first-year students, both departments involved are fortunately recording growth in the BA programme. While the degree programme offers a broad range of subjects, efforts are aimed at expanding teaching collaborations with colleagues from various disciplines.

### Teaching offered in Mainz and Frankfurt

In the Rhine-Main region, African linguistics and African Studies in general have traditionally had a strong focus on West Africa, particularly in relation to research projects. This is also reflected in the languages offered by the two departments: These include Hausa, Bambara and Fula, while a second focus is on the Bantu languages. Swahili is firmly anchored in the curriculum of both universities and, where possible, is supplemented by additional language courses such as Kinyarwanda in view of the long-standing partnership between Rwanda and

the state of Rhineland-Palatinate. At Goethe University, we have also introduced a course in Taqvaɣlit (Kabyle Berber) to take account of the growing importance of so-called heritage languages in the Rhine-Main region. The geographical and typological diversity of the language courses offered is one of the main strengths.

African Linguistics is a less taught and smaller subject, but its thematic range is broad. This corresponds to the broad spectrum of possible professional fields into which our students venture. The diversification of the teaching and learning formats we rely on is of central importance for adequate academic preparation. One example concerns research-based learning. In addition to research, this also applies to third mission work, which is an equally important field for our students. Career prospects in the field of education are particularly good at this point. With outreach projects such as “Afrika macht Schule”, we are building links to schools and civil society organisations, involving our students in these practical tasks.

### Approaches to digital communication: Practices and methods

Several of the modules that make up the study programme are organised digitally or in a hybrid format. A (“blended learning”) course on youth languages and mobile communication in Africa is just one example, funded by the RMU alliance. Based on extensive electronic teaching resources, the course combines self-study phases with some synchronous lectures and individual “research” projects, following ideas on adaptive and problem-centred learning. The logistical opportunities of self-directed learning and customised time management are significant additional benefits of these new formats. And finally, communication in the digital sphere is also one of our central research topics – a key reason for including it in our teaching formats.

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### DURATION

On-going (since 10/2021)

### FUNDING

RMU Teaching Initiative Fund, various short-term projects

### WEB PAGES

<https://www.studium.uni-mainz.de/afrikanische-sprachen-medien-und-kommunikation/>  
[https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/99250713/Afrikanische\\_Sprachen\\_Medien\\_und\\_Kommunikation\\_\\_br\\_Bachelor\\_of\\_Arts\\_\\_Hauptfach](https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/99250713/Afrikanische_Sprachen_Medien_und_Kommunikation__br_Bachelor_of_Arts__Hauptfach)





## Development of hybrid and digital teaching and learning environments for African Studies

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### INSTITUTION

Institute for African Studies

### DURATION

4/2022 – 9/2025

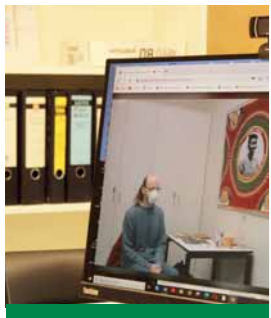
### FUNDING

Government of Hesse

### WEB PAGE

[https://www.starkerstart.uni-frankfurt.de/122996235/Dr\\_Bernhard\\_K%C3%B6hler](https://www.starkerstart.uni-frankfurt.de/122996235/Dr_Bernhard_K%C3%B6hler)

The project, situated within an interdisciplinary program for the improvement of teaching conditions, is concerned with the development of Moodle materials for four different university courses in African Studies. In 2023, the two-semester course “The languages of Africa” was supplemented with a number of new electronic resources including videos on the history of research. A new method of multimedia teaching was tested in the classroom and students were very grateful for the resources. The course “Linguistic anthropology” has been monitored for the second time within the frame of the project. It addresses students with prior knowledge in sociolinguistics, which makes it slightly more challenging to define an adequate baseline across the board. The e-learning materials that we base the course on at this point are sufficiently rich. The new student cohort benefited from them greatly, but could not discuss all possibly relevant themes in class. In order



to meet the students’ often diverse and varying interests, we compiled a pool of e-books intended to ease them into writing seminar papers on particular topics.

Regarding the two other relevant courses, “Mechanisms of language acquisition” and “Basic academic skills”, the principal investigator collaborated closely with the teaching staff offering these courses. Their course materials were thoroughly evaluated. Jointly, we considered conceptual issues where necessary. Further improvements with regard to these courses will follow in the year 2024. With these tasks in mind, the principal investigator participated in several e-learning workshops offered by “studiumdigitale”, broadening the range of electronic tools used in order to meet the key demands of the teaching in African Studies. Given that most of the courses we offer address students based in Frankfurt and Mainz, this is essential also with regard to practical concerns.



## International field school programme “Environmental change, human health and ecosystem services of Lake Malawi”

Aquatic ecosystems in sub-Saharan Africa are of global importance and provide resources on which the livelihoods of millions of people depend. However, African universities currently lack experts in aquatic sciences. International field schools offer an opportunity to build the necessary capacities of young scientists. The Volkswagen Foundation’s “International Fieldschools” programme funded a second consecutive summer school in Malawi in October 2023. The field school programme in Malawi is based on a sustainable network of African and German partnerships that were initiated as part of previous summer schools with water-related topics throughout Africa.

The 2023 field school focussed on the ecosystem services of Lake Malawi. Organismic and molecular bio-indicators were used to determine the state of the ecosystem and the role of the lake in public

health, as diseases such as schistosomiasis can be transmitted through water. Sixteen student participants from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Zambia, Ruanda, and Germany together with 5 lecturers developed sustainable management and conservation strategies within a transdisciplinary framework. A citizen science approach provided the scientific basis for a “Lake Malawi Centre for Conservation and Sustainability”, which is to be established at the defunct Chilumba container harbour.

One aim of the field schools was to establish a permanent network of interdisciplinary cooperation in palaeoenvironmental and aquatic sciences between African and German universities. The capacities built up during the field schools will initiate research projects for theses at Master’s and PhD level and beyond. Academic writing and publishing were thus also an integral part of the programme. The great success of the 2023 field school is illustrated by several future long-term collaborations and joint research and teaching projects on African Freshwater Ecology which were initiated.



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Goethe University

### PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

Mbarara University of Science & Technology, Uganda; University of Kisangani, DR of Congo; University of Zomba, Malawi

### DURATION

2022 – 2024

### FUNDING

Volkswagen Foundation



## Archival Studies master programme in Jos, Nigeria

Since 2019, the University of Jos and the National Film Institute in Jos, Nigeria, have been offering a master program for archival studies to train scientific personnel for film archives, heritage institutions and institutions of film culture. The program is modelled on the Master “Filmkultur: Archivierung, Programmierung, Präsentation” ([www.master-filmkultur.de](http://www.master-filmkultur.de)), which Goethe Universität has been offering together with the “Deutsches Filminstitut & Filmmuseum” in Frankfurt since 2013. The Jos master program is taught by faculty and archive staff which have benefited from hands-on-training at the DFF and “Arsenal Institut für Film- und Videokunst Berlin e.V.” through an exchange program

funded by the DAAD in their “Transnationale Bildung” program. The TNB project “Archival Studies Master in Jos”, directed by Prof. Vinzenz Hediger (cinema studies) at Goethe Universität, is the first program in the humanities to be funded in this program. The funding has recently been renewed for the 2024–26 period. Efforts are underway to create a PhD program building on the Jos master program.

### Preserving the film heritage of one of the world’s most important film producing countries

Nigeria has a long and rich film history and is now among the most prolific film producing nations in the world. Newly independent Nigeria transformed the former British colonial film unit into a government agency, which produced documentaries, newsreels and fiction films throughout the 1960s and 1970s, before evolving into the Nigerian Film Corporation in the early 1980s. The NFC developed a training arm, the National Film Institute in Jos, and a heritage branch, the National Archive of Film, Video and Sound, both in the 1990s. While celluloid production came to a standstill in the 1990s after the onset of IMF-imposed austerity measures, Nigeria has since emerged as the site of several thriving commercial film industries with production centres in Lagos, Kano and other major cities. The main output is in English, Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa language video- and digital native films, which were distrib-

uted first through VHS and VCD formats and now reach global audiences through cable TV and online platforms like irokoTV and Netflix. Increasingly, audiences and producers are no longer just interested in the most recent films, but in the growing body of Nigeria’s film history. Now-classic films from the early 1990s are remade with current casts, while filmmakers set out to trace and acknowledge the work of their predecessors in the pre-Nollywood period. By training archival specialists and creating the conditions for the long-term preservation of audiovisual works, the TNB project responds to this emerging sense of the importance of film history for a budding creative economy.

### Festivals and workshops

To promote the work of preservation, the leadership of the NFC and project members of the TNB project have participated in festivals and workshops in Nigeria, Egypt and Germany in 2023. These include

the “Accidental Archivism” symposium in Berlin in June, where NAFVS staff member Justina Akporherhe presented a newly rediscovered film on women’s education from the 1970s. These further include a conference on Third Cinema’s legacies at the American University in Cairo and a workshop on film heritage at the Zuma Film Festival in Abuja in December. The core activities of the TNB program remain training workshops, including a ten-day event at the NAFVS in January 2024, as well as student and staff exchanges. Since 2020 three Jos master students per semester have been benefitting from DAAD Scholarships to study in Frankfurt; a further five benefit from local scholarships for economically disadvantaged students from all over Africa.

### PUBLICATION

Schulte Strathaus, Stefanie and Vinzenz Hediger (eds.) *Accidental Archivism. Shaping Cinema’s Futures with Remnants of the Past*. Lüneburg: meson press 2023 (open access: <https://meson.press/books/accidental-archivism/>)

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### PARTNER

INSTITUTIONS  
Nigerian Film Corporation; University of Jos

### DURATION

10/2019 – 9/2026

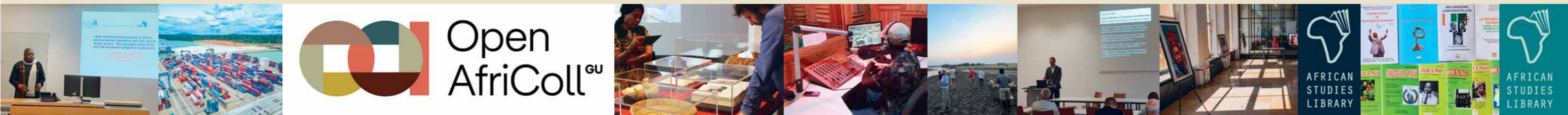
### FUNDING

DAAD

### WEB PAGES

<https://master-filmkultur.de/en/master-film-culture/>





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## ZIAF Lecture

The annual ZIAF Lecture was given on 29th November by the natural scientist Dr Mesmin Tchindjang. He also presented a student lecture on 30th November 2023. He is a permanent professor at the University of Yaoundé I and a scientific consultant in Cameroon. He obtained a PhD in France in 1996 on geomorphology, surface dynamics and natural hazards. He also received in 2012 his habilitation at the University of Paris Diderot VII under the direction of Prof. Monique Faure.

### Interdisciplinary research fields

The areas of investigation of Prof. Tchindjang are tropical geomorphology, natural hazards and vulnerability, environmental studies, climate change

and land use. He has worked with organizations such as the UNDP, GIZ, WWF and the World Bank in Central Africa in various fields of natural hazards, protected areas and landscape resilience. He coordinated about fifteen projects between 2012 and 2022. He is the author/co-author of several expert reports on the environment, mining, mapping, and climate change. He has published and co-published more than fifty articles in scientific journals, and book chapters in various fields, also on mining, tourism and ecotourism.

### Subsaharan Africa is rich in extractive resources – the role of Asian actors

Africa holds considerable economic potential. Inspired by the exemplary economic dynamism of the newly industrialized countries of Asia and Latin America, many African countries aspire to become emerging economies in the near future. Cameroon is no exception in this regard. Industrialization occupies a central place in the new long-term plans in Cameroon through projects for the construction of infrastructure, institutional reforms and the financing of business development. The development of the Kribian Atlantic coast plays a central part in the development strategy of Cameroon. This new dynamic has completely changed the face of Kribi and has only been made possible thanks to Asian funding, particularly Chinese, which has become Cameroon's leading creditor and economic partner.

Whether it is the Kribi Port Authority, the Kribi-Lolabe highway, the Mamelles massive iron project, the Mbalam railway, or the Memve'ele dam. All of these projects have been entrusted to Chinese companies as Prof. Tchindjang showed. Overall, Asian actors are those who have made the most achievements and as such, China is at the top of the companies operating on more than 80% of infrastructure projects in Cameroon.

The environmental dynamics linked to these constructions are numerous and range from the expected socio-economic development to population growth, as well as deforestation and a certain level of indebtedness of the country. Unfortunately, the socio-environmental impacts of this strategy on the rights of the poorest rural and indigenous populations, who very often depend on natural resources for their survival, are not always sufficiently considered, and it is likely that rural communities will end up paying a very high price for infrastructure development. The example of Kribi through its au-

tonomous container port and dedicated infrastructure allowed to illustrate this infrastructural, environmental and social dynamics.

### Volcanic Lake Nyos: from disaster to security

The second talk focused on the gaseous (CO<sub>2</sub>) eruption of Lake Nyos in August 1986 which caused more than 1700 human victims. The mechanisms and potential dangers linked to a dam were well presented by Prof. Tchindjang, without forgetting the security actions undertaken by the Cameroonian Government and the UNDP.

Both lectures underlined the thematic diversity of Prof. Tchindjang's applied scientific work. The stimulating discussions showed once again how little we knew about current problems and events in sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, these lectures also led to a more comprehensive knowledge of socio-economic and natural challenges in Africa.



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### INSTITUTIONS

Institute of Physical Geography; ZIAF

### PARTNER

#### INSTITUTION

Université de Yaoundé I, Yaoundé, Cameroun

### DURATION

28.11. – 3.12.2023

### FUNDING

ZIAF

### WEB PAGE

[https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/47331013/Aktuelles\\_des\\_Zentrum\\_f%C3%BCr\\_Interdisziplin%C3%A4re\\_Afrikaforschung\\_ZIAF](https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/47331013/Aktuelles_des_Zentrum_f%C3%BCr_Interdisziplin%C3%A4re_Afrikaforschung_ZIAF)



## Open AfriColl GU – objects from Africa in the collections of Goethe University

2023 was a significant year for Open AfriColl GU: a project aiming to create transparency with respect to objects from the African continent in the collections of the Goethe University. Firstly, we completed the data acquisition and refinement phase, during which we identified more than 50 relevant object groups from 15 collections at Goethe University. We then enriched this data with details about the collections and created a landing page to make the information publicly available. The landing page is intended as an evolving resource – when further object groups are identified or acquired in the future, these can easily be added.

2023 also witnessed the start of the process to publish the project results. This began with a round table on February 27th, organised to present and discuss the project outcomes with members of Goethe University as well as two researchers from Namibia and relevant stakeholders in the field of

the decolonisation of collections in Germany. On the basis of the feedback we received, we overhauled and officially launched the landing page in April 2023.

In October 2023 we presented the project in a workshop organised together with the collections coordination of Mainz University at the annual conference of university collections in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. To ensure that the results of the project can also be accessed without stable internet connection, we began to work on an offline format in autumn 2023. Together with graphic designer Michaela Lautenschlager, we created a pdf booklet to be published in the beginning of 2024 alongside promotional material. The first follow-up projects building on the results of Open AfriColl GU are currently in the making – hopefully just the first of many!



## Exhibition: “We are happy to see these things (again)” – Collaborations between the Oswin Köhler Archive and Khwe from Namibia”

In May and August 2023, the Oswin Köhler Archive and the coordination unit for collections at the Goethe University Frankfurt presented an exhibition on their collaborative work with members of the Khwe community from Namibia in the Schopenhauer Studio of the university library.

The exhibits included a mobile exhibition on roll-up posters, an audiobook and a research book on medicinal plants, all prepared during a previous workshop with Khwe from Namibia, as well as the volumes of a vernacular Khwe encyclopedia, funded by the DFG, and a film with historical film footage from the 1960s, commented by Khwe in 2016 and equipped with English subtitles in 2019 with funding from the Jutta Vogel Foundation, the Ubuntu Foundation and the ZIAF. The exhibition also comprised an audio tour through the mobile exhibition

by the Khwe curators, a slide show, and a sound experience with both historical recordings and recordings documenting the collaborative work and statements of the participants.

The exhibition further presented information on Khwe objects from different perspectives, focussing on objects that had raised discussions during both the work process and presentations of the mobile exhibition, such as whether a certain object belonged to the genuine Khwe culture or why certain objects were missing in the collection and how they might nevertheless be presented.

The programme included an opening lecture on the objectives, challenges and results of the collaboration as well as a number of public guided tours. During their stay in Frankfurt in August 2023, the Khwe visitors from Namibia themselves took part in a guided tour and a press briefing on the results of their visit (see page 74).



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Institute of African Studies,  
Oswin Köhler Archive  
Coordination of collections  
of the Goethe University

### PARTNER INSTITUTION

University Library  
J.C. Senckenberg

### DURATION

28.4. – 14.5. and  
4.8. – 4.9. 2023

### FUNDING

University Library  
J.C. Senckenberg

### WEB PAGES

<https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/ausstellung/khwe.html>

<https://www.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/ausstellung/khwe2.html>



## Back in Malawi

All good things come in eight. For the eighth and probably last time, a group of interested citizens traveled with Professor Friedemann Schrenk and Dr Stefan Schmid to Malawi and Zambia. This kind of trips aims to give interested citizens a realistic picture of Africa beyond the romance of safaris, through direct encounters with Malawian citizens and lectures on the natural and cultural history of the country, and to generate donations for the Cultural and Museum Centre Karonga (CMCK) in Northern Malawi, a public-private partnership (PPP) unique in Africa and closely linked to the Senckenberg Research Institute and ZIAF. The CMCK is not only a museum but also a vibrant cultural center and event venue, with a theatre hall co-financed by

the state of Hesse. The CMCK gained a national reputation through a special exhibition called “Living Legends”, in which, for the first time, eyewitnesses to the Banda dictatorship spoke about their suffering. It plays a key role in the emancipation of the northern region, which the central state has severely neglected.

Included in the price of the trip is a donation of 700 euros per person to cover staff costs at the CMCK for a year and to allow the actualization of the permanent exhibition “From Dinosaurs to Democracy”. In addition to these “standard” donations, many participants have continued to fund schools, NGOs, and especially the journalistic work of Radio Dinosaur, an independent offshoot of the CMCK, which was the first community radio station to broadcast only in the local languages of the North. Thanks to German donations in the early years, Radio Dinosaur

is now financially sound and sustainable, providing a much-needed counterpart to the church-based radios that dominate the media landscape. In total, the eight trips raised around €80,000 in donations.

## Culture, science, and everyday life

The focus of the trip always is on encounters with the people of Malawi and the country’s natural and cultural history. The trip is based on Professor Schrenk’s more than 30 years of work and life experience in Karonga, where the group spent four days. Professor Schrenk gave lectures in the evenings on paleontology, geology, zoology, history, politics, and society in Malawi and explained the topics on site in many places during the days. He showed the participants how to prospect fossils in the field and a cultural performance by the villagers took place at the Malema research camp.

## Inflation and its effects

The participants of the trip experienced this time also how global inflation and the Ukraine crisis are having an even more serious impact in many African countries than in Europe. In Malawi, the situation is exacerbated by a chronic shortage of foreign currency, which currently no longer allows the country to pay its import bills for fuel. As a result, petrol and diesel are hard to come by, imported products have become unaffordable for the average citizen and the currency is in free fall. To support the Cultural and Museum Centre Karonga in the future, Professor Schrenk will redesign guided tours to Northern Malawi, which will be organized by a local company. The Uraha Foundation Germany, an NGO that has been supporting the CMCK since its foundation, will market these tours in Germany.

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## INSTITUTIONS

Senckenberg  
Research Institute;  
Division of  
Palaeoanthropology;  
ZIAF

## WEB PAGE

www.ziaf.de





## Symposium “Unwanted objects in the field of material irritations and border crossings”

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### INSTITUTION

Department of Social & Cultural Anthropology

### DURATION

September 26, 2023

### FUNDING

ZIAF, Freunde und Förderer der Goethe-Universität

The Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the Goethe University Frankfurt organized the symposium “Unwanted objects in the field of material irritations and border crossings”. It was held on September 26, 2023, on the Westend Campus. The symposium focused on the relevance of the lived material context for ethnological research in Africa, North America, and in museums. It was dedicated to honor Professor Hans Peter Hahn on the occasion of his 60th birthday.

The keynote address was given by Dr Kokou Azamede from the University of Lomé/Togo, who elaborated on material culture in the context of the restitution debate. Two sessions followed this keynote address. The first session focused on expected and unexpected objects in the field. Four invited speakers discussed their encounters with various objects in the field and research insights gained from these encounters. The speakers shared personal reflec-

tions and how such encounters shaped their research and thought without making it explicitly into scientific publications. The second session featured three invited speakers and focused on experiences with material objects and misplaced objects in the field. Similar to the first session, the speakers shared their analyses of material culture but concentrated more on objects that are inconvenient and cause irritation. A final discussion hosted by Professor Hans Peter Hahn, Goethe University Frankfurt, brought to light how everyday objects such as household goods, consumer products, and means of transport, as well as museum collections, shape ethnological research and how these have to be taken into account in reflections about the positionality in ethnographic field work.

ZIAF, “Freunde und Förderer der Goethe-Universität”, and the Department of Social & Cultural Anthropology kindly supported this symposium.



## Phenomenal women empowerment stage 2023

On September 16, 2023, the 5th Phenomenal Women Empowerment Stage unfolded, organized by Women4Knowledge and ZIAF. This year’s theme, “The art of propelling,” guided a transformative day. The event kicked off with three engaging workshops from 10 am to 1 pm, covering health, entrepreneurship, and financial investment. At 1:30 pm, the opening ceremony commenced with a captivating musical performance. Dr Schmid officially inaugurated the event, followed by the Keynote Speaker, Rukayat Kolawole, enlightening attendees on propelling art, particularly for migrants in Germany. Three inspiring speakers shared their success stories. Dr Sanerki, a Nigerian who overcame obstacles to become a German university lecturer; Dorine Tchoang, an engineer leading a Frankfurt-based firm; and a Cameroonian painter in the US, stressing the power of authenticity in achieving goals. A noteworthy addition was Lunia Hara’s Masterclass on empathetic leadership. Five entrepreneurs present-

ed their ventures, followed by a productive coffee break for networking and interaction with speakers. A fair showcased entrepreneurs, fostering potential collaborations.

Post-break, a community talk addressed the African brain drain, followed by a business talk on “Mastering growth.” The W4K team concluded the day, leading into an evening of entertainment including a themed pantomime. The day attracted nearly 310 participants, including a significant number of inspired young people. Impressively, 98% expressed extreme satisfaction, lauding the unique platform and excellent organization. Unleashing inspiration and empowerment, the phenomenal women empowerment stage 2023 marked a resounding success, with an eagerly anticipated return in September 2024, promising continued transformative impact.



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### INSTITUTIONS

Women for Knowledge;  
ZIAF

### FUNDING

Amt für multikulturelle  
Angelegenheiten;  
Immo Finanzwelt;  
ZIAF



## Africa-related projects of the Goethe University Library

In 2023, at the Specialised Information Service (SIS) for African Studies, we were able to extend and deepen contacts with colleagues, publishers and distributors across the African continent, as well as researcher communities across African Studies Centres at German universities and librarians working with African Studies collections across Europe. The year started with a brief stint of a colleague from Ghana as “visiting librarian”. As a prelude to the 2023 European Conference on African Studies (ECAS) Conference in Cologne, we took part in the annual European Librarians in African Studies (ELIAS) meeting. Here, we exchanged with colleagues working in related collections across the European continent.

The acquisition of literature by publishers from the African continent and the African diaspora remains one of our central objectives. The SIS works with a number of specialist distributors for print publications. Following the ECAS conference, we were able to set up a new partnership with Clarke’s Bookshop in Cape Town, which specialises in the distribution of books from South and Southern Africa. Additionally, we provide access to eJournals via the South African provider Sabinet and we are continuing our licenced eBook package from the African Books Collective, which is being extended through the addition of new titles.

At the Frankfurt Book Fair we were able to catch up with colleagues from the African Publishers Network (APNET) and acquire new titles. We were also able to set up a new partnership with Éditions FHB of the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Foundation for Peace Research based in Yamoussoukro, Côte d’Ivoire following a generous book donation on their behalf.

## Roadshows for the new portal of the Specialised Information Service (SIS) African Studies

From the end of 2022 and throughout 2023, we presented the new African Studies Library portal [www.africanstudieslibrary.org](http://www.africanstudieslibrary.org) at African Studies Centres across Germany, including the Cluster of Excellence “Africa Multiple” of Bayreuth University, the Institute for Asian and African Studies at the Hum-

boldt-University in Berlin, the Institute for African Studies of Cologne University, at the Asia-Africa-Institute of the University of Hamburg, at the Institute for African Studies of Leipzig University and at the Institute for Anthropology and African Studies at the Johannes-Gutenberg-University in Mainz. The new African Studies Library research portal makes it possible to simultaneously search library collections of important African Studies centres in Germany and internationally, as well as the repositories of over 100 African universities. The services of this portal will be fine-tuned in the coming years, making it more efficient and user-friendly. The African Studies Toolbox blog continues to offer information on new initiatives to make Africa-related research more equitable and ethical, as well as information on open access, archives and library holdings, and online resources for African Studies.

## New funding phase 2024 – 2026

The year 2023 ended well, in that our funding proposal was approved and that the SIS African Studies will obtain German Research Foundation (DFG) funding for another three years. In these years we are planning new book acquisition trips (including to the Gaborone Book Festival in Botswana and the Foire Internationale du Livre de Lomé in Togo), an exciting cooperation on authority files from oral sources with the University of Hamburg and the National Centre for Arts and Culture (NCAC) in the Gambia, as well as new features in our portal, including direct subito and inter-library loans, a geographic search and a completely new interactive researcher compass.

The SIS team consists of: Dr Aisha Othman (project lead), Dr Anne Schumann Douosson (project staff), Christina Sokol (librarian) and Jan Eberhardt (IT).



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## INSTITUTION

Goethe University Library

## DURATION

1/2020 – 12/2023

## FUNDING

German Research  
Foundation (DFG);  
Specialised  
Information Service

## WEB PAGE

[www.africanstudieslibrary.org](http://www.africanstudieslibrary.org)





## Guest researchers of the ZIAF

ZIAF sees itself as a forum that promotes the circulation of knowledge between Africa, Europe, and the countries of the Global South. Knowledge generated in Europe about the countries and regions of Africa is to be made accessible to African scholars and the public in the same way as the knowledge production of African researchers in Germany. This is done, for example, by inviting African colleagues to Goethe University, where the focus is on joint research work, jointly developing future projects and on presenting the results to a wider academic audience as well as to the public.

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### Sonner Geria, Thaddeus Chedau, Hendrik Mbang and Snelia Mangonga: Representatives of the Khwe Community in Namibia

In August 2023, four representatives of the Khwe Community in Namibia's Bwabwata National Park visited the Oswin Köhler Archive with funding from the ZIAF and the DFG. The main objective of the three-week stay was to work collaboratively with the responsible researcher, Dr Gertrud Boden, on the Khwe collection in the archive. The work started with a presentation of the different holdings from the Khwe (manuscripts, photos, audio recordings, film footage, ethnographic objects, drawings, plant samples and dossiers) and the creation of a priority list of objectives to be achieved during the workshop. The accomplished tasks were the design of posters for a mobile exhibition and the preparation of a booklet manuscript to educate Khwe on their traditional culture. Further activities included the inspection and discussion of the collection database, the visit to an exhibition on previous collabo-

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**INSTITUTION**  
Bwabwata Khwe  
Custodian Committee

**PARTNER INSTITUTIONS**  
Dr Gertrud Boden,  
Institute of African Studies,  
Oswin Köhler Archive

**DURATION**  
7.8. – 26.8.2023



rations (see page 65), interviews with stakeholders on the future of the collection, learning how to write applications for funding, and planning future workshops and collaboration in Namibia.

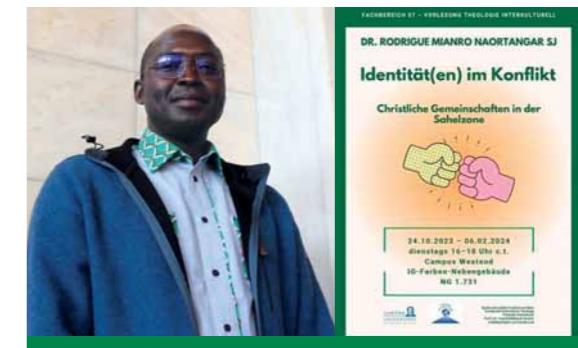
During their stay in Germany, the visitors also took part in a three-day workshop unit in the Nationalpark Eifel with indoor and outdoor exercises exploring how people with different biographies and backgrounds orient themselves in a more or less familiar environment, which units and contexts they perceive, and how they describe and categorize them. Other participants were employees of the Nationalpark Eifel and scholars of the University of Cologne and the Ruhr University Bochum. The workshop was part of the project "Potentials of a collection. Tracking, perceiving relationships and sharing" (see page 30), which, among other things, examines to which degree the academic categories used in describing the Khwe material correspond to their environmental experiences.



### Dr Rodrigue Mianro Naortangar, Intercultural Theologie visiting professorship

Since 1985, "Intercultural Theology" (Thi) has been an interdisciplinary teaching and research focus of the Department of Catholic Theology, dealing with the perception and analysis of worldwide (non-European) "Christianities" and their contexts. The core of the Intercultural Theology is a visiting professorship that changes on an annual basis. In the course of the reorientation of the traditional Thi concept, the profile line of Africa-related studies, skills and encounters has been in the foreground since last year and will initially run for four years. The aim is to systematically strengthen the existing network, to establish new formats for teaching and research exchange and to expand these across disciplines. The existing cooperation with the College of the Theological Institute of the Society of Jesus (ITCI) in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, was further strengthened by a joint international conference in Abidjan in February 2023.

In the winter semester 2023, the Chadian theologian and ethnologist Dr Rodrigue Mianro Naortangar was guest professor at the faculty of Catholic Theology. He focused on "Identity(s) in Conflict. Christian Communities in the Sahel". The lecture and the accompanying seminar were dedicated to the multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multicultural landscape of the Sahel and the current and historical situation of religious communities in the Sahel. The focus was on the situation in the countries of the Sahel region. Dr Naortangar raised the question as to how a Christian or Muslim identity can be considered Sahelian. The traditional African religions are of fundamental importance in this context. Africa's Christian churches continue to be challenged by existential factors such as poverty, migration, Islamist terrorism, neo-colonialism and other issues.



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## Invited guest scholar Dr Setargew Kenaw Fantaw from Ethiopia encourages ZIAF to improve networking with CODESRIA and ARUA

### What was the purpose of your stay, and how far was it possible to realize that?

I am a research fellow at the Makerere Institute of Social Research, Makerere University, Uganda, and an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. I stayed at the Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology for two months (October 15 to December 15, 2023) under the sponsorship of ZIAF. In this two-month period I, with the support of Professor Hans Peter Hahn, developed a grant proposal under the title “Social media and

political space in Africa”, with the intent to compare Uganda and Ethiopia.

To undertake the tasks at hand there have been a series of meetings between me and Hans Peter Hahn. During my stay, I have had also the privilege to attend weekly seminars, and public lectures and present a paper to an international conference entitled “The Museum as a place of knowledge”.

### What do you think is the relevance of the planned project, why is it important, and why should this research happen now?

It is almost a truism that new communication technologies (in the form of smartphones and social media platforms) are tremendously affecting scientific, cultural, economic and political spheres around the world. These technologies have also become almost ubiquitous in many African countries. Cultural events, social support, elections, civil wars, ethnic conflicts, religious tensions, etc. are mediated by social media platforms. As there are many numbers of political activists using social media platforms to critique governments in power, the latter do also invest heavily on online surveillance and other tools to repress or at least curb the oppositions on top of (offline) law enforcement and security forces. Publications that deal with social media in Africa mostly talk about the continent in general and a great number of the narratives are at the level of news-

paper reportages. In this regard, because of the up-to-date nature of the topic and since it is closely describing and comparing two African countries, makes the study all the more pertinent.

### What is your expertise and what previous publications enable you to become the project leader for this?

I am a cooperative PI for this project, with Professor Hahn being the project leader. Both of us have extensive research experience and considerable number of publications in the area of science and technology studies, materiality studies, and smartphone use in Africa. In my capacity as an anthropologist and philosopher of technology, I have ample field experience on various topics, including on the impact of new communication technologies on the socio-cultural and political contexts in which they are used.

### How do you see the Role of African Studies at Goethe and what should be done in order to promote African Studies further?

As a guest researcher with support from ZIAF, I would like to take this chance to thank the Institute. I had also the opportunity to attend some of the public lectures the institute organized. I don't know much about how known ZIAF is in Africa but I would suggest that it could promote its coverage if it tries

to use outlets of such regional organizations as CODESRIA (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa) and ARUA (African Research Universities Alliance).

During my stay in Frankfurt, I have had the opportunity to meet and socialize with so many people from all over the world. My stay at the city of museums gave me the privilege to visit museums and historical places, including Goethe's House. The excursion to the border city of Strasbourg in France was also very memorable for which the Welcome Centre of Goethe's University must also be thanked for generously organizing the tour.

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#### PARTNER

#### INSTITUTIONS

Prof. Hans Peter Hahn,  
Institute for Social and  
Cultural Anthropology  
and ZIAF

#### DURATION

15.10. – 15.12.2023







**Prof. Ludovic Ouhonyioué Kibora, Director of the Institut des Sciences des Sociétés in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso**

**Dear Prof. Kibora, you were one of the rare academic visitors from Africa who came on his own expenses. What opportunities are there in Burkina Faso for researchers to obtain national funding to go abroad?**

My research was funded from the Burkinabe state budget. Every two years, Burkina Faso researchers have the opportunity to go on a study trip to a country and a scientific institution of their choice. Budgetary difficulties mean that the relevance of the trip must be demonstrated.

**You chose to come to the Goethe University in Frankfurt. Why did you choose Goethe University?**

In the past, I've been invited by the Goethe University in Frankfurt to take part in scientific meetings on two occasions. Once for a workshop organised by

Prof. Hans-Peter Hahn, and again for the Point Sud programme, of which my institute is a member.

**In these times of increasingly difficult African-European relations, what role should Germany play at scientific level, especially in promoting the cooperation with the countries of the Sahel?**

In the world of research nothing great can be achieved without a win-win partnership. The criticism levelled at France is a certain paternalism on the part of politicians. This does not prevent researchers from Burkina Faso from working well with researchers from that country. It would be desirable for Germany to intervene a little more in the countries of the Sahel.

**What are your future projects involving German and Frankfurt-based researchers?**

I'm working on traditional institutions in the field of conflict resolution and security. In these areas I have had research collaborations with German researchers that I intend to develop further in my research perspectives.



**Dr Kelemework Tafere Reda: Stories and Experiences of the Tigray War. Community-level Research in Harresaw, Eastern Tigray, Ethiopia**

After over a year of 'tit-for-tat' escalating political tensions between the federal government led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Tigray regional government led by the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), full-scale war erupted on 4th November 2020. Subsequently, the region as a whole remained under a 'blockade' with interruption of vital government services until the signing of a peace deal in November 2022.

This research project aims to assess the aftermath of the violent conflict in northern Ethiopia specifically addressing economic and social impacts of the war among communities in Tigray. Based on exploratory qualitative investigations, we identified the impacts of the war on people's livelihoods and interethnic relations between Tigray and neighboring Afar communities. The findings indicate that the war has made communities vulnerable to poverty

and starvation because of the destruction of productive resources and livestock lootings. This is further exacerbated by the displacement of the economically active force which has had negative impacts on land management. A significant proportion of the youth joined the fighting leaving behind women, children and the elderly. Others had to flee the war in search of safe heavens. On the social dimension, there have been interethnic tensions between Tigray and Afar communities as the latter supported the federal government in the war against Tigray resulting in subsequent raids and counter-raids at different times. Gender-based violence has also been documented. For example, in just a few months, nearly a dozen women were raped by the invading army in the research site alone. Besides, the war-induced displacement of people has resulted in fragile social and economic support networks threatening the very essence of communal integrity, resilience, and survival.



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**INSTITUTION**  
Frobenius Institute for Research in Cultural

**PARTNER INSTITUTIONS**  
Mekelle University, Ethiopia;  
DT consulting, Belgium

**DURATION**  
9/2023 – 8/2024

**FUNDING**  
Embassy of Ireland, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**WEB PAGE**  
<https://www.ireland.ie/en/ethiopia/addisababa/>





## ZIAF information

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## Advisory board of the ZIAF



**Norbert Noisser**  
Senior advisor Africa/Asia of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce Gießen-Friedberg, Chair of the ZIAF advisory board

Norbert Noisser held the responsibility for the Asia/Pacific and Africa markets, along with overseeing foreign trade cooperation with universities and international organizations at the Hessian Ministry of Economics (HMWEVW). Prior to this role, he contributed his expertise at the Federal Ministry for International Cooperation (BMZ) and was a member of the Executive Council of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe and in the UN context in the preparation of Namibia's independence. Currently, he serves as president of the Society for International Development (SID) in Frankfurt.



**Angelika Friedrich**  
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Angelika Friedrich leads the Central Africa Department at the "Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit" (GIZ). The countries within her purview include Cameroon, Chad, Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Her thematic focus encompasses climate, energy, environment, biodiversity, gender equality, agriculture, raw materials, decentralization, and land governance. She has undertaken long-term assignments in Mali and Niger and from 2016 to 2020 as GIZ country coordinator in Burkina Faso. Additionally, she has been involved in short-term assignments across various African countries.



**Dr Detlef Hanne**  
KfW Development Bank

Detlef Hanne, associated with KfW Development Bank, brings his expertise as a geoscientist honed through years of experience in international settings spanning science, industry, and development cooperation. Between 2003 and 2011 he was responsible for the development of the Africa oriented funding programmes at the Volkswagen Foundation. Since then, his focus has shifted to financial cooperation within KfW Development Bank. One of his thematic foci is on higher education in developing countries, with a particular emphasis on sub-Saharan Africa.



**Dr Daniela Kneißl**  
Alexander von Humboldt Foundation

Daniela Kneißl serves as the head of the Africa, Middle East Division within the sponsorship and networking department of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. She is responsible for implementing the Georg Forster Research Fellowship Programme which supports academics from emerging and developing countries. Her responsibilities extend to maintaining and expanding the Humboldt network, with a specific focus on sub-Saharan Africa. Additionally, she acts as the representative of the Humboldt Foundation for fundamental issues concerning scientific cooperation.



**Dr Doris Löhr-Broß**  
University of Bayreuth

Doris Löhr serves as the scientific coordinator for internationalization and public engagement at the Cluster of Excellence "Africa Multiple" at the University of Bayreuth. Following her tenure in the SFB 268 "West African savanna" and the completion of her doctorate in African Studies at Goethe University, engaged in research and teaching roles at the universities of Leipzig and Hamburg. Subsequently, she assumed the position of managing director of the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies within the BMBF project "Future Africa – visions in transition".



**Prof. Dr Dieter Neubert**  
Formerly University of Bayreuth

Dieter Neubert is Professor emeritus of development sociology at the University of Bayreuth. His research spans diverse areas, including political sociology (with a focus on civil society and decentralization), violent conflicts, development policy sociology, and participatory methods. Beyond to his work in Africa, he has also conducted research in Southeast Asia.



**Dr Michaela Oberhofer**  
Museum Rietberg, Zurich

Michaela Oberhofer is curator for Africa and Oceania and deputy head of the board of trustees at Museum Rietberg Zurich. She works at the cross-section of museums and science and has initiated various research projects such as the Benin Initiative Switzerland (BAK) and the SNSF project on the Himmelheber archive. Regionally, the ethnologist specializes in West and Central Africa. Her areas of expertise encompass African art history, museum studies, cooperation, colonial heritage, and restitution.



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## New members of the ZIAF



**Prof. Barbara Alge**

Barbara Alge is Professor of Ethnomusicology. She held guest professorships in Austria and Brazil. Her research is on postcolonial identities, music, dance and Catholic festivals in the lusophone world. She is author of *Gold, Festivals, and Music in Southeast Brazil: Sounding Portuguese* (Routledge, 2022) and *Forschungsdatenmanagement in der Musikethnologie* (2019, Olms), and editor of *Transatlantic Musical Flows in the Lusophone World* (the world of music new series, 2013). Her current research is on music from the islands of S. Tomé and Príncipe.



**Prof. Heinz Drügh**

Prof. Heinz Drügh studied German language and literature, philosophy and political science in Bonn, Tübingen and Göttingen. He received his doctorate from Goethe University in 1997 and habilitated at the University of Tübingen in 2004 with a thesis on the aesthetics of description. In 2005 he was visiting professor at the Université Aix en Provence. Since 2006 he is Professor for Modern German Literature and Aesthetics at the Goethe University Frankfurt a. M.



**Prof. Stefan Michels**

Stefan Michels (\*1986) is a professor of church history. His research includes problems in the history of the Reformation, theological music research as well as post- and decolonial theory within theological research. His most recently published study on the history of the Reformation “*Testes veritatis. Studies on the transformative development of the truth witness concept in the Wittenberg Reformation*”. He is currently working on a research project on contemporary church history in Namibia.



**Prof. Anja Middelbeck-Varwick**

Prof. Anja Middelbeck-Varwick has been teaching theology of religion and religious studies at the Department of Catholic Theology at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main since October 2019. She was previously Professor of Catholic Theology at Europa-Universität Flensburg and Junior Professor of Systematic Theology at the Department of Catholic Theology at Freie Universität Berlin. Her research interests include among others intercultural theology, transformation processes in global Christianity and issues of global justice.



**Dr Judit Tavakoli**

Judit Tavakoli is a post-doctoral research associate at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology. Her research interests include migration, material culture, and linguistic anthropology. Her doctoral dissertation investigates the importance of cultural politics within the Western Sahara conflict. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in Algeria, Morocco and Western Sahara she analysed the impact of material reality on national identity formation. She also worked on political self-conceptions and forms of activism among Sahrawi diasporic youth. Her current research explores linguistic hierarchies and how they are challenged by South African artists.



**Dr Hanna Teichler**

Hanna Teichler is a post-doctoral research associate (GU, IAES). Her research interests include Anglophone world literature, memory studies, blue humanities, environmental studies, and postcolonial literatures. Her monograph *Carnivalizing Reconciliation* appeared in 2021 (Berghahn, shortlisted for the 2023 MSA's First Book Award). She co-directs the *Frankfurt Memory Studies Platform* with Astrid Erll. In 2023, she co-founded the journal *Memory Studies Review* (with Justyna Tabaszewska, Erol Gülüm, and Paul Leworthy). With Adebayo Sakiru, Fabian Krautwald and Nancy Rushohora, Hanna co-edits the *Handbook of Memory Studies in Africa* (Brill).



**Hamza Boutemin**

Hamza Boutemin works as a research assistant at the Institute for African Studies, Goethe University, collaborating with Prof. Axel Fane-go Palat within the LOEWE research cluster “Minority Studies: Language and Identity”, project C1.2 “Berber Speakers in the Rhine-Main Area: Migration, Minority Status, and Masculinity.” In addition to his role as a research assistant, Hamza Boutemin is pursuing his doctoral studies in Educational Sciences at the University of Frankfurt. His doctoral research focuses on early childhood language and literacy support among Maghrebi families in Germany, examining these aspects in the context of Arabic diglossia.



**Pia Maria Eibes**

Pia Maria Eibes is a research associate in the Biogeography and Biodiversity lab at the Institute of Physical Geography at Goethe University. She is a geoecologist with research interests in the biogeography and ecology of plants on terrestrial islands, special soils and drylands as well as urban ecology. For her PhD, she investigated the habitat island biogeography of the flora on quartz islands in a unique biodiversity hotspot in the southern African Succulent Karoo. She is part of the DFG-funded *Quartz Islands* project team.



**Lena Grieger**

Lena Grieger is a research associate and PhD candidate at the Institute for Physical Geography at Goethe University. She is a geographer with research interests in social-ecological systems, human-environment interactions, and land use change in Sub-Saharan Africa. In her project ‘Traditional and modern climate change adaptation strategies in agroecological systems. Agroforestry in Togo and Benin’ she focuses on the diverse agroforestry practices being climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies as well as on the importance of native multi-purpose tree species.



**Melina Götze**

Melina Götze is a research associate and PhD candidate at the Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology at Goethe University. Her research interests include critical migration and border studies, processes of citizenship and belonging, and phenomenological approaches in anthropology. In her project “BeLonging: Translocal Lifeworlds of Ghanaian Migrants in Germany and Ghana”, she focuses on the ways in which transnational differentiations of belonging and ambivalent notions of return and migration are manifested, negotiated, and contested in the lifeworlds of Ghanaian migrants.



**Juan-Marco Puerta Schardt**

Juan-Marco Puerta Schardt is an archaeologist and research assistant at the Archaeological Institute of the University Frankfurt. His research interests are centered around West African pottery, with a specific emphasis on its role in elucidating the exchange of both knowledge and materials. Methodologically, his focus lies in the application of archaeometry and statistical programming. His PhD is part of the “Tracing Connections” project, which aims to identify links between regions through geochemical analysis of archaeological ceramics.



**Cezary Szymanski**

Cezary Szymanski is an archaeologist, research assistant, and doctoral candidate in the project “The Lake Chad region as a crossroads”. His scientific interests are mainly focused on the sub-Saharan parts of Africa, in particular Chad, Senegal, and Tanzania. His doctoral thesis is dedicated to statistical, chronological, and spatial research on Chadian ceramics from the Kanem-Borno period. Szymanski has also been active in the Romano-Germanic Commission of the German Archaeological Institute with minor interruptions since 2018.



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## Publications by ZIAF members

### AFRICAN STUDIES

Botne, Robert, and Axel Fanego Palat (eds.) 2023. *Domains and Regions in Bantu Tense and Aspect*. Cologne: Köppe.

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Hediger, Vinzenz. 2023. The Aesthetics of the Global Value Chain. Container Shipping, Media Networks, and the Problem of Visibility in the Global Sphere of Circulation. In: Vinzenz Hediger, Florian Hoof, Yvonne Zimmermann (Eds.) *Films that Work Harder. The Circulation of Industrial Cinema*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 37–104.

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