Eastern Africa in Global History: from “Precolonial” to Decolonial Entanglements (ECAS 2023)

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We are pleased to invite contributions to a panel titled “Eastern Africa in Global History: from “Precolonial” to Decolonial Entanglements” at the upcoming European Conference on African Studies (ECAS), which will be held from May 31 to June 3, 2023 in Cologne (Germany).

Eastern-African and Indian Ocean historiographies increasingly expand beyond coastal and colonial frames of reference. This panel investigates how this is not only a spatiotemporal expansion, but also affects our understanding of coastal and colonial “cores,” and of Eastern Africa in Global History.

Paper proposals must consist of a paper title, the name/s and email address/es of author/s, a short abstract of fewer than 300 characters, and a long abstract of fewer than 250 words, and must be submitted via the conference website by January 23rd, 2023: https://nomadit.co.uk/conference/ecas2023/paper-form/12595

Full Abstract:

"Eastern Africa in Global History: from “Precolonial” to Decolonial Entanglements" (ECAS - Hist28)

Influenced by a growing awareness for global entanglements, the historiographies of eastern Africa and the western Indian Ocean world have become increasingly intertwined. These entanglements are neither new nor limited to connections between coast and ocean. Regions as distant from the ocean as eastern Congo and the Upper Zambezi River have been understood as integrated with the Indian Ocean world - and with the Atlantic world - since the seventeenth century at the latest.

This panel seeks to take this historiographical development further, arguing that it is not enough to expand - in space and time - the reach of the Indian Ocean world beyond hitherto predominant coastal and colonial frames of reference. Rather, it seeks to move towards an epistemological shift that complements the spatiotemporal expansion and questions how reaching further back in time and further inland also affects our understanding of coastal and colonial dynamics, and of eastern Africa as a whole.

How does research into inland entanglements affect what we understand of eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean world? How does it affect understandings of the Indian Ocean world as a global macro-
region, in the past and at the forefront of current Global South entanglements? Far from being “margins,” we envisage a panel that examines how inland developments had a decisive impact on ostensible “core” regions of the Indian Ocean world. We believe that exploring answers to such questions may contribute to a decolonization of how we understand eastern Africa and its role within broader global entanglements.

More information on the overall conference: https://ecasconference.org/2023/

We are looking forward to reading your proposals!

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