

6<sup>th</sup> African History Day

11 March 2021

History Department, University of Zurich & zoom (hopefully a hybrid event)

## Reflecting on African History produced in Switzerland

The last African History Day took place on 9 November 2013 under the title “5<sup>th</sup> African History Day: Archives, Methods and Sources” at Basler Africa Bibliographien. Besides the annual interdisciplinary Researching Africa Day of the Swiss Society of African Studies, the African History Day has always been a great opportunity for African historians in Basel and Zurich (and sometimes other parts of Switzerland) to discuss their projects within the expert community and talk about current trends and debates in the discipline. The thriving communities of African historians in Zurich and Basel would like to continue this tradition and after an eight-year break renew and strengthen our collaboration. We hope that by spring 2021 we will be able to meet for lunch or dinner and have online and live presentations. If not the event will take place via zoom.

We invite you to present your research projects and by doing so reflect on a common topic as we did on archives in 2013 with Carolyn Hamilton. This time we would like to focus on collaborations with African partners.

There has been a constructive debate about who writes and reads African History, who reclaims it and what silences have occurred as well as wider debates on rethinking African Humanities.<sup>1</sup> Theory from the South has had a deep impact on the humanities in general and more and more inspiring studies occur that raise awareness for how knowledge production can benefit from using African terminology or concepts.<sup>2</sup>

Situating ourselves in this debate, advanced MA students, PhD candidates, postdocs and senior scholars are invited to present papers on their current projects by critically reflecting on how they produce knowledge about African history here in

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<sup>1</sup> Maxmillian Julius Chuhila, Who Writes and Reads African History and Why? Locating African Voices in the Twenty-First Century, From 1960 to the Present, *University of Dar es Salaam Journals* (UTAFITI) 11:1/2 (2014-2015), pp. 67-83. <https://journals.udsm.ac.tz/index.php/uj/article/view/1741/1638>; Jacques Depelchin, *Reclaiming African History* (Cape Town: Pambazuka Press, 2011); Jacques Depelchin, *Silences in African History* (Dar es-Salaam: Mkuki Na Nyota Publishers, 2000); Jean Allman: Episode 119: Rethinking African Humanities, 30:18, *Africa Past & Present: The Podcast about African History, Culture, and Politics*, African Online Digital Library, 29 October 2018: <http://afripod.aodl.org/tag/jean-allman/>; Jean Allman, ASA 2018 Presidential Lecture: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=2&v=mSb\\_N2Ly8VY&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=mSb_N2Ly8VY&feature=emb_logo) (29 November – 1 December 2018), <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/wissen/forschung-politik/afrikawissenschaftler-streiten-ueber-melville-herskovits-16568608.html>  
<sup>2</sup> E.g. Clapperton Chakanetsa Mavhunga, *The Mobile Workshop: The Tsetse Fly and African Knowledge Production* (Cambridge/London: MIT Press, 2018); Clapperton Chakanetsa Mavhunga, *What Do Science, Technology and Innovation Mean from Africa?* (Cambridge/London: MIT Press, 2017).

Switzerland. The focus thereby lies on methodological questions that should allow for in-depth discussions with the scientific community. How much time do you spend in Africa? What opportunities and constraints do funding schemes in Switzerland bring to fieldwork? How do you collaborate with African colleagues, translators and mediators? How do you bring the produced knowledge back to Africa? How useful is the interdisciplinary approach in historical knowledge production? How historical knowledge produced is communicated and for whose benefit? Where do you publish your research? How do you address an African audience/readership?

Please submit an abstract (ca. 500 words) to Tanja Hammel ([Tanja.Hammel@unibas.ch](mailto:Tanja.Hammel@unibas.ch)) by 21 February 2021. Current planning is for the workshop to take place in Zurich with participants in physical attendance apart from those currently conducting fieldwork (zoom). This will be monitored and any adjustments communicated to participants in accordance with the public health situation.