



PRESENTERS: *Participants of the African economic history workshop*

LEAP hosts visitors

LEAP hosted several international visitors during the first few months of the year. Oliver van Beemen, a Dutch investigative journalist known for his work on Heineken in Africa and PhD student at the University of Amsterdam, visited from October 2018 to January 2019. Joachim Wehner, associate professor of public policy at the London School of Economics, spent three months at LEAP. He will work on a joint research project on disenfranchisement.

In February, Auke Rijpma (Utrecht University) presented an R-workshop to the Biography students.

In April, Jutta Bolt (Groningen Uni-

versity), presented a LEAP seminar and attended the PhD graduation ceremony of LEAP scholar Jan Greyling, lecturer in Agricultural Economics.

On 15 April, three visitors, Leander Heldring (briq, Bonn), Ellen Hillbom (Lund University) and Javier Mejia (NYU Abu Dhabi) visited Stellenbosch for an African Economic History workshop. All three presented papers and gave valuable feedback to the students presenting. Both Leander and Javier also gave a special lecture to second-year students.

A week later, Miki Sugiura (Hosei University) visited LEAP and gave a seminar.



On 9 October, Suresh Naidu, professor of Economics at Columbia University, will deliver the fourth LEAP Lecture. Suresh is a prominent economist and economic historian. He has a PhD from Harvard University.

Decolonising the curriculum: an African perspective on economic history

Undergraduate students that study Economics still go through a rigorous programme of micro and macroeconomics at first, second and third-year level. The aim is to equip them with the standard economics toolkit of theoretical and empirical training. Yet Stellenbosch University also offers Economics students something more. Since 2011, second-year undergraduate students have been able to choose an elective course in Economic History and Development. This module, now a continuous assessment course that runs over an entire year, provides students with the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge to real-world development questions. LEAP, with Johan Fourie and Bokang Mpetla as lecturers, is responsible for the first semester Economic History section.

The module follows a truly decolonised curriculum. Beginning in the distant past – the migration of humans from the African continent, and its economic consequences – the topics that are covered provide students with a comprehensive overview of global economic history, but with a focus on Africa by Africans. Topics such as the Bantu migration, slavery, colonisation and African independence are given attention alongside the major themes of global

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Investing in economic history

Research is expensive. Digitisation, transcription, analysis, language editing and disseminating the results at local and international conferences requires significant funding. Supporting Masters, PhD and postdoctoral students also needs investment. It is a constant struggle to attract enough funding to maintain and expand LEAP's footprint.

That is why the recent private donation of \$10 000 per year for the next two years by Dr. Keith Meintjes is a significant step in expanding our activities.

Keith, a South African-born American engineer, was impressed by the data-driven approach that we use



INVESTOR: *Dr Keith Meintjes*

to document South African history. He kindly made funding available to support this type of research. Dr Meintjes's own interest is in genealogical research. The funding will partly be used for work on a project that spatially maps South African populations in the past.

With pressure on universities to dedicate its resources to support students and with a reduction in the National Research Foundation budget, fourth-stream income has become a pivotal source of funding for research units like LEAP. We are therefore extremely grateful to individuals like Dr Meintjes who have the means and willingness to invest in African economic history research.

Keith Meintjes was born in Witbank, Transvaal, and educated as a Mechanical Engineer at Wits. In 1975 he left South Africa to pursue a Ph.D. in engineering at the prestigious Princeton University in the USA. Dr. Meintjes

then spent his career designing powertrains and vehicles for General Motors near Detroit, Michigan.

Keith explains, "I developed an interest in genealogy about 1980, after I graduated from Princeton. I had some fantastical stories about Royal ancestry from relatives of my mother, who is of first generation English descent, and other legends from my father, who is descended from the oldest European Cape families, and some slaves, and from 1820 Settlers.

"I was very lucky to discover, very early on, that one could buy books on the internet, and I started accumulating a library on South African genealogy. I became involved with the Genealogical Society of South Africa and, in particular, helped to establish their electronic branch, eGGSA.org, which has been wildly successful".

A few years ago Keith gave his library collection of 400 genealogy volumes and other additional digital and print assets to the Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA, where they now constitute the most substantial ZA genealogy collection outside South Africa.

Dr. Meintjes was recently elected as a Fellow of the Genealogical Society (Genootskap) of South Africa, GGSA. This is a singular recognition that has only been awarded 21 times in 55 years.

Keith continues: "A few years ago I had an enquiry about the oldest Tulbagh Church Registers. There are old photocopies from the HSRC, but there were questions about missing pages and pages out of order. So, I picked up the phone and was lucky enough to reach Dr. Isabel Murray at the NGK Archives on Noordwal, (the north bank of the Eerste River), in Stellenbosch. She invited me to visit, and I was able to photograph the relevant registers and resolve the questions. Those are now transcribed and posted on the eGGSA.org site. That project involved working with a student to do the filming.

"On a tour of the NGK archive, I noticed piles of Bibles that were uncatalogued. Since Bibles often contain handwritten family information and relevant newspaper and magazine clippings, we created a project to catalog all the Bibles and document their

supplemental information."

This has now translated to Dr. Meintjes funding a number of projects, including the Voters' Rolls at LEAP and GGSA. Keith further says: "It's no more money to take a student out of being a waitperson at some bar or restaurant to being a researcher in a library or archive. And, it is inspiring to see these young people develop and grow in something that may influence them and be relevant for their entire lives. It is very fulfilling to me to work on projects that are important, but not that urgent."

"I would encourage everyone to consider funding a student intern for an interesting project. You (and others) will probably get something useful, and it will possibly change that student's life".



GRADUATE: *Prof Johan Fourie and Dr Roy Havemann*

Havemann writes PhD on financial history

Why did Saambou Bank fail in 2002? This is one of the questions Roy Havemann, a senior director at National Treasury, answered in his PhD dissertation. Havemann graduated on 4 April. Stan du Plessis supervised the dissertation, with Johan Fourie in the role of co-supervisor.



Biography team grows

The Biography of an Uncharted People project, now in its second year, received a new intake of students in 2019. Two postdocs joined the existing postdoc student on the project, Fran Marco Gracia. The first, Kate Ekama, a South African, completed her PhD at Leiden University's History department and joined the Biography project in January. Read more about her work on page 5 in this newsletter. Young-Ook Jang, from South Korea, who joined the team in March, completed his PhD in the Economic History department of the London School of Economics.

One new PhD student joined in 2019. Nobungwele Mbem completed her Masters degree at the University of Pretoria. Nobungwele will work on black migration to Cape Town at the start of the twentieth century. Lesego Mabapa is the new Masters-student on the project. She joins us from the University of Johannesburg where

she completed her Honours degree. She will work on the life histories of black patients registered to the Grahamstown Lunatic Asylum.

Finally, three honours students, all previously from Stellenbosch University, joined the team: Brittany Chalmers will work on the reclassification of race during the apartheid period, Ilse Brookes will work on slave purchases during the early eighteenth century and Paige Smith will work on foreign weddings in Anglican Cape Town during the twentieth century. Three new Honours research assistants have also joined: Kelsey Lemon from Rhodes University, Kudzai Chidamwoyo from the University of Pretoria and Aluwani Ramarumo from Stellenbosch.

The entire team of the Biography project now comprises 17 students, with 3 postdocs, 2 PhD students, 3 Masters students, 3 Honours students and 6 research assistants.

ADVENTURERS: History postdoc Kate Ekama (left) searches through the piles of financial documents found at the Louw museum in Sutherland.

Museum needs renewal

In early April, History postdoc Kate Ekama and Johan Fourie visited the Louw museum in Sutherland to investigate the possibility of aiding the museum in a renewal process. The Louw museum is the former house of the Louw brothers, WEG Louw and NP Van Wyk Louw, who had contributed significantly to twentieth-century Afrikaans literature. The museum also includes a small section dedicated to the town's history and other famous inhabitants.

While visiting the museum, Ekama and Fourie also discovered a store room with countless financial documents in bad condition. For more information on the renewal plan (and to contribute), contact Johan Fourie.

Kara Dimitruk presents new research project in Europe

Economics postdoc Kara Dimitruk visited research venues across Europe in April where she presented and attended conferences and seminars. The trip began and ended in London. She started off by meeting with Gareth Austin, Tony Hopkins, and Emiliano Travieso at Cambridge to discuss a new research project on the British Cape Colony. It was capped with a short visit to the National Archives at Kew.

One initial finding from the Archives was a cartoon of soldier on horseback that was lightly embossed in seventeenth-century records of land transactions. The artist was possibly a government official.

The middle of the trip took her to attend and present at a variety of research venues. She presented work from her dissertation on political change in England at the Economic History Society (EHS) annual meeting at Queen's University Belfast as well as at WU Vienna. Both provided constructive feedback for direction and further work on the project.

The presentations were followed by participation in the WGAPE-Europe (Working Group in African Political Economy) workshop at the Berlin Social Science Centre (WZB). She met scholars from across Europe and Africa whose research touches on themes related to her own work in economic history and was introduced to new work in the field.



Prof Johan Fourie and Masters-student Laura Richardson presented the final keynote lecture at the Digital Humanities Association of South Africa conference on 29 March. Their talk – Digital History in South Africa: the Biography of an Uncharted People project – was enthusiastically received by the large audience of digital humanists. The World Congress will be held in Utrecht during July.

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economic history, like the Industrial Revolution, the Great Depression and the remarkable growth of the twentieth century. We also cover regions that are sometimes neglected, like colonisation of the Americas, Russian communism and China's Great Leap Forward.

The course has evolved to be one of the most popular undergraduate courses (in terms of student feedback). In 2019, several LEAP visitors

and postdoc students were invited to give guest lectures, giving the course an additional 'international' feel. The idea of a textbook has been raised as one possibility to disseminate the course content beyond the fortunate few who are able to enrol at Stellenbosch.

It is not only through research that LEAP is contributing to expanding knowledge of Africa's economic past, but through our role as teachers we hope to nurture the next generation of scholars.

Fourie gives seminar at ISG in Bloemfontein

On 17 March, prof. Johan Fourie presented a paper in the Stanley Trapido seminar series at the University of the Free State's International Studies Group. Prof. Ian Phimister heads up this large and active research group on social and economic history.

Fourie's talk, titled 'Making South African Historians Count', argued that historians have much to add to social science research in South Africa. Not only is their contextual knowledge helpful to critique the sources



MEETING: *Phimister and Fourie*

and methods of economists, but because history by its very nature is interdisciplinary, historians are uniquely positioned to be unifiers between disciplines that have become isolated.

This would require them, though, to be more ambitious in their research questions and open to train themselves and their students in the methods and techniques of the other disciplines.

Fourie also met with several postdoc students to discuss their research.

Calumet Links appointed

In January 2019, Calumet Links was appointed as lecturer in the Economics department. Calumet, now in the final year of his PhD, is originally from Springbok in the Northern Cape.

He was an undergraduate student before completing his Masters at Stellenbosch in 2009. He then spent time in the public and private sector before joining LEAP in 2016 to enrol as a PhD student. Links works on the Cape of Good Hope Panel project.



WHEN IN AMSTERDAM: *Kate Ekama visits the Tropenmuseum*



PRIZE WINNER: *Dr Anton Ehlers*

Ehlers wins prize

Dr Anton Ehlers, HoD of History, recently received a Ministerial Award from the Western Cape Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport, Ms Anroux Marais, at the 18th Annual Cultural Affairs Awards ceremony in Cape Town.

He received the prestigious Ministerial Award for his Outstanding Contribution to Research in Archival Heritage. The Cultural Affairs Awards have been held since 1999 and acknowledges those “individuals and organisations that have made a significant impact in the Western Cape”.

Ehlers commented that “archives are the laboratories of historians and archival preservation our life blood... We cannot make the students sleep in the archival stack rooms – but we try to make them dream about them at least.”

Kate Ekama launches new project on the financial underpinnings of slavery

In March, newly-appointed History postdoc Kate Ekama attended the Bondage, Capture and Forced Relocation in Asia and the Indian Ocean World (1400-1900) conference. Hosted by the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Lyon, France, the conference brought together scholars from Europe, the US, Asia and Africa who work on related questions about historical slavery. Kate presented her new research project on emancipation and compensation in the Cape Colony. She commented: ‘The conference was a great opportunity to hear what specialists in the field of slavery studies think of my research plans. What I’m going to do, as part of the Uncharted people project, is work on the financial underpinnings of slavery. It’s a story that isn’t often told. To some extent it has been an invisible history.’

Kate’s research deals with credit and debt relations, the workings of the Cape economy, formalising of institutions in a period when Cape society – at all levels – was dealing with the transition from slavery to wage

labour. In that period, slave owners across the British Empire were paid £20 million compensation but we know so little of how that process actually worked at the Cape; how was the money transmitted, by whom, and how was it invested at the Cape? This starts to point towards the long-term legacies of slavery and slave-financing. It is these sorts of questions that she will work on to bring to light a group of people who were deeply involved in slavery but not necessarily, or perhaps not primarily, as slave owners. Kate’s research is based on rich archival records through which she will trace numerous named individuals, including the enslaved. Through this project she hopes to contribute to a deeper understanding of the ending of slavery in the nineteenth-century Cape Colony.

After the conference Kate visited Emeritus Professor Robert Ross in Leiden to discuss future research plans. She also visited the Afterlives of Slavery exhibition at the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam.

'We need a better theory of institutions'

Erik Green talks to Johan Fourie about his sabbatical at Stellenbosch

You and your family are spending a year on sabbatical at Stellenbosch. Why?

My wife and I have talked about staying a longer period in South Africa since we first visited the country in 2004. Then a lot of other things came in between, like new job opportunities and kids. A couple of years ago we felt that both we and the kids were ready and I was lucky to get a sabbatical grant from Riksbanken in Sweden. So we are finally here and so far it has been above our expectations.

You were one of the first African economic historians I met. What was it about African economic history that attracted you, a Swede, to the field? How did it happen?

To tell the truth I really do not know. I guess it was a gradual process. I have always been interested in history, but mainly European history. For some reason I decided in my first year as a University student to take a one year course in African economics and politics. The course enabled me to spend four months in eastern and southern Africa and since then I am hooked.

I guess my greatest fascination as a researcher is the challenge of understanding the continent's rich history with very limited sources available. You really have to be open minded and prepared to use new methods and techniques.

Lund has become one of the most important centres of African economic history – and, indeed, economic history – globally. Why is Lund so excited about this field?

It goes back to 2011 when I returned to Lund after 6 years in exile at Stockholm University and LSE. My colleague Ellen Hillbom and I decided to join forces and systematically work together to strengthen African economic history research at the department. The strategy has been to continuously apply for external funding and develop new courses at all levels. It took a while but, once we managed to

attract sufficient number of students, to some extent it has become a self-reinforcing process.

You are one of the founders of the African Economic History Network. What are the aims of this Network, and what would you like to see this Network do in future?

The aim of the Network is simply to provide a platform for scholars to exchange ideas and initiate collaborations. Through the Network, its annual meetings, working papers and newsletters scholars get a chance to get to know each other and identify common research interests. Equally important has been to use the network to enable more interaction between scholars at African universities and academics from the north, by among other things, helping them with funds to attend the network's annual meeting.

I also hope the Network in the future will be more active in facilitating economic history research in Africa. So far such efforts have to a large extent been dependent on the actions of individual researchers, but I hope that in future we will have more long-lasting capacity building projects.

You're a research associate at LEAP and also a principle investigator on the large Cape of Good Hope Panel project. What is it about this dataset that excites you?

It is simply how rich the data is. Once completed it will most likely be one of the most detailed longitudinal datasets in the world, richer than many of the datasets you find in Western Europe, including Sweden. It will enable scholars to analyse crucial questions about economic development, welfare, inequality as well as the role and legacy of colonialism in a systematic way. Economic historians have for long been interested in these questions, but previous studies have been hampered by lack of data.

It is my sincere belief that the Cape of Good Hope Panel will make a significant contribution to more general

debates about why some are rich and others poor and the role of colonialism in this process.

What are the biggest questions in African economic history that we still don't know the answers to?

That is the tricky question. It may sound pessimistic, but I would claim that we do not know the answer to most questions we ask in economic history. There are and always will be contesting answers to the same question and that is how the discipline progresses.

For me, the fundamental question of why some are poor and others rich has so far not been answered and probably will never be, at least not in a way that everybody would agree on. Personally, I hope we in the near future will see more theoretical work on institutions. The way the term is used today tends to be very broad, which means that its explanatory power weakens.

Finally, what are you working on at the moment? Any exciting prospects that readers can look forward to?

I am in Stellenbosch to write a book on the history of the Cape Colony c. 1650-1850. Although it is about the Cape the aim is to add to the larger literature on settler colonialism, institutions and factor endowments. It is based on research conducted by the Cape of Good Hope Panel research group, but also previous research by historians and economists, which is remarkably rich.

The book aims to identify the factors that explain the establishment and expansion of a settler colony. Different from previous research by economists, I can analyse how institutions gradually develop and how they interact with factor endowments and politics over time. It is a story of incremental change rather than an exogenous shock. I do not want to reveal any findings yet, but I think I am on to something that will contribute to both the larger literature on settler colonialism as well as the history of the Cape.