

On the Frontiers of the Indian Ocean World

This is the first interdisciplinary history of Lake Tanganyika and of eastern Africa's relationship with the wider Indian Ocean World during the nineteenth century. Philip Gooding deploys diverse source materials, including oral, climatological, anthropological, and archaeological sources, to ground interpretations of the better-known, European-authored archive in local epistemologies and understandings of the past. Gooding shows that Lake Tanganyika's shape, location, and distinctive lacustrine environment contributed to phenomena traditionally associated with the history of the wider Indian Ocean World being negotiated, contested, and reimagined in particularly robust ways. He adds novel contributions to African and Indian Ocean histories of urbanism, the environment, spirituality, kinship, commerce, consumption, material culture, bondage, slavery, Islam, and capitalism. African peoples and environments are positioned as central to the histories of global economies, religions, and cultures.

Philip Gooding is a postdoctoral fellow at the Indian Ocean World Centre, McGill University.

Cambridge Oceanic Histories

Edited by

David Armitage

Alison Bashford

Sujit Sivasundaram

Across the world, historians have taken an oceanic turn. New maritime histories offer fresh approaches to the study of global regions, and to long-distance and long-term connections. Cambridge Oceanic Histories includes studies across whole oceans (the Pacific, the Indian, the Atlantic) and particular seas (among them, the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, the North Sea, the Black Sea). The series is global in geography, ecumenical in historical method, and wide in temporal coverage, intended as a key repository for the most innovative transnational and world histories over the *longue durée*. It brings maritime history into productive conversation with other strands of historical research, including environmental history, legal history, intellectual history, labour history, cultural history, economic history and the history of science and technology. The editors invite studies that analyse the human and natural history of the world's oceans and seas from anywhere on the globe and from any and all historical periods.

On the Frontiers of the Indian Ocean World

A History of Lake Tanganyika, c.1830–1890

Philip Gooding

McGill University



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
 978-1-009-11418-9 — On the Frontiers of the Indian Ocean World
 Philip Gooding
 Frontmatter
[More Information](#)



CAMBRIDGE
 UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India
 103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009114189

DOI: 10.1017/9781009122023

© Philip Gooding 2022

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

First published 2022

First paperback edition 2025

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data

Names: Gooding, Philip, 1988– author.

Title: On the frontiers of the Indian Ocean world: a history of Lake Tanganyika, 1830–1890 / Philip Gooding, McGill University, Montréal.

Other titles: Cambridge oceanic histories.

Description: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY: Cambridge

University Press, 2022. | Series: Cambridge oceanic histories |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2022010295 (print) | LCCN 2022010296 (ebook) |

ISBN 9781009100748 (hardback) | ISBN 9781009114189 (paperback) |

ISBN 9781009122023 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Tanganyika, Lake–History–19th century. | Africa,

Eastern–History–19th century. | Africa, Eastern–Commerce–History. |

Indian Ocean Region–History–19th century. | Indian Ocean

Region–Commerce–History.

Classification: LCC DT365.7 .G66 2022 (print) | LCC DT365.7 (ebook) |

DDC 967.8/28–dc23/eng/20220407

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022010295>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022010296>

ISBN 978-1-009-10074-8 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-009-11418-9 Paperback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

For Émilie, Adèle, and Mathis. I love you all.

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	page viii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>Note on the Text</i>	xii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xiii
Introduction: Lakes, Oceans, and Littorals in History	1
Part I Demarcations of Space	31
1 The Growth of ‘Emporia’	33
2 Changing Land Use in a Changing Climate	64
3 Traversing the Lake	96
Part II Interactions	119
4 Competition and Conflict on the Western Frontier	121
5 Global Commodities in East African Societies	148
6 Structures of Bondage	170
7 An Islamic Sea	193
Epilogue: The Littoral and the Lake	215
<i>Glossary</i>	221
<i>Bibliography</i>	224
<i>Index</i>	250

Figures

I.1 Map of the major ivory trading centres in the western Indian Ocean World	page 5
I.2 Map of the major East African commercial centres and regions in the nineteenth century	7
I.3 Map of major centres, missionary stations, nature spirits, and regions surrounding Lake Tanganyika in the nineteenth century	12
1.1 Map of Ujiji, c.1860–80	48
1.2 Sketch of Kawele-Ugoy, 1880s	50
1.3 Liendwe from the lake, 1883	57
1.4 A chief and a granary at Akalungu, 1874	58
1.5 Makutubu’s <i>tembe</i> in Kirando, 1883	62
3.1 A dugout fishing canoe	97
3.2 A coastal trader’s sailing craft	110
3.3 The London Missionary Society’s iron boats	115
4.1 Hamed bin Muhammad el-Murjebi, also known as Tippu Tip	132
4.2 Said Barghash, sultan of Zanzibar (r. 1870–88)	137
4.3 Mohammed bin Khalfan el-Barwani, also known as Rumaliza	140
5.1 Women wearing imported cotton cloth in Rumaliza’s court	162

Acknowledgements

Monographs by first-time authors have a reputation for long acknowledgements sections, in which everybody but nobody who has had anything to do with the project is thanked. This section will hardly buck the trend (although I'll try not to go overboard), but before I get to thanking everybody, there are two other things I would like to acknowledge first.

The first of these is my privilege. As an able-bodied, white, cis-het male brought up in the UK and now living in Canada, I have benefited from several explicit and implicit institutional advantages. All these advantages have played a role in me writing this book. They have opened doors for me that would otherwise have remained closed, and they have provided me with research environments that have been geared to the success of people like me. I write at a time now, however, when the institutional imbalances that such privileges foster are being vociferously challenged. I strongly support these challenges. I hope that the environments that researchers work in can be reformed or revolutionised in ways that benefit the entire scholarly community, and to be an ally in making such changes come to fruition.

The second 'acknowledgement' to make is of my mental health and that of many of my peers. This project, at times, made me miserable, particularly when I was writing it up for my PhD. I often felt isolated; I felt guilty when I took breaks; my social life disappeared. I've often expressed to graduate students the importance of a life outside academia to get through a doctoral programme. If only I followed my own advice. Things did get better for me, especially after I relocated to Montreal. I also had strong familial support, especially from my wife. But I know that many graduate students and early career scholars don't have access to this kind of familial support, and most don't have the opportunities to migrate that I did. I thus hope that more robust institutional support, especially for graduate students, can be developed to make 'struggling' a lesser feature of research and writing in the future. The Covid crisis in the last two years has made the need for more support of this kind even more apparent.

x Acknowledgements

Now to the thank yous: I will be forever thankful to the elders who I met and interviewed on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, who divulged their communities' histories to me, and who challenged me to rethink the ways in which I approached the documentary record. I hope I have done their accounts justice. Any and all shortcomings are my own, and I apologise for them in advance.

Two scholars in particular have had a major influence on this book, as is evident from its title. The 'frontier' stems directly from the work of my primary BA, MA, and PhD supervisor, Professor Richard Reid; the 'Indian Ocean World' stems from the work of my postdoctoral supervisor, Professor Gwyn Campbell. Thank you both for your inspiration and guidance over several years. To Richard – thank you for your patience and support, not least when I decided that I wanted to move away from London at a crucial stage in my doctoral programme. To Gwyn – thank you for welcoming me into the community at the Indian Ocean World Centre (IOWC) and for providing me with the space in which to continue my doctoral and postdoctoral studies.

There are, moreover, several scholars who have provided large and small pieces of advice and guidance throughout my academic career. To William Clarence-Smith, John Parker, Giacomo Macola, Peter Hynd, Geert Castryck, Stephen Rockel, Karin Pallaver, Hannah Whittaker, Ben Kirby, Zozan Pehlivan, Tyler Yank, Jonathan Walz, Andy Ivaska, and Alastair McClure – your contributions to this book have been diverse and changing over a long time. Please know that they are very appreciated. I regret that I have somewhat lost contact with some of you in recent years. Time and distance have been cruel. I hope we get to talk, meet, or even just email or tweet each other again soon.

Further thanks go to Fabrice Munezero and Hamisi Hababi. You were kinder and better research assistants in respectively Burundi and Tanzania than I can ever have reasonably hoped for when I met you. I hope we meet again. Additionally, thank you to Ivy Gathambo and Désiré Kathihabwa for your translation efforts and to several archivists for assisting my research: Fritz Stenger and François Richard at the White Fathers' archive in Rome; Mathilde Leduc-Grimaldi and Tom Morren at the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren; and everyone at the SOAS Special Collections, Zanzibar National Archives, and Royal Geographical Society.

There are several others I could list to thank for little tit-bits of information here and there – on research assistants, publishing, archives, and much more. Some are impossible to name, such as the two anonymous peer reviewers who offered wonderful insights on how to develop the manuscript into a book. But to attempt to name everyone I *could* name

Acknowledgements

xi

who has had some influence would almost inevitably result in leaving more than one of you out. So, in a clear cop-out, here is just a thank you to everyone else who I've had contact with over the last several years who has helped to turn this book into what it is. I hope you know who you are. Thank you.

Thanks also to the Wolfson Foundation for funding my PhD research, on which this book is based, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for funding my postdoctoral fellowship at the IOWC, during which I wrote it up. Thanks also to the editors of *Slavery and Abolition* and *The Journal of African History* for allowing me to revise and reprint articles in respectively Chapters 6 and 7 of this book. And special thanks to those who I have worked with at Cambridge University Press in the last months, principally Lucy Rhymer, Rachel Blaifeder, Emily Plater, Natasha Whelan, Niranjana Harikrishnan, and Michael Watson, as well as to Dan Harding for his copyediting efforts.

Finally, and most importantly – thank you to my family. Mum, Dad, Ruth, Mike, Granny, Grandma, Grandad and Grandad – thank you. And to Émilie, Adèle, and Mathis – this book is dedicated to you. I met you, Émilie, in the summer before I started my doctoral programme. You have barely known me while this project has not been dominating my work life. I made the following observation in the acknowledgements section of my PhD thesis, but it bears repeating: you often said that it was not just me doing this project, but both of us, given how it impacted our lives. This was, of course, very true throughout. Thank you for keeping me grounded; thank you for showing me the value of breaks; thank you for everything. And to Adèle and Mathis – you're a little young to read even this acknowledgements section right now. Maybe you'll give the whole book a try when you're older; maybe you won't. Either way, it doesn't matter – just know that your arrival in 2017 and 2019 was an integral part of the process that led to this book's creation.

Note on the Text

In line with recent trends in histories of the East African interior, this book drops Bantu language group prefixes from translated words. For example, it is now usual in academic writing to write ‘the Nyamwezi’ rather than ‘the Wanyamwezi’ for the people of Unyamwezi and ‘the Ganda’ rather than ‘the Baganda’ for the people of Buganda. This is because, in the latter translations, the Bantu-language prefix (Wa- or Ba-) repeats the article; that is, ‘the Wanyamwezi’ literally translates as ‘the the Nyamwezi’ and ‘the Baganda’ literally translates as ‘the the Ganda’. For unknown reasons, however, it has not been customary in histories of the East African coast and islands to drop such prefixes from translations of Swahili words. Historians still refer to ‘the *waungwana*’ (literally: ‘the the gentlemen’) and ‘the *washenzi*’ (‘the the barbarians’). Given the convoluted nature of such translations and the fact that this is a history of an interior region of East Africa, it is thought prudent to break with this pattern when using Swahili words. Thus, ‘the *waungwana*’ becomes ‘the *ngwana*’ and ‘the *washenzi*’ becomes ‘the *shenzi*’.

Throughout the text, Lake Tanganyika is referred to as being ‘in East Africa’. The author acknowledges that this is a somewhat problematic geographic representation. ‘East Africa’, as describing the region covered by the nation-states of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi, as well as parts of the eastern Democratic of the Congo, is a colonial and post-colonial invention, and one of the aims of this book is to challenge such Eurocentric spatial frames. But ‘East Africa’ remains in some ways useful. Much of the book focuses on regions within the bounds of those aforementioned nation-states. ‘East Africa’ is also more geographically specific than ‘eastern Africa’, which can refer to regions as far south as the eastern Cape and as far north as Egypt, and is especially applicable to Ethiopia and the Horn. A more appropriate term might be ‘equatorial eastern Africa’, but this is unnecessarily long and hinders readability, especially when describing someone or something as ‘equatorial eastern African’. Thus, despite their problems, in this book, ‘East Africa’ and ‘East African’ are used, although the reader is invited to substitute ‘equatorial eastern Africa(n)’ if it aids their understanding to do so.

Abbreviations

A.G.M.Afr	Archivio Generale dei Missionari d’Africa (General Archive of Missionaries of Africa)
AIA	Association Internationale Africaine (International African Association)
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CWM	Council for World Missions
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ENSO	El Niño Southern Oscillation
IOD	Indian Ocean Dipole
IOW	Indian Ocean World
LIA	Little Ice Age
LMS	London Missionary Society
NA RGS	National Archives held at the Royal Geographical Society
RMCA ESA	Royal Museum for Central Africa, Emile Storms Archive
RMCA HMSA	Royal Museum for Central Africa, Henry Morton Stanley Archive
ZNA	Zanzibar National Archives