

# MAJOR COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH INITIATIVE

# NEWSLETTER



The Indian Ocean World: The Making of the First Global Economy in the Context of Human-Environment Interaction

## Sixth International MCRI Conference, "Disease Dispersion and Impact in the Indian Ocean World" 23-24 September 2016

By Jennifer Craig

The Project held its sixth international conference at the beginning of the autumn semester in Montreal, Canada. It was hosted by the Indian Ocean World Center, McGill University and Max Planck Fellow Group "Connectivity in Motion: Port Cities of the Indian Ocean" of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale, Germany. The two day event brought together 30 or so members of the MCRI project and other scholars from Canada, Germany, Sweden, USA, UK, Austria, Japan and Australia. Members of the MCRI teams, Max Planck Group and others compared and contrasted interpretations of Disease in the IOW Global Economy. Some of the broad themes included:

- Reevaluation of past epidemic diseases such as Leprosy, Cholera, Syphilis, Hookworm, Plague, Chikungunya, Malaria in the Indian Ocean World
- Connectivity in the Indian Ocean World and the Extent of Disease Spread
- Climate, Weather and Pestilence on Islands in the Indian Ocean World
- Health and Nutrition and the Maritime Landscape of the Indian Ocean World

The conference opened with an address by the MCRI Principal Investigator Professor Gwyn Campbell who displayed an oscillation of boom and peak environmental and human impacts in the Indian Ocean World. He suggests the collision of environmental disasters with human migrations across the globe may be cause for multiple outbreaks of disease. The topics of the presenters explored this possibility across the continents and islands of the Indian Ocean World, namely the Philippines, Russia, India, Iran, Myanmar, Singapore, Maldives, Reunion, and the East Asia Region. Generally we were invited to view micro events of disease as part of major impacts from disaster.

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Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

This conference was made possible by the hard work of MCRI Team Leader 1 Gwyn Campbell and Project Partner Burkhard Schnepel (Max Planck). We thank them for all their efforts in organizing and hosting this successful project conference!

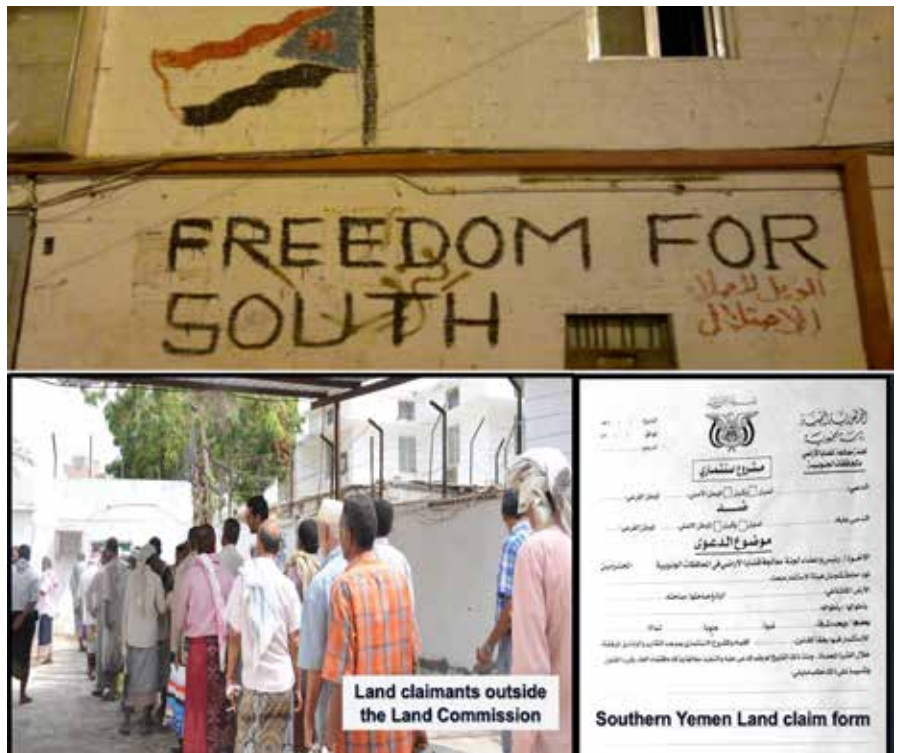


**Jon D. Unruh, McGill University**  
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The research focus of Team 6 is the interaction of conflict, migration and environmental change in contemporary times (approx. 1900 to present). In this context we focus on the precursors and repercussions of armed conflict on human population movements and role of the environment in this nexus. This mix inevitably leads us to land rights in various aspects, because such rights underpin conflict over land resources, and the tension involved in migration to destination areas and the use of the environment. The geographic coverage of Team 6's research extends from Mozambique to East Timor; and all researchers on the Team are also actively engaged in combining research with policy and practice, and as such work for a variety of agencies in the international donor community. Such work combines nicely with MCRI/IOWC objectives, and allows for outside funded access to the conflict – migration – environment nexus that would not be possible otherwise. One example of this is my recent work in Yemen with the Southern Yemen Land Commission and the United Nations Development Programme.

The context of this work was Yemen's Arab Spring uprising in 2011 and 2012, when President Saleh, who presided over Yemen for over 30 years, was forced out of office and a transitional government support-

ed by the Gulf Cooperation Council sought to reconcile the primary grievances in the country. One of the primary grievances, was the enormous quantity of land confiscations that occurred after the brief 1994 war between northern and southern Yemen, that resulted northern Yemen's armed forces and elites take over massive amounts of land and property, evicting the former occupants. The population-wide grievances over these confiscations grew so severe that it became one of two issues that the population in southern Yemen indicated would need to be resolved in order to engage in national reunification and reconciliation, and forestall separation--with separation



A composite from Jon Unruh's fieldwork on land claim's in southern Yemen photo credit: Jon Unruh

from the north having produced considerable support and a militia movement (photo). As a result the transitional government at the behest of the Gulf Cooperation Council constituted a Land Commission to mount a mass claims land and property restitution program for southern Yemen (photo). UNDP then invited me to advise the Land Commission about how to process claims and make decisions for whole categories of claims according to type of evidence,

type of land holding, value of property, etc. I traveled several times to Aden, the largest city in southern Yemen to work with the commissioners, claimants, and other government and civil society actors. A good deal was learned about Yemen's conflict history and the relationship between its conflicts and dispossession, migration, and environmental problems. One important finding relevant to the MCRI work, was that past Land Commissions had attempted to simply provide alternative lands for those dispossessed to migrate to. However the lands allocated for this purpose were in environmentally unsuitable terrain, with no water or other services. As a result these lands remain unoccupied and the grievances held by the displaced population went unresolved. Unfortunately the Houthi incursion into southern Yemen in 2015 stopped the Land Commission's activities, and it currently waits for relative stability to return.



## Ronald Kydd, Tyndale University and Seminary (rkydd@tyndale.ca)

During June/July, 2014 I made a research trip across much of China which turned out to be an extraordinary experience. The fundamental objective of the venture was to evaluate positions I had come to hold through literary review. The questions I had been looking at had to do with early trade patterns throughout the Eurasian land mass on one hand and the presence of Christianity in China prior to c. 1400 CE on the other. I will be focusing on the first of these here and in that regard the trip was both remarkable and useful. A key to the success of the effort was Mr. Yang Zhi Jun, Executive vice president of the China Culture Relics Protection Founda-



Mr Yang Zhi Jun  
photo credit: Ron Kydd

tion, an archaeologist, and prior to his retirement, a leading officer of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage of the Chinese government. He and I planned the itinerary together.

As a member of Team 5 of the IOWC/MCRI project my orientation is primarily historical. Over the years I had become familiar with the idea of the Silk Road(s), and it seemed highly relevant to the interests of the IOWC. The name, Silk Road(s) was coined in the late nineteenth century and, with qualifications, is used in reference to trade patterns across Eurasia.



Map of locations and direction of this Silk Road trip across China

The trip I made was extensive. After ranging from Inner Mongolia to Fujian Province, we went north to one of the ancient capitals, Luoyang, one of the termini of the Silk Road(s). From there, our route traced the ancient Chinese trade corridor from East to West, going as far as Yiming in the Xinjiang Ili Kazak Prefecture just inside the Chinese-Kazakstan border. At every stop we were greeted by government officials and archaeologists, and feted warmly.

Among the sites we visited were sixteen museums,



eight ancient cities, four ancient Christian monasteries, and eleven temples and mosques.



A composite of artifacts in the Luoyang Museum and Xinjiang Institute of Archaeology: (clockwise from left corner Luoyang Pillar, group gathered over silk, caravan ceramics photo credit: Ron Kydd

The activities on the Silk Road(s) are a constant theme from one end of the route we travelled to the other. Starting in Luoyang, the beautiful, two-year old Luoyang Museum possesses the “Luoyang Pillar.” This pillar was erected first in 814/5 CE, and it comes out of the Sogdian community of the capital. The Sogdians were an ethnic group arising from Central Asia, which dominated trade in the area from 500 to 1000 CE, serving as liaisons between merchants coming from both east and west.

Moving farther north-west to Xi’an, another ancient capital of China, we visited a private museum built within five years. It has arranged a number of objects created during the Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE) forming them into a caravan such as may have travelled the Silk Road(s). They also displayed a large collection of artifacts and coins with some of each coming from the early Roman period. In fact, they held 1,335 coins coming from 45 countries.

Still farther toward China’s north-west border, we were invited to dinner by Dr. Wang Xudong, Executive Director of the Dunhuang Academy after having visited some of the famous Buddhist Dunhuang Grottoes. However, the last location I will pause over is Urumqi, Xinjiang. In their provincial museum I was guided through a display devoted to the Silk Road(s). It had not yet been opened to the public, but its displays of various artifacts including coins from early Rome and silk clothing were taking shape beautifully.

While in Urumqi, we were privileged to visit the Xinjiang Institute of Archaeology. We were permitted to see holdings at the time still unknown outside of the institute. Among the desiccated human remains exhumed from a nearby desert, tools, and weapons, was a small piece of silk that had been found in the grave of a king dating from approximately 2100 years ago. Its colours were still brilliant, and of course it was woven by hand with the pattern being formed by 200 silk threads per cm. It was this kind of material and this kind of dexterousness that was critical to the birth of the Silk Road(s).

The trip was indeed both remarkable and useful. I have read papers at international conferences in Oxford and Salzburg based on material I saw, and both



Feast in yurt. Photo credit: Ron Kydd

will be published. In addition to lectures and talks related to this trip in various contexts, I am also in contact with Mr. Yang. We are discussing the possi-

bility of a conference, hoping to assemble a group of Chinese and western scholars in either China or Canada, or both, to pursue issues arising from antiquity in this area.



## Jennifer Craig, McGill University (jennifer.craig@mail.mcgill.ca)

The years 2014/5 were busy for travel to collect and analyze beads for my doctoral thesis project. The timing for fieldwork at the National Museum of the Philippines (NMPL) was in part due to the conference support I received from this project (MCRI/IOWC) to attend the Indo-Pacific Prehistoric Association (IPPA) conference held in Siem Reap, Cambodia. Where I co-organized and presented on Maritime Archaeology in Southeast Asia. We were so pleased with the turnout of attendees (the seats were full and the wall space was covered with people). We realized the abundant interest of our topic so published with the *Journal of Indo-Pacific Archaeology*.

The IPPA conference placed me in Southeast Asia where the fee was more manageable to fly into the Philippines. While in Manila at the NMPL my maintenance costs were covered by the Anderson Award of the Society for Nautical Research. I stayed at the Broadway Court Apartelle (recommended by our



Session participants Photo credit: Jennifer Craig

colleague Dave Roskies whom I met at an IOWC conference in Montreal). Here I lived in a clean and safe studio flat. I traveled an hour each way five days a week to the NMPL on the LRT. I always had a clear view to watch the sunrise and sunset.



Emil Bersamira on laptop and Jennifer Craig with calipers measuring and recording the San Diego beads and gold links  
Photo credit: Allan Quinto

The NMPL was very generous with their in-kind contributions of staff time and work space, specifically, the Museum Director Jeremy Barns, Angel Baptista of the Cultural Properties Department, Mary Jane Bolunia of the Archaeology Division, Clyde Jago-on and staff of the Underwater Unit, Nida Curvas and staff of the Records Section, Dr Eusebio Dizon, Mauro Alvarez of the Chemistry and Conservation Laboratory, and Marcelo Cercado of the Restoration and Engineering Division. I also appreciated the assistance of the following people who worked with me: Bobby Orillaneda, Emil Bermisera, Vergil San Mateo, Allan Quinto, Paolo Tabirao, Larry Alba, Amelia Alhambra, and Rey Bautista.photos work station

With all this support I was able to conduct a morphological analysis of +1300 beads on site over two months. Most of the beads were in collections storage but the beads of the San Diego were on display in this shipwrecks special exhibition. These beads are a national treasure and I am honored at the trust and enthusiasm for my project.



While in Manila I regularly popped into the University of the Philippines' Archaeological Studies Program to visit with colleagues Victor Paz, Armand Mijares, Alfred Pawlik and Grace Barretto-Tesoro. I especially enjoyed the impromptu Bead Nerd Workshop with Pau Basilia and Ena Angelica Luga.

Once I had compiled all this information I began my return trip. I stopped into Thailand's Wat Khlong Thom Bead Museum to compare two particular beads with assemblages other friends had informed me of. After which, I sailed along the coast in the Andaman Sea with friend Jim Gardner on his beautiful yacht Jag Flight.

I stopped into my then home in Oman. I was invited to attend a workshop on shared heritage between Oman, Pakistan and India. Here I met the world expert on carnelian bead technological analysis - Mark Kenoyer. He's examined the bore holes with scanning electron microscope which led me to Denez Frenez to organize moldings of the bead holes and arrange for further analysis of the geo-chemistry with Randall Law.

From Oman I continued on to the Chicago Field Museum where I met with Laure Dussubieux. A representative sample of the beads underwent compositional analysis with the support of a National Science Foundation grant from the USA and a Bruce Triggard Award from the Department of Anthropology, McGill. Photo at lab?

I am now finalizing my doctoral thesis.

I thank Rey Santiago for his bead analysis training in 2011 and for providing access to photograph his Bead Typology Plates A through K.



From top right going clockwise. A picture of a carnelian bead from the Santa Cruz shipwreck. My workstation in the Records Section, NMPL with Dizon and Bermisera. LA-ICP-MS laboratory at Field Museum. Denez Frenez at work station in Oman  
photo credits: Jennifer Craig



Sailing the Andaman Sea. Jim Gardner on Jag Flight  
photo credit: Jen Craig

The IOWC-MCRI database assembles data on the incidence and impact of significant human and natural “events” (e.g. conflicts, volcanism, droughts, floods and disease) in the Indian Ocean World (IOW) throughout history. Entries are gathered from any useful source, but especially from IOW-related archives of states and organizations. The entries thus gathered (currently about 15,000) are organized into five subsets: environmental events, human migration, exchange, disease and conflict. Using Dynamic Bayesian Network Analysis, a method of statistical interference, researchers can use the data to test correlations and hypotheses concerning human-environment interaction in the IOW. Additionally, through the website, researchers can query the database and have the results outputted to spreadsheets and visualized on maps, with further tools in the process of being added and developed. The database is accessible through <http://iowp.geog.mcgill.ca>. To get a username and password, please contact Dr. Pablo Arroyo at the McGill GIC.