



Swahili Colloquium  
Bayreuth



UNIVERSITÄT  
BAYREUTH

## 29<sup>th</sup> SWAHILI COLLOQUIUM in Bayreuth, from 6<sup>th</sup> May to 8<sup>th</sup> May 2016

13<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Dear Colleagues,

We would like to cordially invite you to the 29<sup>th</sup> Swahili Colloquium in Bayreuth: *karibuni sana*.

### **The Swahili Colloquium**

The Swahili Colloquium is a well-established forum in Bayreuth. Every year, we invite scholars and researchers from different disciplines, who work on various aspects of the language and the respective culture(s) to this unique colloquium. The multidisciplinary approach and the wide range of contributions from linguistics, literary studies to anthropology and history particularly account for the appeal of the colloquium. We are always looking forward to welcoming you all including new participants at the Swahili Colloquium.

### **This year's thematic foci**

The 29<sup>th</sup> Swahili Colloquium has two thematic foci.

The first one is: **Imagineries and Visions: The Power of Images across the Swahili Worlds**. In one of her much-quoted paper, Micere Mugo relates how the depiction of Gagool, an old African woman, in Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* made her develop a mortal terror when approaching old African women. The example provided here aims at emphasising how representation can shape perception. Fabricated, distorted, idealised images are the filter through which a situated experience is analysed and social reality is largely constructed. In questioning the idea of the arts as merely reflecting society, we invite contributions from a broad array of disciplines to explore how language, literature and visual arts provide meaning in everyday life through metaphors and symbolism. How are abstract concepts, such as love, pain, death, home, "translated" into metaphors, imagineries and visions? Which types of cultural image schemas and metaphors does Swahili use to interpret and simplify the understanding of more complex experiential phenomena (e.g. time, space, emotions)? And how do these images in turn shape experience? From a diachronic point of view: How are these images, symbols and imagineries constantly re-functionalised and re-interpreted? How do images come to mean things?

The second thematic focus is born out of discussions of the 28<sup>th</sup> Swahili Colloquium and its panel will be organised in cooperation with Dr. Maud Devos (Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren): **Linguistic Diversity in the Swahili-Speaking Area**. On the one hand, compared to other African languages, Swahili has been relatively well described for its linguistic diversity, as for instance

echoed by research on some varieties, like youth languages as well as individual dialects. And still, on the other hand, rather basic questions concerning the classification of its dialects, their limits vis-à-vis the neighbouring Bantu languages and the historical expansion of Swahili speakers and the coming into being of Swahili's varieties have been either not sufficiently answered or have caused quite a bit of controversy. Furthermore, some regions, like, for instance, the Southern and Northern ends of the coastal dialectal continuum, but also the main land varieties of Kenya, Tanzania as well as Uganda, Congo and the diaspora, have rather been neglected in research. Therefore, we would like to invite contributions, which revisit prior research and add new insights on historical-linguistic aspects of Swahili, its varieties as well as its relationship with the neighbouring languages.

Although we would like to suggest "Imaginary and Visions: The Power of Images across the Swahili Worlds" as well as "Linguistic Diversity in the Swahili-Speaking Area" as common points of discussion, presentations can also deal with other topics related to Swahili language, literature and culture. The Swahili colloquium does not intend to be thematically restrict discussions, but also to provide a forum open to broad interdisciplinary contributions. A roundtable discussion, where Swahili lecturers can discuss teaching methods and material, is being planned at the moment as well.

### **Registration**

We would like to ask you to give your paper either in Swahili or English. Each contribution will be granted 30 minutes (including ten minutes of discussion). Please register via email (to [swahili@uni-bayreuth.de](mailto:swahili@uni-bayreuth.de)) and send us a provisional title of your presentation until **20<sup>th</sup> February 2016**. If your presentation is going to be in Swahili, we kindly ask you for a short English summary. Please also register if you merely intend to participate without giving a paper.

### **Location/time**

The conference will take place in the new **Iwalewa-House**, the centre of African studies of Bayreuth University, which is located in Wölfelstraße 2.

The Swahili Colloquium will start on **Friday 6<sup>th</sup> May** in the morning and will end on **Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May**. Very soon, you will also be able to access this letter as well as the program and other information via the following website:

[http://www.afrikanistik.uni-bayreuth.de/de/colloq/swahili\\_colloq/index.html](http://www.afrikanistik.uni-bayreuth.de/de/colloq/swahili_colloq/index.html)

At the beginning of next year, we will send you a second letter containing more information on the programme and other issues. If you have any questions, please, do not hesitate to contact us. You can reach us via the following email address: [swahili@uni-bayreuth.de](mailto:swahili@uni-bayreuth.de)

We are looking forward to welcoming you at the 29<sup>th</sup> Swahili Colloquium in Bayreuth!

Kind regards,

Prof. Dr. Clarissa Vierke & Nikitta Adjirakor, Fred Bosire, Roberto Gaudio, Serena Talento

Literaturen in afrikanischen Sprachen

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