

## Thesis supervision possibilities – Felicitas Becker

My area of specialization is the modern history of East Africa, especially the history of Islam in the region. I am also very interested in the aftermath of slavery in East Africa; in gender, popular politics, and the history of poverty and development. I have taught modern history across Africa and am willing to consider topics focused on any region, especially as the majority of sources available near Gent concern Central Africa. I have extensive experience with oral history and am willing to supervise oral history research projects if they are sufficiently well-focused to be concluded within the given time frame. For the time being, I supervise only theses to be written in English. Possible research topics are endless; the challenge will always be to make sure that suitable sources are available. What research topics are realistic therefore depends very much on individual students' willingness to travel. Here are some options:

- The Belgian National Archives contain information on every aspect of Belgian colonial policy, on politics and social change in the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi.
- Ethnographic collections at the Museum in Tervuren contain further materials on social and cultural change. Many of these are non-textual sources that demand specialized interpretive strategies but are particularly rewarding for those interested e.g. in material culture.
- The Catholic documentation centre, KADOC, contains information on the activities of numerous Catholic charities in Africa, relevant to education, development and religious change.
- Company archives of Belgian companies active in Africa provide information on economic influence and change, mineral extraction, plantations, labour recruitment and the attendant conflicts.
- The African Studies Centre in Leiden holds a collection of Swahili-language pamphlets, concerned especially with Islamic reform but also some other questions of religion and politics in East Africa. For Swahili-speaking students, they provide material for work on the history of religious identities and conflicts.
- Possible topics for oral-history projects in Swahili-speaking East Africa include Muslim-Christian relations, changing gender and family relationships, the life trajectories and social integration of formerly-servile populations, local experiences of decolonization, villagization and economic liberalization, and many more.