



Commission 08.02 on

Arid Lands, Humankind and Environment (AHE)

<http://ahe.uni-koeln.de>

Report 2009 – 2012

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The members of the steering committee are members of their national Geographical Societies or their national Associations of Geographers and use these networks for communication (Egypt, Germany, United States of America, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, China, United Kingdom, Oman, and Sweden).

Meetings and field trips of the commission with brief summary

Since 2010, the commission chairman Mahmoud Ashour directs the five-year project “Sand accumulations in Egypt”. Commission member Nabil Embabi is principle investigator, the commission members George Brook and Olaf Bubenzer act as foreign experts and are part of the research team. From March 1st until 6th 2010 a field trip to the Farafra Sandsea and the White Desert took place. In sum the group consisted of 34 participants who are students from different Egyptian Universities and graduated students, Rangers from the White Desert National Park, Egypt, PhD-Students and postdocs as well as professors from the Ain Shams University, Cairo, from Syria and Yemen, the Desert Research Center, Cairo, and the Universities of Heidelberg and of Cologne, Germany. In addition a field trip to north Sinai and south Sinai of the commission member Mahmoud Ashour, Nabil Embabi and George Brook together with other Egyptian colleagues were performed. Mahmoud Ashour organised two further fieldtrips in Nov. 2011 and March 2012.

Olaf Bubenzer chaired a session of the commission on the regional IGU conference in Chile (Nov. 2011) with four talks:

- Out of Africa – Northeastern Africa as a possible human dispersal route during the Late Pleistocene (O. Bubenzer),
- Cushion peatlands in the high Andes of Southern Peru (14°S) – A new high-resolution geoarchive in the context of multidisciplinary studies (K. Schitteck),
- Late Quaternary paleoclimatic history of Southern Peru (14°S) and its implications for Pre-Columbian cultures (B. Mächtle),
- Dynamics of land cover through environmental indicators; the case of four basins in the Chilean Highlands (M.A. Méndez Díaz).

Networking and relevant research projects

From 2007-2009, the commission member X. Yang led the project “Formation and development of the megadunes in deserts and their responses to global change. Project of knowledge innovation” (Chinese Academy of Science).

From Jan. 5-7, 2009, the commission members O. Bubenzer and X. Yang participated the meeting of the Quaternary Research Association (<http://qra.org.uk/>), X. Yang gave the talk “Potentially large amplitudes of environmental changes in the deserts of northern China during the Quaternary?”.

From Jan. 7-9, 2009, the commission members O. Bubenzer and X. Yang participated the inaugural meeting “Sand seas and dune fields of the world: a digital Quaternary atlas“ (<http://inquadunesatlas.dri.edu/>).

From March 5-8, 2009, the commission member G. Brook acted as member of the core committee and co-coordinator of session 1 at the Third LIMPACS (IGBP, PAGES) Conference in Chandigarh, India.

Since July 2009, the Cologne Collaborative Research Centre “Our way of Europe” (<http://www.sfb806.de/>) is running in which commission member O. Bubenzer is principle investigator of two projects. . He undertook two expeditions to the Eastern Desert of Egypt (2010, 2012) and one to Ethiopia (2010).

Commission member X. Yang was chair of the session “Regional landforms and geomorphology”, Chinese National Congress on Geomorphology and Quaternary Geology, Shanghai, 2009, and co-convenor of the sessions “Landscapes in drylands, Seventh International Conference on Geomorphology”, Melbourne, 2009, and “Environments and global change”, National Scientific Conference on the Occasion of Li Siguang’s 120th Birthday, Beijing, 2009.

From Nov. 1-5, 2009, commission chairman M. Ashour and commission member N. Embabi participated in the Internat. Symposium and field workshop organized by the Alexandria University, Damanhour Branch.

Since 2010, the commission member G. Brook is principle investigator of the three-year project “Socio-environmental dynamics in the North Vaca Plateau, Belize: A long term perspective”.

Since 2010, the commission member X. Yang is principle investigator of the project “Formation of the Hunshandake Sandy Land and its environmental processes since last interglacial, and its responses to global change (Main Foci Project of the National Natural Science Foundation of China).

From February 6-7, 2009, and February 5-6, 2010, the commission member O. Bubenzer organized the annual meeting of the working group “Desert Margin Research” as part of the German Geographical Society (<http://www.uni-koeln.de/sfb389/wuestenraender/index.html>).

From April 16-18, the commission chairman M. Ashour participated with the talk “Evidences of climatic changes in the Western Desert of Egypt” as a keynote speaker on the 2. International Symposium of Geography, Bucharest, Romania.

Field trip to the Farafra Area, March 2010



From September 19-21, 2010, Chairman M. Ashour and the commission members N. Embabi and O.

Bubbenzer participated in the International Colloquium on Geoarchaeology "Landscape Archaeology – Egypt and the Mediterranean World". O. Bubbenzer was member of the Scientific Committee and gave a speech with colleagues about the Geoarchaeology of the Eastern Desert, Egypt.


From December 5-10, 2010, commission chairman M. Ashour participated in the International Conference on Conservation and Development of Natural Heritage, Cairo and Sharm El Sheik.

In 2011, Chairman M. Ashour attended three meetings concerning the development of Sinai.


From Nov. 14-18, 2011, O. Bubbenzer participated in the regional congress of the IGU in Santiago de Chile.

From May 11-13, 2012, M. Ashor attended the IGC conference in Romania.


In 2012, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) financed the installation of a new master course with the title "Environmental Archaeology" which will be provided by the Cairo University (Egypt, coordinated by T. Tawfik) and the Cologne University (Germany, coordinated by O. Bubbenzer) as part of the funding program "Change by Exchange".



Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst
الهيئة الألمانية للتبادل العلمي




change by exchange
German-Arab
Transformation Partnership



Cairo University

Transformation Partnership


Master of Environmental Archaeology



University of Cologne

Project Overview

Based on 30 years of environmental and archaeological research in Egypt's Western Desert the project aims at rounding off established study programmes by a fruitful integration of humanities and natural sciences. The graduates of this scheme will be fit for future challenges within archaeology as well as for interdisciplinary tasks beyond. Gradually they will create a sustainable base for more efficiently studying, preserving and presenting Egypt's archaeology and raise general awareness for the protection of the cultural and natural heritage.



Facts & Figures

Start: March 2013 with 10 students
2 terms in Cologne, 2 in Cairo
(+ 2 terms in Cairo for thesis writing)
Target group: BA graduates in environmental or historical sciences with excellent skills in English.

Partners

- Faculty of Archaeology, Cairo Univ.
- Supreme Council of Antiquities Cairo
- Institute of Prehistory, Univ.Cologne
- Institute of Geography, Univ.Cologne
- Cologne African Studies Centre
- Heinrich Barth Institute e.V. Cologne

Programme Structure and Content


Archaeogeography
Introduction into geoscientific basics and methods: cartography, satellite image interpretation, GIS, geomorphology, climatology, archaeobotany, archaeozoology etc.


Basics in Archaeology
Aims and principles of the archaeological disciplines: methods of relative and absolute dating: typology, statistics, radiocarbon and OSL dating, etc. Training in documentation and analysis of pottery, stone artefacts etc.

Prehistory
Human evolution, from Early Man to Early Egypt: adaptations, economic and social developments. Crucial periods of change, e.g. Neolithisation. Main chapters of African Archaeology, e.g. rock art and great migrations.

Landscape Archaeology
Interrelation between landscape, climate and economic development. Human response to environmental change: migration/diffusion/adaptation. Special case: land use in ancient Egypt and the holocene eastern Sahara.

Heritage Management
Preparation and implementation of archaeological field surveys and excavations. Principles of monument protection, including „invisible heritage“. Supervision of tourism. Presentation in museums and media.





Chances

to gain practical field experience
to join an internat.interdisciplinary network
to train constructive scientific criticism
to promote „Preventive Archaeology“
to give a future to Egypt's past and nature

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Publications (Relevant publication of the commission members):

Commission chairman **Mahmoud Ashour** and commission member **Nabil Embabi** published four papers with Kim Donner about Abu ElEgl Playa Near Dakhla. Another paper about the dating of playas in southwestern Egyptian desert is in preparation.

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- Förster, F., Riemer, H., Bolten, A., **Bubenzer, O.**, Hendrickx, S., Darius, F. (2010). Tracing linear structures. Remote sensing, landscape classification and the archaeology of desert roads in the Eastern Sahara. In: Möhlig, W., **Bubenzer, O.**, Menz, G. & [Eds.]: Towards Interdisciplinarity. Experiences of the Long-term ACACIA Project. *Topics in Interdisciplinary African Studies*, Vol. 15: 49-75; Cologne.
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Continuation

The commission will continue the re-establishment of interactions with colleagues in the Arab world, if not else, with regard to the recent political situation. In addition these colleagues have insights in the indigenous geographical knowledge of livelihood practices which could be sustainable in arid environments.

Planned joined field trips, conferences and sessions of the commission in 2012/13:

- Session of the commission on the IGC 2012, 26-30 August, Cologne, with 18 assigned papers and commission meeting.
- Meeting of M. Ashour, N. Embabi and O. Bubbenzer in Cairo (Oct. 2012)
- Field trip to the Abu Moharik dune belt (middle part) and the Farafra Sand Sea as part of the project "Sand accumulations in Egypt" (spring 2013).

Report: Olaf Bubbenzer, Cologne, Germany.