

Remembering Jeremy Gale Silvester

Introductory note

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Jeremy Silvester died on 5 July 2021, aged 58, following a struggle with Covid-19. In the 1980s, while a doctoral student at the School of Oriental and African Studies, he was also a member of the London-based Namibia Support Committee. In 1994, he completed his Ph.D. on the history of land dispossession and labour recruitment in southern Namibia under South African colonialism. He subsequently became an academic at the University of Namibia in the 1990s, and thereafter director of the Museums Association of Namibia. In these capacities he supervised a number of students who subsequently occupied influential positions in the educational and heritage sectors; and he was also involved in the establishment of a number of new museums and archives.¹ To commemorate his life, we convened a roundtable of his peers to reflect on his legacy as an academic and an activist in these various spheres.

Jeremy Gale Silvester

Ndapewoshali Ndahafa

Ashipala University of Namibia; Museums Association of Namibia

Ndapewoshali Ndahafa Ashipala is the Operations Manager at the Museums Association Namibia. She holds a Bachelor Honours Degree in Finance Management from the International University of Management (IUM), a Certificate in Accounting and Auditing and a Diploma in Labour and Employment Studies, both from the University of Namibia (UNAM). She is currently studying towards a Master of Arts in History at UNAM and she is a self-taught Graphic Designer, Writer, and an Avid Community Activist. Her portfolio consists of, inter alia, research and content development, curation and design, and museum and exhibition development for permanent and mobile exhibitions, guidebooks and training manuals, and other publications for Namibian Museums and Heritage Arts and Culture professionals, students, and learners.

Albert Einstein said, 'The value of a man should be seen in what he gives and not in what he is able to receive'. Jeremy was a man who gave. He gave much to his work, to his friends and colleagues and to the heritage, arts and culture sector as a whole. Here was a life that demands notice ... a life that exemplified brilliance ... a life that inspired emulation ... a life that burned so that others' paths were lit.

I have known Jeremy since 2014 when I interviewed for a position at the Museums Association of Namibia (MAN). I was extremely nervous and, as was Jeremy's nature, every time I looked up, he was the only person on the panel smiling and nodding and encouraging me to keep going. I did not know it then but that day set the tone for the next seven years in which I would have the pleasure of working with him. He became my biggest cheerleader and he had faith in me, even when I did not have any in myself.

I am currently studying towards a master of arts (MA) in history, and I can only attribute that to Jeremy's subtle nudging over the years and, more than anything, the way he believed in

me. Every time I said ‘Jeremy, I’m an accountant, not a historian’, he would leave it alone for a few months and then ‘randomly’ send me a link to another master’s programme ... in 2020, I caved. I finally applied to the University of Namibia (UNAM) and to the Carl Schlettwein Foundation for funding, and because of Jeremy’s support, I both got into the MA programme at UNAM and was awarded the scholarship. There is no doubt that everyone who believes in me in this sector does so because Jeremy did.

Jeremy was a strategic thinker, a visionary who was brilliant, innovative and creative. He contributed much to the development of MAN, Namibian museums and the sector as a whole. He generously gave us his knowledge, his expertise, his skills. Jeremy was deeply concerned with improving and capacitating our sector, and he was very keen to innovate museums in Namibia. He initiated and implemented much in this field since 1997 when he started as a lecturer at UNAM, and since 2005 when he joined the MAN.

As a lecturer at UNAM, he taught courses in early Namibian history and twentieth-century Namibian history, ran the final-year ‘research thesis’ course, and taught a final-year course in public history that he introduced and developed. He supervised the first three students to obtain MAs in history from the University of Namibia. He developed and taught another new course – ‘The Making of the Atlantic World’ – that dealt with the impact of the slave trade on Africa and the Americas.

During his tenure at MAN, he provided training workshops for museum and heritage sector workers and assisted with the planning and design of exhibitions. He was also the Project Co-ordinator for a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)-funded project – The Heritage Hunt – that sought to identify heritage sites of importance to communities throughout Namibia. The project included addressing Regional Councils and organising a national school competition (SCAM X) which has, so far, taken place for 10 years.

As the Director of MAN, Jeremy exemplified leadership. He provided energy, commitment and inspiration to us and to others with whom he worked. The hard-working ‘Team No-Sleep’ is well known in our sector for getting things done under the leadership of Jeremy who was able to identify and mentor the passionate individuals who worked under him.

However, Jeremy did not limit his work to just the MAN. Throughout his life, Jeremy worked closely with the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MEAC) to facilitate the establishment of heritage institutions at regional and local levels and to support such institutions by providing guidance, assistance and expertise where necessary and possible.

The most recent notable testament to his dedication to collaboration with the MEAC was (amongst many other successful projects) the development and launch of the Museum of Namibian Music, the Zambezi Museum and the Stand Together and Oombale Dhi Ihaka Mobile exhibitions and teacher’s handbooks. One cannot begin to list all of the achievements that stemmed from collaborations between MAN and MEAC as there are just too many.

Jeremy was living proof of how kind a person can be. He was a good boss (although he hated being called a boss) to us, and, more than anything, he was a good friend and a great colleague.

The Jeremy I remember was a happy Jeremy, one who not only was cheerful in himself but who gave much cheer to others. He had a beautiful smile, a sense of humour and a gentle demeanour. Jeremy was bright, logical and systematic in his thinking. He was always willing to share his ideas and information. Many of us found him to be a splendid person of great intellect and big heart.

In his career as the Director of the MAN and as a dedicated Namibian historian, he worked with passion, integrity and energy. Everyone who knew him will miss a highly intelligent, vibrant individual with a rare friendliness and charm of personality. Jeremy was a genuinely warm and wonderful individual – one whom we will miss greatly. Our sorrow is lessened only slightly with the comforting thought that we had the privilege to know him.

As Adlai Stevenson said, ‘It is not the years in a life that counts; it is the life in the years’. Jeremy lived and taught us how to live. We will all miss him, but we will keep his vision alive.

Dr Jeremy Gale Silvester - The best friend that our profession has ever had

Napandulwe Shiweda

University of Namibia

Napandulwe Shiweda is a Senior Lecturer in public and visual history/culture at the University of Namibia (UNAM), in the School of Humanities, Society and Development, Faculty of Education and Human Sciences. Her recent research has focused on photography in the making of Omhedi, north-central Namibia, and on the history of migrant and contract labour in Namibia.

It has been nearly two months since the loss of my mentor, colleague, and friend, Dr Jeremy Silvester. Just a month prior to his tragic passing, he asked me, as editor of the newsletter of the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Ethnography (ICME), to write a summary of *Making African Connections: Decolonial Futures for Colonial Collections; Initial Findings and Recommendations*,¹ a report of a collaborative project I was involved in. He reviewed my draft and shared some improvements before submitting the final version. I was wholly unprepared to receive news that Dr Silvester has gone forever as we still had so much to do.

I take extreme pride in offering an appreciation of Dr Silvester’s life and his commitment and support to Namibia in the field of history, heritage, and museum development. It is a deep honour to be asked to contribute to the *South African Historical Journal*’s Roundtable that is being respectfully dedicated to him. Dr Silvester was an unwavering force. For as long as I have known him, his time, energy, and irrepressible enthusiasm have always been centred on stimulating young Namibians’ interest in history and museum development. At the University of Namibia, where we met in 2004, he was generous, encouraging, and helpful with advice for my planned studies for a master’s degree in Public and Visual History at the University of the Western Cape. I credit Dr Silvester’s influence with more than one career milestone. His excitement about the potential findings of my research on how the Kwanyama King, Mandume ya Ndemufayo, is remembered in both Namibia and Angola was crucial to my subsequent career. He served as external examiner for my master’s thesis. He has been the best friend and colleague, and a dedicated mentor, first in Namibian history and, later, on issues of historical collections of objects relating to Namibia held overseas and on the return of sacred objects to Namibia. If it had not been for Dr Silvester’s scholarship and his considerable personal support and encouragement, I believe my academic career would have followed a much less satisfying trajectory. Thus, I am enormously grateful to him for his

confidence in me and his interest in my work over the years, including most recently his selection of me as co-author for an article titled 'The Return of the Sacred Stones of the Ovambo Kingdoms: Restitution and the Revision of the Past'.²

I have never regretted taking up the positions of administrator at the Museums Association of Namibia (MAN) after my master's studies. In fact, I would probably never have become what I am today if it was not for the time I spent at the MAN. Dr Silvester, as MAN's project planning and training officer, always shared his expertise and gave me extremely valuable advice on how to run a project, set up an exhibition, and write applications for research funding. Since then, Dr Silvester has been my mentor. His mentorship prepared me to take up my position as project officer for the Archives of Anti-Colonial Resistance and the Liberation Struggle (AACRLS) based at the National Archives of Namibia (NAN). After my doctoral studies I was able to take up a project officer position at MAN for a project titled 'Promoting and Preserving the Cultural Heritage of Northern Namibia', which was funded by the Finnish Embassy in Namibia. This project enabled an upgrade of the Nakambale Museum and Rest Camp; the establishment of the Ongandjokwe Medical Museum; and the writing of the biography of Namibian activist and freedom fighter Toivo ya Toivo. The late Andimba Toivo ya Toivo was one of the most significant founding members of the Ovambo People's Congress, one of the earliest nationalist movements in Namibia, and in 1960, a founding member of SWAPO. In 1968, he was convicted of violating a South African terrorism law and was sentenced to 20 years in prison on Robben Island. He was released on 1 March 1984. He died on 9 June 2017 at his home in Windhoek at the age of 92 years. Ya Toivo was declared a national hero of Namibia and was laid to rest at the Heroes' Acre in Windhoek.

Dr Silvester encouraged a whole new generation of history learners and teachers through a national competition for History Clubs called School Clubs and Museums Exhibition (SCAM X) at the MAN. Learners were encouraged to identify a place or person of historical significance to their region and conduct research with the aim of mounting a small exhibition. The competition not only encouraged existing school history clubs but also motivated the establishment of new clubs in schools that did not have any yet. These were some of Dr Silvester's many contributions to our field. He set many of us on course for successful academic careers as he guided us through our postgraduate studies, the basis on which many of us achieved wonderful positions in the education and heritage sectors. Personally, he guided me through my doctoral work, recommending literature and other sources of information for my research. Lately he had been involved in assisting me source opportunities for collaborative research and publication with scholars in Britain and Germany.

Besides all academic support, Dr Silvester offered many of us kind and warm hospitality at his home in Windhoek. For me, his kindness, which he modelled throughout his life, made all the difference in my own life. He taught us to be better human beings and see the positive in everything we do.

Thank you, Dr Jeremy Silvester, on behalf of all of us who have benefitted so deeply from your work and your example. It goes without saying that without your unwavering kindness and patience, we would probably not be where we are today!

Jeremy Silvester – Historian and Activist

Marion Wallace
British Library

Dr Marion Wallace is a historian of Namibia. She is Lead Curator for Africa at the British Library, and previously worked at the UK National Archives. She is a member of the Board of the *Journal of Southern African Studies* and of the committee of SCOLMA (the UK Libraries and Archives Group on Africa). Her publications include (with John Kinahan) *A History of Namibia From the Beginning to 1990* (London: Hurst, 2011). She also publishes on other aspects of African history and on issues in research, archives and librarianship in African Studies.

I cannot remember when I first met Jeremy; he is one of those people with whom I have had such a long connection that my instincts as a historian have failed when it comes to the date of our first meeting. So, it could have been in the United Kingdom (UK), or it might have been in Windhoek where, by 1994, I was conducting research for my PhD and collaborating with Jeremy, and our colleagues Patricia Hayes, Wolfram Hartmann, and Ben Fuller, on what was the first major book and conference that most of us, as young(-ish) scholars, put together. ‘Trees Never Meet’, as we called the project, took its name from a Namibian proverb about mobility (implying that trees do not meet, but people do), the organising theme of our edited collection.¹

Rereading the introduction to the eventual book publication, which Jeremy, Patricia, and I laboured over in intense writing sessions on campus at the University of Namibia (UNAM), I detect the seeds of ideas which Jeremy was to follow throughout his professional life. His PhD thesis, which he had completed at the University of London in 1993 under the supervision of David Anderson, is a social history of southern Namibia during the inter-war years, a nuanced, grounded account of land, labour, anti-colonial struggle, and dispossession.² The Trees Never Meet project carried forward similar ideas, seeking among other things to interrogate the ‘transition from colonial weakness to consolidation’ during this period and to understand how ‘social and cultural spaces became the site of intensifying struggles’.³ It did this, in part, through seeking to engage beyond academia, mainly through the 1994 Windhoek conference, an event that attracted international participants while also drawing in, from Namibia, ‘history teachers, students, “oral historians”, and [...] a small but vocal group of those who were the agents of history between the world wars’.⁴

It was not only for the sake of inclusion but also for shifting the balance of power among those who write Namibia’s history – that Jeremy pursued so strongly after becoming a lecturer at UNAM in 1997. In the mid-1990s (still not long after independence), we wrote that most research on Namibian history was being carried out abroad.⁵ The period since has seen a marked increase in academic history-writing, and a number of new PhD studies, by Namibians (even if academic structures and support for the subject remain rather fragile).⁶

Jeremy’s efforts contributed much in this direction. He profoundly understood how to encourage and mentor bright and interested students – famously opening his personal bookshelves to UNAM students, inviting them to come to his office simply to read – and continued to support Namibian scholars throughout his career. I was in touch with him last year over an early career writing workshop we were planning for July 2020 at UNAM: Jeremy acted as one of the selectors of workshop participants, finding time to send perceptive, knowledgeable, and thorough comments on the applicants’ papers, despite his always heavy schedule.⁷

As a practising historian, Jeremy worked hard – and cooperatively – to reach beyond the limits of academia and engage with a wide variety of people through (for example) newspaper columns and exhibitions, and to encourage different forms of community-based research. This practice of solidarity was probably founded on the formative experience of involvement in the final years of the struggle against apartheid and for Namibian independence. It flowered as he developed, both intellectually and practically, an increasing interest in public history. Under his leadership, the Museums Association of Namibia (MAN), a tiny and always cash-strapped organisation, carried out astonishing work to develop the Namibian museums sector and engage fully with pressing international debates on cultural heritage and restitution, and the purpose of museums.⁸ I was privileged to attend the landmark 2018 conference on ‘The Past, Present and Future of Namibian Heritage’, jointly organised by MAN and UNAM, which brought together academics and practitioners, laid out the debate, and charted new directions with regard to Namibia.

Jeremy’s work combined the many practical tasks inherent in the projects he and colleagues undertook with intense intellectual engagement – an evening spent in discussion with him and other colleagues and friends was always an energetic workout for the brain. He was a key figure in the long-running project on the Archives of Anti-Colonial Resistance and the Liberation Struggle (AACRLS), editing the papers of the project’s 2009 conference and co-editing a spin-off volume on Kavango history.⁹ Together with Martha Akawa and Napandulwe Shiweda, he also authored a long chapter in *Southern African Liberation Struggles*, a monumental nine-volume work funded by the Southern African Development Community.¹⁰ Working within the nationalist paradigm in these projects, his approach was always nuanced, seeking for example to draw out the implications of the nationalist narrative in contemporary Namibia.¹¹ Another significant contribution, with Jan-Bart Gewald, was the annotated republication of the *Blue Book* prepared by the British to document the horrors of German rule, particularly the 1904 genocide. The authors argued (and I agreed with them) that, despite the volume’s obvious propaganda purpose, it remained important as a mediator of the accounts of those who experienced the atrocities of that period.¹²

Despite his workload, Jeremy also continued with his own historical research, taking deep dives into the written and oral records. His work with Martha Akawa on the Civilian Casualty Project was an important attempt to identify non-combatants who died during the liberation struggle.¹³ He was also intrigued by voting exercises under the political confines of apartheid Namibia and, on the basis of research in the National Archives of Namibia, wrote on this theme for the ‘South African Empire’ collaborative research project.¹⁴

Over the years Jeremy encouraged me to help out with the UK end of the research projects he was engaged in. I could not respond to all his suggestions, but when I could, it expanded my own horizons and contributed to my knowledge of Namibian heritage. At his instigation, a group of us spent several days in 2004 at the Powell Cotton Museum in Birchington, Kent, photographing Kwanyama objects and typing up index cards, and sending copies of the resulting compact disk to museums in Namibia and Angola. This research later contributed to the innovative ‘Making African Connections’ project which looked at decolonising these collections.¹⁵

Jeremy knew that history is about the heart as much as the head. Deeply committed to Namibia, he combined academic rigour with a profound understanding of the impact of past events on the lives of Namibians today – that history is never closed but rather constantly remade in the present. His approach was always to foreground and facilitate the perspectives

and experiences of those excluded from previous historical writing. His absence leaves a huge gap for so many: his family – his partner and daughters in Namibia, and his sister and daughter in the UK; his many friends; and his colleagues in the wider world of history, archives, and museums, in Namibia and internationally. But in his legacy – his research and publications, his encouragement of others in the field, and his work in the Namibian heritage sector – there is an extraordinary amount for which to be grateful.

Creative Activism, Transnational Collegiality and Friendship – Jeremy Silvester in Collaboration with Namibian and Southern African Studies in Basel (Switzerland)

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Giorgio Miescher is the *Carl Schlettwein Foundation* Senior Lecturer and Research Fellow in Namibian and Southern African Studies at the *Centre for African Studies Basel* (Switzerland) and an associate researcher of the University of Namibia. He has published widely on the history of Namibia and Southern Africa more general, with a special focus on historical geography, public history and visuality. His ongoing research projects comprise “Thinking with empire: towards an alternative geography of South Africa's imperial space”, “and “Space in Time: Landscape narratives and land management changes in the Lower Orange River cross border region”.

Lorena Rizzo is a historian of Namibia and South Africa, with a special interest in gender and visual history. She has published widely on gender and colonialism, photography and public history in Southern Africa, and co-curated a number of exhibitions on Namibian visual history and memory. Lorena Rizzo has been a fellow and lecturer at the University of the Western Cape, the University of Namibia, the University of Michigan, and Harvard University. She is currently a senior researcher and lecturer, and the co-chair of the Centre for African Studies at the University of Basel. Among her recent publications are *Photography & History in Colonial Southern Africa. Shades of Empire* (WITS University Press, 2019) and *Women & Photography in Africa. Creative Practices and Feminist Challenges*, coedited with Darren Newbury & Kylie Thomas (Routledge, 2020).

The idea of friendship [...] seems to me to invite us to consider an alternative model of dissenting thinking, one that is inherently *dialogical* and *collaborative* and one that works less in the direction of truth than of *clarification*, a kind of sorting out of paths and perspectives and assumptions. What friends do with each other is to clarify matters of mutual concern. One might say that friendship as a condition and context of reflective thinking depends on an ongoing provisional and recursive practice assembled, notably, out of both speaking and *listening*. Friends are not only speaking but also listening selves. Listening, after all, is indispensable for clarification. Indeed, I'd say that friends are precisely those who are able to cultivate a practice of listening as a dimension of an elucidating art of living and thinking in each other's milieu. Not surprisingly, then, the ethical attitude that friendship encourages is one not only of generosity but of *receptive* generosity, that is, a way of being with others that is as open to receiving from friends as giving to them.¹ (Emphases in the original)

In May 2019 a workshop entitled ‘Refashioning Collaboration’ was held at the Centre for African Studies of the University of Basel, bringing together two generations of scholars

from Namibia, South Africa, Mozambique, the UK, the USA and Switzerland. We took the opportunity to reflect on, take stock of and re-assess our decade-long cooperation in order to explore new perspectives for future collaborative work. At the time, David Scott's essay quoted above served us as one point of reference for sorting out what constituted a scholarly community and how we could understand our (future) relationships and common project(s). We return to the essay here, since we write our contribution to the *South African Historical Journal's* roundtable dedicated to the late Jeremy Silvester from a specific perspective: as members of institutions located in Switzerland – the Basler Afrika Bibliographien/Namibia Resource Centre and Southern Africa Library and the Centre for African Studies at the University of Basel; as fellow historians, who shared with Jeremy Silvester a common vision of and commitment to Namibian pasts, presents and futures; and as friends, who mourn the tragic loss of an exceptional scholar, teacher, activist and public intellectual. The 'receptive generosity' in all this, to which Scott refers, was profound.

Jeremy Silvester shaped and re-shaped Namibian, Southern African and African studies with us in Basel over the past nearly 30 years through many and often intense collaborations, initiatives and multi-faceted projects. He and his Namibian network of students and colleagues, which he always 'brought in', shaped the intellectual landscape in Basel and, arguably, in numerous centres of African studies in Europe. The sustainability of the Namibian network, which transcended generations, disciplines and themes, was a hallmark in all of his endeavours. Initiatives and ideas from Jeremy Silvester for collaborative ventures revolved from the very start of our relationship around poster and liberation histories, rooted, as it were, in public debates in Namibia. The international 'Public History, Forgotten History' conference at the University of Namibia (UNAM) in 2000, and with it the engagement of many Namibian students from the UNAM History Society, was one crystallising occasion, with various offshoots in both Windhoek and Basel. The conference, for instance, triggered the long, complex 'Posters in Action' exhibition, student exchange, course teaching and publication project;² and stimulated a first post-graduate programme of UNAM history students to complete master of arts degrees (MAs) and publications.³ As Jeremy Silvester wrote in 2006 in the introduction to the MA theses, *Aawambo Kingdoms, History and Cultural Change*, by Lovisa Nampala and Vilho Shigwedha:

For UNAM History Society, the study of the past involved an active engagement with the present. History was presented as a contest between different stories and narratives, an ongoing debate that students were encouraged to engage with. In this sense students were encouraged not to view history as a boring, 'dead' subject, but as a dynamic ongoing debate about the past that has a tremendous influence on the political decisions that are being made in Namibia today.⁴

North–South (student) exchanges within research and teaching projects, between academic institutions and broader publics, marked our subsequent long-term collaboration with Jeremy Silvester. Among the last of these was the exhibition entitled 'Usakos: Photographs beyond Ruins – the Old Location Albums, 1920s–1960s', which also involved the making of a local museum in Usakos.⁵ Through these exchanges, Jeremy Silvester left a lasting impression on generations of Swiss students, whom he inspired with his enthusiasm for Namibian history and his extraordinary ability to encourage students to believe in themselves and to trust their own thinking and creativity. By personal example, he taught them that good scholarly research involved more than writing academic papers, and required an enduring commitment to individuals and communities. His understanding of responsible academic work surely

demanded reciprocity, and involved making research results accessible to those who shared their knowledge.

One of the many highlights in our collaboration was a 10-day winter-school in 2017 entitled 'Remembering Forced Removals', which focused on exhibition-making as knowledge transfer. The winter-school brought together a large group of students from Switzerland and Namibia, and museum practitioners from Namibia and South Africa. This encounter facilitated a critical dialogue about museum theory and practice. Jeremy Silvester's never-ending energy at work and at socialising turned these days in Windhoek and various parts of the country into a profound learning experience. Taken together, our collaborative teaching and research over the past few decades was essential to shaping and building institutions in Windhoek and Basel, in this case notably the Museums Association of Namibia and the Centre for African Studies in Basel.

Jeremy Silvester's creativity and activism – infectious for all involved – served, as his numerous presentations in Basel stressed over and over again, civil society at large (and not only in Namibia itself) and disenfranchised communities and marginalised pasts and 'voices' in particular. A poignant example was his and Martha Akawa's Basel presentation on 'Civil Casualties in the Namibian Liberation War' in early 2007, shortly after their controversial publication 'Opening Pandora's Box' in *The Namibian*.⁶ Some of us were also drawn into some of his and his wider networks' intense committee work, whether within the Archives of Anti-Colonial Resistance and the Liberation Struggle project (AACRLS), or transnational museum, archive and repatriation initiatives.⁷ All this, too, rooted 'Basel in Namibia and Namibia in Basel', intellectually, institutionally and network-wise. Overall, Jeremy Silvester's scholarship and activism were situated in a humanist project, deliberately articulated through critical African nation-building engagements.

The year-long commitment, the intensity of work, and the deep obligation Jeremy Silvester felt for Namibian history and society sometimes pushed him to his limits. On several occasions, he visited Basel in order to 'breathe', which allowed him to make time for reading, writing and resting, but also inevitably implied reaching out for a new project or reaching back to an old, dormant project (such as his unpublished PhD).⁸ On the other hand, whenever we needed to 'breathe', Jeremy's generous company and a braai or beer garden in Windhoek were always available.

Jeremy Silvester's passing leaves a major void in our transnational community and in our personal lives. We have unexpectedly been forced to pause, to think about what it means for us in Basel, and perhaps in African Studies in Europe more broadly, to lose one of our most outstanding colleagues, public intellectuals and friends in Southern Africa. While coming to terms with and ultimately accepting this tragedy, we are reminded of the fragility of academic collaboration between Africa and Europe, especially in times of a pandemic that has eroded parts of the grounds on which transnational collaborative knowledge production, public history and creative activism could thrive – thanks to those like Jeremy Silvester. For now, the mid- and long-term repercussions of this moment of crisis cannot be fully assessed. Our confidence rests on the resilience and commitment of those who shared and supported Jeremy Silvester's visions and commitments, first and foremost our colleagues at the Museums Association of Namibia and the University of Namibia, but likewise our community of scholars of Namibia in Basel and elsewhere.

Notes

- ⁱ Patricia Hayes, 'Historian Silvester was an activist and builder', *The Namibian*, 9 July 2021. <https://www.namibian.com.na/213032/archive-read/Historian-Silvester-was-an-activist-and-builder>.
- ¹ D. Scott, 'Preface: Friendship as an Art of Living', *Small Axe*, 21, 3 (2017), ix–x.
- ² G. Miescher, L. Rizzo and J. Silvester, eds, *Posters in Action. Visuality in the Making of an African Nation* (Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2009). The initial exhibition and exchange project was framed as 'Posters in the Struggle. Images and Audiences in Namibia's Liberation History'. These projects transcended Jeremy Silvester's positions as UNAM history lecturer (1997–2005) and as Project Planning and Training Officer with the Museums Association of Namibia (MAN) since 2005.
- ³ Facilitated by the then Head of the UNAM Department of History, Mwelwa Musambachime and the Carl Schlettwein Foundation, Basel.
- ⁴ J. Silvester, 'Introduction: Changing Clothes, Changing Traditions', in L.T. Nampala and V. Shigwedha, eds, *Aawambo Kingdoms, History and Cultural Change. Perspectives from Northern Namibia* (Basel: P. Schlettwein Publishing, 2006), xi.
- ⁵ See also P. Grendon, G. Miescher, L. Rizzo and T. Smith, *Usakos: Photographs beyond Ruins. The Old Location Albums, 1920s–1960s* (Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2015).
- ⁶ *The Namibian*, 5 November 2006. See also the extended essay by J. Silvester and M. Akawa, 'Waking the Dead: Civilian Casualties in the Namibian Liberation Struggle', in J. Silvester, ed., *Re-Viving Resistance in Namibian History* (Windhoek: University of Namibia Press, 2015), 192–206.
- ⁷ Based in Windhoek, the AACRLS operated external committees in Germany/Switzerland, Finland and the UK, amongst other locations. Amongst the museum initiatives, see esp. Jeremy Silvester's mapping of the 'African Accessioned Network' project, with strong regional southern African outreach and the involvement of German and Finnish institutions, in J. Silvester, 'The 'African Accessioned Network': Do Museum Collections Build Bridges or Barriers?', in L. Förster, I. Edenheiser, S. Frünth and H. Hartmann, eds, *Provenienzforschung zu ethnografischen Sammlungen der Kolonialzeit. Positionen in der aktuellen Debatte* (Arbeitsgruppe Museum der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Sozial- und Kultur-anthropologie, 2017), 55–68. doi:10.18452/19029, <https://edoc.hu-berlin.de/bitstream/handle/18452/19809/05-Silvester.pdf?sequence=1>, accessed 4 September 2021.
- ⁸ J. Silvester, 'Black Pastoralists, White Farmers: The Dynamics of Land Dispossession and Labour Recruitment in Southern Namibia' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, University of London, 1993).