



Shea and Other Parklands–Approaching the Historical Ecology of West African Domesticated Landscapes

Speaker: Dr. Alexa Höhn (Goethe University Frankfurt)

In discussions about reforestation, biodiversity and climate change mitigation, the landscapes of the West African Sudanian Savanna Biome are sometimes not seen for what they are: Domesticated Landscapes, where humans have been transforming the environment into a productive landscape for more than a millennium. In particular, the management of useful non-domesticated trees in farms characterizes traditional land use in much of this biome. Historical evidence attests to their existence hundreds of years ago, but does not tell when or where they first developed. The presentation will discuss the contribution of archaeobotany to shedding more light onto the deeper past of in particular shea parklands, and how these insights may be relevant for their conservation.



Alexa Höhn is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute for Archaeological Sciences, Goethe University Frankfurt. She is an archaeobotanist specializing in the analysis of wood charcoal and holds a PhD in biology. In general, her research traces human-environment interactions and subsistence practices in West African prehistory. Her current project investigates the emergence, diffusion and development of cultivated landscapes in relation to land use practices and to the environmental settings.



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