

Shamil Jeppie: Research projects:

I am leading the *Tombouctou Manuscripts Project* ([www.tombouctoumanuscripts.org](http://www.tombouctoumanuscripts.org)) with its multi-faceted concerns with the cultures of reading and writing in Timbuktu, the broader region, and in other regions of the continent. My own work with the Timbuktu materials focuses on one individual, Ahmad Bularaf (d.1954), who was a major copyist and collector. I am trying to understand his methods and approach to copying and collecting books and the network across northwest Africa that he cultivated over decades. I also hope through him to understand earlier processes of archiving and collecting in Timbuktu.

I have a long-standing interest in the connected histories of modern Egypt and Sudan and I often return to this area of concern and research. I have now completed a series of essays on struggles over law in Sudan and depending on the availability of material plan to complete this research. Current events in the region have provided me with an opportunity to return to the area and think of the contemporary moment through a deeper historical lens.

Because those areas are physically rather distant – it is costly to travel and do archival and fieldwork there – I have learned to always do something going on South Africa such as my current research into the South African love affair with the car. I have started out with an exploration of the culture of car consumption and transformation in the greater Cape Town region. This is plotting entirely new territory for me but it also fits into a longer-term interest I have had in understand the varieties of spaces and histories of the city.