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"Working in the Mangroves and Beyond: Scientific Forestry and the Labour Question in Early Colonial Tanzania"

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doi:10.3197/096734005774462754. Germans arrived in Tanzania with a vision of scientific forestry derived from European and Asian templates of forest management that was premised on the creation of forest reserves emptied of human settlement. They found a landscape and human environment that was not amenable to established practices of rotational forestry. In particular, a general labour dearth and resistance from Tanzanian peasants and labour migrants forced German foresters to compromise their forestry blueprint. The backdrop of the Maji Maji rebellion of 1905 led colonial authorities to back away from the unbridled use of force to muster labour for forest work, and land abundance in most of the colony stymied the introduction of taungya methods of forest squatting as practised in Asia. Early priority given to managing mangrove forests for revenue generation further undermined established precepts of scientific forestry, seen in the trend toward granting concessions to private entrepreneurs for mangrove bark exploitation rather than for timber. The persistence of an African and Asian consumer demand for mangrove poles and fuel wood subverted a vision of rotational forestry based on timber milling. Problems of labour procurement and retention furthermore undermined efforts to demarcate and conserve inland dry canopy forests, and obviated the expansion of managed forestry into woodland savannahs. By the end of German rule managed state forestry had therefore failed to reshape the landscape according to a Eurocentric and Asian model of development. All rights reserved. © 2005 The White Horse Press

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