I am a historian of East Africa and the Indian Ocean world. I am currently completing a book manuscript entitled *A Dissonant History of the East African Coast: Inland Societies and the Contingencies of Indian Ocean Connections*. The book is history of the East African port city of Mombasa between the late-first millennium and nineteenth century, but it traces this history from the vantage point of smaller, rural Mijikenda-speaking communities that lived in the city's hinterlands. Despite living just miles away from a major port city, Mijikenda speakers rejected many of the norms and practices usually seen as undergirding Indian Ocean connections like Islam, urbanism, and maritime lifeways. The book argues that they influenced East Africa’s connections to the Indian Ocean precisely because they rejected the Islamic-maritime practices of this larger oceanic arena.

At its broadest level, the book illuminates how smaller societies influenced larger scales of interaction by pursuing paths that were out of harmony—or dissonant to—oceanic norms. Departing from much world history scholarship, which focuses on the movement of people, commodities, or ideas across oceans or continents, I ask what happens when these connections seem to stop, whether in time or space, and what historians do when their historical agents do not neatly fit preconceived categories of global actors. I show how the Indian Ocean flourished not only due to connections between Islamic port cities, but also because of dissonant social, commercial, and ritual practices of communities that either rejected or never fully integrated into this well-known transcultural arena.

My scholarship has appeared in the *Journal of World History*, the *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, *World History Commons*, and *Edge Effects*. Beyond my current book, I’m working on a smaller project on the translation ideas about of slavery in nineteenth century Mombasa in the first Nyanja (Malawi) dictionary.