

## *The Quadruped and the Infinity Bridge*

*Jacob Shell*

My previous research work (see especially the book *Giants of the Monsoon Forest*) focused on the use of Asian elephants as flood-time transportation in India and Myanmar (Burma); new elaborations upon this previous research will comprise a significant portion of the book-in-progress. I also plan to incorporate case-studies in Germany, and develop a kind of Burmese-German comparative framing for the book. The Wadden Sea region is an important research area from my perspective, because of its geography of transient island-landforms, and because of the wading horse convoys that facilitate access to certain islands (most famously to the lighthouse island of Neuwerk). Other “cross-wadden” mobility linkages are also significant from my point of view, such as the low-tide dredged canals that afford access to certain Frisian islands (such as Wangerooge), and the small rail causeways that access certain semi-leveed small pasture islands (such as Oland). All of these mobility phenomena are methods of living with flood cycles which I want transportation, planning, and environmental researchers in North America (my regular home) to become more familiar with.

Another region in Germany I am focusing on is the area around Breisach, along the Rhine River. Breisach is noteworthy because, at least according to historical records, it has switched which bank of the Rhine it faces without the town itself actually changing location. This has occurred because the Rhine has changed its course over the centuries, first flowing past the east of Breisach, then flowing around both sides of the town (making the town an island), then flowing past the west of Breisach. This sequence is not widely published on, and it is certainly an obscure history from a North American geographic point of view. Again: I believe American geographers and similar researchers interested in the theme of geomorphological transience ought to become much more familiar with cases like this one.

Some geovisual work of mine, related to these themes, can be found here: <https://jacobshell.carbonmade.com/>

A final project, somewhat separate from the book project, and only at a preliminary stage now, will concentrate on historical muleteers’ paths in the Alps. I am hoping this research can complement work I’ve done in the past (see Chapter 1 of my 2015 book *Transportation and Revolt*) on muleteer-smuggler path networks in American Appalachia during the 1930s.