

THE MAGAZINE OF THE BONN CENTER FOR DEPENDENCY AND SLAVERY STUDIES

# DEPENDENT

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## VALUES, NORMS, AND INSTITUTIONS

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Dear Readers,

Welcome to the fifth issue of our Cluster Magazine **DEPENDENT**. We are looking back on some highly productive months. Yes, they were still marked by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as you will see from the numerous reports, activities and selected publications, the BCDSS has been remarkably resilient and, thanks to the initiatives of so many of us, incredibly creative and flexible in handling these challenging times.

While some of our researchers were able to make use of the temporary ease in COVID-related travel restrictions and quickly squeezed in their long overdue field trips, like Paul Graf who takes us on a field trip to the ancient Maya communities of Tzikin Tzakan and Tamarindito in Guatemala, others like Ayesha Hussain altered their research project altogether. Instead of focusing on bonded labor in Pakistan she swapped her focus for Pakistani migrants in Europe and redirected her field trip from Pakistan to Brescia, Italy. Ayesha also shares with us her insights into 'Research Methods and Ethics in Migration Studies' that she gained at the International Summer School at Koç University Istanbul, together with fellow PhD researcher Katja Girr. Dita Auziņa gave up her field trip altogether but still travelled to Belize

to plough through the local archives. Michael Zeuske, who in turn was denied access to the archives in Cuba, turned the tables and declared a field trip to be a trip to 'human archives', thus tracking down a well-preserved myth around Alexander von Humboldt, a manor house and its slave accommodations. Martin Bentz, Philippe Kluge, and Matthias Lang take us on a very special field trip to the Etruscan city of Caere, today's Cerveteri, near Rome, where they document burial mounds and chamber tombs using 3D modelling. Their mission is, in a way, to make field trips redundant, certainly a good means of defying a pandemic (see page 26 for field researchers' reports).

It looks as if we have obtained a certain degree of proficiency when it comes to adapting our conferences and workshops to the digital format, including the occasional hybrid event. Our annual conference "Embodied Dependencies", held online, brought together approx. 130 experts from across the globe. Their presentations and lively discussions provided some valuable stimulus, highlighting the importance of bodies, resources and objects for the identification of different forms of dependencies. Keeping the focus on "Embodied Depen-

dencies", the digital workshop "Artistic Communities and Patronage in Asia" provided a deepened understanding of how the lives and practices of traditional Asian artists were governed by a variety of societal dependencies. Going back to mid-summer, the workshop on "Narratives of Dependency", also held digitally, discussed fictional and non-fictional narratives that address asymmetrical dependencies in terms of contexts, structures and potential functions. Finally, the conference "In the Grip of the Supernatural", the only hybrid conference in 2021, analyzed the structures of dependency that govern heaven and earth, linking and organizing the physical and the metaphysical world in ancient and early medieval times (see page 49 for conference/workshop reports).

While these reports can only highlight some of the cluster's productiveness and creativity, our new recruits are certainly playing their part in raising the cluster's profile, too. First of all, with the arrival of our three new cluster professors we are immensely proud to count four BCDSS professors and their respective teams among us. What's even better: they have written a little piece for this magazine to help us get a grasp on their research interests in asymmetrical dependencies (see page 9).

However, this isn't it. We are equally proud to have welcomed 15 new highflying fellows to our cluster from across all career stages and each with a distinct research profile, many of whom have already made valuable contributions to our discussions. These are joined by 11 new PhD students and around 30 new Masters students who joined the BCDSS last autumn.

Last but not least, we hope that our special focus on "Values, Norms, and Institutions in the Study of Slavery and Other Forms of Asymmetrical Dependency", written by Rudolf Stichweh, will give us plenty of food for thought. We look forward to lively discussions on this or any other topic of our **DEPENDENT** issue. Remember you can join us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram if you like (see back cover for details). But for now, enjoy the read!

Wishing you all a happy, healthy,  
and productive year 2022

Cécile Jeblawei

Assyrian stone panel depicting enslaved prisoners, Nineveh 700-692 BC

## VALUES, NORMS, AND INSTITUTIONS IN THE STUDY OF SLAVERY AND OTHER FORMS OF ASYMMETRICAL DEPENDENCY

By Rudolf Stichweh

### VALUES, NORMS, INSTITUTIONS

Societies are always a web of values, norms, and institutions (Parsons 1937). Norms are expectations that are endowed with a binding effect. If someone tries to evade this binding effect, negative sanctions are in place to threaten those who make such an attempt. It is also possible to dispense with the application of these sanctions in individual cases, but the force and effectiveness of the norm depends on the availability of the sanction in principle. Instead of negative sanctions (= punishments), a society can alternatively use positive sanctions (= rewards). But positive sanctions are less suitable for enforcing expectations that are important to society. In the case of positive sanctions, the norm addressee can always say, 'I renounce the reward', and thus withdraw from the normative commitment.

As a rule, social norms (e.g. compulsory schooling for children), which are conceived as uncompromising, do not concede such freedom and therefore tend to rely on negative sanctions. The function of positive sanctions (good grades, awards in many social spheres) is rather to motivate performances that go beyond what is normatively expected. One will not be able to encourage good school performance or top athletic performances through negative sanctions.

Social values are not norms. They lack the binding effect of norms and the endowment of negative sanctions. Values are rather preferences or indicators of directions to be followed. They provide interpretations of the meaning of what currently exists and define directions regarding what a society would like to achieve in the future (in this respect, values are "conceptions of the desirable type of society" (Kluckhohn 1951). Individual members of society can adopt values, but they do not have to. Values oscillate between normative and cognitive orientations, and the motivation that attaches to them is determined by a goal to be achieved rather than an order to be defended.

Institutions are always a web of norms and values, so they are clearly more complex social entities than the single value or norm. They are somewhat persistent, and at the same time their persistence and identifiability (on the basis of the norms and values of which they are composed) create an unrelenting pressure for change. It is precisely when institutions have a visible identity that one can criticize the values and the norms on which they rest and seek to change them. It is the complexity of the construction of institutions that makes this likely. Compared to other guiding concepts used in this context, the concept of institution has repeatedly and more clearly been linked to evolutionary theorizing (Hodgson 2004).

### INSTITUTIONS OF ASYMMETRICAL DEPENDENCY AS "INCLUDING EXCLUSION". DIVERSIFICATION AND CONTRADICTIONS

For all forms of strong asymmetrical dependency, the key question is how they fit into the web of norms, values, and institutions that make up any society. Are the forms of strong asymmetrical dependency an unbroken part of a social order that continuously consolidates this order, or do they create an internal contradiction in society that also appears as a disturbance, as a factor of unrest, as something that can also blow up a social order?

One can visualize this problem by means of a real (because historically occurring) thought experiment. A society that takes no prisoners in conflict or war, but kills all defeated enemies indiscriminately, will and can have no slaves (see Testart 1998, p.47). Similarly, a society that neither recognizes strangers as such nor is able to include them – i.e. must turn them away or kill them – can have no internal strangers and thus, again, no slaves (Stichweh 2010, 2017). This leads to two conclusions. The invention or creation of the slave creates an internal societal complexity that did not exist before. And second, this intra-societal complexity as a result of slavery is not an additive component that adds a small difference to social institutions. Rather, it creates massive heterogeneity because it institutionalizes a 'contradiction' to the previous social order.

The social order in lineage-societies rests on the fact that assignment to a kinship context is the constitutive social principle. The emergence of the slave, however, means precisely that slaves are made possible by being denied integration into kinship. They are excluded from the most important structural principle of society. And this exclusion is internal social exclusion. One does not expel the slaves, one does not drive them into the sea but leaves them in the society, however, the most important principle of belonging and social structure formation is denied to them. The sociological term for this process is "including exclusion" (Foucault 1977; Stichweh 2022) – an exclusion put into the form of inclusion. And it seems to be the case that every form of slavery rests on the fact that a radical exclusion is performed on the slave regarding a dimension of societal self-description that is constitutive of society (Testart 1998, 2018; Patterson 1982/2018; Rio 2017), and further and equally significant, that this exclusion is performed internally to society. One historical possibility is exclusion from kinship (African pre-colonial societies), another is exclusion from a society insofar as it is understood as a political community (Greece, Rome), and a third is exclusion from a religion actually understood as indispensable (Islam, Christianity). The multitude of variants and their respective shaping into an institution is obviously a central object of investigation.



Narmer Palette (recto), siltstone, circa 3200-3000 BC, depicting the Ancient Egyptian king Narmer about to strike a prisoner

However, the emergence of slavery seems to always take the institutional form of an "including exclusion." It is obvious that the societies in question arrive at an increase in complexity by institutionalizing contradictions and ambiguities, and that they thereby endow themselves with momentum for change and internal tensions.

Hence, Slavery is always a social institution. The same is true for the other forms of strong asymmetrical dependency: serfdom, debt slavery, forced labor, etc. How universal is the moment of ambiguity or institutionalization of an alien principle that entangles society in contradictions? This is an important research question. As an institution, slavery is created via normative expectations (legal and other norms), cognitive expectations (theories and semantics), and values. All of these components must continually be renewed, i.e. confirmed or changed, in a communication-based society (i.e. in any human society), and in this respect any institution is both stable and subject to evolution. Normative expectations are at the core of the stability of institutions of strong asymmetrical dependency, and they are so according to the definition of norms, since norms are those expectations to which one adheres even if something happens in society that disregards or violates these norms (Luhmann 1972).

### CONTROL STRATEGIES IN ASYMMETRICAL DEPENDENCIES

In the case of slavery and its related institutions, normative rights of control of the Other are of particular prominence. The emergence of the multiple institutions of asymmetrical dependency should be understood as an escalation of controls that makes ever new dimensions of the social subject to outside control. In this respect, strong asymmetrical dependency is the systematic and unilateral substitution of external controls for self-control.<sup>1</sup> In a first dimension of control, it is a matter of one person controlling the material resources that another person believes he or she needs to live. This situation is close to the exchange that takes place in markets. As long as effective markets exist, no significant dependencies are likely to arise on this basis yet. A second control dimension emerges when someone has the rights of control over the actions of another (in the absence of institutionalized rights, it is only a de facto control of actions) (Coleman 1990). This second control dimension implies the possibility of pervasive control rights of one person over almost all actions of another person. In this way, there could already emerge a very strong asymmetrical dependency among two persons. Slavery is obviously a case of such (almost) complete control of actions. The control of the actions of another includes in many cases the control of the resources of this second person, since the use of the resources consists in actions, so that an ownership of these resources becomes dispensable.

Even when the resources I seek and my actions are controlled by another person, there is the possibility of argument and protest against this control exercised by another. This suggests a third dimension of control in asymmetrical dependencies. This third dimension of control arises when the possibility of conflict communication (Luhmann 1984, Ch. 9) or, in Albert Hirschman's terminology (Hirschman 1970), the possibility of 'voice' is cut off. As long as one can still protest openly, there is hope to weaken and end asymmetrical dependencies through consistent argumentation and contradiction. But if this fails, a fourth circumstance must be considered. This is the possibility of leaving the situation - or 'exit' (Hirschman 1970). Once pervasive, conflict-resistant asymmetrical dependencies are involved, leaving the system is the 'ultima ratio' left to the subjected. As a surprise decision, this can be as effective as the asymmetrical dependencies thereby disestablished. But if this possibility of exit is also cut off by effective control strategies, the web of dependencies that surrounds one becomes ever tighter. There then remains one last freedom in this situation of almost complete dependency. This is the possibility of withdrawal into a personal world experience that remains private and that one consciously keeps out of communication. It is difficult for an external person to control another

person's world experience (see on 'experience' vs 'action', Luhmann 1978), and it is precisely in this that this last possibility of freedom rests. It seems to be a characteristic of totalitarian societies that they also try to invade this domain. Re-education camps are one of those institutions through which they attempt to establish this unlikely form of control.



Swiss child laborers, *Schweizer Verdingkinder*, carrying wood outside a children's home, Kriens near Lucern, 1944

### NORMS AND NORMATIVE PLURALISM IN INSTITUTIONS OF ASYMMETRICAL DEPENDENCY

The considerations up to this point have shown, first, that the manifold institutions of strong asymmetrical dependency practically always use the social form of "including exclusion". There is always an exclusionary element, a denial of a belonging or entitlement that is socially significant or even fundamental (kinship, political membership, religious affiliation). In this respect, there is no difference in principle between slavery and the other institutions of strong asymmetrical dependency; at most, the difference between slavery and other forms is a matter of the socially constitutive character of the exclusions in question. This is the reason why one can speak with Patterson (1982) of slavery as 'social death'.

Second, the previous considerations have discussed the control strategies and control dimensions that are drawn upon in determining the inclusion side of the "including exclusion". In this regard, there exists an escalation of controls across five dimensions that increasingly sharpen the asymmetry between the controllers and the controlled, leading to what sociology calls a "total institution" (Goffman 1961). In this case, too, slavery is found at the end of a scale of escalating opportunities for control, which in the institution

of slavery may include the possibility to destroy the physical existence of the controlled, the possibility of physical death.

The normative design of institutions of strong asymmetrical dependency necessarily includes both the exclusion side and the inclusion side. On the one hand, there are norms regarding the question of what exclusions can be expected and justified in a given society, just as, on the other hand, there is always a normative articulation of the inclusion side that has an essential impact on the control dimensions. In this context, a pronounced normative and also legal pluralism can often be observed. Due to the fact that they are based on exclusions that deny persons and groups constitutive memberships of the society in question, institutions of asymmetrical dependency exist in many societies that are illegal in terms of the legal order of the respective society. On the other hand they occur against the background of typical social emergencies (poverty, debt, bad harvests). In regard to these illegal asymmetrical dependencies often arise independent normative frameworks and forms of contract. This ensures among the respective participants in illegal institutions a reliable framework of normative expectations that is valid for them and illegal at the same time (the sale of children to other families, the sale of girls into forced prostitution) (cf. with reference to forms of slavery in Southeast Asia, Testart 2011)). 'Verdingkinder' ('enfants placés', 'bambini-schiavi') are another notable example of the occurrence of familial exclusion and resulting quasi-slavery at the center of social modernity (Switzerland 1800-1960). Durkheim's principle (Durkheim 1893) applies to all of these forms: the violation of norms also takes place in society and it creates its own normative frameworks, which it uses as a means of securing expectations.

### VALUES: DEPENDENCY AS A SOCIETAL VALUE AND THE SOCIAL VALUE OF EXCLUDED GROUPS

The institutions of slavery and the other forms of asymmetrical dependency are embedded in the communication of social values. First of all, in all pre-modern societies there are preferences for dependency, i.e. dependency values. Patronage, clientelism, vassalage, submission as an educational value are some of the many agents of institutionalized preferences for dependency. In this respect, social modernity represents an epochal break insofar as it substitutes freedom, maturity, enlightenment, and self-responsibility for dependency values.

At the same time, another moment must be emphasized. This arises directly from the paradoxical character of "including exclusion," which is the institutional form of almost all strong asymmetrical dependencies.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Elias 1976 who interprets the „process of civilization“ as the substitution of self-controls for the external controls of premodern societies.

While on the exclusion side there is practically always the denial of a belongingness indispensable in principle, inclusion in exclusion means that the society in question expects that it will benefit from the persons and groups excluded in this way. Something is expected of them and something is imposed on them that produces a return or value for society. Hence, social ambiguity returns to the core of institutions of strong asymmetrical dependency. On the one hand, the exclusions that are the basis of strong asymmetrical dependency conflate with the strongest forms of communicative disregard and dishonor available in a society (Patterson 1982/2018; Patterson and Zhuo 2018). On the other hand, these excluded and dishonored persons provide services that society seeks as profitable and beneficial. There is a contradiction in this, and it is an important task for historical sociological research to analyze how these contradictions are perceived, processed, and, if necessary, communicatively and cognitively denied.

This (second) form of societal contradiction must then be further linked to the first form of societal contradiction discussed above, that the characteristics of individuals treated as reasons for exclusion are reproduced and possibly multiplied in society via the including side of exclusion. The rapid growth of the black African population of the United States even after the exit from the transatlantic slave trade (1808) was, after all, also

an internally socially produced growth of the exclusion space and the contradictions and conflicts given in it. This is an experience of many historical societies, which react to the contradictions of their spheres of exclusion, which they need as such, with radicalization of repression and expansion of the scope of control. At the same time, they intensify their own contradictions. The analysis of these dynamics in historical and contemporary perspective is of obvious centrality.



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**GET TO KNOW ...**

**... OUR CLUSTER PROFESSORS THROUGH THEIR OBJECTS**

Julia Hillner (JH), Claudia Jarzebowski (CJ), Pia Wiegink (PW) and Christoph Witzenrath (CW) each have their distinct research interests in asymmetrical dependencies. However, one thing they all share is the interest in the social dimensions of material culture. That is why each of them brought along an object that is representative of their research and that will draw us into their current research debates. Our four cluster professors will take their turn in explaining (1) their choice of object, (2) the connection with the key concept of asymmetrical dependencies, and (3) the historical processes it is part of.



**Projecta-Casket, silver box (56x29x49cm), Late Roman, ca. 380 AD**



**Object chosen by Julia Hillner**



**What does this source mean to you/your research?**

**JH:** The Projecta-Casket is a large silver box, constructed from two truncated pyramid shapes, now on display at the British Museum in London. The lid shows bust portraits of a couple, held up by two Erotes. The plates of the top pyramid display mythological scenes, including the bath of Venus, as well as depicting a woman in plain clothes being led to a bath house by attendants. The plates of the bottom pyramid show the same woman in splendid attire sitting on a throne, mirroring both the similarly dressed female portrait on the lid and (in gesture) the nude Venus above. The majority of the lower level is taken up by a large row of

attendants holding bathing utensils (nine female and two male). The box is usually taken to be a jewellery chest, perhaps a gift to the woman represented here upon her wedding to the man displayed on the lid. It was discovered in 1793 as part of a hoard of several silver objects on the Esquiline Hill in Rome. The box, and the entire treasure, have been dated to the later fourth century CE, on stylistic and onomastic grounds. The box carries an inscription on the lid, naming the couple depicted here as Secundus and Projecta and identifying them as Christians. Cross-references with other inscriptions suggest that they belonged to the influential Turcii, an aristocratic family who sent many members to sit in the late Roman senate.

The box has been a companion to my research for decades now, but the focus of my attention has shifted considerably, from the top to the bottom, as it were. I began studying it during my doctoral studies on elite households in the city of Rome more than twenty years ago. Then, I was interested in the marital strategies, property transmissions and conspicuous consumption through which late Roman aristocratic families shaped and dominated neighbourhoods in the city of Rome. These days I am more interested in dependency relations surrounding marriage. I would like to know more about the depiction of the attendants who are literally the foundation of the edifice of marriage constructed by the box.

**How does it tie in with slavery and dependency studies?**

**JH:** Most students of the late Roman empire will have come across the Projecta casket, as it may be one of most frequently illustrated late antique objects in modern scholarship. The focus of research has however been predominantly on the juxtaposition of "pagan" iconography and expressions of Christian faith as a window into a changing religious landscape. But the box also deserves attention in terms of what it tells us about dependency relations in this period. To begin with, we assume that the attendants are meant to depict the enslaved, but the absence of physical markers as a feature of Roman slavery and the increased permeability of the boundary between freedom and slavery in late antiquity make this difficult to assess.

*Relationships depicted here are clearly asymmetrical, but there is a scale of asymmetry.*

Furthermore, relationships depicted here are clearly asymmetrical, but there is a scale of asymmetry. The box reflects and created a gendered sphere in which the wife was objectified and subordinated to her husband. Yet, her status as an aristocratic wife was itself produced through dependent labour, in more than one way. This begins with the materials of wifely attire, including this box – silver was mined in the Roman world through a complex system of free, coerced and enslaved labour – and extends to strategies of physical segregation of wives through the use of attendants as human shields, as depicted on the box (and the box would have been carried by attendants in actual public outings of this wife). It is important to ask

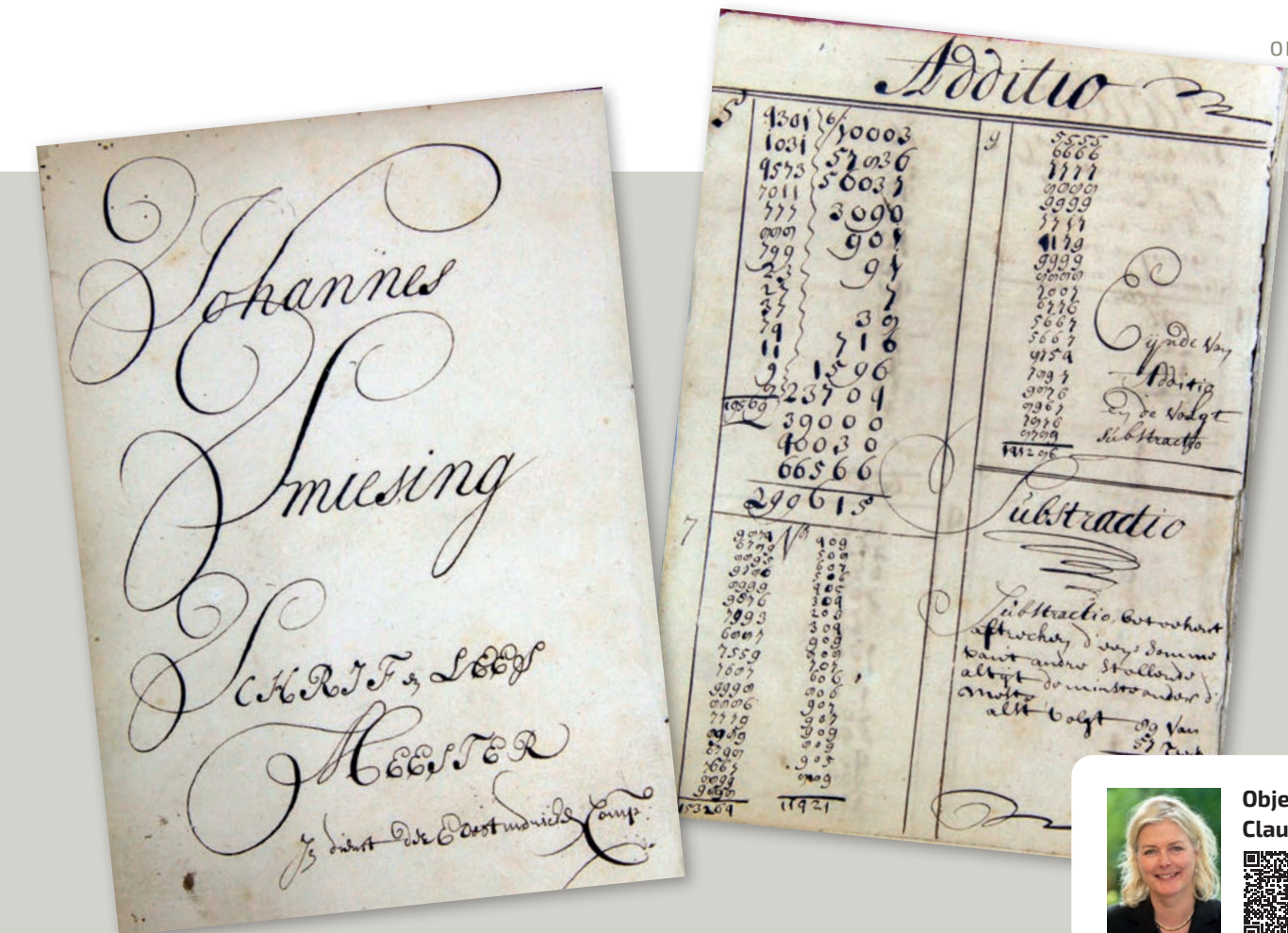
*In a period in which voices from beyond elites are rare, material culture is often the only way to give us an insight into dependent experiences.*

what happened to such distribution of labour when women similar to Projecta converted their households into Christian ascetic communities, as we know happened. Finally, thinking about materiality also helps us to imagine the many hands which will have carried, opened, filled, cleaned or stored away boxes like these. In

a period in which voices from beyond elites are rare, material culture is often the only way to give us an insight into dependent experiences.

**Which historical processes and practices is this object part of?**

**JH:** The box originates from the milieu of the fourth-century Roman aristocracy, which was peculiar in many ways. Increasingly Christian since the conversion of Constantine in 312, it was also much wealthier than its classical counterpart in a world of starkly rising inequality and new forms of dependency. This group of people was also much more confident to display wealth in the form of precious objects, glittering jewellery, colourful clothes and beautifully groomed attendants. The Projecta casket is only one of many fourth-century art works that show members of this group surrounded by an entourage of dependants, which had been a rare iconographic choice in earlier times. It is important to note that often such members are married women shown in the process of being dressed up by attendants. This is again an interesting development, because in classical antiquity and at the centre of the empire toiletry scenes were mostly reserved for the depiction of divine figures, like Venus here. Although the values of Roman wifehood, modesty and chastity, remained the same, their embodiment changed considerably. At the same time, wealthy wives and widows were also at the centre of public Christian debates around the renunciation of sexuality and property, including slaves. As an example of aristocratic self-display centred on the ceremonialised body of the wife, the box helps us to understand why these debates were so fierce.



The Notebook of Jan Smiesing, South Africa, 1697-1734

**What does this source mean to you/your research?**

**CJ:** The Notebook by Jan Smiesing from the early 18th century gives testimony to a twofold life: that of a slave who inhabited the Capetown Slave lodge, a place where the Dutch East India Company housed the enslaved men, women, and children owned by them. Later on, he was manumitted (set free). Smiesing was also a teacher and as such capable of reading and writing. His notebook displays language skills in Dutch, English and Tamil. He was able to do maths in high numbers, including knowledge of how to write numbers in Tamil. He taught Protestant church songs in Dutch, and passed on healing recipes coming from Indian settings at the time. He also noted important events in Capetown's history, including the birth and death of people close to him. This source is rare, important and telling. Rare, because it was created by an enslaved person. Important, because it tells us a lot about the self-empowerment of the enslaved, with Smiesing being one in a row of many who took the chance to teach children and adults at the Slave Lodge. Telling, because Smiesing was capable of reading and writing, of doing maths and he knew Tamil in a version that might be best considered the lingua franca of the Indo Pacific slave trade. At the same time, his biography stands exemplary for innumerable men, women, and children whose traces would have faded soon, in history as much as in historiography. When I

came across this source, which was partly exhibited in the Rijksmuseum in 2018, I contacted the archive in Capetown and when I eventually held the pages in my hands, I was touched. It was a feeling similar to what I had experienced when I read through court records documenting the interrogations of children who were suspected of witchcraft in the 17th century. They, too, had reacted to a hostile environment.

**How does it tie in with slavery and dependency studies?**

**CJ:** Following Smiesing through his biography and notebook into early 18th century Capetown we are taken right to the heart of slavery and strong asymmetrical dependency. The notebook is a complex collection of what it meant to be a slave and, at the same time and just as importantly, of what the ongoing intergenerational experience of enslavement and strong dependency did to these people. Smiesing and his family travelled back and forth across social boundaries of enslavement and partial manumission. Manumission was not a right to be obtained or realized; manumission was granted by Dutch colonial authorities. As an enslaved person you had to qualify for being considered either by way of marriage to a free person or by service and "obedience". As an enslaved child, your social rank was determined by your mother's. So, when Smiesing started to work as



Object chosen by Claudia Jarzebowski



a teacher, he was a slave and the son of a manumitted mother. After obtaining his freedom he continued to teach the children at the lodge, with his ex-wife and children staying at the Lodge.

**Rethink slavery and asymmetrical dependencies as a social system of reciprocal relations, emotions, knowledge transfer and conditions.**

Unlocking the perspectives of the enslaved men, women, and children and with them their emotional, social, cultural, religious dimensions enables historians to rethink slavery and asymmetrical dependencies as a social system of reciprocal relations, emotions, knowledge transfer and conditions, and also to strengthen perspectives that include enslaved men, women, and children and the many traces they have left besides written documents.

**Which historical processes and practices is this object part of?**

**CJ:** Capetown was the youngest Dutch colony, founded in 1652 with the aim to ensure that the ships' supplies were re-loaded on their way to the East Indies. It started with the expulsion of the Khoikhoi people who had inhabited the territory for long. Instead of establishing labour relations beyond slavery with the local population, the Dutch authorities decided to re-import slaves from South East Asia, especially

from India and Batavia, nowadays Jakarta. These men, women, and children, or their ancestors respectively had been enslaved in East African territories and sold into South East Asia, first by Arabian slave traders, and then after 1550, by their Portuguese and Dutch counterparts. So, the people who were forcibly brought to Capetown had been enslaved for at least one or two generations. They had brought along their own community habits, spiritualities, medical and magical knowledge and practices, and – as one can gather from Smiesing's notebook, skills in reading, writing, and accounting in different languages all of which then started to blend with life in the Dutch colony. As a result, a set of new codes and practices emerged, and from it a process which is known as creolization. Smiesing's notebook represents this creolization, a huge pool of knowledge and practices that these enslaved people brought into the Dutch colony of Capetown. From this point of view one can easily conclude that the Dutch authorities profited enormously from the knowledge of the enslaved and, as I would argue, they were very much aware of it. Regarding practices, the teaching and perpetuating knowledge transfer is the most significant feature of Smiesing's notebook. Today, this practice is known as: "each one teach one", a practice that also emerged in plantation slavery, when reading and writing was prohibited for slaves.



The Liberty Bell, Maria Weston Chapman (ed.), Boston Massachusetts, 1848



**Object chosen by Pia Wiegink**



**This object illustrates really well to which extent antislavery literature is embedded in complex and ambivalent cultural practices of slavery and its abolition in the United States.**

**What does this source mean to you/your research?**

**PW:** The object I selected is a nineteenth-century abolitionist gift book, *The Liberty Bell*. A gift book is a collection of various kinds of literature designed to be given away as gift to a beloved person. But *The Liberty Bell* is a special gift book as it comprised antislavery literature. It was published in Boston by a women's organization and sold at their annual fair to raise money for the antislavery movement. It was published almost each year for a period of 20 years prior to the American Civil War. As a literary anthology edited by a female antislavery advocate, Maria Weston Chapman, this gift book was produced and distributed by a female antislavery organization as part of women's benevolent work. It comprised a large amount of contributions by both women authors and transnational supporters of U.S. abolition. It was part of my previous research project in which I examined women's participation in the production and dissemination of American antislavery literature and its transnational entanglements.

**Which historical processes and practices is this object part of?**

**PW:** First, as a literary anthology of antislavery literature, the gift book, of course, profoundly contributes to the production of certain narratives of (anti)slavery. Second, as a material object designed to be given as a present to a loved one and symbolizing affection and support for enslaved people, the gift book is also part of nineteenth-century consumer culture, gift economies, and the cultural practices of benevolence. Finally, I find the gift book also a suitable object to think about the politics of representation informing these cultural processes and practices. On the cover of the book you see a bell which is supposed to proclaim liberty and thus represents the demand for abolition. In the bell you see an enslaved black man pleading to a white woman for help. The depiction on the cover echoes the composition of authors included in the anthology; *The Liberty Bell* included almost exclusively literature written by white authors. The practices associated with the gift book further contributed to this unequal power relation: Its often costly binding

turned *The Liberty Bell* into a consumer product for the (predominantly white) upper/middle class. Taking all this into consideration, this object, I think, illustrates really well to which extent antislavery literature is embedded in complex and ambivalent cultural practices of slavery and its abolition in the United States.

**How does it tie in with slavery and dependency studies?**

**PW:** I am a literary and cultural studies scholar with a research focus on the literatures and cultures of anti/slavery in the United States and the Atlantic world more broadly conceived. In my research I examine how specific groups of people (e.g. antislavery activists, African American writers, women writers, immigrant writers) produce distinct narratives of slavery and how these narratives also refer to and reflect on other forms of dependency and movements questioning and challenging these dependencies. In other words, I am interested in exploring the protocols of dependency and the narratives that inform these protocols in nineteenth century American culture. I think it is important to pay attention to the fact that chattel slavery as a systematic system of exploitation did not exist in a social vacuum and that it relates to and interacts with other forms of dependency in the United States as well as across the Atlantic. Yet, the histories of the labor movement, of immigration, of women's rights, and, for example, Native American resistance to removal are usually narrated in isolation from each other. In a similar vein, scholars

have paid very little attention to the intersecting tropes and discursive structures of dependency that resurface in nineteenth century American print cultures. This is something I would like to explore (among other things) in more detail in my research at the BCDSS.

**Scholars have paid very little attention to the intersecting tropes and discursive structures of dependency that resurface in nineteenth century American print cultures.**



St Nicholas of Mozhaik, wood painted in tempera on gesso ground, late 17th c. Russia

### How does it tie in with slavery and dependency studies?

**CW:** Genome analysis has just established that contemporary horses spread globally from the Volga–Don steppe about 4200 years ago. Mounted nomads ruled the steppe as they were militarily unassailable by settled populations in open field warfare. Sometimes this facilitated transcontinental trade, at other times nomadic empires fell apart. This happened in the fifteenth century to the remnants of the Mongol Empire, and its nomadic populations looked for new sources of complementary income. Raids and the human trade boomed in the late fifteenth to early eighteenth centuries in inner Eurasia north of the great mountain chains, with the wealthy gunpowder empires from Central Asia to the Mediterranean as potent clients. A slaving area among others in the medieval period, the rising Muscovite state coordinated extensive frontier defences to keep raiders out. On the symbolic level, it developed self-description as New Israel, the tsar as New Moses leading the Israelite slaves out of Egyptian slavery – or Muscovites to “liberate” allegedly 60.000 Russian slaves in the capital of the Middle Volga Tatars, Kazan conquered in 1552. The new representation of the state just like the expensive steppe fortifications spreading across the Eurasian steppe during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries reversed asymmetric dependencies and expanded the settled empire in the very spot where the horse-rider system had been invented almost four millennia ago.

*On the symbolic level, it developed self-description as New Israel, the tsar as New Moses leading the Israelite slaves out of Egyptian slavery – or Muscovites to “liberate” allegedly 60.000 Russian slaves.*

### Which historical processes and practices is this object part of?

**CW:** Nicholas was a symbol both of liberation and strong asymmetric dependency. He was assimilated to imperial culture not least by the name of two emperors in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, among his other functions such as fertilizing the fields he became the panacea of captives who submitted petitions for relief of ransom debts in Moscow, claiming that he had helped in calamity and liberated them. He was the ambiguous agent of liberation propagating empire. Increasing numbers of Tatars served the tsar as soldiers or respected interpreters exchanging or ransoming captives, talking in the local idiom to their masters in Crimea or the Ottoman Empire. Some of the miracle stories depicted St Nicholas liberating Muslims and nomads captured by Russians. However, if they happily forgot to repay ransom back home, he might appear unseen when they boasted amidst their fellow nomads to fop them into obeisance, demonstrating the might of the empire.

With this in-depth insight into their object of choice, we asked the four to engage in a conversation and discuss in what way their objects are connected to one another.

## OBJECTS HARBORING SCALES OF ASYMMETRY



**PW:** I see various connections between our research objectives and the objects we are discussing here. The traces of slavery and dependency are still with us today in their various forms – casket, wood relief, autobiographical document, literary anthology. These material objects, iconographies, and narratives deserve closer attention as they shed light on the complex socio-political, economic, and cultural structures slavery and other forms of asymmetrical dependency were embedded in. What I found particularly interesting about Christoph's object, the wooden relief of Nicholas, is how Nicholas was instrumentalized for various causes. Christoph said that he was an “ambiguous agent of liberation propagating empire”. That is very intriguing because Nicholas was hailed as a liberator, but he was also in a position in which he helped to generate new structures of dependency. Julia's casket also conveys this ambiguity, I think, as it depicts various „scales of dependency“. And what Claudia describes as “reciprocal relations...[and] knowledge transfer” also draws attention to how these objects, the knowledge they contain and represent, and the cultural practices they are part of, travel and, at times, mutate. In the gift book we have women lobbying on behalf of enslaved people and against the commodification of human bodies, but by printing the kneeling slave on the cover of each gift book and by selling the gift book as part of an antislavery merchandise, they also create a form of commodification. I find the complex structures these objects are part of and the “travels” of these objects really fascinating.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MATERIAL CULTURE AS A WINDOW INTO SLAVE EXPERIENCES



**JH:** What we have also seen so far is that objects raise the importance of material culture as a window into slave experiences, and perhaps even more importantly show that the tactile nature of objects can alter personal research trajectories. As Claudia explains so evocatively when describing her encounter with Smiesing's

notebook, the empathy that we as researchers feel can be a powerful heuristic device, inviting us to ask further questions about the human experiences behind these objects. In their own ways, the notebook and the box speak to the ways the enslaved shaped social relationships, including through individual knowledge, be this languages or beautification techniques. They invite us to think harder about the “traces left” by the enslaved. For an object like the box, with its surface level prioritising the values of slaveholders, it means looking twice and thinking about the object within the dimensions of social practice.

*For an object like the box, with its surface level prioritising the values of slaveholders, it means looking twice and thinking about the object within the dimensions of social practice.*

Like Pia, I also find it important to reflect about cultural products also as products of dependency systems. We should not be dazzled by the beauty of Roman art works to overlook that they can also be products of violence, and, more importantly, that they can help us reveal such violence if “read against the grain”. I am intrigued by artistic conventions of representation of slavery, from the very stark hierarchies, presented on the Projecta casket to the period of abolition as seen in the figure of the kneeling slave on *The Liberty Bell* cover. This should warn us that what are often considered outdated values of the deep past have a very long history, and have the power to shape the contemporary world, too.

### Object chosen by Christoph Witzelrath



### What does this source mean to you/your research?

**CW:** This seventeenth-century wooden relief of St Nicholas of Mozhaik stands out not only because it is a sculpture

which the Russian Orthodox Church tended to treat with apprehension. It shows him in the full ornate attire of the ideal bishop, with omofor, palica, a church symbolising the parish he protects and, more unusually, a sword in hand which breaks the pattern of the orans posture – one hand not raised towards the heavens, instead clenching the weapon. It was made as one of many similar figures in the north of Russia, near Novgorod, after a model dated to 1480# from the steppe border town of Mozhaik. I found this sculpture and others like it when I was looking for background on the petitions of slaves returning from the Ottoman Empire who asked, among other things such as recompensation for their suffering and for ransom payments they had made for themselves, for an icon specifically in the image of St Nicholas of Mozhaik. Nicholas was highly esteemed in Muscovy, with about 800 known manuscripts collecting the legends of his vita he was present in virtually all parishes. Just half of the manuscripts of his vita written in Muscovy contain diverse stories on miraculous liberation and ransom of captives and slaves. For example, he transports in a blink Vasilii the captive son to his parents, still holding the cup from serving the emir of Crete. Nicholas the ideal bishop is shown in Mozhaik style with raised sword, otherwise an attribute avoided in imagery of bishops regardless of real activities. Bishops were obliged to ransom parishioners since the Arab raids on the Byzantine Empire. This changed the prevailing pattern of the Roman Empire, which during its ascent and at the height of power had little cared for captives abducted to foreign lands. Therefore, the sword does not indicate military activities. There is only one story in his vitae mentioning a physical sword. Transcending space-time, Nicholas wrested the sword from the executioner striking out to illicitly behead captives, appearing behind him out of nowhere.

## THE AMBIGUOUS ROLE OF RELIGION



**PW:** What all four objects illustrate really well is how religion and in particular Christianity played an important role both in the fight for abolition but also in the maintenance and justification of slavery. The very page of the first volume of *The Liberty Bell* shows an engraving which includes a psalm from John 8:32 – “Truth shall make you free” – which justified women's social activism on behalf of enslaved people as a religious (as opposed to a political) endeavor. Christianity was thus an important part of this culture of women's benevolence. For women, benevolent work that stemmed from piety was a socially accepted way of leaving the confines of the domestic sphere. At the same time, of course, Christianity also played a crucial role in justifying slavery in the United States.



**JH:** I see the connection in the deep history of paternalism or (in Pia's words) “the cultural politics of benevolence”. Christoph's and my objects direct the attention towards the free and their attitudes to slavery. The Christian inscription of the Projecta casket raises questions about how the continuing importance of the traditional Roman social order helped to accommodate slavery in the Christian Roman empire. This is the period in which Christian narratives about manumission of slaves and the ransoming of captives as quintessential Christian virtues emerged which, as Christoph's objects show, remain central to later Christian societies too. These narratives grapple with the problem of how to reconcile slavery with Christian messages of freedom and humility, but ultimately do not question the existence of slavery which underpinned imperial order. I am intrigued that Pia's object, *The Liberty Bell*, still foregrounds what anti-slavery meant to free people, rather than the freed.

*Anti-Slaverism as an expression of paternalism*

## WHAT YOU SEE IS NOT WHAT YOU GET THROUGH PROFOUND RESEARCH



**CJ:** I agree. These structures of strong asymmetrical dependencies are as complex as they are because they were established and perpetuated by human beings. Therefore, any type of dependency is interactive as much as structurally bound to certain legal and social institutions. When I look at Julia's casket, I can see a beautiful piece of ancient artwork displaying typical scenes. At a closer look, however, the people depicted emerge as representatives of different social groups and genders and ages. One step further, looking into who produced this beautiful piece, enslaved labour comes to the fore. However, these deeper layers of content are not immediately obvious to the viewer. It is not without a certain amount of learning from Julia that I arrived at these conclusions. Christoph's choice to illustrate his interest in strong asymmetrical dependencies, as I – as an early modern historian see it – pertains to religion, Orthodox Christianity in particular. One prevailing question that has for decades been treated by scholars who identified as Protestant or Catholic or Calvinist – I am less aware of scholars who identified as orthodox – was how Christians justified their engagement in slavery practices, always, but wrongly, claiming that these only ever took place outside Europe.

**A prevailing question: how Christians justified their engagement in slavery practices, always, but wrongly, claiming that these only ever took place outside Europe.**

Nikolaus is threatening, but now, that I know he is judging slavery and offering help to the enslaved, I ask myself: what kind of slavery – religious slavery in a metaphorical sense, like being a slave to God, may be the wrong one? Or slavery in the sense of a labour-based social relationship? With regard to methods, I find it very important to see that dependency and slavery have to be contextualized in order to be understood properly in their historical rootedness and cultural and social embedding. What you see, so to speak, is not what you get through profound research.

## THE PERCEPTION OF CHANGE IN THE HISTORY OF DEPENDENCIES



**CW:** What we do get through the study of our four objects is the perception of change in the history of dependencies, although it is often one step forward and two steps back or somewhere sideways. Julia's object is fascinating in the direct manner in which it shows off the values of the slaveholders and displays their slaves ostentatiously in silver, which was mined in often mortally dangerous conditions by slaves. Most Roman philosophers and Christian theologians de-emphasized narratives of liberation in the older parts of the bible, or the ideas of Greek polis focusing on the liberty of at least a small in-group, or the personal relationship monarchs claimed to their subjects, in favour of double asymmetric dependency on God and the human master. Like some of the early empires, Rome was oriented towards the gods or one God, and towards military expansion or enthroning the next emperor by the might of his legions. Captives, therefore, retained little honour and, if they returned, had first to be accepted by their families to regain property and citizen status. Citizenship, in turn, was extended to the few lucky and successful slaves manumitted to become freedmen and motivate their less lucky former fellows.

*It is often one step forward and two steps back or somewhere sideways.*

## THE DOUBLE-EDGED ROLE OF FEMALE DEPENDENCY



**JH:** I also find it productive to think about gender and how we study it. Pia says that the history of women's rights is often studied in isolation from the history of slavery in this period, and the same is true for the fourth century CE. Scholarship on women in late antiquity has tended to focus on women like Projecta and (simply put) has asked whether Christianisation “liberated” women like her or added new forms of “oppression”. It is important to think about free women within systems of dependency however, and ask what the choices that free women made meant for the enslaved.



**PW:** Absolutely! As two material and “precious” objects Julia's Projecta Casket and the gift book both draw attention to the gendered contexts of slavery and dependency. Here, we have two objects used or produced in the context of elite or upper-class women who were dependent on men. Julia already unwrapped the various “scales of asymmetry” inherent in her object. With regard to the gift book, gendered conventions of what was considered appropriate female benevolent profoundly impacted the production and sale of the gift book. Furthermore, in many of the contributions, women used antislavery discourses to draw attention to their own social position as dependents of their husbands, fathers, and brothers. So, women, in other words, also used the antislavery movement, that is, lobbying on behalf of the enslaved, to claim agency and also power for themselves.

**Women used anti-slavery discourses to draw attention to their own social position as dependents of their husbands, fathers, and brothers.**

## THE CONTINUING DEBATES AROUND ABOLITION AND THE DEFINITION OF WHAT SLAVERY IS AND IS NOT



**CJ:** Looking at *The Liberty Bell*, Philadelphia – a place where I lived as a Feodor-Lynen-fellow for almost two years – comes to mind – and how today the abolitionist movement is present in the public sphere. Abolitionism also comes to the fore as political consumerism and I wonder whether the – presumed – ladies who gave away these gift books felt better in so doing. I also wonder whether these books were ever given to the enslaved? It does make me think how promising it would be to write a critical history of abolitionist ideas and practices from antiquity right up to today.



**CW:** Indeed! In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Russian Empire became a major power and conveniently forgot about many of the implications of the former subjection of its territory to raids and the human trade. Obligations of the nobles for military service were faster abolished than serfdom, which became rather more severe. The former focus in the worldview on liberating one's own group, the Orthodox, diminished with increased security. At the same time, globalisation had the effect that Russians talked more about the same issues as the rest of the world did – while *The Liberty Bell* contained some texts from Russia, the abolition of slavery was discussed in Russia and the plight of serfs in Russia was debated among Western abolitionists in similar, often paternalist terms. Religion and other forms of ideology were used to justify liberation for particular groups and from certain forms of affliction while others fell through the roster or were actively, in the name of the same values, suppressed. It was not only in the two cases of the US and Russia highlighted here that abolition did not lead to complete freedom. Jim Crow laws in the Southern States and the specific regulations of land tenure in post-emancipation Russia imposed severe limitations on the rights of former slaves and serfs. Colonial states needed local powers and tacitly assented to continuing forms of profound asymmetric dependency to conserve power. The growing industry needed raw materials for which slaves, convicts and other dependent people toiled on plantations, in prisons or work camps. While the UN treaties fortunately mean that all states have officially made slavery illegal, there are still many forms of severe asymmetric dependency which can arguably be termed slavery. It remains difficult in many cases to impose these laws as some seem unable to compete globally without wage dumping and there are continuing problems to define what slavery is and is not.

**Religion and other forms of ideology were used to justify liberation for particular groups while others fell through the roster or were actively, in the name of the same values, suppressed.**

# NEWS



More on:



## SLAVERY DIGITAL HUMANITIES INVENTORY

Thanks to the initiative of Dr. Klara Boyer-Rossol, postdoctoral fellow at the BCDSS, we were able to launch the Slavery Digital Humanities inventory in October 2021. This inventory is a **collection of websites and digital databases, archives and other digital projects** over the longue durée. It covers a wide range of research areas (the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, continental Africa, the Americas etc.) and many different approaches, techniques, and media. The inventory is intended to be both, a pedagogical tool for students and junior researchers, and an outreach tool to make these numerous digital projects accessible to a wider public. The idea for the inventory emerged from an e-workshop on Slavery Digital Humanities held by the BCDSS in collaboration with the European research program SLAFNET and the Center for Research on Slavery and Indenture Studies (CRSI) of the University of Mauritius in June 2021. It is a peer-based "living medium" that will improve in time with the participation of all those involved in the development of Slavery Digital Humanities.

### OUT NOW: "RESOURCES OF POWER" EXHIBITION VIDEO

Watch the exhibition video:



The "Resources of Power" exhibition, which was launched last summer, is still on display until 30 March 2022 across four locations at the University of Bonn. If you can't visit in person, watch our latest video on the exhibition to learn more about the materiality of strong asymmetrical relationships of dependency and slavery. Prof. Dr. Karoline Noack and Professor Dr. Julia Hegewald, both BCDSS Principal Investigators, explain the concept and intention of the exhibition and how it reflects the cluster's ongoing research. Dr. Wolfer Stumpfe, our new BCDSS curator, gives a foretaste of the cluster's large exhibition planned in 2024/2025.

Visit the exhibition website:



<https://www.dependency.uni-bonn.de/en/exhibition>

## NEW AT THE BONN CENTER FOR DEPENDENCY AND SLAVERY STUDIES

### New Fellows



**André Luís Bezerra Ferreira**  
Federal University of Pará  
10/21-03/22  
The memories of the "sertões": captivity, slavery and freedoms of indigenous and mestizo people in the Amazon (18th century)



**Ruth Ennis**  
Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), Barcelona  
10/21-02/22  
The construction of "white slavery" as a trans-national problematic between 1870 and 1904



**David Beresford-Jones**  
University of Cambridge  
10/21-12/21  
Transformation of ecological dependency and evolutionary change with focus on the Andean Region



**Mònica Ginés-Blasi**  
Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), Barcelona, 10/21-09/22  
Trading Chinese Migrants: International Networks of Human Traffic in Treaty Port China (1830-1930s)



**Klara Boyer-Rossol**  
Independent researcher  
10/21-09/22  
Slavery, Dependencies and Circulation of Knowledge in the 19th century South West Indian Ocean



**Lori de Lucia**  
Boston University  
09/21-12/21, 07/21-02/23  
The relationship between race and slavery in the Mediterranean



**Bogdan Chiriac**  
Independent researcher  
10/21-09/22  
The memories of the "sertões": captivity, slavery and freedoms of indigenous and mestizo people in the Amazon (18th century)



**Ludolf Pelizaeus**  
Université de Picardie Jules Verne  
09/21-04/22  
History of human trafficking in the early modern period in German-speaking countries



**Daisy Chioma Onyige**  
University of Port Harcourt  
10/21-9/22  
Asymmetric dependency and agency in the gendered nature of slavery in crime and punishment in Ogbia customary law of Nigeria



**Claudia Rauhut**  
Free University of Berlin  
10/21-05/22  
Materializing Slavery Within Caribbean Activism for Reparations: Transregional Perspectives from Jamaica and Cuba



**John F. Chuchiak**  
Missouri State University  
09/21-10/21 11/21-04/22  
Human Plunder: The Role of Maya Slavery in Post-classic and Early Conquest Era Yucatan, 1450-1550



**Boudewijn Sirks**  
University of Leiden/ All Souls College, Oxford  
10/21-04/22  
Reciprocal dependencies between persons in Italy and in Gaul under the Merovingians and the early Carolingians, and in Spain under the second Visigothic Kingdom



**Frank Cirillo**  
Yale University  
12/21-8/22 Yale Fellowship  
The Abolitionist Civil War: Immigrants and the Struggle to Transform the Union, 1861-1865



**Anne Vater**  
University of Hannover  
12/21-05/22  
Gortynian debt bondage



**Firat Yaşa**  
Düzce University  
10/21-09/22  
An Attempt at Revision: Writing about Crimean Slavery in its own Terms and in a Comparative Perspective

**New Bonn-Yale Anton-Wilhelm-Amo-Fellowship**  
With the arrival of Frank Cirillo we proudly announce the new Bonn-Yale Anton-Wilhelm-Amo-Fellowship. The scheme allows us to welcome a Yale scholar (or a scholar chosen by Yale University) to the BCDSS for the duration of one year as of the academic year 2021/2022 and through to 2025. The fellowship is designed to broaden our perspectives on transatlantic slavery.

NEW TEAM MEMBERS

Team Julia Hillner



**James M. Harland**  
Postdoctoral Researcher  
  
At the Limits of Empire: The Trans-formation of Identity on the Roman Peripheries, c. 300–800



**Gulia Cappucci**  
Doctoral Candidate  
  
Inscribed roman lead pipes as sources of information to locate the *domus* in the topography of imperial Rome. Moreover, I recorded on the EDR database some of the inscriptions analyzed in the thesis.

Team Claudia Jarzebowski



**Eva Marie Lehner**  
Postdoctoral Researcher  
  
Early modern history of bodies and identities. I investigate how dependencies shaped bodies and how these bodies shaped identities of those men, women, and children who had lived in and were born into strong asymmetrical dependencies.



**Julia Schmidt**  
Doctoral Candidate  
  
Antonia Forster – Networking in Early Modern Europe



**Joseph Biggerstaff**  
Doctoral Candidate  
  
Properties of Dependency: Gender, Kinship, and Slavery in Barbados, 1680-1763

Team Pia Wiegink



**Jennifer Leetsch**  
Postdoctoral Researcher  
  
Black Atlantic Ecologies: Writing the Self and Writing the World in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Black Life Writing



**Luvena Kopp**  
Doctoral Candidate and Lecturer  
  
Cinematic representations of symbolic violence and resistance in the films of Spike Lee

Management



**Meltem Dramali**  
Website and Social Media Coordinator  
  
Responsible for creative planning, implementation and monitoring of digital content for the BCDSS website and social media channels including Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.



**Wolfger Stumpfe**  
Exhibition Curator  
  
Coordination of content, realization and implementation of the cluster exhibition (2024/2025) planned as outreach project to the general public. Momentarily, the development of the exhibition concept and the identification of cooperation partners are primary tasks.



**Cécile Jeblawei**  
Press & PR Manager  
  
Overall responsibility for PR and Press. Strategic development of website and social media channels. Current focus: (1) development of thematic photo and video material (2) development of contact database for outreach projects (3) PR networking & co-operations

Publication Awards

THE HUNGARIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION'S BOOK PRIZE



Béla Bodó

BCDSS Investigator Prof. Dr. Béla Bodó was awarded the *Hungarian Studies Association's book prize 2021* for his monograph "The White Terror: Antisemitic and Political Violence in Hungary, 1919-1921" by the *Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies* (ASEES). He teaches Eastern European History.

The White Terror was a movement of right-wing militias that for two years actively tracked down, tortured, and murdered members of the Jewish community, as well as former supporters of the short-lived Council Republic in the years following World War I. It can be argued that this example of a program of virulent antisemitism laid the foundations for Hungarian participation in the Holocaust.

Given the rightward shift of Hungarian politics today, this book has a particular resonance in re-examining the social and historical context of the White Terror.

The goal of the Hungarian Studies Association Book Prize, sponsored by the Hungarian Studies Association (HSA), is to recognize and support quality scholarship in Hungarian studies. The book prize is awarded biennially for the most important contribution to Hungarian studies originally published in English in the previous two calendar years. The HSA Book Prize carries a cash award and is presented at the meeting of the Hungarian Studies Association at the annual convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies.

DISSERTATION AWARD IN THE FIELD OF HISTORICAL WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES



Eva Marie Lehner

This year's Dissertation Award of the Arbeitskreis Historische Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung e.V. went to BCDSS member Dr. Eva Marie Lehner for her outstanding work in the field of historical women's and gender studies. Eva, who joined the cluster in October, is a Postdoctoral Researcher / Research Associate in Research Area E: Gender and Intersectionality.

The Dissertation Award of the Arbeitskreis Historische Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung e.V. (AKHFG) honors Eva's contribution to the formation of the early modern gender. In her thesis "Taufe, Ehe, Tod – Verzeichnungspraktiken in frühneuzeitlichen Kirchenbüchern aus süddeutschen Gemeinden" she analyzes entries on baptisms, marriages, and burials in early modern parish records from southern Germany.

*"Eva Maria Lehner evaluated 68 church records of congregations of different denominations from the 16th and 17th centuries. She locates the work at the intersection of an anthropologically oriented history of administration and knowledge and at the same time understands it as a contribution to historical intersectionality research. Through this unusual connection, she builds up a field of tension that allows her to gain important new insights into a supposedly well-researched research topic, the formation of the early modern gender order, from the brittle-seeming text type 'church book'."* (from the statement of the jury of the AKHFG)

The Award comes with a prize money of €5000.

## ASIAN ART AS MIRROR OF DEPENDENCIES

### STUDENT EXHIBITION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ASIAN AND ISLAMIC ART HISTORY

By Julia A. B. Hegewald and Karina Linke

Extreme forms of dependency can, amongst others, be represented in paintings and sculpture or leave material traces in architecture and archaeological contexts. This is why the BCDSS is organizing a number of exhibitions, showcasing visual representations of slavery and dependence. Research Area B – Embodied Dependencies – has already started its Growing Exhibition project with four display cabinets set up throughout the University. As the focus in these glass cases is exclusively on resource dependencies, students from the Department of Asian and Islamic Art History (AIK) decided to take a wider look at reflections of extreme forms of dependency, including other contexts as well.



**Plate 1:** View of the two student display cabinets in the Department of Asian and Islamic Art History.

During the thematic year of Research Area B, a group of five undergraduates and one postgraduate student, under the leadership of departmental lecturer Karina Linke, set out to organize a show of Asian art objects reflecting dependencies. The exhibits come from the departmental collections of the AIK and from various private collectors in Bonn. The display includes 16 objects from South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia, dating largely from the twenties and twenty-first centuries. The items have been shown in two separate glass cabinets in the AIK, displayed on the same corridor as the Cluster's vitrine (Plate 1). The students started their endeavour in April and formally opened the exhibition in July 2021.

All objects put on show as part of this student project visualize strong forms of asymmetrical dependency. While some also embody material or resource dependencies, others express religious, family or marital as well as financial dependencies. The exhibits include amulets, oil lamps, sandal wood objects and religious wall hangings in cloth.



**Plate 2:** Cloth hanging (*kalamkārī*) from Andhra Pradesh, South India, showing the ten incarnations of the Hindu god Viṣṇu.

The latter category is represented by an Indian *kalamkārī* (Plate 2) and a Tibetan thangka hanging, which illustrate both resource and religious dependencies. People were dependent on locally available materials, such as cotton, and the size, form and composition of the banners are strongly determined by their fabric. Furthermore, the wall hangings have been crafted according to strict specifications laid down in sacred texts and have to be used in accordance with ritual regulations, clearly illustrating their dependence on rules, norms and religious determinants.



**Plate 3:** *Ga'u* amulets from the Himalayas are box-like receptacles, containing sacred objects which protect the wearer.

Similarly, the showcased necklaces, two Buddhist *ga'u* amulets and one plate charm, further illustrate religious dependencies. The two Buddhist *ga'u* amulets from Nepal and Tibet are both made of silver, coral and turquoise (Plate 3). The plate amulet from

northern India depicts the monkey god Hanumān and is made of silver and cotton. The use and function of jewellery date back to prehistoric times, when people employed tattoos and ornaments for body beautification and adornment, but also to mark a person's status, wealth and social background. Necklaces in the form of amulets primarily have a religious function. They are worn as markers of rites of passage and to ward off evil. The exhibited talismans are considered magical divine objects which serve people's spiritual and physical needs. The *ga'u*, a charm box container, originates in Tibet but is worn throughout western India as well. Such amulets were and still are today carried as portable shrines by travelling pilgrims for protection and as a means of communication with protective spirits. Most women, men and children in Tibet and western India, as well as in other regions of the subcontinent, wear at least one talisman on their body, each for a different purpose. *Ga'us* have a variety of complex forms, functions and meanings and can be made of copper, brass, bronze, silver or gold. In Tibet, the amulets are often made of silver and entirely or partially fire-gilded. Gold is reserved for high-ranking members of society only.

*Ga'u* amulets are usually quite large, as they act as containers to hold and safeguard the charms placed inside. The religious contents, kept either invisible within – as in our examples – or behind a small glass window, are particularly valuable items such as small statuettes, relics such as bone fragments or hair, blessed objects, medical herbs or religious texts and prayers. Amongst the most common sacred contents are handwritten or printed charms, derived either from ancient texts or protective yantra diagrams. The small window allows the contained to be viewed and venerated and at the same time for it to guard its wearer. While the material of the *ga'u* displays the bearer's societal and financial rank, illustrating group, societal and economical dependencies, its contents illustrate religious concerns and beliefs, visualising spiritual dependence.

Comparable, the exhibited Afghan necklace made of British colonial coins, further underlines the overlapping of different dependencies (Plate 4). This necklet represents the interweaving of material and financial dependencies. Resource-wise, silver coins were available but highly treasured. The monetary dependency is marked clearly by the chain made of a large number of threaded British 1/4 Rupee colonial coins. On one side, they display a representation of King George VI. Coins have been incorporated into jewellery by all economic classes since about the 2nd to 1st century BCE, and they act primarily as symbols of wealth



**Plate 4:** Colonial coins have been integrated into a silver necklace from Afghanistan, representing material and financial dependencies.

and prestige. Historically, the inclusion of coins into ornaments was also a means of showing allegiance to and dependence on the government which had the currency minted.

If we stay with embellishments, which form a particularly interesting area of Asian art, others also illustrate family or marital dependencies. This is common practice in Nepal, where women after their wedding apply red powder to the parting of their hair, wear a bindu mark on their forehead and a necklace made of large numbers of strings of small red or black coral beads.

Here again, the number of coral chains combined in one necklace indicates status and prosperity in addition to the marital status of the woman, indicating her family or household dependency.

As such, the AIK student display considerably widens the angle of visual representations expressing dependency in Asian art. There is a small catalogue accompanying the student show.

All three display cabinets in the department can be visited until the end of March 2022.

Address:  
Abteilung für Asiatische und  
Islamische Kunstgeschichte  
Adenauerallee 10  
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**Prof. Dr. Julia A. B. Hegewald**

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North Rhine-Westphalia Minister Isabel Pfeiffer-Poensgen engaged in talks with BCDSS members

## NORTH RHINE- WESTPHALIA MINISTER ISABEL PFEIFFER-POENSGEN FOR TALKS AT THE BCDSS

**ENGAGING TWO-HOUR VISIT TO THE BCDSS  
DURING MINISTER'S RESEARCH TOUR ACROSS  
NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA**

By Cécile Jeblawei

On Friday 12 November 2021, we had the pleasure of welcoming Minister Isabel Pfeiffer-Poensgen to the BCDSS. Her visit was part of an extended tour to eight selected research locations across North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW Forschungsreise), one being the University of Bonn. The BCDSS was one of only two Clusters of Excellence representing the University, the other one being PhenoRob, our neighboring cluster dedicated to research into robotics in crop production.

After a warm welcome by Prof. Dr. Volker Kronenberg, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, our speaker, Prof. Dr. Stephan Conermann, introduced the Minister to the cluster's extended inter- and transdisciplinary approach to dependency studies, one that goes beyond the traditional notions of 'freedom' and 'slavery'.

She learned that our cluster hosts more than 100 international researchers across four faculties and 43 disciplines: from archaeology and history, Egyptology and German literature to sociology and Tibetology. Together we examine all forms of human exploitation across all time periods, religions and cultures such as slavery, serfdom, debt bondage, or forced labor.



During filming: PhD researcher Luvena Kopp, Cluster Professor Claudia Jarzebowski and Principal Investigator & Cluster Co-Speaker Marion Gymnich

Eleven of our cluster members, from Master students to senior professors, gave testimony to the many different manifestations of "strong asymmetrical dependencies". One example included a 19th century annual gift book (See the section on *The Liberty Bell* in the article by our Cluster professors, p.12) dedicated to the abolition of slavery. However, the publishers were themselves "trapped" in structures imposed by society. Other manifestations included a judicial sentencing to slavery from the 18th century African 'Gold Coast' whereby slavery was used as a means to pay off debts.

Wherever possible, the Minister took the chance to engage in talks with our cluster members as well as members of the Rectorate, including the Rector Professor Dr. Dr. h.c. Michael Hoch.

Before concluding her visit, the Minister was shown around parts of our current exhibition "Resources of Power", which is on display in four locations across the University until 30 March 2022. Based on objects from the University's own museums and collections, the exhibition illustrates how dependency can be reflected in objects such as cotton, sugar or cereals. Drawn in by the exhibits, the visitor is introduced to the concept of materiality of dependency and slavery.

Following in the Minister's tracks was, what it felt, a film crew the size of a small army, commissioned to produce a documentary on her visit to the various research locations. Although it did feel a bit crowded at times, from a PR point of view this provided an excellent opportunity to capture some of our key messages on camera, i.e. who we are, what we do, explain our transdisciplinary approach and why researching past dependencies should matter to people today. On top of this, our contribution carries another important message: with our strong international setup (57% non-German recruitment) and our high percentage of female recruitment (63,5 %) the BCDSS is committed to upholding the values of diversity and equal opportunities.

The film will soon be released by the Ministry (albeit in German only). So do keep an eye on our news section!

**FURTHER NEWS  
AND ANNOUNCEMENTS OF  
BCDSS EVENTS CAN BE FOUND  
ON OUR WEBSITE:**





# FIELD RESEARCHERS' REPORTS

As they investigate **strong asymmetrical dependency**, our scholars go beyond the study of written records. They travel to the regions they research in order to scrutinize historical sources and artefacts. They also conduct interviews with experts and communicate with local people. In the following pages, the scholars share impressions from their historical, archaeological or anthropological field research.

Due to the corona pandemic, many of our scholars have had to postpone their research trips to a later date or alter their projects significantly in order to comply with safety regulations. The health and safety of all is of particular concern to us.



Image of a historical barracón in times of slavery (center left): „Ingenio Santa Teresa (a) Agüica”

## FIELD RESEARCH ON THE MATERIAL HERITAGE OF SLAVERY IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC

By Michael Zeuske



**Prof. Dr. Michael Max Paul Zeuske** was Professor of Iberian and Latin American History at the University of Cologne (1993–2018), Professor of History (University

of Havana, 2018–2019) and is Senior Research Professor at the BCDSS. He is a corresponding member of the Academia de la Historia, Havana, Cuba. He focuses on different forms of dependency in the Atlantic slavery (1400–1900), in the global history of slavery and in different local slaveries and slave trades on a micro-historical level as well as on life histories of enslaved people and slave traders.

### CUBA, SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2021.

Classical archive research is cancelled completely. All institutions in the country are closed until November 15th. So, I have to go to a different sort of archives – colleagues who have been vaccinated and who dare to meet me. They are living archives. With some of them I plan to push for field research for material remains and ruins of plantations and slavery in general. There are so many problems in Cuba – transport is a very big one.



Photo 1: Remedios, North-East of Santa Clara, Villa Clara province



Photo 2: Caibarién, North-East of Santa Clara, Villa Clara province

Taxis are currently the only mode of transport in the country. For a start, the driver is in. So, some friends of mine and I set off to Santa Clara and Cienfuegos (known to be the technology stronghold in the times of late slavery (Abolition 1886) and after). From there to Remedios and Caibarién in the north of Central Cuba, where the large sugar plantation industry has also emerged late. Remedios is a pretty colonial town (photo 1). Before we get to the fishing village of Caibarién (specialty: crabs; photo 2) we take a turn and drive overland to the agricultural production cooperative *Los Dolores*. There we find the remains of the Sugar *ingenio Dolores* with a very interesting and relatively well-preserved clock tower, of course also a symbol of rule, as well as the remains of the manor house and the slave accommodation, called *barracones* (photos 3 and 4). The former manor house is still inhabited today.

The photo of a *barracón* (large, prison-like slave dwelling on the large, modern slavery plantations; photo 5) comes from an earlier field research of this type.



Photos 3 and 4: Ingenio Dolores, South-West of Caibarién



Photo 5: Barracón near Güines, South-East of Havana, Mayabeque province (The photo shows the side of the building, which is still inhabited today, because it has undergone the least changes to its original state from the middle of the 19th century)

A second journey takes us from Havana to San Antonio de Río Blanco del Norte to the *palacio del conde* (Palace of the Count). We find a fairly well-preserved and still fully inhabited former manor house. The basic structures of the former plantation center (*batey*) are still in a good condition (manor house, garden, foreman house and slave accommodation; photos 6 and 7). The resident of one half of the manor house, a nice person from the family who occupied the mansion after the revolution of 1959 and has looked after it all the time to this day, tells us the most important myth of the place: Alexander von Humboldt stayed in this palace for months and, in his writings, has given testimony of its importance to Cuba. The narration of the myth lasts over an hour. The myth is incorrect. But it does reflect what Humboldt is all about. He measured everything everywhere. The temperatures too. For the area between Havana and Matanzas he points out the cool and sometimes even cold temperatures, owing to the north winds and the natural spring water lakes. We (Reinaldo Funes and I) do not know whether Humboldt has really been there himself.<sup>1</sup> The nice person is surely aware of this. He is a Christian spiritualist (in Spanish: *espiritista*) and at times seems to take himself for the reincarnation of the builder of the palace (Gabriel Beltrán de Santa Cruz y Aranda, conde de Jaruco, 1717–1772). One thing is for sure – he was looking after the palace better than the count and the heirs had ever done.



Photos 6-7: Palacio del Conde in San Antonio de Río Blanco del Norte, near Jaruco, between Havana and Matanzas, Mayabeque province.

<sup>1</sup> If Humboldt had really done all the geographic position measurements himself, as the table in the essay on Cuba seems to suggest, he really could have been in San Antonio de Río Blanco del Norte – though very briefly (no longer than a day and possibly a night; however, he does not mention it explicitly); see: “Table of Geographical Positions for the Island of Cuba, determined by Astronomical Observations”, in: Humboldt, *Political Essay on the Island of Cuba. A Critical Edition*, Kutzinski, Vera M.; Ette, Ottmar (eds.), Chicago/ London: The University of Chicago Press, 2011, pp. 15–16.



Inside a Pakistani migrant family home, with Italian teacher visiting

## FIELDWORK AMONG PAKISTANI MIGRANTS IN ITALY

By Ayesha Hussain

### ENTERING THE FIELD: PEOPLE OF SAME ORIGIN

As an anthropologist, ever since I started my PhD at the BCDSS, I was looking forward to carrying out fieldwork. In my original research I wanted to examine bonded labour in agriculture in Pakistan by focusing on contemporary forms of asymmetrical dependencies. However, due to travel restrictions caused by COVID-19, I had to make changes to my topic and decided to work on asymmetrical dependencies among Pakistani migrants in Europe instead. To my surprise, I found out that Italy hosts the second biggest Pakistani diaspora in Europe, right behind the UK. I decided to find out why this was the case and how Pakistanis went about settling in Italy. Migration of Pakistanis to Italy relies heavily on networks and chain migration thus creating several dependencies. But what kind of dependencies are these?



### WHAT MAKES ITALY SO ATTRACTIVE FOR PAKISTANIS?

The first Pakistanis who settled in Italy went to Lombardy (Lombardia) in Northern Italy in the 1990s. As of 2020, there are 131,173 legally residing Pakistanis living in Italy, representing 3.6% of the non-European population. 70.7% of this population is male, while only 29.3% female. Since Pakistani migration to Italy is focused on economic migration, it is important to explore what these people do. According to ISTAT, 52.5% of the Pakistani population is employed, and the occupations in which they are involved include 26.4% in industrial jobs (including skilled as well as unskilled manual jobs), 32.9% in the service sector, and 5.3% in agriculture. Most of the Pakistanis (77%) live in Northern Italy, the majority of which (32.5%) live in Lombardy, followed by 17.4% in Emilia Romagna and 7% in Tuscany. 13.4% of Pakistanis also live in the south of Italy, representing a low figure compared with other non-EU populations in the same region.

My work is focused on the city of Brescia, which is the most populated city of Pakistani immigrants. 42.6% of those living in Lombardy live in Brescia. Brescia is located in the foothills of the Alps, an industrial district that produces the highest industrial value in Europe. It is led by a particular strong steel and iron industry and a network of specialised industries of automotive and weapons.



Ayesha with her Bengali key informant, a cultural mediator for the South Asian community in Brescia

Nine months later, in July 2021, I found myself travelling from Bonn to Brescia in Italy, a city that is popular with Pakistani migrants. Most of them are from Punjab province, which is also my region of origin in Pakistan. Since I was able to speak their language and was aware of the norms of their culture it was not very difficult to make initial contact. However, during my later interaction with male members of the community and because of my special role as a female with a similar background, sometimes the relation turned somewhat controlling and, at times, I felt being judged by other female members of the community. It was a challenge to keep a healthy balance between the role of the curious researcher and that of the fellow Pakistani, i.e. someone of the same origin as the research participants.



Pakistani migrant workers at work on the fields

Brescia is also surrounded by agricultural fields on the outskirts where many migrants are involved in the agro food industry including harvesting, packing and transporting of agricultural products. It is also surrounded by famous tourist attractions like Lake Garda and Iseo, hence offering work opportunities to migrants in the services sector and tourism, too.

Most of the Pakistani migrants arrive in the country through their transnational networks in Italy and Pakistan. The settled migrants help the new and prospective migrants, a process which has been referred

to as **social capital** by migration scholars. My research would be focusing on the dependency of new and prospective Pakistani migrants on their social capital, particularly in the informal labour markets.



Pakistani migrant workers in the heavy metal and steel industry

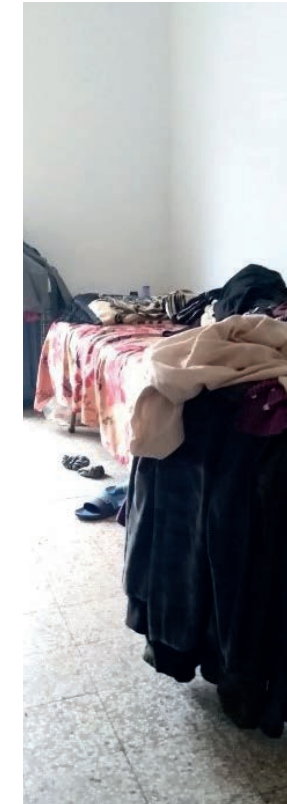
#### INFORMAL LABOUR MARKETS IN ITALY

The Italian informal labour market contributes no less than 25% to the country's gross national product. The contribution of Pakistani migrants in the irregular economy is about 9.3% in Lombardy. Informal labour is found in Brescia, Italy from the highly structured industrial sector, agriculture, services to low structured construction, transportation, courier services and distribution of printed advertisements called "Publicita". In the *Publicita* job the worker gets 30 euro for a 10 to 12 hour shift. The supervisor takes the group of workers and drops them off in an area from where they have to distribute publicity material from door to door. The worker has to walk several miles for these jobs. In agriculture, informal labourers work approx. 8 hours a day, earning 7 to 8 euro per hour. But since the agricultural fields are far away from the city, the farmer sometimes arranges a pick and drop service for the informal workers, charging an extra 5 to 10 euro per worker, depending on the distance. Agricultural jobs are the least preferred by Pakistanis and are only accepted in case of extreme necessity and unavailability of any other job.

Informal jobs are also very common in factories. The factory hires the person on a temporary contract for one month initially and pays them 7 euro per hour. The contract is extended if the factory still needs the workers, otherwise they are sacked. The factory can offer such temporary contract for one year and after that, has to offer a permanent contract to the employee and also the benefits of permanent employment. Initially, the company was only bound to offer a permanent contract to the employer after two years of service on a temporary contract. The permanent contract is called *contratto indeterminato*. The factory does not hire someone independently and always employs via an agency. Some Pakistanis who have been living in Italy for long time run their own employment agencies. They help the people from their country to find jobs in factories, agriculture, services etc. The agent of the company pays 7 euro to the worker and takes 10 to 12 euro approx. from the company that is seeking labourers. Nothing is done illegally in this way but the benefit is on the side of the companies as well as the employment agencies. The migrant workers who are in need of jobs to improve their work status and ultimately their visa status in Italy, are bound to take these jobs and cannot argue on any terms and conditions. Most of them are unskilled with language barriers and are left with no options but to take these jobs.



Inside a so called "dera", a workers' housing in Brescia that is shared among male Pakistani migrants



These dependencies on the ethnic networks are not only limited to jobs but apply also to housing. The already established Pakistanis own apartments which they let to their compatriot men as renting apartments from Italians is extremely difficult. An apartment for two to three people is sometimes shared by more than 8 to 10 people, with multiple beds and shared bathroom and kitchen. These houses are called "*deras*" in local Punjabi language. Sometime all these people come from one village or town in Pakistan and sometimes people with no previous acquaintance share such dwellings. The relations of asymmetrical dependencies are obvious in several spheres of life of Pakistani migrants but not only with the host country, rather more with their compatriots and their own social capital.



A Pakistani Italian employment agent in Brescia



#### Ayesha Hussain

Ayesha Hussain is a PhD candidate in Cultural Anthropology and a Research Associate in research area E "Gender and Intersectionality" and research area D "Labor and Spatiality" at BCDSS. Her research project is entitled "Asymmetrical dependencies among Pakistani migrants in Italy's informal labour sector: The role of Social Capital".

She analyses these dependencies within the micro and meso level structures of migration including families, ethnic networks and diasporas focusing on the mobilisation of social capital of networks particularly within the informal labour sector in Italy.



## BETWEEN DRY EARTH AND THE GATES OF HEAVEN

By Paul Graf

Location of the field research: Department of Petén, Guatemala

### FIELDWORK IN GUATEMALA BETWEEN JULY AND SEPTEMBER 2021

My central activity at the Bonn Center of Dependency and Slavery Studies is the study of the social relations in the ancient Maya communities of Tzikin Tzakan and Tamarindito. Moreover, the importance of essential resources in these relations is a crucial aspect of my research. As a lot of work needs to be done both on the social-environmental aspects and the archaeological sites, I traveled to the departamento of Petén in Guatemala and conducted two months of fieldwork.

However, this sounds easier than it was at the time since the Corona pandemic delayed my fieldwork by a year and a half, preventing me from leaving Europe to collect my indispensable data. In early summer 2021, when my COVID vaccination was arranged and I had a clearer perspective on travelling, I planned the

trip in more detail, set up my team and collected my special equipment needed for the theoretical and methodological framework of my research. The 'equipment question' led to another challenge. I wanted to use a geophysical device to detect buried archaeological features, but this kind of tool is difficult to find and I had no prior experience with near-ground remote-sensing techniques. I managed to borrow an electromagnetic induction meter from the Research Center in Jülich, an instrument

that reveals special features in the soil via different values of conductivity resulting from different materials and their water and salt contents. Finding team members was also complicated as the project was still uncertain. Nevertheless, I set up a cooperation with two flexible archaeologists from Guatemala, a student from the University of Bonn and a cluster member, Dita Auzina, among other colleagues who helped me in the field for shorter periods.

I gathered my core team first at Flores, a city located on an island in the big Petén Itzá lake in the center of the Maya Lowlands of northern Guatemala. It is an anchor point for any archaeological research in the area. Once we arrived in Flores, we moved to our first destination, the archaeological site of Tamarindito in the south-eastern part of Petén. The time we had on the site was shortened due to a broken car as well as the need to get familiar with the special equipment. However, the biggest problem was the malfunction of our electricity generator and, in the end, we had to reduce our working plan. As a consequence, our data collection in Tamarindito was not satisfactory but we were trained in the use of our devices and prepared for the rest of the project.

The core part of the project was the work on the archaeological site of Tzikin Tzakan. This site, as we demonstrated with the recent field season, is a large old settlement with several neighborhoods as well as ceremonial and civic facilities. The site is located in the east of Petén on a mountain chain with steep hills, which stretches from the southwest to the northeast and borders the Mopan valley to the south with the Salsipuedes stream meandering through the flat basin.

Our field season was the first archaeological project in the western portion of Tzikin Tzakan and the first with intensive work activities, from systematic surveys to excavations, in the whole area. This had the interesting side effect that we could invent our own names for the archaeological settlement sectors. The most southern section got the name *Tierra Seca* or "Dry land" referring to their location on a flat and sandy shelf within the basin which stays safe when most of the valley is flooded during the hurricane season. It also lies in a very stable proximity to the river shore and it may have provided the ancient Maya with a year-round access to its resources. We found possible agricultural facilities in that zone. Further north there are two other sections on the foothills of the mountain chain that we named *Pueblito[s]* ("small villages"). We interpreted these as old neighborhoods where primarily ordinary citizens resided. These settlement areas were probably supervised by people of a higher status that had outposts on mountain ledges above the neighborhoods, which we called *Mirador[es]* ("lookouts").



The neighborhood Pueblito 1, overseen from the spot Mirador 1.

On top of the mountain chain, we found several complexes of monumental architecture and larger residential platforms. The elites in those areas may have held control over part of the food production as the monumental platforms, stone houses and pyramids were interspersed with potential terraces and walls made of cumulated chert. Some areas with terraces, however, are located on more accessible spots in the region, on footslopes, as in *Transición* and *Pueblito 2*, or on intermediate ledges, as in *Terrazas*. The highest point of the uplands lies in a section that we called *Puerta del Cielo* or "Gates of heaven". It is composed of a natural mountain that was transformed by the ancient Maya into an enormous rectangular platform with southeast orientation that is covered and surrounded by smaller platforms, residential structures and stone alignments that resemble agricultural terraces. The neighboring *Cerro Subín* had a similar setting, the "Subín mountain", named after the plant that covers the area, which is known to house ants in its thorns, both very painful after accidentally touching the plant. Even bigger than the aforementioned elite sections, there was the arti-

cial mountain of *Pirámide Francisco*, a pyramid on top of several superimposed platforms with buildings on top. There we also found petroglyphs in the bare limestone, which could be dated to 2000 years ago thanks to the ceramic shards from the layer of earth covering them. While we were working in Tzikin Tzakan, my team and I rented a private house in the small village of La Pólvora in the eastern part of Petén, around 10 minutes by car from the archaeological site. Life in La Pólvora was friendly and "calm" for Guatemalan conditions. However, working conditions in Tzikin Tzakan were accompanied by some climatic and cultural obstacles. Since most of the private lands in the area of fieldwork is used for cattle raising, we had many encounters with cows. In *Cerro Subín* we used to park our car right in a cattle pasture. When the beasts tried to eat it and damaged the left side mirror, we began to monitor our car from our work space. Having said that, one of the best aspects of the work in Tzikin Tzakan were the afternoons with cold drinks and entering the fresh water of the Salsipuedes stream after an exciting day in the fields.

Finally, it is especially important for me to honor the residents of Vuelta Grande for their hospitality and curiosity. Typically, the local population throughout Guatemala is skeptical of foreign projects, both domestic and foreign. They have had bad experiences with military and government officials taking away their land to exploit mines, as well as foreign grave robbers stealing archaeological objects to hawk on the black market. Archaeological projects themselves sometimes create asymmetrical dependencies by underpaying workers or even completely ignoring local residents and working on their land without asking or compensating them. It is therefore very important to involve local people in the research, through close contact with them, lectures on the project and any results, and the offer of active participation in the field. I wish my new friends from Vuelta Grande all the best and look forward to continuing to work with them.



We gave a public lecture for the residents of Vuelta Grande in the local school building.



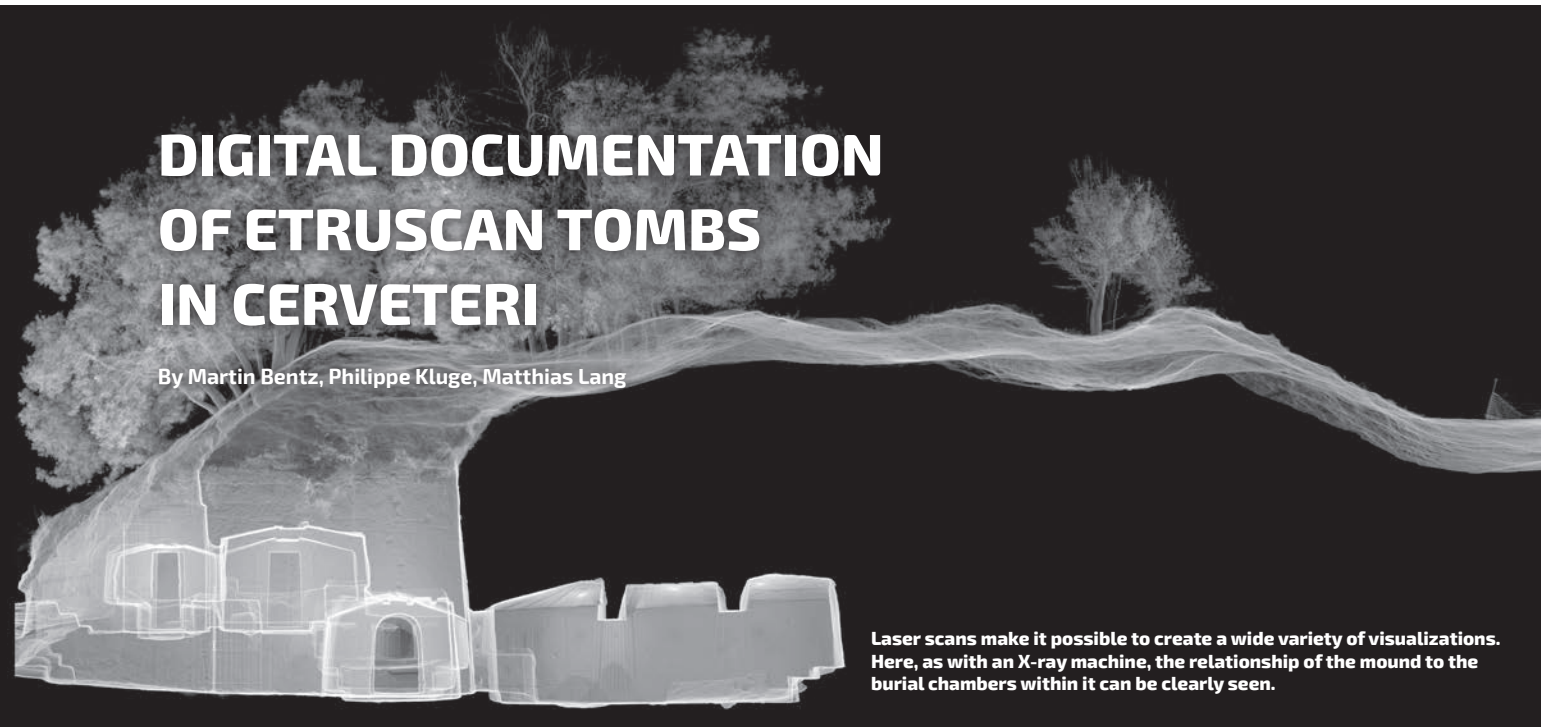
Paul Graf

is a Ph.D. candidate at the BCDSS and a Research Associate in Research Area B "Embodied Dependencies".

He is interested in environmental archaeology and pre-Columbian dependencies based on essential resources in societies located in tropical environments in the Americas, especially the southern Maya lowlands in Mesoamerica. His doctoral thesis considers certain essential resources as bodies of dependency which can influence settlement patterns, the social system and the political economy.

# DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION OF ETRUSCAN TOMBS IN CERVETERI

By Martin Bentz, Philippe Kluge, Matthias Lang



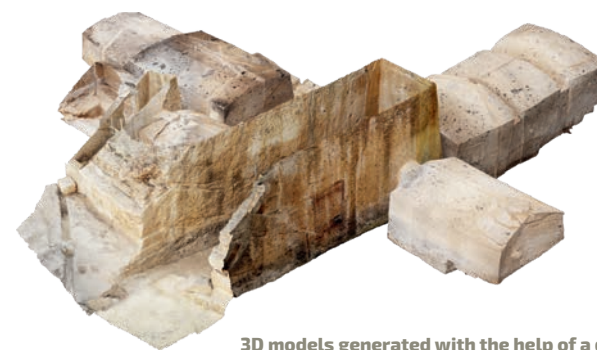
Laser scans make it possible to create a wide variety of visualizations. Here, as with an X-ray machine, the relationship of the mound to the burial chambers within it can be clearly seen.

Last September, Philippe Kluge and Matthias Lang from the Bonn Center for Digital Humanities supported the excavation project that Martin Bentz is currently leading in the Etruscan city of Caere, today's Cerveteri, located about 50 kilometers northwest of Rome in Central Italy.

The project, which is conducted in cooperation with the Universities of Capua, Viterbo, and Urbino and financed by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), aims at reconstructing the society of Caere, one of the largest and richest cities in Etruria between the 7th and 1st centuries BCE. As the city itself is covered by modern constructions, the cemeteries with thousands of preserved tombs with different architectures and an elaborate grave ritual, including many burial goods, can be used as a mirror of the city's society. For example, it is possible to distinguish between elite burials and poorer ones related to them, between natives and foreigners buried in them, and to analyze gender-specific rituals.

The goal of the 2021 campaign was the digital documentation of a whole series of burial mounds and chamber tombs concentrated around the massive Tumulus Campana in the Monte Abatone necropolis. In addition, the BCDH team digitally documented every step of the ongoing excavation. At the same time, the project staff was trained in the use of state-of-the-art digital documentation methods in order to integrate them into their own work process and to replace analog methods. In addition, the biggest part of the necropolis was surveyed by a drone in order to produce, for the first time, a high-resolution terrain model that will help archaeologists to investigate and understand the complex spatial relationships of the several hundred tombs

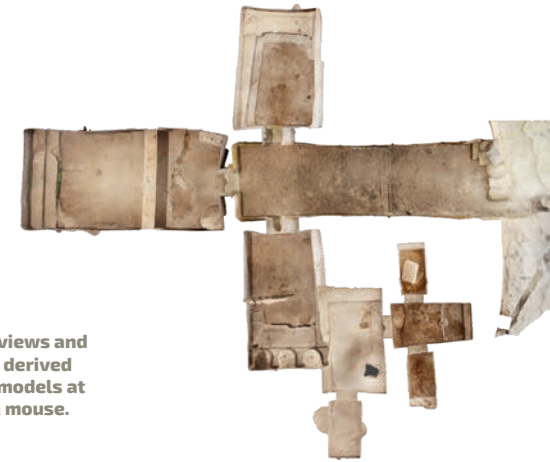
in the necropolis of Monte Abatone, which covers more than 100 hectares.



3D models generated with the help of a drone open up completely new perspectives on the archaeological sites.

Digital methods are becoming increasingly important in the documentation and communication of cultural heritage. 3D scanners, drones, and image-based 3D methods allow the recording of complex archaeological contexts and artifacts with unprecedented efficiency, accuracy, and quality. Digital copies are created that allow researchers to repeatedly view and analyze the sites and features from new perspectives, uncovering previously unexpected connections that remained hidden during fieldwork. At the same time, the models permanently preserve the shape and appearance of a feature or artifact at the time it was recorded in digital form, while the actual physical instances are subject to constant change due to natural decay, destruction,

but also due to conservation and restoration measures. Ultimately, the process of excavation itself is an irreversible destruction that can only be addressed with the most accurate and comprehensive documentation possible.



Floor plans, views and plans can be derived from the 3D models at the click of a mouse.

For archaeologists, the 3D models serve as an information container from which all measurements, plans, profiles, and views can be derived at the desired scale with high accuracy. Where previously a multitude of drawings and photographs were necessary, today one 3D model containing all this information is sufficient.



With the help of 3D technologies, the complex spatial relationship of the individual burial chambers can, for the first time, be clearly seen and measured with high precision.

In addition to being useful to research, these virtual copies of sites and objects serve as versatile teaching tools that are accessible to various audiences. They allow scientists to communicate directly with the public, thus contributing to the democratization of knowledge. While access to journals, museums, and, of course, the sites themselves is limited to a privileged few, digital content can be accessed almost worldwide. Last but not least, 3D models can help to protect our material cultural heritage from physical damage and destruction as it contributes to reducing site tourism. In recent years, virtual reality (VR) methods have become increasingly established as a tool for presenting and communicating cultural heritage. In addition to the visualization of the archaeological feature itself, they allow the virtual environment to be enriched with a wide variety of audiovisual content and digital reconstructions that allow users to immerse in and interact with worlds that have long since disappeared.



The 3D models of the finds allow them to be continually reassembled and examined without having to touch the fragile artifacts themselves.

The technologies used in 3D modeling are constantly being developed further at the BCDH in collaboration with researchers at the BCDSS. They are available to all projects within the cluster.



## Prof. Dr. Martin Bentz

is Professor of Classical Archaeology at the University of Bonn and Principal Investigator at the BCDSS. He studies different forms of dependency in the Greek and pre-Roman world of the first millennium BCE, beginning with the material evidence – archaeological finds and ancient images – and contextualizing it with literary sources. At present, he is directing a research project on the Etruscan necropolis of Monte Abatone at Cerveteri (Italy) that looks at social inequalities and dependency structures. The project is funded by the DFG.



## Philippe Kluge

specializes in spatial humanities, with a focus on 3D documentation and visualization. Trained in surveying and geoinformatics, he was research assistant at the Bonn Center for Digital Humanities (BCDH) at the time this article was written. In December 2021 he took on the position of developer at the "Virtual Collaboration Project" of Bonn University.



## Dr. Matthias Lang

is the coordinator of the Bonn Center for Digital Humanities (BCDH). He is responsible for the coordination and development of the BCDH. Founded in summer 2019, the BCDH offers a broad, demand-oriented portfolio of digital humanities services to BCDSS members as well as to all humanities scholars at the University of Bonn. In close cooperation with the University and State Library and the University Computer Center, the BCDH aims to establish and maintain a long-term, stable research infrastructure for the humanities at the university.

# INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL AT KOÇ UNIVERSITY ISTANBUL

By Katja Girr and Ayesha Hussain

Campus of Koç University Istanbul

## REFLECTING ON ETHICS AND METHODS IN MIGRATION STUDIES

The international summer school 'Research Methods and Ethics in Migration Studies' took place 11-22 October 2021 at Koç University, İstanbul. The Migration Research Center at Koc University (MiReKoc) organized this event together with the International Migration Research Network (IMISCOE), Europe's largest interdisciplinary research network in the field of migration. The focus of this year's summer school was on methods and ethics in migration research and included two weeks of lectures, lab sessions and discussion sessions between international scholars and PhD students working on migration issues.

The two weeks were filled with lectures linking migration research with timely topics such as COVID 19, ethical issues, big data, gender aware research methods, urban mapping, ethnography and participatory methods, assessing divers of migration, surveying migrants through social media, visual methods, experimental methods, 'MedThinking' and knowledge production as well as network analysis. In addition, a lecture on the role of curiosity in research, a presentation of MiReKoc and a session on writing and publishing an academic article in migration studies were organized. Beside the lectures, PhD candidates could present their current state of research in the PhD workshops and get feedback from the group. Furthermore, two-day-lab sessions were held each week, the first one on the qualitative analysis program NVivo and the second on the quantitative analysis program R. In addition to the academic activities, the summer school organizers

also arranged a socializing dinner on the first day and a dinner at the end of the second week.



PhD researchers Katja Girr and Ayesha Hussain at Mirekoc Summer School, Koç University

This school was of high interest for both of us as our PhD dissertations are linked to the topic of migration. We presented our work in the PhD workshop and got a productive feedback.

Furthermore, we met experts in the field of migration and were able to build networks with other migration scholars. Our PhD work has been highly affected by the COVID 19 pandemic and the two weeks onsite participation provided a much needed platform for exchange. Especially the time we spent together outside the lectures, during breaks on the campus or in the city allowed us to discuss our personal research and reflect on current debates.



Post-lecture lunch – food for thought

The summer school pointed out clearly that asymmetrical dependencies are also part of the way we work as researchers and it is highly important to reflect on these dependencies. It brought up various questions: Is the research we conduct ethically correct? Which dependencies are linked to our methods? Can a researcher for example pay money to Facebook for targeting specific research participants via search engine advertisement?



Ayesha's research presentation was tweeted by MiReKoc

How do we enable data security, especially if the research includes sensitive data? The summer school raised a lot of questions and pointed out the need to discuss them further.

## WHAT WE TOOK AWAY WITH US

**“** The summer school was an excellent experience particularly regarding learning methods and ethics of doing migration research through enlightening sessions. One most interesting lecture was on “The role of curiosity in research” where the lecturer Prof. Ilhan Inan introduced the concept of inostensible reference (the reference to the unknown), which makes it possible to answer an interesting question. He claims that our aptitude to recognize such a reference enables us to realize our ignorance and makes us more curious. I find curiosity an imperative for researchers. **”** (Ayesha)

**“** It was wonderful to travel to Istanbul by train. I especially liked the lecture on gender aware research methods pointing to Kimberly Crenshaw's TED Talk 'The urgency of intersectionality' and her quote 'If we can't see a problem we can't solve a problem'. **”** (Katja)



**Katja Girr**

is a PhD candidate at the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies. Her dissertation project focuses on researchers' challenges and coping strategies while researching illegalized migration. The aim is to find out how

the intersection of fieldwork experience and working within the neoliberal university influences researchers' well-being. In a wider context, the research addresses research ethics and questions asymmetrical dependencies in academia.



**Ayesha Hussain**

Ayesha Hussain is a PhD candidate in Cultural Anthropology and a Research Associate in research area E "Gender and Intersectionality" and research area D "Labor and Spatiality" at BCDSS. Her research project is entitled „Asymmetrical dependencies among Pakistani migrants in Italy's informal labour sector: The role of Social Capital".

She analyses these dependencies within the micro and meso level structures of migration including families, ethnic networks and diasporas focusing on the mobilisation of social capital of networks particularly within the informal labour sector in Italy.



## AN ARCHAEOLOGIST IN THE ARCHIVE

By Dita Auziņa



Dita Auziņa is a doctoral researcher at the BCDSS. She is interested in the way past societies interacted with the landscape and how this interaction shaped the social structures in communities. Her Ph.D. project focuses on the early colonization period in the Caribbean and Central American and the interaction between indigenous communities, European conquistadors, and African slaves. It aims to understand how the newly established hierarchy between different ethnic groups and genders is represented in the spatial organization of both households and settlements. She is part of the Research Group Dependency, Gender, and Labor in the Household.

### ONE MONTH OF ARCHIVAL RESEARCH IN THE BELIZE ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

In order to make her research more interdisciplinary and access some data while archaeological fieldwork was impossible due to the COVID-19 pandemic, archaeologist Dita Auziņa went for an archival trip to Belize and learned a thing or two about the nature of a historian's work.

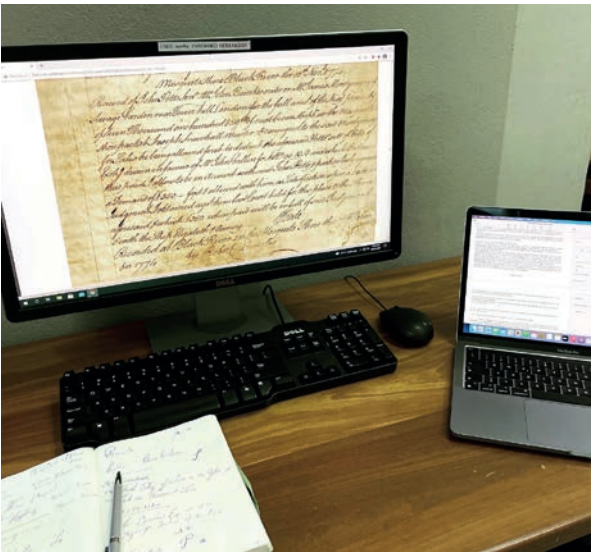
Belize Archives and Records Services is located in Belmopan, the capital city of Belize. Belmopan is the smallest capital in continental Americas with only approximately 16 thousands inhabitants and it has been artificially planned and constructed in the 1970s, scarring Caribbean landscape with brutalist architecture hosting Belize's administration structures.

Caribbean archaeologists (and, probably, archaeologists in general) tend to be quite critical, even harsh towards historians focusing on the Caribbean (and, frankly, historians in general). We tend to accuse historians of Eurocentrism, exclusion of indigenous perspectives and other marginalized groups, and reproduction of centuries-old European ignorance and world views filled with a feeling of superiority. To be fair, historians don't treat archaeologists much better. It would not be unusual to receive a harsh comment from a historian saying "of course there is no way you can answer these questions with the help of archaeology" while presenting my research. Of course, I am generalising here, creating a somewhat simplified dichotomy. An increasing number of researchers of the past embrace each other's disciplines and produce truly interdisciplinary work.

However, "interdisciplinarity" has become a fancy buzzword we tend to use to make our research sound more attractive. To be truly interdisciplinary, one needs to become an expert in all the fields one wants to combine in one's research. I can't imagine that somebody would be able to interpret archaeological data in a meaningful way without having any experience in excavation trenches, staring at sections for hours trying to figure out the subtle differences among archaeological layers. At the same time, someone who has not worked in an archive with primary sources probably could not understand how small fragments from hundreds of documents might build a story of the past, which goes beyond the narrative intended by the initial writers. If I wanted to claim interdisciplinarity of my work, it was time for me to pack up and take a dive into the archive. For my research on the Mosquito Shore (the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua and Honduras), I spent one month in the Belize Archives and Record Service (BARS). This archive holds documents which were produced by the local administration of Mosquito Shore during the period of British Superintendency, from 1749 to 1786, when all British settlers got evacuated to Belize (British Honduras at the time). These documents contain information on daily transactions and agreements between inhabitants of the Mosquito Shore. They are the only known group of documents that have been produced by and for the use of the local inhabitants of the area. So far, no historians interested in the history of Mosquito Shore have worked with these documents. First of all, it's probably because not so many researchers have been focusing on the history of Mosquito Shore. Secondly, it is probably related to the state of the documents. More than 2000 folders of documents were obtained by BARS in the early 1990s and already back then they were in a very bad shape. Mary Alpuche, one of the Archives Officers with BARS has digitised these documents to ensure the existence of copies, because none of them have been restored. But so far, no catalogue of the documents has been made.

This put me in a quite challenging position: I was about to head into a trip halfway across the world in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic to work with historic documents I had high hopes for but only little clarity about. First of all, I was not sure if I would even be able to read them. The examples of the page quality I received from BARS were not promising. Ink faded by water stains, parts of papers disintegrated by time, and the text in untouched parts written in a scribble I could not decrypt. Still back in Bonn before heading to Belize, I spent a full day with the sample page and was not sure I had managed to read it. And this was only one page! At the archives, I'd be confronted by 2000 folders and no way to preselect without reading through them. Not even considering that I had a very little idea on what I might find there, or how I would understand

that something I found would be of any importance. I am sure that for trained historians my concerns might come across as silly, but with no previous experience in an archive, I felt that I was going there blind.



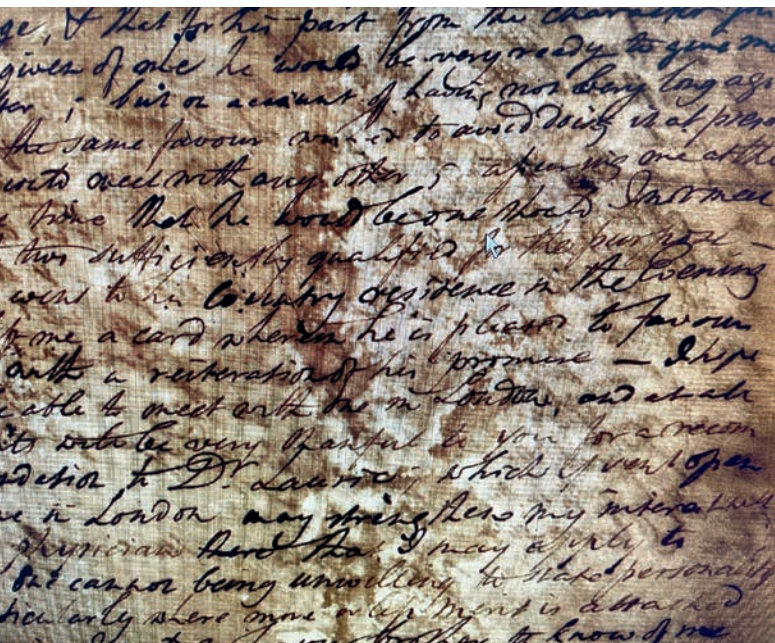
My daily workstation in Belize Archives and Records Service. Due to the fragile state of the documents they are available only in digital format.

As a big surprise to myself, my fears were unfounded and I found the job in the archive not only more doable than I had expected but also enjoyed it a lot. The first day, I just started to read one document after the other, to get a feeling of what there is. Soon I started to notice patterns in how different types of documents were formed. For example, wills start with a person confessing that they are in sound mind, but weak in body. Manumissions start with calling on all the witnesses. Land border disputes begin by referring to maps and surveyors who had made them.

Where similar sentence structures were used, I realised that if I don't understand a word in one document, I can look for it in another. And if I got completely lost, I always had a helpline to "Whatsapp a historian back at the Bonn office".

Slowly, also the content of documents started to make sense and I was able to judge faster which documents might be of use for my research and which I should skip without reading. I started to pay attention to wills and manumission cases, as they contained important information of people who changed their status from enslaved to free people and information on how local society racialised these people. I looked into the land ownership documents as they contained information on the racialisation of people who were able to obtain property. I looked into resources people bought, sold and disagreed about, and especially spatial differences on which kind of resources were needed and could be

found. And with every day I realised that I can read more and more words in the documents and distinguish between different handwritings. Already during the second week of my archive work I was sure that my visit would not be a failure. Not only was I able to read the documents, but I was also finding a lot of important information for my PhD research. Slowly but surely, I was learning to become a historian.



Some of the documents were very easy to read, while others seemed almost unreadable at the first sight. However after several weeks in the archive I realised that I can read more and more of them.

Besides the practical skills needed for the job, I also found out that fieldwork in an archive is very different from fieldwork in an archaeological site in terms of daily life. I can't deny that I enjoyed returning to a hotel room in clean clothes and spending days in a nicely air conditioned room, instead of sweating somewhere on a mountain range while trying to carry 20kg mapping equipment up the hill. But at the same time, archival work is a lonely affair compared with an archaeological campaign. In archaeological fieldwork you are always together with your team members – not only do you work together, but you also cook, do your laundry and share evening drinks. Also, you are actively involved with the local community – quite often local people are involved in the project to help you out, you wander on other people's land and end up having a chat about their lives and your work. Sometimes, you even wish for an unattainable moment of privacy. However, at 17.00h when the archive closes, a historian is left completely alone. It means a lot of lonely dinners and a lot of solo exploration of the country during the weekend. One might say that as an archaeologist, you are forced into adventures every day, while as a historian you need to actively decide to search for adventure.

After one month at the archive, I can conclude that archaeology is still my preferred medium to access the past. But at the same time, I enjoyed working with historical documents way more than I would have expected. Besides the huge amount of invaluable data I collected for my PhD research, I also gained a first-hand understanding of how we as historians can construct the past: as free from biases as possible. And I hope that this experience will help me to develop a truly interdisciplinary project.



Due to strict Covid-19 restrictions, I was allowed to stay only in certain certified hotels and none of them were located in Belmopan, the city where the archive is. Therefore every day I needed to commute from San Ignacio, a city 40 km away. Initially I tried to use public buses, but fully packed they did not feel like a safe option during a pandemic. So I chose to rent an old scooter instead.

# NEW PUBLICATIONS

## MORAL DILEMMAS IN SLAVE-OWNING SOCIETIES: EVIDENCE FROM EARLY LEGAL TEXTS

Joseph C. Miller Memorial Lecture Series:  
Fernanda Pirie



Fernanda Pirie  
eds. Abdelkader Al Ghouz,  
Jeannine Bischoff, Sarah  
Dusend  
Moral Dilemmas in Slave-Own-  
ing Societies: Evidence from  
Early – Legal Texts  
ISBN: 978-3-86893-379-6  
EBVERLAG 2021

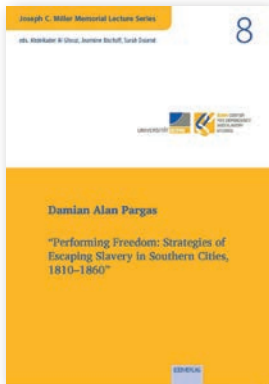
Slavery is not a natural state. It arises when people or classes in a society assume the right to treat others as their property. And yet the status of slaves has rarely been defined by law, even when slavery was an accepted social fact. This publication examines the laws that did deal with slavery, from the earliest written rules in Mesopotamia, India, China, Rome, and the Islamic world, to medieval Europe and Tibet. It is evident that, rather than offering comprehensive definitions, the lawmakers were dealing with the complications that arose from the instability of the state, including issues of manumission, legal capacity, and the status of children. People could become slaves without the need for legal intervention, as a result of warfare or debt, but many slaves acquired freedoms, presenting complications that the lawmakers tried to address. They also, in many cases, hint at moral discomfort, suggesting that the act of lawmaking forced slave-owners to face up to the fact that they were treating other people as property.

Listen to the lecture now.



PERFORMING FREEDOM: STRATEGIES OF ESCAPING SLAVERY IN SOUTHERN CITIES, 1810–1860

Joseph C. Miller Memorial Lecture Series:  
Damian Alan Pargas



Damian Alan Pargas  
eds. Abdelkader Al Ghouz,  
Jeannine Bischoff, Sarah Dusend  
Performing Freedom: Strategies  
of Escaping Slavery in Southern  
Cities, 1810–1860  
ISBN: 978-3-86893-381-9  
EBVERLAG 2021

"Performing Freedom" examines the attempts by enslaved African Americans living in the nineteenth-century US South to escape slavery by fleeing to towns and cities within the slaveholding states and disguising themselves as free blacks. Going to great lengths to "look" and "act" free – often even acquiring forged free papers – thousands of enslaved people "passed for free" in urban areas with large free black communities. Such strategies of escape underscore the importance of visibility to the successful development of slavery as an institution, and reveal how enslaved people attempted to erase visible markers of enslavement to live in freedom.



[Listen to the lecture now.](#)

HISTORICIZING THE YANAONA: METHODOLOGICAL DECISIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Joseph C. Miller Memorial Lecture Series:  
Paola Revilla Orías



Paola Revilla Orías  
eds. Abdelkader Al Ghouz,  
Jeannine Bischoff, Sarah Dusend  
Historicizing the Yanaona:  
Methodological Decisions,  
Implications and Challenges  
ISBN: 978-3-86893-385-7  
EBVERLAG 2021

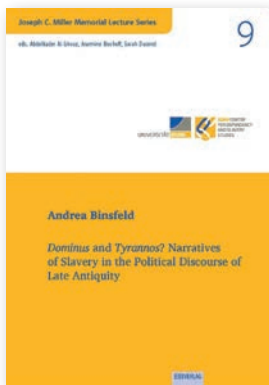
Based on the critical analysis of historiographic assertions focused on the study of Yanaconazgo as a long-standing labor institution, this text proposes various key factors to broaden the historical perspective. It is supported by concrete data from the context of the jurisdiction of La Plata in Charcas (Bolivia) between the sixteen and eighteenth centuries, which provides a glimpse into the complexity of this labor system, as well as the diversity of situations of both free and unfree servitude in which workers of different origins, genders and ages were immersed. The study encourages a breaking away from methodological attachments or other constraints that may lead to uncritical repetition of certain terms of a proscribing nature. At the same time, it gives an approach to the daily functions that gradually molded this labor institution and that remind us that history is engineered by people's actions.



[Listen to the lecture now.](#)

DOMINUS AND TYRANNOS? NARRATIVES OF SLAVERY IN THE POLITICAL DISCOURSE OF LATE ANTIQUITY

Joseph C. Miller Memorial Lecture Series:  
Andrea Binsfeld



Andrea Binsfeld  
eds. Abdelkader Al Ghouz, Jeannine  
Bischoff, Sarah Dusend  
Dominus and Tyrannos? Narratives  
of Slavery in the Political Discourse  
of Late Antiquity  
ISBN: 978-3-86893-384-0  
EBVERLAG 2021

Late Roman authors give us many examples of how firmly images of slavery were anchored in the minds of contemporaries, and how these images were incorporated into literary tradition and political discourse. Images from the world of slavery could be used in a great variety of ways: to criticize an emperor's behavior, to illustrate his loss of authority, or to characterize the relationship between two emperors. The book will show how the presentation and perception of Late Roman emperors, such as Diocletian and his co-emperors, were influenced by narratives from the world of slavery. These narratives form part of a power discourse, a discourse on power relations. Or to speak with Hayden White, "And this raises the suspicion that narrative in general, from the folktale to the novel, from the annals to the fully realized 'history', has to do with the topics of law, legality, legitimacy, or, more generally, authority".



[Listen to the lecture now.](#)

HOW TO CREATE A LABOUR MARKET IN COLONIAL SITUATIONS: SPANISH GUINEA, SOUTHERN CAMEROON AND NORTHERN GABON, 1890S–1940S

Joseph C. Miller Memorial Lecture Series:  
Enrique Martino



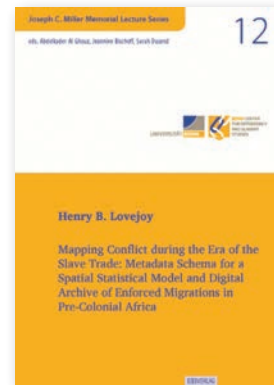
Enrique Martino  
eds. Abdelkader Al Ghouz, Jeannine  
Bischoff, Sarah Dusend  
How to Create a Labour Market  
in Colonial Situations: Spanish  
Guinea, Southern Cameroon and  
Northern Gabon, 1890s–1940s  
ISBN: 978-3-86893-390-1  
EBVERLAG 2021

This study is, at once, a historical critique of neoclassical and Marxist economics of labour market formation, a critical history of the colonization of continental Equatorial Guinea by France, Germany and Spain, and a comparative inquiry of the labour recruiters who forged the gateways to expanding imperial peripheries of colonial production. A recruitment boom for the cacao plantations of the Spanish island of Fernando Po swept into Rio Muni and the Fang areas of southern Cameroon and northern Gabon during the first half of the twentieth century. By documenting the volatile phases as well as the recruitment techniques for this great boom and eventual bust, the author argues that recruiters have usually been empirically conflated or conceptually obviated even though they stood in sharp contrast to the slave trade or state-organized forced labour schemes. They were key informal vectors of commercial conquest across a variety of times and regions, and operated non-violently by way of persuasive and distorted communication and immanently through credit and money creation in the form of gifts and advance payments.



[Listen to the lecture now.](#)

## MAPPING CONFLICT DURING THE ERA OF THE SLAVE TRADE: METADATA SCHEMA FOR A SPATIAL STATISTICAL MODEL AND DIGITAL ARCHIVE OF ENFORCED MIGRATIONS IN PRE-COLONIAL AFRICA



Henry B. Lovejoy  
eds. Abdelkader Al Ghouz,  
Jeannine Bischoff, Sarah Dused  
Mapping Conflict during the Era  
of the Slave Trade: Metadata  
Schema for a Spatial Statistical  
Model and Digital Archive of  
Enforced Migrations in  
Pre-Colonial Africa  
ISBN: 978-3-86893-393-2  
EBVERLAG 2022

Joseph C. Miller Memorial Lecture Series:  
Henry B. Lovejoy

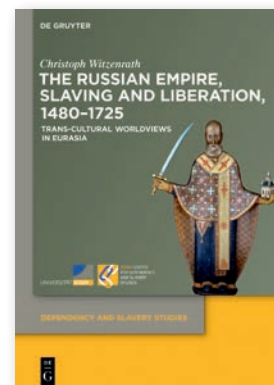
Labelled a crime against humanity by the United Nations in 2011, the slave trade and its legacy of bondage unfortunately continue to shape modern society through racism, discrimination, and unconscious bias. For those who were silenced, and for their descendants, there is little reconciliation. Without knowing their individual stories – where they came from, where they were taken – this part of human history remains a generalized story of mass atrocity, lacking details about the experiences of enslaved human beings. While historians have amassed data for over 12.5 million people involved in the Atlantic slave trade between 1500 and 1867, we have not been able to piece together enforced population movements from specific African places inland to slave ships at the coast. By applying methods from GIScience and spatial statistics, it is possible to learn about global migrations resulting from slavery within pre-colonial Africa. By extracting spatial data from primary and secondary sources, it is possible to design a spatial data repository and digital archive of pre-colonial African places with instances of conflict to operate on a temporal scale with Geographic Information Systems (GIS).



Listen to the lecture now.

## THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE, SLAVING AND LIBERATION, 1480-1725 TRANS-CULTURAL WORLDVIEWS IN EURASIA

Forthcoming new book by Christoph Witzernath



Christoph Witzernath,  
The Russian Empire, Slaving and  
Liberation, 1480-1725  
Trans-cultural Worldviews in  
Eurasia. Berlin, De Gruyter 2022.

The monograph realigns political culture and countermeasures against slave raids, which increased during the breakup of the Golden Horde. By physical defense of the open steppe border and by embracing the New Israel symbolism in which the exodus from slavery in Egypt prefigures the exodus of Russian captives from Tatar captivity, Muscovites found a defensive model to expand empire. Recent scholarly debates on slaving are innovatively applied to Russian and imperial history, challenging entrenched perceptions of Muscovy.

## WAHRHEITSEFFEKTE UND WIDERSTREIT. „TROSTFRAUEN“ UND IHRE DENKMÄLER

New Book by Reinhard Zöllner

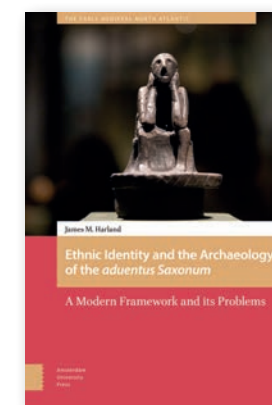


Reinhard Zöllner,  
Wahrheitseffekte  
und Widerstreit.  
„Trostfrauen“ und ihre  
Denkmäler.  
München, iudicium 2021

In the early 1930s, the Japanese military established a system of brothels, called "comfort stations", for the use of its soldiers and recruited tens of thousands of women as military prostitutes, called "comfort women". The majority of these women were recruited from the populace of Japan's colonies, in particular Korea, or occupied territories in China and South East Asia. Public discourse about the legality and morality of this system started in 1936 and intensified during the 1990s when Korean and other victims broke their silence. From the 1970s, the term "sexual slavery" had been applied to the "comfort women" system and was later adopted by feminist movements and international organizations. This provoked a harsh refutation by the Japanese conservatives who deny the use of (state) force towards these women. Moreover, when in 2020 one Korean survivor expressively rejected being called a "sex slave", it became evident that the discourses about the "comfort women" have been riddled with "differends", to borrow Jean-François Lyotard's concept. (According to Lyotard, a differend is a wrong or an injustice that comes about because there is no discourse in which its wrongness might be described.) To uncover and learn to endure these differends, I propose to use what Foucault would have called "truth-effects."

## ETHNIC IDENTITY AND THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE ADUENTUS SAXONUM. A MODERN FRAMEWORK AND ITS PROBLEMS

New book by James Harland



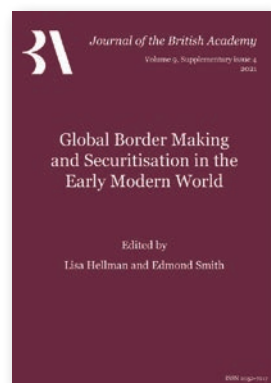
James Harland: Ethnic Identity  
and the Archaeology of the  
aduentus Saxonum. A Modern  
Framework and its Problems.  
Amsterdam, Amsterdam  
University Press 2021.

For centuries, archaeologists have excavated the soils of Britain to uncover finds from the early medieval past. These finds have been used to reconstruct the alleged communities, migration patterns, and expressions of identity of coherent groups who can be regarded as ethnic 'Anglo-Saxons'. Even in the modern day, when social constructionism has been largely accepted by scholars, this paradigm still persists.

This book challenges the ethnic paradigm. As the first historiographical study of approaches to ethnic identity in modern 'Anglo-Saxon' archaeology, it reveals these approaches to be incompatible with current scholarly understandings of ethnicity. Drawing upon post-structuralist approaches to self and community, it highlights the empirical difficulties the archaeology of ethnicity in early medieval Britain faces, and proposes steps toward an alternative understanding of the role played by the communities of lowland Britain – both migrants from across the North Sea and those already present – in transforming the Roman world.

## GLOBAL BORDER MAKING AND SECURITISATION IN THE EARLY MODERN WORLD

Special Issue edited by Lisa Hellman and Edmond Smith



Lisa Hellman and Edmond Smith (eds.): *Global Border Making and Securitisation in the Early Modern World*. *Journal of the British Academy*, London, volume 9, supplementary issue 4, 2021

In the early modern period, borders could be mutable, imprecise, and represent far more than the lines on a map or delineation between sovereign states. In this essay, as well as introducing the eight articles that form the body of the special edition, we set out the key ideas that serve as a common theme and thread across this collected body of work. First, the idea of 'securitisation' is examined, and consideration given to how it has been used by both scholars in International Relations and more recently in historical studies. Second, we consider the concept of 'border making' and explore how re-examining our preconceptions about the idea of borders can change the way we examine important questions related to state and imperial formation, identity, and the meaning of community. Finally, the possibilities for using borders and security as entry points into asking new questions about 'emotional global history' are discussed, and how this could be useful for thinking more carefully about the tensions, frictions and entanglements, as much as connection and exchange, that are at the core of globalising processes that have done so much to shape the world as we know it today.



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We want our conference reports to showcase the wide thematic range covered by our Cluster of Excellence. Researchers from various disciplines approach the topic of strong asymmetrical dependency through a variety of questions and perspectives across different epochs. Throughout the year, the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies organizes conferences with international scholars to enable this multi-disciplinary approach, flanked by series of workshops, seminars, lectures and panel discussions. The core questions and findings of these events will be found in the following pages.

For the duration of the coronavirus pandemic most of our events are being held online. We regret this – but we are happy that this medium allows us to reach many more researchers around the world than we could have done otherwise. The resulting exchanges across continents and time zones are very stimulating and enriching.

# CONFERENCES LECTURE SERIES AND OTHER EVENTS

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Prisoner from the city of Tonina (from Classical Maya Period, 8th century A.D.)

## “EMBODIED DEPENDENCIES” ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2021

By Nikolai Grube

### BCDSS ANNUAL CONFERENCE 22-23 SEPTEMBER 2021

The conference “Embodied Dependencies” was the second annual conference of the BCDSS drawing a “thematic year” to a close. The organization of the thematic year was in the hands of Research Area B, therefore, the conference was designed to summarize

the discussions on the materiality of dependency relations and link them with an outlook on future perspectives. The presentations of the conference approached the material evidence of asymmetrical dependencies by examining embodied dependencies in human societies from archaeological, art-historical and anthropological perspectives, exploring their historical breadth and variety. With a perspective on objects and the material evidence for asymmetrical dependencies, the view should be steered away from the focus on the written word. Inspired by the insights brought forth by the “material turn”, as well as recent debates on environmental history and bio-history, this conference aimed to add a specific pre-colonial perspective. The conference was organized along four thematic panels: Bodies, Representations, Resources, and Spaces.

This conference, like the first annual conference, was held under the auspices of the COVID pandemic. This extraordinary situation forced us to conduct the conference only digitally, a format that we had already employed successfully and that allowed us to invite colleagues from all over the world and to discuss across continents. However, the presence of many participants from Europe, North, Central and South America also meant that we had to take the time difference into account in the planning of the program. On both days, the conference did not start before lunchtime in Europe and then extended into the evening. Of course, we all missed the opportunities for conversations between presentations, the shared coffee breaks, and the many other social activities surrounding such an event. Nevertheless, the conference provided us with an excellent opportunity to discuss key concepts and new approaches related to the materiality of asymmetric dependency relations, and we therefore also plan to make the conference papers available in a book publication in one of the cluster’s series.

After a short welcome to the conference guests by Stephan Conermann, spokesperson of the cluster, and Nikolai Grube, spokesperson of Research Area B, the conference started with the first panel on **Bodies of Dependency**. The opening lecture was given by Royce Mahawattee (University of the Arts, London), who was a BCDSS Fellow during the thematic year. His talk, “‘The Fashion Intelligence’: Punch Magazine and the Raced Body,” examined the relationship between embodiment, fashion writing, and enslavement in early nineteenth-century British media and, in particular, in the satirical articles of Punch Magazine. Royce Mahawattee pointed to the potential of the fashionable body as a metaphorical and temporal boundary between slavery (and abolition) and colonialism.

Julia Hillner (The University of Sheffield) was the second speaker on the Body Panel and, like Royce Mahawattee, was a BCDSS Fellow at the Heinz Heinen Kolleg last year. Her talk, “If you see a disheveled woman, you suspect she is a slaveholder”: body adornment, slavery, and Christianity in Late Antiquity,” took as its point of departure a shift in the conventions of representation of highly elite Roman women in the 3rd and 4th centuries CE. Whereas high status women were usually depicted in a sober and frugal manner, 3rd and 4th century portraits show them with jewelry and enslaved servants in the act of adornment. Comparing the writings of fourth-century Christian authors, Julia Hillner shows how they balanced expectations of Christian renunciation of body adornment with advocacy of asymmetrical dependencies, including between free and enslaved bodies.

With the presentation of Vera Tiesler (Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, Mérida) and Guilhem Olivier (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México) “The ‘hands of god’ as instruments of death and creation: physicality, embodiment, and symbolism of sacrificial knives in Mesoamerica” the discussion turned away from clothing and towards the disposal of the human body in its most total form as killing. Vera Tiesler and Guilhem Olivier focused on the sacrificial knives used in human sacrifice and their symbolism, showing that the flint knife perfectly symbolizes one of the main meanings of human sacrifice: to generate life from death. In Mesoamerica, the human body was a resource that could be used to generate new life.

This lecture thus created the transition to the second panel, whose theme **Resources of Dependency** was primarily intended to discuss the control of resources as a means of establishing and securing asymmetrical dependency relationships. Felicia Fricke from the University of Copenhagen opened this panel with a presentation entitled “Access to Resources in Dutch Caribbean Slavery: Perspectives from Archaeology and Oral History,” based on fascinating research in which Felicitas Fricke combines archaeology, osteology, and oral history, which allows a bottom-up perspective. She pointed out how enslaved people in the Dutch Caribbean found food, built their homes, and acquired possessions. She also made it very clear that the modern descendants are still experiencing structural inequality today. The subsequent presentation by Steve Buckridge (Grand Valley State University) “Looking Good and Feeling Good: Fashioning Enslaved Bodies and the Materiality of Jamaican Lace-Bark, 1700-1900” focused on the production of a specific resource, lace bark, which is a unique form of bark-cloth that resembles fine lace and is obtained from the lagetto tree. Steve Buckridge used the materiality of the lace-bark in order to point out how it can be used to unravel aspects of enslaved African women’s power, strategies and agency and the reciprocity of fashion trends between classes and races.

On Thursday afternoon, the third panel **Representations of Dependency** addressed the representation of extreme forms of asymmetrical dependency in images and artifacts. Marenka Thompson-Odlum (Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford) spoke about the image of a young enslaved man of African descent in a prominent Glasgow family portrait in her presentation “Re-thinking the Representation and Construction of Trans-Atlantic Slavery in Glasgow through the Glassford Portrait & Glasgow Museums.” Marenka Thompson-Odlum used this figure, marginal in the image, to show the ways in which contemporary interpretation, cataloging, and framing contribute to reinforcing those hierarchies and ideologies that perpetuated slavery. This stimulated a debate about the ways in which museums and academic discourse contribute to marginalizing inequality.

Saurabh Dube (El Colegio de México) explores in his presentation "Entangled Bodies: Caste, Representation, Dissonance" the work and word of a widely known expressionist and contemporary Dalit artist from India, Savi Sawarkar. His work reveals entangled bodies and bodily entanglements "that connect and confront caste and gender, the human and the more-than-human, masculinity and androgyny, Brahmin and Dalit, the dominant and the subaltern, the bigoted nation and the uncouth republic". The paper is based on a reading of Savi Sawarkar's artistic work, uncovering various layers of dependency, slavery, and precarity.

Rosemary Joyce (University of California at Berkeley) led us in her paper "Not seeing like a state: Visualizing Human and Non-Human Relations in Ancient Ulua Traditions of Pre-Hispanic Honduras," into a pre-state "egalitarian" society in northwestern Honduras whose distinct visual culture shows little sign of enslavement or even of less extreme forms of dependency. The anthropomorphic and anthropomorphized objects that are the subject of traditional Ulua craft production created discourses about valued forms of embodied subjectivity within an egalitarian and heterarchical society. Rosemary Joyce examined the visual culture associated with Ulua style to understand how visuality, corporeality, and agential intra-action can be understood.

The final panel **Spaces of Dependency** began with a presentation that posed the question of the material traces of slavery that are recognizable to archaeologists. In her presentation "Slavery in Things: Beyond Shackles and Chains", Lydia Marshall (DePauw University) notes that archaeologists rarely encounter direct evidence of slavery, such as shackles and chains, which has led some archaeologists assume that slavery is not detectable in the archaeological record. However, as Lydia Marshall points out, in recent years archaeologists have broadened this very limited focus to understand how slavery influenced and shaped societies in all its facets. It is primarily the conditions of production and consumption of goods in which slavery manifests itself. She argues that archaeologists should take a broader material perspective in an interdisciplinary approach to slavery studies.

Laurel Bestock (Brown University), in her presentation "Spaces of dependence at an ancient fortress on the Nile," identified different spaces of dependency using the example of an early 2nd millennium BCE Egyptian fortress in Lower Nubia. Located in a remote and inhospitable landscape, the settlement was dependent on grain supplies from the state. On another level, the garrison depended on trade with the local population. At the smallest level, the transformation of the garrison's barracks into individual houses seems to indicate a move away from state-planned architecture toward buildings

that better reflected the daily needs of the people who inhabited them. Different forms of dependency can be traced on all of these analytical levels.

The final presentation of the conference was given by Zoë Crossland (Columbia University) and was titled "Plant and Human Bodies and Their Interdependencies: Rice Cultivation and Sovereignty in the Highlands of 19th Century Madagascar." She examined how irrigated rice cultivation was implicated in the constitution of sovereignty in 18th and 19th century Madagascar. During this time, sovereignty was imagined as a divine partnership with rice and ancestors, underpinned in part by the alienation of enslaved people from their ancestral rice fields and by the demands that wet rice cultivation placed on the community and the landscape. Zoë Crossland used the example of Madagascar to trace how human-plant relations were imagined and articulated in discourse and practice, and how they were used to construct sovereignty.

In a late evening, but very lively final discussion, the participants argued for the special role of materiality in relation to the study of asymmetrical dependency. They agreed that a material perspective makes it possible to move away from a very European approach focusing on written narratives. An object-focused look seems necessary in order to uncover traces of extreme dependency that were otherwise unrecognizable. Later during the evening, the discussion went on about the terms "enslavement" and "extreme asymmetrical dependency" as well as the role of the control of the body as an indicator of dependency. The discussion showed the great importance of bodies, resources and objects for the identification of different forms of dependency. The two-day conference was thus an excellent conclusion of the thematic year and at the same time a stimulus for further research of Research Area B. All the contributions are expected to be published in a forthcoming publication.



**Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Nikolai Grube**

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academic journals. His research focuses on the structure of Mesoamerican societies, particularly pre-Columbian Maya societies. He is a Principal Investigator at the Cluster of Excellence "Beyond Slavery and Freedom" and Speaker of the Research Area B ("Embodied Dependencies").



**Prof. Dr. Julia A. B. Hegewald**

is Professor of Oriental Art History at the University of Bonn and Principal Investigator at the BCDSS. She works on artistic and architectural expressions of different forms

of dependency in Asia, particularly South Asia, art and architecture. Her research topic is called "Artistic Communities and Patronage in Asia: Dependencies and Freedoms".



A follower of the Hindu god Śiva in Karnataka, who refer to themselves as 'slaves of god,' has offered his severed head to the divinity. Relief panel from the Someśvara Temple at Abalur

## EMBODIED DEPENDENCIES AND FREEDOMS: ARTISTIC COMMUNITIES AND PATRONAGE IN ASIA

By Julia A. B. Hegewald

### INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 14-15 OCTOBER 2021

This e-symposium brought together specialists working on expressions and reflections of extreme forms of dependency in Asian art. The speakers, at varying levels of academic seniority, came from Great Britain, France, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, India and the US, and from universities, research institutions and museums. With more than one hundred international registrations, the event attracted considerable attention.

The speakers examined different manifestations of extreme forms of dependence, which are either represented in Asian art – e.g. in sculpture, paintings, prints – or have left a mark on Asian architectural or archaeological contexts, the porcelain trade or in literary writings. The presentations focussed on material from India, Nepal, Tibet, the Silk Route, China and Japan. Positioned on the verge of two thematic years, the end of Research Area B 'Embodied Dependencies' and the start of Research Area C's focus on institutions, norms and practices, the symposium included papers interconnecting art with norms and practices.

The event was structured along thematic lines with five panels, containing three presentations each, concentrating on different kinds of dependences. After the welcoming remarks by Professor Dr Julia A. B. Hegewald, the initial panel engaged with the reliance on rulers, patrons and markets. The first joint talk by Professor Deepak Kannal and Kanika Gupta showed that sculptural art at Buddhist sites in central India during the first centuries BCE demonstrates an acute dependency on patrons and a lack of attention paid to the carvers' skills. Nonetheless, the sculptors took enormous freedoms to convey deeper and more wide-ranging meanings than just a mere narration of the prescribed stories. Moving to the south and the colonial period, the presentation by Dr Jennifer Howes highlighted that after the victory over Tipu Sultan in 1799, the British portrayed his female courtly performance artists as dependent victims in order to justify the siege of Srirangapatnam. Here, an alleged asymmetrical dependence was constructed for political means. However, the women refused to accept their new masters and, even under life-long house arrest, they subversively continued their art of storytelling, acting as mouthpieces of Mysorian society. Professor Pratyush Shankar and Snigdha Srivastava continued the topic of colonial dependencies by investigating the liberties which the dependent Princely State of Baroda in northern India took between 1880 and 1910 in the areas of city planning, public building and parks by employing foreign but not colonial professionals to defy British rule.

The second panel on religious and sectarian reliances started with a discussion by Professor Dr Tiziana Lorenzetti of a very literal dependency, namely, followers of the Hindu god Śiva in Karnataka who refer to themselves as 'slaves of god' and commit self-sacrifice by self-decapitation. Preserved are the knives as well as numerous depictions of this religious practice. Subsequently, Jahfar Shareef Pokkanali, focussing on Kerala, introduced the audience to a ritual form of dance worship. In the performances, lower caste heroes contest normative social forms by challenging caste restrictions in a performative context. The third speaker, Professor Dr Gudrun Bühnemann contested the alleged peaceful coexistence of religions in Nepal by examining Buddhist sculptural material. Statues towering in often military stances over subdued and dependent Hindu divinities clearly express religious rivalries.

The afternoon section concentrated on social and gender dependencies. The first speaker, Dr Tiziana Leucci, again talked about very direct references to slavery in the context of South Indian temple dancers. These were called 'slaves' or 'servants' of the gods. Whilst young girls were given to temples, Dr Leucci concluded that this cannot be equated with actual female slavery, as later missionaries claimed. A fascinating new dimension was introduced by Professor Dr Peter Sturman, who explored

the ghost-writings of Xu Wei in China. This showed very poignantly how the writer managed to liberate himself and to reclaim texts he had written for others by later collecting and republishing them under his own name. Very compelling was also the investigation by Dr Elisabeth Scherer of depictions of female Japanese ghosts, formerly mistreated and dependent women, who after their often violent deaths took revenge on their suppressors and on society.

The second day started with a panel on dependence on oral or written traditions, norms and conventions, the topic of the thematic year of Research Area C. Professor Dr Adam Hardy demonstrated that although medieval Indian religio-philosophical texts determine the proportions of architecture, there remains ample freedom for variations. In fact, the texts can at times be freer than actual practice. In the following, Dr Amy Heller broached the issue of an absence of texts on artistic repair works and the reliance on Western written conventions for restoration projects in Tibet. Instead of depending on foreign regulations, local people choose to repaint and rebuild the edifices as sacred spaces and not museums. In the final presentation in this section, Sandra Schlage illustrated dependencies on unwritten oral sources and the innovations made in depictions of dancers during the Chola, the Vijayanagara and the modern periods.

The theme of the final panel was dependency on climate and resources. Birgit Angelika Schmidt shed light on the exceptionally dry, hot and cold region of the northern Silk Route and its extreme resource scarcity. Despite these constraints, artistically impressive and diverse paintings, sculptures and caves were created with limited resources. Contrasting with this, the paper by Professor Dr Julia A. B. Hegewald on coastal Karnataka, explored reliance on a climate of heavy monsoon rains. This resulted in wood, mud and clay as main local building materials and the necessity to protect buildings against strong rains. While certain choices were possible in terms of material, the dependency on the wet climate could not be circumvented. This was followed by the final talk by Dr Daniel Suebsman investigating the reliance on silver of the Ming porcelain trade in China. This example is especially fascinating, as it illustrates a dependence on a material largely imported from Peruvian and Mexican silver mines.

The conference was wrapped up with a closing discussion focusing on common themes, general issues and the wide diversity of dependences imposed on artists and architects throughout Asia as well as the autonomies which artists found during all times to express their creative energy. Instead of stopping or seriously limiting, it appears that dependencies often stimulated a particularly creative response in the artists, leading to powerful visual expressions of artistic freedom.



Archangel Michael and Satan Weighing Souls, Illustration of the Last Judgement, central portal of west facade, Notre-Dame de Paris

## „IN THE GRIP OF THE SUPERNATURAL: DEPENDENCIES ABOVE, WITHIN, AND BEFORE US“

By Henriette von Harnier & David B. Smith

### INTERNATIONAL BCDSS CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 28-30, 2021

The "In the Grip of the Supernatural" conference brought scholars together from across borders to explore the relationship between the supernatural realm and dependency structures from the perspectives of biblical exegesis, political theory, eschatology, feminist & disability studies, and confessional analysis. The conference was organized by Wolfram Kinzig, Julia Winnebeck, and Maria Munkholt of the BCDSS and the Faculty of Protestant Theology at the University of Bonn. Attendees of the hybrid gathering heard from twelve notable scholars in sub-disciplines ranging from biblical scholarship to church history. Eleven papers were presented in English, and a twelfth in French. Reflections on the practice of penance, studies of monastic life and explorations of the relationship between ethics, pastoral care and demonology painted a complex picture of the multifaceted spiritual lives of Christians living in the periods under scrutiny.

Peter van Nuffelen, Professor for the Cultural History of the Ancient World at the University of Ghent, kicked off the first panel discussion, “*Dependencies Above Us: Masters and Servants in Heaven*” with a reflection on the impact of theological hierarchies upon late antique political theory. Prof. van Nuffelen asserted that the presumed hierarchy of heaven affected the way political thought developed. In what is commonly called the “Lord’s Prayer” or the “Our Father” in the Christian liturgical tradition, Jesus of Nazareth instructed his followers to pray that God’s will would be done “on earth as it is in heaven.” Trinitarian theology postulates that God, who is one con-substantial being in three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), created and rules the cosmos as an almighty father. Within this worldview, the emperor’s reign on earth becomes a reflection of heaven’s hierarchical social structure; civic dependencies are thus granted a divine imprimatur.

**Dependencies  
Above Us: Masters  
and Servants in  
Heaven**

Markus Saur, Professor of Exegesis and Theology of the Old Testament at the University of Bonn’s Faculty of Protestant Theology, presented the second paper of the opening session. His work explored dependencies between God and the king in various traditions of the Hebrew Bible. Drawing upon the so-called ‘Royal’ and ‘Kingship of YHWH’ Psalms, along with selections from *Codex Hammurabi*, Prof. Saur contextualized the rise and fall of Israel’s kings within broader historical trends in the Ancient Near East. He asserted that the king is the divine agent of responsibility and the guardian of law and justice. The king is dependent upon God, and the people are dependent upon the king, whose glory and authority are based upon that of YHWH. After the fall of Judah, the heirs to the Covenant tradition asserted that YHWH had the power to raise up a future king, a Messiah who will restore justice. Kingship imagery thus became more dependent upon God as the social reality of Judah’s earthly kingdom evolved into an eschatological hope for the coming reign of YHWH’s Messiah.

Marie-Odile Boulnois, Professor of Patristics and the History of Dogma at École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris, posed a theological question, which cut against the grain of the historical analysis provided by other papers. She asked, must it be admitted that the supreme God can be assimilated to the Creator or must several hierarchical entities be admitted in order to preserve the absolute transcendence of the first principle? To answer this query, she reflected on the Arian Controversy of the early fourth century C.E. and sought to understand how Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria conceived of the demiurgic act by emphasizing the direct action of the Father and by refuting any idea of recourse to a subordinate cause. She concluded that the gap between Creator and creature did not necessitate the advent of a

hierarchical system; instead, the act of Creation is a free gift of God’s Goodness.

Wolfram Kinzig, Professor of Church History at the University of Bonn, asserted that early Christian commentators like John Chrysostom understood the universe (and the church by extension) as a carefully organized hierarchy of ranks. It was difficult, if not impossible, for philosophers of the late-antique period to envisage the transformation of an all-powerful and immutable deity into a human being who was feeble and subject to the contingent nature of the created order. The image of a deity emptying itself and becoming a slave was beyond the pale. Yet, the author of the *Epistle to the Philippians* claimed that Jesus the Christ did precisely that by becoming “like a slave” and turning the traditional system of ontological dependencies upside down. Despite its social potency, ancient commentators emphasized the paraenetic character of the pericope. Bound by the philosophical constructions of their time, the church fathers could not wrap their minds around the dual categories of divine movement (humbling/exaltation) in the text. Consequently, their explications robbed the text of its social power and poetic boldness.

Explorations of the complex relationship between supernatural agency and ‘enslavement’ according to Christian anthropology occupied most of the group’s time on the second day of the conference.

Ulrich Volp, Professor of the Early Church and History of Dogma at the University of Mainz, reflected upon John Chrysostom’s Letter to Stageirios. While classical medical practitioners had developed natural explanations for seizures, Christian commentators tended to value demonological elucidations of the condition. Chrysostom’s response to an epileptic and suicidal monk’s fear of being taken over by a nefarious spirit bridged the gap between demonological (thus dependent) and medical explanations for human suffering. Chrysostom pushed beyond the false dichotomy between natural and supernatural causes with the tact of a well-practiced pastoral caregiver. He provided a form of fraternal therapy that admonished the sufferer to fortify himself by developing his moral character (Prohairesis). Chrysostom’s goal was to aid Stageiros in his ethical development so that he might be better equipped to handle suffering, whether it is natural or supernatural in origin.

Rahel Schär, Research Associate at the University of Bern, presented findings from her recently completed Ph.D. project on the Jura Monks. For the conference, she highlighted the monk’s network and connection to the supernatural world. Schär presented evidence of dependency on the supernatural among her interlocutors and argued that they believed the devil was the origin of all vices which could be healed by God through faith. The



The digital and non-digital participants of the “In the Grip of the Supernatural” Conference

monks of Condat Abbey believed they were constantly embroiled in a battle against the devil, who was actively scheming to lead them and their community astray. If they were to withstand his corrupting influence, they had to traverse the faithful path of fundamentally ascetic way of life.

Albrecht Diem, Associate Professor of History at the Maxwell School of Citizenship & Public Affairs of Syracuse University, asked to what degree monks and nuns of the early medieval period ‘in the grip of the supernatural?’ To what extent did the presumed presence of the devil rule monastic life and its organization? Christians in this period were convinced that people were perpetually at risk of being grasped by the devil. Monasteries were constructed as safe spaces that kept out both, the practical evils of the world and the supernatural evils associated with demonic powers. Every building, act, word, or gesture made by a nun or monk needed to strengthen the proverbial fence and help keep the devil and the evils he spawned outside the community.

The last lecture of Panel II was given by Maria Munkholt, Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Faculty of Protestant Theology in Bonn, who dealt with theories of self-governance according to the Egyptian Ascetic Tradition of Late Antiquity. She explored how authors in the period articulated their demonologies. Dr. Munkholt concluded that an increasingly metaphorical and psychological understanding of demons emerged during the period. Late Antique Ascetics located sinful thoughts within the human mind; events that were perceived as

demonic attacks were frequently identified as inward internal spiritual battles. The emergence of psychological demonologies contributed to a broader movement away from external (dependent) moral causalities toward an emphasis on personal moral growth.

The third panel discussion, “*Dependencies Before Us: Christian Life on the Eve of Doomsday*,” focused on Christian conceptions of eschatology and apocalypticism.

Markus Bockmuehl, Dean Ireland’s Professor of the Exegesis of Holy Scripture at Keble College, University of Oxford, expounded upon the links between heavenly hope and earthly aspiration in second-century Christianity. Early Christian sources can be described as a “big tent of millenarian voices.” The themes of apocalyptic drama and millennial bliss were crucial factors in the second century, even if the socio-political elements of Christian proclamation were feared for their potentially subversive implications. Some commentators emphasized the ritual dimension of messianic hope and apocalypticism, while others offered polemics against the spiritualization of eschatology. For most, the eschaton was fast-approaching and would lead to an upheaval of the world’s dependencies (both spiritual and social).

Meghan Henning, Associate Professor of Christian Origins at the University of Dayton, reflected on visions of hell in early Christian apocalypses and highlighted the fact that female, disabled, and enslaved bodies were

often depicted as sinful. Women frequently appeared in connection with, for example, adultery, for which only they were expected to be punished in hell. In contrast, theological ruminations on the impending punishment of able-bodied 'free' men for similar offenses are rarely attested. Thus, it can be argued that historic conceptions of sin have been passed down through the centuries through a gendered, able-bodied and hierarchical prism. The sins of women, differently-abled and enslaved persons are viewed through one lens, while the sins of able-bodied 'free' men are perceived through another. The particular guilt assigned to various social groups shaped ideas about how God would act toward them in the afterlife.

**To prevent perpetual pains in the future: Penance as a ticket to heaven or medium of Christian social control?**

Julia Winnebeck, Research Group Leader at the BCDSS, opened the third day with a lecture titled, "*To prevent perpetual pains in the future: Penance as a ticket to heaven or medium of Christian social control?*". She focused on the practice of penance, its purpose and its connection

to the Christian belief in the afterlife. Based on penitential books, she illustrated the following motivations to take on the dependencies that might result from undergoing penance: the fear of hell, the promise of heaven and concerns about being excluded from the community. She concluded that two dimensions are involved in the practice of penance: the spiritual dimension of the salvation of the soul and social dimension of conflict resolution.

Veronika Wieser, Research Associate at the Institute for Medieval Research of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, concluded the formal presentation of papers at the conference. She explored architectural features of Paulinus of Nola's reconstructed Basilica of Cimitile to visualize the relationship between daily life and apocalyptic discourse in late-antique asceticism. Paulinus bore witness to freedom from spiritual dependency by reconstructing his encounter with divine grace through the medium of architecture. Through artistic renderings, his spiritual flock could enter a house of worship and briefly exit the world in a space where spirituality and concreteness came together.

The "*In the Grip of the Supernatural*" conference provided an excellent opportunity for scholars from diverse contexts to ask bold questions from novel perspectives about the relationship between religion and dependency. In Late Antique and early Medieval Christianity, there was no strict demarcation between the natural world and that of the supernatural. The comparatively 'modern' conceptual binary between the two realms would likely have been unintelligible to Christians of earlier periods. During the formative centuries of the Christian tradition, the lines between physical realities

and metaphysical possibilities were blurred. In the universe of the Christian imagination, spiritual beings like God, angels, and demons were active within the confines of history. The structures that resulted from this cosmic blurring-of-the-lines linked and organized the physical and the metaphysical – the heavenly and earthly. Emerging from this framework were strands of dependency that brought order to religio-cultural life amidst the social upheaval caused by the evolution of the Christian tradition and the eventual collapse of the Western Roman empire. May this conference mark the beginning of an ongoing trans-disciplinary and international conversation!



#### Henriette von Harnier

is a Ph.D. candidate in Church History at the BCDSS and a Research Associate in Research Group "Structures of Dependency in the Late Antique and Early Medieval Western Church". Her research project focuses on the role of women in the late antique and early medieval Church's system of penance and ecclesiastical judiciary, drawing on Irish, Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Penitentials. She analyzes how women fitted into the penitential system and how their dependency has changed in the different groups of penitential books over the centuries.



#### David B. Smith

is a Ph.D. candidate in Protestant Theology (Church History) at the BCDSS and Research Associate in Research Group "Structures of Dependency in the Late Antique and Early Medieval Western Church". His research project explores the entanglements of masculinities, homoeroticism and dependencies in early medieval penitential literature and ecclesial law.



Konrad, Rolandslied, late 12th century, fol.19r: 'Charlemagne appoints Genelun as messenger'

## "NARRATIVES OF DEPENDENCY"

By Marion Gymnich

#### BCDSS WORKSHOP 15 AND 16 JULY 2021

The workshop on "Narratives of Dependency", organised by Elke Brügggen and Marion Gymnich, brought together scholars from a range of different disciplines, including Egyptology, Protestant Theology, German Medieval Studies, Islamic History, Ancient History, Social Anthropology, and North American Studies. Originally, this two-day workshop had been planned for July 2020, as part of the activities in the context of the thematic year of Research Area A ("Semantics – Lexical Fields – Narratives"). Due to the Covid pandemic, the workshop on Narratives of Dependency was postponed and had to be held online even in 2021. Even though we had hoped for a workshop in Bonn, the digital format certainly did not prevent the participants from engaging in lively discussions. The workshop on Narratives of Dependency complements the workshop on Semantics and Lexical Fields, which took place in March 2020.

Starting from the premise that strong asymmetrical dependencies have shaped human societies throughout history, it seems almost like a foregone conclusion that slavery, serfdom and other types of strong asymmetrical dependency have left traces in all sorts

of factual and fictional narratives. The two-day workshop was a vital contribution to the task of identifying the archive of textual sources that are relevant to the study of asymmetrical dependencies across societies from Antiquity to the present. The oldest narratives of dependency addressed in the context of the workshop were the 'tomb biographies' of two Ancient Egyptian nomarchs discussed by Honey Hammer. Several papers addressed texts from the Islamic world: Anna Kollatz, for example, showed that biographical manuals are sources that lend themselves to exploring definitions and negotiations of asymmetrical dependencies in the specific context of the Mamluk sultanate. Veruschka Wagner traced slave voices in Istanbul court records from the 16th and 17th centuries and examined the narrative patterns which emerge in this highly normative text type. The paper by Gül Sen on "An Ottoman Captivity Narrative in St. Petersburg (1771-75)" focused on a genre that is bound to raise intriguing questions with regard to negotiations of asymmetrical dependency in a very specific cultural contact zone. While most of the papers presented in the Workshop focused on the time from antiquity up to the 19th century, Miriam Quiering discussed a modern narrative of dependency: Islamist activist Zainab al-Ghazali's prison memoirs, which were published in 1977.

The different case studies presented during the workshop have also served to highlight many of the challenges that analyses of textual sources on slavery and other forms of strong asymmetrical dependencies are bound to encounter. For many periods and historical contexts, there are few, if any, sources that provide insight into society from the perspective of people in dependent positions. More often than not, reconstructing the voices of enslaved and dependent people thus proves to be an extremely difficult or even impossible task, as Michael Zeuske argued in his paper "Self-Representations/Narrations of Enslaved People under Slavery Regimes – Myth or Reality?", drawing upon a wide range of textual and visual sources as well as cultural practices. Given the scarcity of traces of voices of the enslaved, it should come as no particular surprise that several texts representing strong asymmetrical dependencies discussed in the course of the workshop were written by outsiders who describe slavery through their own cultural lens. A case in point was Zeynep Yeşim Gökçe's examination of representations of slavery in the Ottoman Empire that can be found in 19th-century travel writing by British women travelers. Narratives of dependency also differ enormously with respect to their social functions. Many texts take strong asymmetrical dependencies for granted, which means that reading in between the lines or against the grain is a prerequisite for attempts to reconstruct the situation of dependent people. The texts compiled in the abolitionist gift book *The Liberty Bell*, which was

discussed by Pia Wiegink, by contrast, are informed by a political agenda; i.e. they sought to create awareness and raise funds for the abolition of slavery in the United States.

The interdisciplinary format of the workshop also served to highlight different disciplinary traditions and approaches to narratives of dependency. For instance, Hermut Löhr's reading of the Second Temple Liberation Narratives from the perspective of historical narratology and Markus Saur's paper on "Narrating Dependency: *The Tradition of Solomon of Jerusalem and the Relationship between Israel and Phoenicia in the 1st Millennium BCE*" demonstrated how much can be gained by applying narratological concepts to biblical and theological contexts. The presentation by Sinah Kloß did not only address the manifold implications of godnas, i.e. tattoos that mark gendered suffering of Hindu women in Suriname and Guyana; simultaneously, her paper exemplified how (oral) narratives of dependency can be approached in the methodological framework of social anthropology. While most papers focused on factual narratives, Clara Hedtrich discussed fictional representations of asymmetrical dependencies and betrayal in the Middle High German *Roland-slied*, and Andrea Binsfeld examined representations of slavery in various novels from Antiquity. Moreover, Elena Smolarz's comparison of different versions of Yakov Zinov'ev captivity account (1838) served as a case study for highlighting the impact narrative strategies and conventions may have on how asymmetrical dependencies are depicted and remembered.

An edited volume containing contributions based on the presentations that were held during the workshop on Narratives of Dependency as well as a few additional articles will be published next year. The volume will hopefully stimulate further discussions about the forms and functions of the many narratives of dependency which have emerged in the history of asymmetrical dependencies across the globe.



**Prof. Dr. Marion Gymnich** is Professor of English Literature and Culture at the University of Bonn as well as BCDSS Co-Speaker and Principal Investigator. In her research project on representations of domestic service, Marion Gymnich explores changes and continuities in a wide range of literary and non-fictional depictions and negotiations of asymmetrical dependencies that shaped the lives of domestic servants in Britain from the Restoration period to the end of the nineteenth century.

# EVENTS & PREVIEW

## CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

March 31 - April 2, 2022

**NORMS OF DEPENDENCY  
IN LATE ANTIQUE  
AND EARLY MEDIEVAL  
SOCIETIES**

**International Workshop**  
Organized by  
Konrad Vössing, Martin  
Schermaier, Julia Winnebeck

June 7- 8, 2022

**MAKING THE VAGRANT,  
CONTROLLING LABOR  
MOBILITY**

**International Workshop**  
Organized by  
Christian De Vito

June 10-11, 2022

**WOMEN AND JUSTICE:  
FEMALE AGENCY IN  
LATE ANTIQUE LEGAL  
CULTURES**

**International Workshop**  
Organized by  
Julia Hillner

June 14-15, 2022

**COERCION AND  
HISTORICAL CHANGE  
IN THE SITE. A SOURCE-  
BASED APPROACH**

**International Workshop**  
Organized by  
Christian De Vito,  
in cooperation with WORCK

June 16-18, 2022

**DEPENDENCY AND  
SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN  
PRE-ROMAN ITALY**

**International Conference**  
Organized by  
Martin Bentz &  
Patrick Zeidler

June 27-28, 2022

**THE SOCIAL HISTORY  
OF CAPITALISM**

**International Workshop  
by the International Social  
History Association (ISHA)**  
Organized by  
Christian De Vito

LECTURE SERIES

The Joseph C. Miller Memorial Lecture Series

| January 2022           |                                                                     |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| January 10, 16:00 CET  | <b>Karen Woods Weierman</b> , Worcester State University, USA       |
| January 24, 16:00 CET  | <b>Andrew Wells</b> , TU Dresden, Germany                           |
| January 31, 16:00 CET  | <b>Caroline Wallis</b> , University of Helsinki, Finland            |
| February 2022          |                                                                     |
| February 14, 16:00 CET | <b>Tommaso Beggio</b> , Università degli Studi di Trento, Italy     |
| March 2022             |                                                                     |
| March 7, 16:00 CET     | <b>Johannes Rainer</b> , Universität Salzburg, Austria              |
| March 21, 16:00 CET    | <b>Johannes Auenmüller</b> , University of Göttingen, Germany       |
| March 28, 16:00 CET    | <b>Peter Gemeinhardt</b> , University of Göttingen, Germany         |
| April 2022             |                                                                     |
| April 4, 16:00 CET     | <b>Christine Walker</b> , Yale-NUS College, Singapore               |
| April 11, 16:00 CET    | <b>Nabil Matar</b> , University of Minnesota, USA                   |
| April 25, 16:00 CET    | <b>Juan Lewis</b> , The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK          |
| May 2022               |                                                                     |
| May 2, 16:00 CET       | <b>Rafael de Bivar Marquese</b> , Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil |
| May 9, 16:00 CET       | <b>Adriana Chira</b> , Emory University, USA                        |
| May 16, 16:00 CET      | <b>Hendrik Hartog</b> , Princeton University, USA                   |
| May 23, 16:00 CET      | <b>Miles Ogborn</b> , Queen Mary University of London, UK           |
| May 30, 16:00 CET      | <b>Chouki El Hamel</b> , Arizona State University, USA              |
| June 2022              |                                                                     |
| June 13, 16:00 CET     | <b>Finnbar Barry Flood</b> , New York University, USA               |
| June 20, 16:00 CET     | <b>Maren Niehoff</b> , Hebrew University Jerusalem, Israel          |
| June 27, 16:00 CET     | <b>Chris Eyre</b> , University of Liverpool, United Kingdom         |

CURRENT EVENTS AND PUBLIC LECTURES AT THE BCDSS



PUBLIC LECTURES RECORDINGS ON BCDSS YOUTUBE CHANNEL



The magazine **DEPENDENT** is published twice annually by the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS) and contains information, descriptive articles and reports about its research projects and findings, as well as its publications and events. A feature article provides insights on research into areas related to strong asymmetrical dependency. The magazine is sent out by e-mail in PDF format or in print. Information on how to subscribe and future issues can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/dependent-magazine>

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**DESIGN AND TYPESETTING**  
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**OTHER SUBJECTS AND PERSPECTIVES FROM THE BCDSS**  
Over the coming years, the BCDSS will continue to publish information about its current research projects on its website, and to provide background information on subjects related to the overall topic of dependency. BCDSS scholars will also comment on social developments from their own perspectives. In the "Interviews" section, they talk about the conditions of their work, new methods and the changing nature of research communication.

**THE BONN CENTER FOR DEPENDENCY AND SLAVERY STUDIES (BCDSS)**  
The Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS) hosts the Cluster of Excellence "Beyond Slavery and Freedom", which aims to overcome the binary opposition of "slavery versus freedom". For that we approach the phenomenon of slavery and other types of strong asymmetrical dependencies (e.g. debt bondage, convict labor, tributary labor, servitude, serfdom, and domestic work as well as forms of wage labor and various types of patronage) from methodologically and theoretically distinct perspectives.

The research cluster is part of the framework of the Excellence Strategy of the Federal Government and the *Länder* and is free and independent in the selection and realization of its research projects.

Our Cluster of Excellence is a joint project of scholars from the fields of Anthropology, Archaeology, History, Law, Literary Studies, Area Studies (including The History of the Islamicate World, Japanese and Chinese Studies, Tibetan Studies), Sociology and Theology. We propose "strong asymmetrical dependency" as a new key concept that includes all forms of bondage across time and space.



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