

THE MAGAZINE OF THE BONN CENTER FOR DEPENDENCY AND SLAVERY STUDIES

DEPENDENT

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WHY INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS ARE KEY TO THE BCDSS

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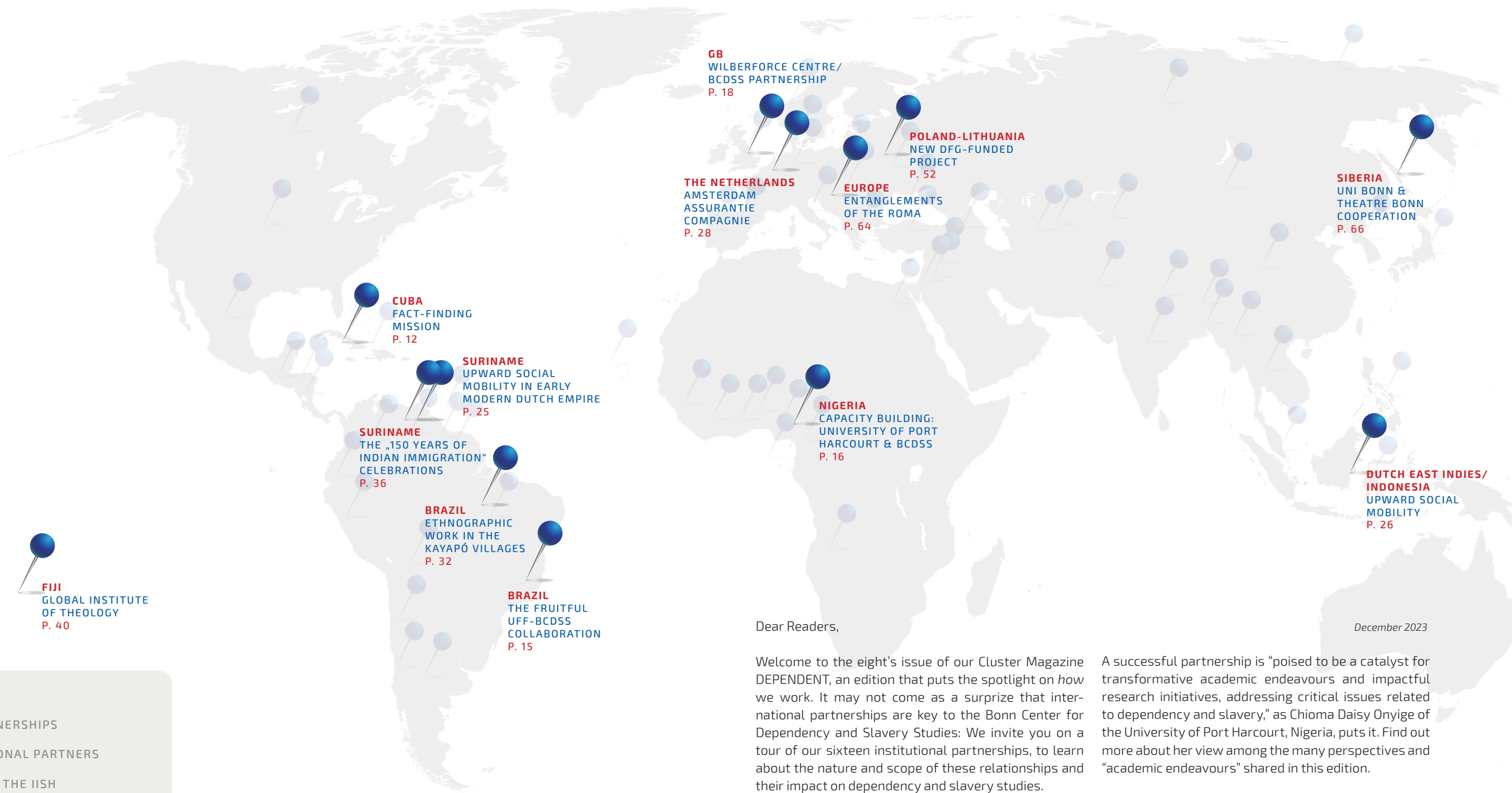


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Dear Readers,

Welcome to the eight's issue of our Cluster Magazine DEPENDENT, an edition that puts the spotlight on *how* we work. It may not come as a surprise that international partnerships are key to the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies: We invite you on a tour of our sixteen institutional partnerships, to learn about the nature and scope of these relationships and their impact on dependency and slavery studies.

In his introduction, BCDSS speaker Stephan Conermann makes a strong case for strategic partnerships as a means to prepare the ground for his vision of "a multi-lateral network that enables the circular mobility of people, ideas and research results". What does it take to establish sustainable, strategic partnerships?

We strive to offer diverse answers and perspectives in this magazine: from our partners' points of view, who share their critical reflections, and from the perspective of the BCDSS, for instance, when Principal Investigator Michael Zeuske takes us on his latest "fact-finding mission" to Cuba.

A successful partnership is "poised to be a catalyst for transformative academic endeavours and impactful research initiatives, addressing critical issues related to dependency and slavery," as Chioma Daisy Onyige of the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria, puts it. Find out more about her view among the many perspectives and "academic endeavours" shared in this edition.

As usual, we shed light on recent research trips by BCDSS scholars, this time taking us to South America and Oceania. Our four reports from recent conferences and workshops, which include a report on a course offered in cooperation with *Theater Bonn*, clearly reflect and illustrate the Cluster's transdisciplinary and global approach to slavery and dependency.

Enjoy the read!

Cécile Jeblawei

December 2023



WHY INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS ARE KEY TO THE BCDSS

by Stephan Conermann

Stephan Conermann opening the Bonn/Leiden/Hull PhD Seminar, Bonn October 29-31, 2023 ©BCDSS

Germany has undergone significant changes since the time of our application for the Cluster of Excellence in 2017. The debates surrounding the Humboldt Forum, the Black Lives Matter movement, the return of the Benin bronzes to Nigeria, the renaming of streets, and the reconciliation agreement with Namibia have led to a re-evaluation of Germany's colonial history. The involvement of German regions, individuals, institutions and companies in the colonial trade, and thus also in slavery, is becoming increasingly clear. At the same time, postcolonial demands for an equal exchange with people from the formerly colonized territories are growing. People want to listen to each other to gain insight on diverse opinions and perspectives. The emergence of a multilateral world order in the wake of globalization, which began in the 1990s after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, has led to a significant shift in the balance of power. However, we have noticed that the process of political, economic, and epistemic decolonization, which gained momentum after the Second World War, is still far from complete. Therefore, it is crucial for the BCDSS to collaborate with strategic partners from across the world during the second funding phase. A strategic partnership is a formal agreement between institutions (not individuals), typically in the form of a letter of intent or

a memorandum of understanding. It paves the way for joint activities such as exchange of students, faculty and administrative staff, as well as joint teaching concepts and programs, conferences or workshops.

Against this backdrop, we have been reaching out to academic institutions worldwide over the last years. In order to initiate and consolidate a strategic partnership, a number of fundamental requirements must be met. The first step is to determine which institution might



Participants of the Bonn/Leiden/Hull PhD Seminar in Bonn ©BCDSS

be a good fit for the cluster topic. This is followed by cautious contact in the form of preliminary talks. In many cases, contacts result from existing relationships with individual, particularly committed colleagues. To be on the safe side and ensure that the partner is seriously interested in a sustainable collaboration and willing to commit in the long term, a fact-finding mission is usually necessary. Michael Zeuske has carried out many of such fact-finding missions for the BCDSS. One of his recent trips was to Cuba. Find out more about how he went about in the following article!

OUTLOOK

The second phase of the Cluster of Excellence will focus on the implementation and consolidation of the strategic partnerships. This will require the establishment of a coordination office that will be in constant contact with the respective contact persons at the partner institutions. In addition, the responsible colleagues will act as ambassadors for the BCDSS in the field and as associated Principal Investigators in Bonn. From the initial bilateral partnerships, we will develop a multilateral network that enables the circular mobility of people, ideas and research results. The resulting structures will turn the BCDSS into a globally visible beacon of Dependency and Slavery Studies that will also shift the perspective on strong asymmetrical dependencies (such as slavery, debt bondage, serfdom...) in human societies.



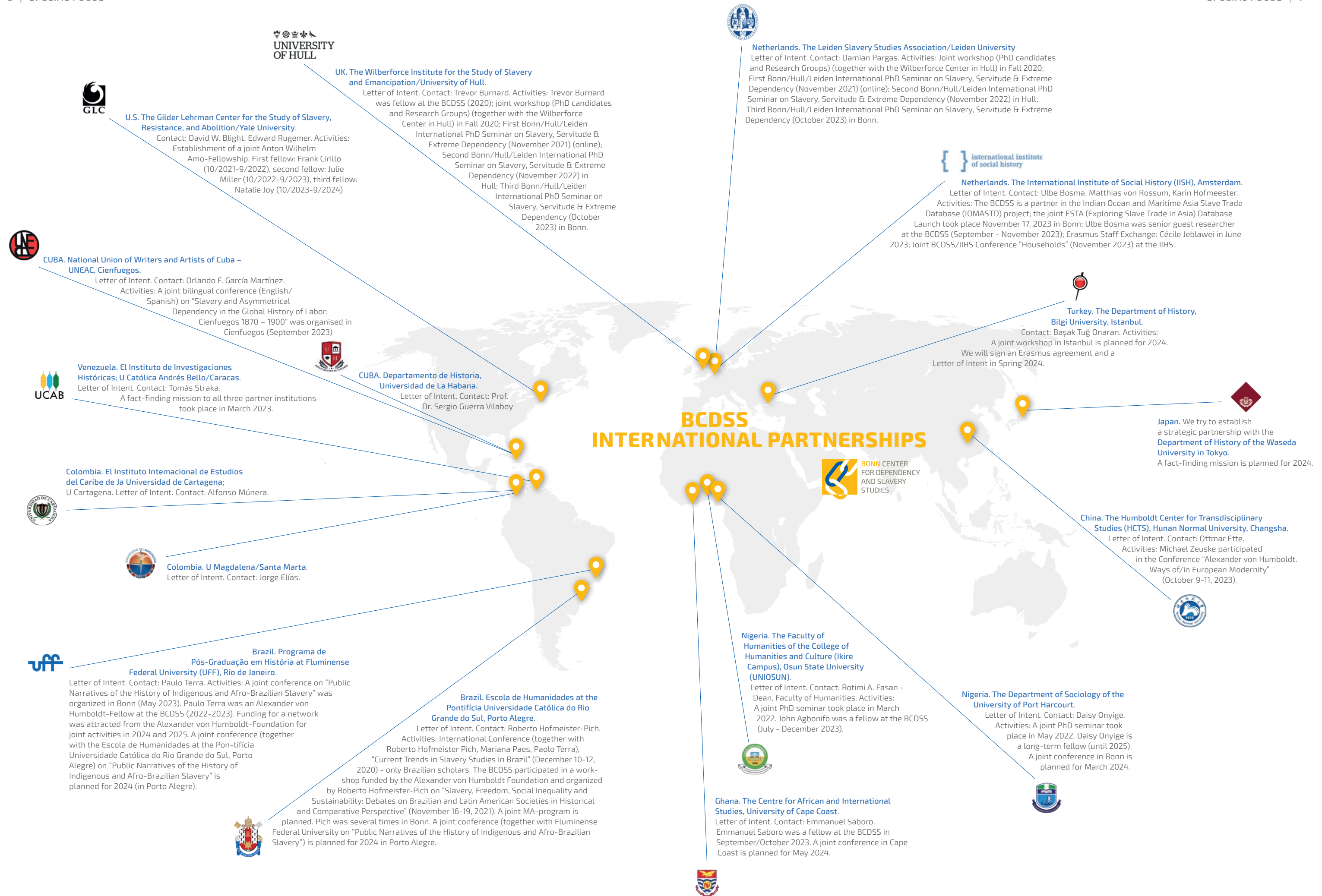
Prof. Dr. Stephan Conermann is Spokesperson and Principal Investigator of the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies, as well as Dean of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Bonn. He is Professor for

Islamic Studies at the Institute for Oriental and Asian Studies. In his research, he compares different forms of slavery in pre-modern societies. His starting point are different forms of dependency in the Mamluk Sultanate in Egypt and Syria (1250–1517). Among many editorial roles, he is co-editor (with Jeannine Bischoff) of the BCDSS publication series "Dependency and Slavery Studies".



Stephan Conermann (BCDSS Speaker) signing the letter of intent with Ana Lidia Hernandez Chacon (Director of the Department of History, Universidad de Cienfuegos) and MSc Orlando F. García Martínez (President of National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba – UNEAC), Nov. 9, 2023, Cienfuegos, Cuba





THE BCDSS AND THEIR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS



El Instituto Internacional de Estudios del Caribe de La Universidad de Cartagena

What is your institution's specific angle to slavery and dependency research?

At the Institute we have developed a line of work on slavery, racism and nation-building. In this direction, we were pioneers in opening a field of work with the books "The Failure of the Nation: Region, Race and Class in the Colombian Caribbean", and "Imagined Borders: The Construction of Race and Geography in the Colombian Caribbean". For the first time, the participation of free and unfree Afro-Colombians in the founding of the Colombian nation and the production of a profoundly racist image of the nation in the 19th century was systematically studied. In relation to forms of dependency, we are working to initiate studies on the relationship between migration and domestic work and the trafficking of women and children, in the particular case of Venezuelan migration.

What would you say is the added value of the cooperation?

A joint collaboration allows for comparative approaches, as well as pooling economic, intellectual and research resources etc., for shared projects on the different forms of slavery and dependency. Sharing methodologies, experiences and fostering a permanent exchange and dialogue will enrich both institutions.

Was there a joint activity that was particularly formative for the partnership?

We have had an academic relationship with Professor Michael Zeuske for more than 20 years, thanks to the biannual International Seminar on Caribbean Studies, a space for the dissemination of research on socio-cultural and economic issues in the Caribbean and for dialogue between researchers. In this seminar, Professor Zeuske has presented the development of his research and shared with students and professors, and we have discussed the development of joint projects.



Alfonso Múnera,
Director / Professor
of History



Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil

What is your institution's specific angle to slavery and dependency research?

We work very inter-disciplinarily. The following topics can be highlighted: firstly, the philosophical and theological groundwork of the ideology of black slavery in Latin America, 16th-19th centuries. The question to be answered is: How black slavery was normatively discussed and eventually "normalized" in Latin American colonial history? Secondly, the study of the fate of black people in Brazilian post-emancipation period, with an emphasis on theories of scientific racism and eugenics in early 20th-century Brazil and on work relationships in the post-emancipation history of the lusophone countries in South America and Africa. Thirdly, the study of claims of restitution in 21st-century Brazil that reasonably connect to the past of slavery in the country and the shortcomings of post-abolitionist policies of reparation.

What would you say is the added value of the cooperation?

On the institutional level, the cooperation can bring something very specific and new – such as a shared international Master's Program in Dependency and Slavery Studies (PUCRS – BCDSS, Brazil – Germany). This can mean a unique opportunity for students from Germany for having the experience of studying in a highly qualified Brazilian university, as well as, of course, for Brazilians students, to make their education in a top university in Germany. On the conceptual level, the cooperation can point to new areas of research in dependency and slavery studies. Of course, transatlantic slave trade is a major interest in the global history of slavery. But research lines such as the ideology of black slavery during the colonial Latin-American history and the challenge of understanding post-abolitionist and contemporary claims of reparation and restitution can represent new emphases in slavery research that have, moreover, a significant appeal to current debates in South American societies.

Was there a joint activity that was particularly formative for the partnership?

Three joint activities were particularly formative for the partnership: firstly, the CAPES/Uni-Bonn Chair (07.2018-02.2019 and 11.2019-02.2020), of which Prof. Dr. Roberto Hofmeister Pich was the first holder and during which he presented the research project "The Philosophy of Black Slavery: The Historical-Philosophical Groundwork of the Ideology of Slavery in Latin America, 16th-19th Centuries". Secondly, two visits of Prof. Dr. Stephan Conermann to the PUCRS, in August 2019 and June-July 2022. Thirdly, the Humboldt-Kolleg "Slavery, Freedom, Sustainability, and Pandemic: Debates on Brazilian and African Societies in Historical and Contemporary Perspective", Porto Alegre – Brazil, November 16-19, 2021. Through visits to Porto Alegre and the joint organization of the Humboldt-Kolleg, mutual knowledge between PUCRS's and BCDSS's researchers was made possible and a more thorough acquaintance with dependency and slavery studies in Brazil stimulated further cooperation.



Roberto Hofmeister Pich,
Professor of Philosophy



Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition, Yale University

What is your institution's specific angle to slavery and dependency research?

Our Center is principally concerned with the history and legacies of racial slavery in the Atlantic World. We offer both long and short-term fellowships to support scholars at various points in their career, including graduate students, recent recipients of the PhD, and senior scholars, in the development of a wide range of research projects that include the Caribbean, the United States, Brazil, and Latin America.

What would you say is the added value of the cooperation?

Our cooperation with the Bonn Center for the Dependency and Slavery Studies has allowed us to expand our fellowship program to include the Bonn/Yale Anton Wilhelm Amo Fellowship. The partnership has also allowed Yale scholars and GLC affiliates such as Edward Rugemer and Noel Lenski to share their work through the Joseph Miller Memorial Lecture Series.

Was there a joint activity that was particularly formative for the partnership?

The mutual learning and cooperation in the development of the Bonn/Yale fellowship has been especially formative.



Edward B. Rugemer,
Professor of History and
African American Studies



Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF), Brazil

What is your institution's specific angle to slavery and dependency research?

Here the specific angle to slavery and dependency research is predominately connected to labor history. We have studies, for example, that examine the connection between enslaved and free workers.

What would you say is the added value of the cooperation?

The cooperation with the BCDSS represents the mutual exchange and enrichment of the debate on slavery and dependency. It is a chance to internationalize and give more visibility to research produced in Brazil, and national production can also contribute to the rich debate promoted by the BCDSS. We are currently working on a joint project funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation which aims to bring PhD students from Brazil to Germany and vice versa. The project seeks to analyze the unexplored field of connections between Brazil and Africa in the worlds of labor.

Was there a joint activity that was particularly formative for the partnership?

A crucial joint activity was a workshop held in Bonn in 2020 that brought together many researchers from Brazil who discussed current trends on Brazilian slavery. The resulting publication in the BCDSS De Gruyter series was an excellent opportunity to present national production to the international audience.



Paulo Cruz Terra,
Professor of History



Trevor Burnard,
Professor of Slavery and
Emancipation at and
Director of Wilberforce
Institute

What is your institution's specific angle to slavery and dependency research?

The Wilberforce Institute, founded in 2006, is a research centre attached to the University of Hull, whose mission is to study slavery both past and present. It has focused in the past on establishing the contours of transatlantic slavery but has now expanded its mission to look at slavery over all of his history and in particular to examine the legacies of slavery or British institutions. It studies the evil of modern slavery academically and has an outreach programme to help businesses prevent modern slavery in supply chains and a Justice hub to help inform and mitigate modern slavery.

What would you say is the added value of the cooperation?

The study of slavery has become increasingly urgent within Europe as we realize its effects are not something we can dismiss as happening 'over there.' BCDSS has greatly raised the profile of the study of slavery in Europe through its many activities. Its works complements the work of the Wilberforce Institute in multiple ways, through workshops, conferences, student exchanges and in particular by raising the profile of the study of slavery as major academic activities within Europe.

Was there a joint activity that was particularly formative for the partnership?

The education of postgraduate students is particularly important for both institutes. It has significantly enhanced by annual postgraduate conferences for students at Leiden, Hull and Bonn. For Hull students, this has provided an invaluable opportunity to present their work to international audiences and to expand their European networks.



international institute
of social history

The International Institute for Social History (IISH)

What is your institution's specific angle to slavery and dependency research?

The IISH Global Labour History program explores the history of work from a global and long-term perspective by studying all types of work and labour relations world-wide. We focus on shifts in labour relations – as part of transformations set in motion by capitalism, colonialism and globalization – and the effect they had on workers, their position and social inequality. Slavery and other forms of coercive labour relations are a key part of this program. Moving beyond dominant models of 'classic' and Atlantic histories of slavery, we question how different regimes functioned, how they were enforced and challenged, and how different regimes were connected and interacted.

What would you say is the added value of the cooperation?

The added value lies in the combination of the two different perspectives on dependency and different forms of labour relations. The BCDSS' expertise in the field of early and early-modern history in parts of the world where the IISH does not have specialised knowledge leads to a broadening and deepening of our understanding of slavery and other forms of forced labour.

Was there a joint activity that was particularly formative for the partnership?

Contacts between individual members of BCDSS and IISH existed long before the BCDSS came into existence. These contacts led to a collaborative project to map the slave trade in Asia. In 2018 IISH and BCDSS forged a consortium together with Linneaus University and CNRS Lyon, which obtained a grant by the Dutch Science Foundation to build a database on Asian Maritime Slave Trade (ESTA), which was launched in Bonn on 17 November 2023.

Damian Pargas,
Professor of History and
Culture of the United
States



The Leiden Slavery Studies Association, Leiden University

What is your institution's specific angle to slavery and dependency research?

The avenues of inquiry here in Leiden are extremely diverse, but much of it is characterized by what we often call a "GLOCAL" approach. This entails localized case studies that tell very broad (or even global) stories. For example, LSSA colleagues have recently published works on: Black Sea slavery (consisting of several localized case studies); various "spaces of freedom" for runaway slaves in North America; Black family life in the Dutch Caribbean as a unique case study in the Atlantic world; testimonies of slavery in South Asia as a lens for Indian Ocean World slavery; Dutch lawsuits regarding the "hidden" slave trade; attempts in Louisiana to reopen the African slave trade under the guise of "African apprenticeship" schemes; etc.

What would you say is the added value of the cooperation?

The most important added value of the cooperation is the influence of Bonn's conceptual framing of "asymmetrical dependency" and the sliding scale of freedom and unfreedom on Leiden scholarship. We have noticed far more interest lately in scholarship that moves away from binary or linear understandings of slavery and freedom. Recent output by colleagues in Leiden has for example examined

in-between legal categories of bonded Africans in the Americas; experiences of dependency among free Blacks and refugees living all over the Atlantic world; the porous boundaries between captives and slaves in the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions; and even extreme dependency among North Korean workers in the EU.

Was there a joint activity that was particularly formative for the partnership?

The most fruitful and formative activity for the partnership has been the establishment of an annual PhD/Postdoc conference, which we launched at the height of the corona pandemic in 2020. The conference is a triangular joint cooperation between Leiden, Bonn, and the Wilberforce Institute at the University of Hull. This activity is not only fruitful as a forum for young scholars to present their research and receive valuable feedback, but it is especially inspiring to the "older" staff! The conference exposes us all to the very latest cutting-edge research, to new questions, and to innovative avenues of inquiry being pursued by the next generation of scholars.

Emmanuel Saboro (PhD),
Senior Lecturer in African
Literature, Memory and
Slavery Studies at the
Centre for African and
International Studies



Karin Hofmeester,
Research Director, IISG,
and part-time Professor
of Jewish Culture at
Antwerp University



The Centre for African and International Studies, University of Cape Coast, Ghana

What is your institution's specific angle to slavery and dependency research?

The University of Cape Coast (UCC) is a public university located in the historic town of Cape Coast in the central region of Ghana and currently ranked by the World University Rankings and Higher Times Education as No.1 in Ghana. The University offers a wide range of courses in the Liberal Arts, Sciences including Medicine Law, Social Sciences, and Education. The study of slavery and its afterlives is a theme that some academics within the The Centre for African and International studies research on. Currently an academic in the Centre, Professor Emmanuel Saboro focuses on the impact of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade on African societies in general and within decentralized societies specifically. Within the last couple of years this research has focused largely on African indigenous slave

systems, resistance and identity construction. The Centre also offers a course on the Slave Trade and Colonialism in Africa at the undergraduate level. The Centre is currently developing a new programme in Slavery and Diaspora studies to be offered at the MA/PhD level.

What would you say is the added value of the cooperation?

The cooperation between the Centre for African and International Studies and the Bonn Centre for Dependency and Slavery Studies is valuable in a number of ways: Our two centres will be able to facilitate faculty and student exchanges in order to better understand the ways in which asymmetrical dependencies are understood within our specific contexts. This partnership is also important because African scholars from Ghana will bring a much more nuanced understanding of slavery and other forms of

dependencies from a rich repertoire of African indigenous sources that are often inaccessible within European or Western spaces.

Was there a joint activity that was particularly formative for the partnership?

Prof. Emmanuel Saboro was recently offered a short visiting research fellowship at the BCDSS in September/October 2023 where he had some fruitful discussions with Professor Dr. Stephan Connerman and Sarah Duseund on how to proceed further with our institutional partnership. Professor Saboro also presented his current research based on a second book he is writing on „Sites of Memories connected to the slave experience in Ghana". We have also begun discussions for a joint conference to be held either in Ghana or in Bonn in 2024 on a common theme that is yet to be decided on, based on our mutual research focus.



Chioma Daisy Onyige,
Professor of Criminology,
and current Head of
Department of Sociology,
Faculty of Social Sciences



University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT), Nigeria

What is your institution's specific angle to slavery and dependency research?

The Department of Sociology at the University of Port Harcourt's (UNIPORT) approach to sociology is broad, encompassing a commitment to addressing societal challenges on both local and global scales. Their philosophy emphasizes the importance of social justice, diversity, and inclusivity. In the context of slavery and dependency research, the department takes a multi-faceted approach where they adopt historical perspective of slavery, examining its roots, impact, and evolution over time. The department focuses on contemporary forms of dependency, including economic, social, and political dependencies that exist in the present day. This involves researching on issues like modern-day slavery, economic exploitation, or systemic dependencies.

What would you say is the added value of the cooperation?

The Department of Sociology's, UNIPORT commitment to being a trailblazer in social science education requires the use of an interdisciplinary approach where we collaborate with other departments or disciplines to bring a comprehensive understanding to the study of slavery and dependencies. That is why the cooperation between the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies is very strategic in the sense that we feed on each other's knowledge about the state of the art in the study of dependency and slavery studies. We intend establishing a joint international research and teaching network by this cooperation. Currently, I am a guest lecturer and a former Senior Fellow at the BCDSS where I teach contemporary slavery studies at the Post graduate level.

Was there a joint activity that was particularly formative for the partnership?

The Department of Sociology and the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS) jointly conducted a PhD workshop for PhD students from both the Department of Sociology, UNIPORT and the BCDSS. The PhD workshop was held on May 12, 2022, via zoom due to travel restrictions still in place during the covid-19 pandemic. It was a very interesting event, and I am happy to say that despite the limitations most of our students may have had due to the pandemic, they were still doing their research on strong asymmetrical dependencies. This joint PhD workshop was particularly formative for our partnership with the BCDSS.

FACT-FINDING MISSION TO CUBA IN 2023

Universidad de la Habana ©Michael Zeuske

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR PROF. MICHAEL ZEUSKE HAS CARRIED OUT MANY FACT-FINDING MISSIONS FOR THE BCDSS. ONE OF HIS RECENT ONES TOOK HIM TO CUBA.

by Michael Zeuske

Cuba has historically been the most dynamic and developed slavery society of the industrial Second Slavery era (i.e. the nineteenth century). Until 1886 and beyond, it relied heavily on slaves and dependent workers to produce plantation commodities such as sugar and tobacco. Owing to its past as a global slavery hub with many forms of asymmetrical dependencies in after slavery, Cuba bears significant collaborative potential for partnerships with the BCDSS. Therefore, our aim was to establish firm and sustainable links with research institutions, universities and individual researchers in Cuba.

In March 2023, Prof. Zeuske set off to Cuba on behalf of the BCDSS, with the initial aim to identify potential partners who were ready to commit to collaborative research projects involving as many researchers and academic levels as possible (students, PhDs, postdocs and senior researchers). The challenge lay in identifying genuine and enduring dedication rather than mere formal agreements. Prof. Zeuske's longstanding working relations with Cuba, going back as far as 1993, proved very beneficial. It is not only the knowledge of the local research landscape but also the experience and trust built over decades that helps with approaching potential partners. Of the six Cuban institutions that Prof. Zeuske had selected for initial talks, three have committed to a letter of intent by now *(see photos of formal signature by Prof. Conermann).

The first letter of intent was signed at the Department of History at the University of Havana (*Facultad de Filosofía, Historia y Sociología de la Universidad de La Habana*), following negotiations on several occasions with the director of the Department of History, Professor Sergio Guerra Vilaboy. Photo von Sergio Guerra kommt unten nochmal, aber nicht an der Uni Havana, sonder in Santa Clara.

These talks were complex due to the necessity of establishing new structures at the University of Havana in order to form the partnership. This is because there is currently no institution exclusively devoted to research on slavery.

To understand Cuba's slavery narratives, it was also important for the BCDSS to approach the *Unión Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba* (UNEAC) in Cienfuegos, central Cuba. The UNEAC is the Cuban writers' and artists' association, whose directors are freely elected by the members. Orlando García Martínez, the current president of UNEAC Cienfuegos, is a historian of slavery, and a regional and local historian of the city of Cienfuegos on the southern coast of Cuba. It was in this area that the world's most modern sugar factories were built and operated by slaves between 1870 and 1886, and then by former slaves and other dependent workers until the 20th century.



The Cuban writers' and artists' association "Unión Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba" (UNEAC), Cienfuegos ©Michael Zeuske



UNEAC / BCDSS conference poster, September 2023



From fact-finding to joint commitment (from left to right): Luis Ramírez (writer/historian), Ana Lidia Hernández Chacón (Director History Department, Universidad de Cienfuegos), Yenifer Sánchez Mesa (translator) and Stephan Conermann (BCSSS Speaker), Anabel García García (Professor of History, Universidad de Cienfuegos), Orlando F. García Martínez (UNEAC President), Michael Zeuske (BCDSS Principal Investigator) ©Michael Zeuske

barons and slave owners of Cienfuegos. It brought together specialists from Cuba and from the BCDSS in a place that is very important for the global history of labor, of plantation slavery, Second Slavery, the slave trade and the industrialization of the Americas.

At the same time, Prof. Zeuske had conducted intensive negotiations with the University of Cienfuegos / *Universidad de Cienfuegos "Carlos Rafael Rodríguez"* (UCF) see photo,



Universidad de Cienfuegos "Carlos Rafael Rodríguez" (UCF), Cienfuegos ©Dirección de Comunicación Institucional Ucf

which holds a relatively new center for historical research where the new generation of historians investigate slavery and the slave trade in and around Cienfuegos. As a result, the University of Cienfuegos offered three thematic areas for joint research: (1) Slavery, illegal trafficking of enslaved persons and the impact of technological and scientific advances in the emancipation processes and the transformation of sugar plantations into sugar factories (*centrales*). (2) Sociability, subsistence and the social geography of ex-slaves and their descendants in the region. (3) Memory, daily life, cultural traditions, and the patrimonial legacy of Second Slavery.

Following the successful talks with researchers from the University of Cienfuegos and the fruitful joint conference with the writers' and artists' association UNEAC, the BCDSS signed letters of intent with both institutions in Cienfuegos in November 2023.

During his visit to central Cuba in March/April 2023, Prof. Zeuske also made several trips to Santa Clara. Santa Clara is home to Cuba's most research-intensive university after Havana, the *Universidad Central de Villa Clara "Marta Abreu"* (UCVC Marta Abreu).



Santa Clara, Cuba ©Michael Zeuske



Departamento de Historia de la Universidad de La Habana, Cuba ©Michael Zeuske

Up until around 2000, the university held the best historical and linguistic research on formerly enslaved people in this region (where during and after slavery the most important and largest sugar factories in world history were located). Now that many of its historians and researchers have retired or are abroad, the university is trying to rebuild its department of history. Hence, the Vice-Rector for international relations, Prof. Alina Montero Torres, has opened a path for joint research with the BCDSS and granted us access to their excellent library and visualization center with its historical image collection. The *Universidad Central de Villa Clara "Marta Abreu"* is ready to sign a letter of intent and to undertake joint research, including joint activities related to public history and applied history. Due to the significant transport problems in Cuba, the final signing (and planning of another project) must take place in 2024.

Among the remaining institutions and researchers approached by Prof. Zeuske, the *Academia de la Historia de Cuba*, is ready to collaborate and issue a letter of intent. The Academia, a national institution based in Havana and chaired by renowned slavery historian Prof. Dr. Eduardo Torres Cuevas, is currently considering whether to create a center or a chair for research on global slavery as a result of the collaboration. The president of this academy co-signed the letter of intent with the University of Havana (Department of History), mentioned above, in November 2023. see photo



Prof. Dr. Stephan Conermann & Prof. Dr. Michael Zeuske with renowned slavery historian Prof. Dr. Eduardo Torres Cuevas, President of Academia de la Historia de Cuba ©Michael Zeuske

Further negotiations are still needed with the *Casa de las Américas*, a world-renowned Latin American literary and cultural institution based in Havana. It is particularly strong on literature on the memory of slavery and cultural heritage. Prof. Zeuske has been to *Casa de la Américas* several times and talked to the director of international relations, Yolanda Alomá (most recently in March 2023) and Zuleica Romy, a principal researcher. In principle, *Casa de las Américas* is willing to enter into contractual relations with the BCDSS, however, some details about the structure of the relationship and the joint work are still to be worked out. It would be its first contract with an institution from Europe in many years, as its primary focus is on the Americas.



Casa de las Américas, Havana ©Michael Zeuske



Prof. Dr. Michael 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 trader.



UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL FLUMINENSE (UFF), BRAZIL:

BCDSS AND UFF – A CASE OF FRUITFUL COOPERATION

by Paulo Cruz Terra

My first contact with the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS) was in 2019 when I became a guest researcher with a grant from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. Since then, our institutions have continuously been fostering a fruitful and growing partnership.



University Federal Fluminense, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil ©uff

Starting off with a workshop on "Current trends on Brazilian slavery trade", which I organized in 2020 in cooperation with Stephan Conermann, Mariana Armond Dias Paes and Roberto Hofmeister Pich, Brazilian researchers were given a unique opportunity to present their latest research on the country's history of slavery to an international audience. Thanks to the cooperation with the BCDSS, the results of this workshop were published in an open-access publication by De Gruyter as part of the BCDSS Dependency and Slavery Studies series. The publication was a vital step in helping to overcome barriers in Brazil to disseminate and publicize Brazilian research to an international audience. Due to its success, the event was followed by another international workshop on "Dependency and Labor in Latin America" in 2021, which brought together further researchers from Latin America.

In 2022, Stephan Conermann visited my university, the Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF), located in the city of Niterói, in Rio de Janeiro. On this occasion, a partnership agreement was signed between the BCDSS and the UFF Graduate Program in History (PPGH-UFF), one of the oldest in Brazil with a tradition of slavery studies. We took the opportunity to present our institution's approach to the notion of strong asymmetrical dependency as spearheaded by the BCDSS. Our angle focuses, on the one hand, on the history of labor, on the other, on the analysis drawn from the perspective of memories and public narratives of slavery.

A milestone in the cooperation between the UFF and BCDSS was reached in 2023 with the organization of the conference "Public narratives of the history of indigenous and Afro-Brazilian slavery", held in Bonn. It was an excellent opportunity to bring together Brazilian researchers to discuss an issue that has hardly been explored yet: the public narratives of indigenous and Afro-Brazilian slavery, a very innovative topic.

The successful partnership has since been recognized by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, which recently granted us funding for a major project under the Research Group Linkage Program. Uniting the BCDSS and the PPGH-UFF, the joint research project aims to explore the still unprecedented theme of connections and comparisons between the worlds of work in Brazil and Africa, addressing issues such as coercion, dependence and labor relations.

The project will enable us to continue and build on the fruitful partnership between our institutions by fostering exchange between our PhD students, post-docs and senior researchers. It is vital to carry on the academic dialogue about new research and theoretical debates in order to further develop and enrich the current debates on slavery and dependency. The cooperation will also help to internationalize and give more visibility to research produced in Brazil. At the same time, the BCDSS will profit from our national expertise, which will in turn help raise its profile.

In addition to the many achievements so far, I am sure that the cooperation between our institutions will bear many more fruits.



Paulo Cruz Terra

is Professor of History at Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil. He was an Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Fellow at the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies in Germany between 2019 and 2020. Currently, he is a research fellow of the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) and of the Research Foundation for the State of Rio de Janeiro (FAPERJ). In 2022, he was elected an Affiliated Member of the Brazilian Academy of Science.



**UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT
(UNIORT), NIGERIA**

WHY THE PARTNERSHIP IS BENEFICIAL, NOT ONLY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF MY UNIVERSITY, BUT ALSO FROM A WIDER, THE NIGERIAN CONTEXT.

by Chioma Daisy Onyige

Collaboration between the Bonn Center of Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS) and the Department of Sociology at the University of Port Harcourt holds immense potential for mutual benefits, not only for the university but also for the Nigerian society. This partnership is poised to be a catalyst for transformative academic endeavours and impactful research initiatives, addressing critical issues related to dependency and slavery. The synergies between these institutions are multifaceted, ranging from knowledge exchange and research advancement to community engagement and policy implications.



The University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria ©Uniport Nigeria

Furthermore, joint research projects and collaborations can lead to the advancement of research in the field of dependency and slavery studies. The combined resources and diverse perspectives from both institutions can contribute to more comprehensive and nuanced research outcomes. Currently, the BCDSS and the department of Sociology, UNIORT are organising a two-day workshop that will be taking place in May 2024. The two-day workshop will bring together renowned scholars and PhD students from both institutions working in the field of asymmetrical dependency to discuss the historical, socioeconomic, and power dynamics at play.

Nigeria has a complex and rich history, including periods of colonization, the transatlantic slave trade, and post-independence challenges coupled with contemporary issues related to dependency, economic challenges, and social justice. Engaging in scholarly dialogue and exchange of ideas, presentations on issues of strong asymmetrical dependencies and slavery in Nigeria can shed light on current socio-economic dynamics, providing insights into the persistence or transformation of historical patterns. Collaborating with an international centre like the BCDSS promotes the internationalization of research at the University of Port Harcourt. This can enhance the university's reputation, attract more international scholars and students, and foster a more globally connected academic community. Also, students at the University of Port

Harcourt can benefit from exposure to international perspectives, research methodologies, and potential opportunities for exchange programs or joint degrees. This broadens their educational experience and prepares them for a globalized academic and professional landscape.

The collaboration and partnership between the BCDSS and the department of Sociology, UNIORT fosters capacity building. This is because the partnership involves training programs, workshops, and seminars that contribute to the capacity building of faculty and students at the University of Port Harcourt. Exposure to international best practices and methodologies can enhance the skills of researchers and educators. Also, the BCDSS can benefit from the local expertise of the Department of Sociology in understanding the specific historical, cultural, and social contexts of Nigeria. This ensures that research on dependency and slavery is culturally sensitive and appropriately contextualized. Our collaboration and partnership has a wider policy implication for Nigeria. For example, findings from joint research efforts may have direct implications for policy development and implementation in Nigeria. Understanding the historical and contemporary factors contributing to slavery and dependencies can inform policies aimed at addressing social injustices and promoting economic development. Nigeria's diverse communities provide opportunities for community engagement in research. Involving local communities in the research process ensures that the study is sensitive to their experiences and needs, fostering a more inclusive and ethical approach. Nigeria's complexities invite interdisciplinary approaches, involving not only sociological perspectives but also historical, economic, and cultural lenses. This interdisciplinary approach can provide a more holistic understanding of slavery and dependencies. Embracing the complexities of Nigeria, the collaboration encourages interdisciplinary approaches. Beyond sociological perspectives, the research encompasses historical, economic, and cultural lenses, providing a holistic understanding of slavery and dependencies. Nigeria's historical role in the transatlantic slave trade and its current status as one of the most populous countries in Africa makes it a compelling case study. Findings from studies in Nigeria contribute not only to a nuanced understanding of African contexts but also offer insights into global patterns of slavery and dependencies. Comparative analyses with other regions and countries reveal commonalities, differences, and lessons with broader implications for the study of these issues globally.

In conclusion, the collaboration between the BCDSS and the Department of Sociology at the University of Port Harcourt represents a significant step towards academic excellence, global engagement, and societal

impact. The partnership aligns seamlessly with the university's vision of being a trailblazer in social science education and research, dedicated to addressing societal challenges. As these institutions join forces, they pave the way for a future where scholarly endeavours transcend borders, contributing valuable insights to the understanding and resolution of issues related to dependency and slavery in the African context. Through this collaboration, the University of Port Harcourt stands poised to not only elevate its academic and research standing but also contribute meaningfully to the advancement of knowledge and societal well-being.



Prof. Dr. Chioma Daisy Onyige

is Professor of Criminology, and current Head of Department at the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. She is Senior Guest

Researcher & Guest Lecturer as well as former Heinz Heinen Senior Fellow at the BCDSS. Her research area includes gender and crime, environmental sociology, gender and climate change, and cognate issues such as conflict and peace building. Her current research is on contemporary slavery studies, specifically on human trafficking and smuggling of women and children from Africa to Europe.



THE WILBERFORCE INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF SLAVERY AND EMANCIPATION/ UNIVERSITY OF HULL

WHY NETWORKING WITH THE BCDSS IS IMPORTANT FOR THE WILBERFORCE INSTITUTE AND FOR RESEARCH ON EUROPEAN HISTORY

by Trevor Burnard

Until recently the study of slavery was very much dominated by the USA and especially by its involvement with transatlantic slavery. Much of the research on slavery was by American scholars and the models of slavery, even when they dealt with slavery in other parts of the world than America and in time periods very different from the relatively short time that the USA has been in existence was based on the idea that America's nineteenth-century 'peculiar institution' was in fact the model by which slavery in other places and times should be judged. For Europeans, both in those places like Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands and Denmark, which were heavily involved in the transatlantic slave trade between the mid-fifteenth and the mid-nineteenth centuries and in countries such as Germany or Italy where there was little direct involvement in that trade, slavery was seldom part of national or European discourses. It was something that happened outside Europe and to Africans moving to the New World, whose experience was not connected particularly strongly to European history.

Recent decades have started to see a substantial shift from that position. Slavery was not just American, was not something experienced only by Africans and was not an institution either unknown in Europe nor without resonances for European society. Of course we had always known that slavery and Europe went together – the great civilisations of ancient Greece and Rome which formed so much of Western European historical consciousness had been based extensively upon chattel slavery. Nevertheless, slavery after that ancient time had seemingly stopped in Europe and Europe and slavery did not go together, even though we have always known about how heavily Europeans were involved in the transatlantic slave trade and in benefiting from the products – sugar, tobacco, coffee, cotton – that enslaved people in the New World produced. Moreover, when Europeans did think about slavery and tried to do so outside an American-centric framework, they tended to see it as something very different from other forms of coercive relations and as a state that was highly exceptional and the obverse of what constituted freedom.

These views are ones that are challenged by the founding of the Bonn Centre for Dependency and Slave Societies. The BCDSS is at the vanguard of intellectual movements that are reshaping the study of slavery. It concerns itself with slavery throughout time, up to and including the present day, and in all parts of the world, not just Africa and the Americas. It is especially strong in the study of slavery before the Columbian exchange and in the Middle East and in Asia. It has even studied slavery, or forms of coercive labour, in Australia and the Pacific, as in a recent June conference put on by

BCDSS faculty member, Pia Wiegink. Moreover, it has expanded greatly the field of slavery studies by placing slavery firmly within a larger context of different kinds of dependency, emphasizing the continuities between various kinds of coerced labour rather than seeing slavery as exceptional, unusual and defined by the extreme relations between Black people and White people and highly unequal patterns of labour, ownership and capitalist practices that characterized early modern and modern transatlantic slavery.



The Wilberforce Institute ©University of Hull

BCDSS is important, in addition, in having considerable institutional heft as well as an intellectual presence that is helping rewrite the history of slavery so that it is global rather than American. The munificence of the German government in providing large amounts of funding for this centre, under the direction of the esteemed scholar of the Mamluks of early modern Egypt, Stephan Conermann, has meant that BCDSS has become a major European hub for the study of slavery. It has emerged propitiously at a time in modern European history and culture when slavery has become a matter of urgent public importance. Europeans have become increasingly aware that slavery was not something which happened elsewhere and was not something that concerned Europeans. In part, their new concern with slavery comes from current circumstances such as the terrible rise of modern slavery in European countries; the humanitarian crises provoked by increased numbers of refugees, often desperately poor and susceptible to exploitation; and the complications that arise from Europe being more than ever multicultural, heterogeneous and diverse. Europeans have also become increasingly aware of the role that Europeans within Europe have played in slavery in this continent and in others over the whole span of human history. Slavery is as intrinsically a part of European history as anything else.

BCDSS pays an important part in shaping a developing European consciousness over slavery and in reorienting the study of slavery away from its traditional heartland of research in North America towards Europe. That it

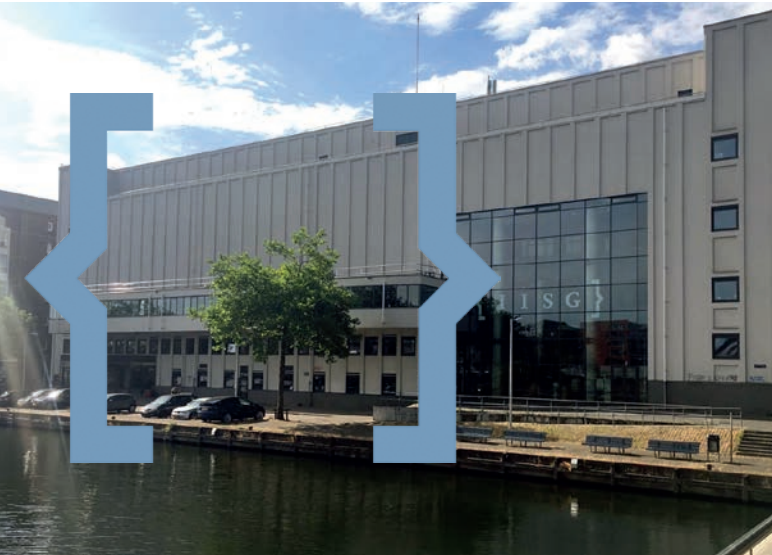
is located in Germany is incredibly important. Germany is not the European country that comes to mind first when thinking of slavery – at least not compared to Britain, France, Spain, Portugal or the Netherlands. But as Germans are discovering, not least due to the research pouring out of BCDSS on both slavery and unequal relations we might call dependency, slavery is very much part of German history and is also a means whereby Germany can associate itself with important global trends in the humanities and social sciences. BCDSS is a hub within Europe for slavery and is, or is becoming connected, with other hubs of research activity on slavery studies – including my own institution, the Wilberforce Institute at the University of Hull in England. It provides an institutional base through its extremely active programme of academic events and public-facing outreach through which slavery can be seen as both European and also having a wide global outreach. In its relatively short life it has invigorated the study of slavery globally, and especially within Europe. It has become a major player – probably the most important slavery institution not just in Germany but in Europe and possibly in the world. Its importance lies not just in its institutional presence, What makes it especially influential is its intellectual heft, its insistence that we have to widen our understanding of slavery and to move the study of slavery so it is central to European and global discourse as a whole. It is especially valuable within Europe and we who do slavery studies in Europe cannot but be extremely grateful for the foresight of the German government in funding a centre so vital to Europeans' understanding of themselves and the world they did so much to create, both good and bad.



Prof. Dr. Trevor Burnard

is Director at the Wilberforce Institute and Professor of Slavery and Emancipation at the University of Hull.

He is a scholar of early American, imperial, world and Atlantic history, with a special interest in plantation societies in the New World and their connections to eighteenth-century modernity. Particular interests include slavery, social history and demography, imperialism, economic and business history, and gender.



International Institute for Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam ©BCDSS

THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL HISTORY A SPARRING PARTNER

by Cécile Jeblawei

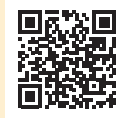


Cécile Jeblawei

is Press and PR Manager at the BCDSS. In June 2023, she joined the IISG for a week under the ERASMUS staff exchange scheme. She holds a Magistra Artium from Bonn University in Modern Languages with a focus on Early Modern French Literature. With more than twenty years of PR experience in the higher education sector, most of which gained in the UK, she was team leader for Online Communications at the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) before joining the BCDSS in 2021.

Our partnership with the *International Institute for Social History* (IISH) in Amsterdam is longstanding, dating back to individual connections between members of our respective institutions that have developed over years. Since the start of the BCDSS, we have been collaborating on numerous projects as our shared research interests continue to strengthen and diversify. Founded in 1935, the IISH is dedicated to social and economic history, carrying out research into the relationship between labor and social inequality. The institute focusses on work and social movements worldwide over the past five centuries. Its mission is to ensure the sustainable accessibility of information on these themes and connect them to social inequality in their research. The IISG and the BCDSS are both co-sponsors of the *Revista Latinoamericana de Trabajo y Trabajadores* (REVLATT), a journal initiated by the *Latin American and Caribbean Network of Labor and Workers* that brings together research on the history of labor from a Latin American perspective.

The Revlatt Journal:

revista.redlatt.org/revlatt

Friends' evening at the IISG Amsterdam, with presentation of some of their collection, June 2023 ©IISG



Participants of the "Plantations: Forms & Practices of Coerced Labor in Global History" workshop, November 24, 2023 ©BCDSS

2023 was a year of intense cooperation. Starting with an interview with Marcel van der Linden, senior fellow at the IISH, on *Global Labor History* featured in the last *DEPENDENT* issue, the BCDSS had the pleasure of hosting Ulbe Bosma as senior guest researcher between September and November. His research project on *Commodity Frontiers and Social Transformations (1816 - 1870)* and the expertise he brought to numerous workshops at the BCDSS sparked wide interest within our Cluster, leading to a workshop he jointly organized with Joseph Biggerstaff of the BCDSS on *Forms & Practices of Coerced Labor in Global History in the context of Plantations*. On 17 November 2023, he was joined at the BCDSS by his colleagues from Amsterdam for the launch of the *Exploring Slave trade in Asia (ESTA) Database Database*: Matthias van Rossum, Merve Tosun, Pascal Konings, and Karin Hofmeester. Initiated in 2016 by the IISG and later joined by the BCDSS in 2018, it reconstructs the historic slave trade in the Indian Ocean and Maritime Asia region. Currently (December 2023), the database contains over 4,000 slave trade voyages across the maritime Asia region between roughly 1600 and 1850. The number of enslaved persons transported during these voyages range from at least 340,000–342,500 to 600,000 individuals.



Matthias van Rossum, Project Leader of ESTA, during the launch of the database, November 17, 2023 ©BCDSS

Exploring Slave Trade in Asia (ESTA) Database

<https://esta.iisg.nl>

To make this year's collaboration truly reciprocal, the IISH hosted the BCDSS Annual Conference on *Households as Coercive Labor Regimes* in Amsterdam at the beginning of November 2023. The conference focused on larger household organizations, including private households of the military, political and economic elites, but also plantations, private companies, haciendas, and estates. All these households represented labor regimes, which were based on an asymmetrically



Participants of the BCDSS Annual Conference, hosted by the IISG, November 2-3, 2023 ©BCDSS

dependent work force consisting of servants, peasants, enslaved and other coerced laborers. The international conference allowed for vivid exchange, not only among members of the IISG and the BCDSS *Labor and Spatiality* research group, but also with eminent scholars from across Europe and the United States. The results will be published in a joint publication.

Some reactions captured at the BCDSS Annual Conference

[Link to Youtube](#)

See the BCDSS BLOG for Christine Mae Sarito's reflections (available from 1st week of January 2024)

<https://dependency.blog/>

However, the partnership is not restricted to research. In June 2023, BCDSS Press and PR Manager Cécile Jeblawei joined the IISG for a week under the ERASMUS staff exchange scheme. Her exchange with researchers and staff at the IISG and the wider KNAW Humanities Cluster on the respective communications strategies sparked a fruitful discussion. Being on site and talking to Rose Spijkerman, her communications pendent at the IISG, as well as staff at the Public Services, who offer access to their collections (see page bottom of page 20 for more information), also contributed to a wider understanding of the similarities and differences in the respective communicational frameworks. So did a guided tour of the archives and participating in a friends' evening. The visit clearly sharpened the view of one's own communicational aims and needs and the potential for further institutional collaboration.

As you will see in the following, the visit also proved beneficial from another perspective: it helped us recruit articles for this *DEPENDENT* issue!

Everybody is welcome to consult the **COLLECTIONS** at the IISG reading room in Amsterdam, where you will find archives, books, journals and image and sound materials. Frequently consulted collections, most of the photographs and posters and the archive finding aids may also be accessed online via the catalogue on the website.



International Institute
for Social History:
iisg.amsterdam/en





A RESEARCH AGENDA AND A RESEARCH PROJECT:

COMMODITY FRONTIERS

by Ulbe Bosma

Our lives would be unthinkable without the production of millions of tons of cotton, sugar, palm oil, soy and fossil fuel. The products that we use and consume arrive from many places in the world, which is so different from a few centuries ago when almost everything was produced nearby. Today, the cotton for our clothes is most likely grown in China, sugar might come from Brazil, the palm oil for our soap from Indonesia or Malaysia, whereas our coffee might be plucked in Guatemala to go with sugar milled from cane harvested in Southern Africa. Europe's animals chew soy harvested near or in the Amazon region of Brazil. Fossil fuel, finally, comes from across the globe.

This global and accelerating expansion of commodity production and trade over long distances is one of the most remarkable features of human history and has shaped our present world. And not always positively, because all these above-mentioned commodities are obtained at the lowest possible price with often detrimental consequences for people and nature.

To understand the world of today and its current predicaments of sharp social inequalities and ecological destruction, we need to take long historical perspective. This includes identifying the mechanisms that have driven this worldwide expansion of commodity production and trade, which has been attended by manifold crises and conflicts. The trading and production schemes that have grown and extracted commodities from around the world arguably facilitated and shaped capitalist growth over the past six hundred years. To do justice to this fact we need to shift our focus away from the industrial and urban centres of the world to the millions of people producing all these primary goods, which implies also a socio-ecological perspective.

At the IISH we study the history of labour relations and social inequality in a global canvas. Inevitably, capitalism comes in, which we can define as a *historical* process of commodification of labour and nature through private property. It is driven by the intrinsic need to open up new opportunities for accumulation and thus, new frontiers. By studying the expansion of commodity production as the basis for capitalist growth, we open up the labour history agenda of the IISH to environmental concerns. And here, we also see a pertinent connection with the work of the BCDSS on extreme asymmetrical dependencies because the current global exploitation of natural resources is at the expense of both vulnerable communities as well as future generations.

Central to this approach is the concept of "commodity frontiers", which we can define as processes of incorporation of labour and nature. It was introduced by Jason W. Moore twenty years ago, when he advocated a focus on the role of ecology in the history of capitalism. In fact, he defined capitalism as a new relationship between humans and nature, in which humans were no longer bound to what their immediate environment could provide, thus setting in motion a worldwide expansion. Western Europe started to compensate for its ecological shortages by producing commodities in the Americas. Since then we have seen a relentless expansion of commodity frontiers in the global economy, often under coerced conditions. This history has been one of recurring crises and fixes. A case in point is how the slave rebellions that would end the old American slave-based commodity production for the global market was replaced by other systems of labour recruitment.

Researching these complex links between commodity frontiers and the global economy are the focus of the *Commodity Frontiers Initiative* (<https://commodity-frontiers.com>), an international network of individual scholars, research teams and civil society organizations, initiated by the International Institute of Social History (IISH) in 2020.

The coordinating team consists of Mindi Schneider (Brown University), Sven Beckert (Harvard University), Eric Vanhaute (Ghent University) and the author of his piece. Without any external funding it produces a bi-annual journal *Commodity Frontiers*, which is edited by a large group of scholars and researchers from various disciplines and organizations across the globe. It features articles that are grounded in solid research but are accessible to a non-academic audience also facilitated by an average length between 1500 and 2000 words. In addition, the members of the network organise webinars on key concepts related to commodity frontiers such as "capitalism", "extractivism" and "commons". Finally, the network organises round table discussions on important publications that relate to its ambitions.

In 2021, the leadership of the Commodity Frontiers Initiative published a research agenda in the respectable *Journal of Global History*. This research agenda has also appeared in more popular forms in for example *Die Zeit* and the widely circulated electronic magazine AEON. Meanwhile, it resulted in individual research projects, including my own. We are grateful to the Gerda Henkel Stiftung that enables us now to have some coordinating capacity at the International Institute of Social History (IISH) and organize another two workshops in the coming years.

My own research project will also create a link between a long-term IISH project and the Commodity Frontiers initiative. It will go back to the pivotal decades when Europe recovered from the devastating Napoleonic wars, the Industrial Revolution picked up steam and global trade went through fifty years of rapid growth, a spurt even more spectacular than after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Driven by the philosophy of the Commodity Frontiers Initiative, my aim to put our gaze on the countryside of the Global South. The massive worldwide expansion of these commodity frontiers – coined the *Great Frontier* by Walter Prescott Webb – has been mentioned as one of the five key characteristics of the nineteenth century by Jürgen Osterhammel in his monumental *The Transformation of the World*. This era ushered into a global division of labour in which the Global South emerged as the producer of commodities for a rapidly industrialising and urbanising Global North.

The availability of immense amounts of land and pre-existing mechanisms of labour coercions, combined with migration in and towards the commodity producing global periphery, were key to the world's industrializing core economies struggling with ecological constraints. Without all these cheap commodities often produced under colonial coerced conditions, countries such as Great-Britain would simply

not tense enough land to feed its urban proletariats and provide the raw materials such as cotton for its fledgling industries. These facts are well-known and well-researched, but less researched are the massive social transformations in the commodity producing regions of the Global South.

I will address this research question by using my own expertise on the global history of sugar and extend it to a limited number of dominant commodity exports of the Global South (i.e. sugar, cotton, coffee, precious metals (gold/silver), tea, opium and cereals). These seven commodities arguably made up the majority of exports from the Global South in terms of value until the 1860s. I plan to examine how labour and land relations changed *when labour was massively mobilised for these commodity frontiers*. I will also ask the question *how* it was mobilised. Much of the capital needed for plantation expansion, for instance, came from local sources, which indeed suggests that the commodity frontiers in the Global South financed themselves to a large extent. Overall, a staggering demand for labour must have led to tremendous social change, taking labour from the household economies to the market economies, which impinged particularly on female labour. At the same time the effects may have been highly differentiated in terms of land and labour relations as well as ecological effects. The aim of the project is therefore also to do justice to this diversity rather the “homogenizing” the Global South.

The expertise of the IISH plays a very specific and crucial role in this research project. For a comparative study of changing labour relations and particularly the commodification in the Global South, we can draw on the structured data of the “Global Collaboratory on the History of Labour Relations” at the IISH. It has developed a “Taxonomy of Labour Relations” and a method to collect data on labour relations that comprises all kinds of work, including work for the household and home-stead, the family firm or farm, and self-employment in the so-called informal sector. At present, the IISH holds data for the benchmark years 1800 and 1900 for most countries in Asia, Western Europe and the Americas and is still in the process of further expansion. This data is further specified by gender, ethnic groups, regions and often economic sectors as well.

This unique Global Collaboratory allows us to demonstrate how our contemporary world is based on the vast mobilisation of labour and the resulting changes within households. It also enables us to show how macro-inequalities were linked to micro-inequalities at household level. Thus, we aim to present for the first time a comprehensive analysis of the immense transformative effects of commodity frontiers that fed the rise of early industrial capitalism.



Professor Dr. Ulbe Bosma is Senior Researcher at the International Institute for Social History (IISH) and Professor of International Comparative Social History at the VU University of Amsterdam. The endowed chair covers empirical research into labour and labour relations, from a comparative social historical and geographical perspective. He was guest researcher at the BCDSS from August to November 2023. His main fields of interest are the histories of labour, international labour migration, and commodity frontiers.



PhD researcher Hanna te Velde scrolling through the IISH archives. [©]IISHG

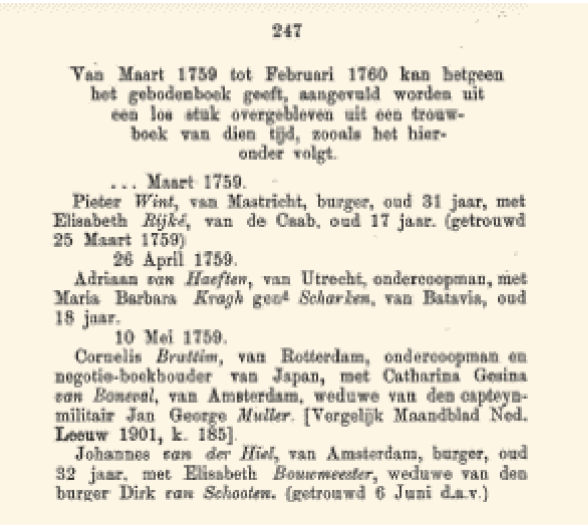
UPWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY IN THE EARLY MODERN DUTCH COLONIAL EMPIRE

by Hanna te Velde

My first encounter with the International Institute of Social History was in 2019 while working as a student assistant for the research project 'Resilient Diversity'. I got to know the institute as a center of knowledge, as well as a place to easily meet interesting people from its research and collection departments. In 2019, I was responsible for the indexation of court records of the Dutch East and West India Companies (VOC and WIC). These archival materials are very interesting sources, among other reasons because they contain a wealth of information on processes and actors in and beyond (Dutch) colonial establishments that have left almost no historical traces. Nevertheless, the access to these colonial records is difficult and time-consuming. The indexing of the court records helped to solve this issue.

The diverse stories of people before the VOC and WIC courts inspired me and I was able to use them while writing several papers during my Masters in Colonial and Global History at Leiden University. Later on, I wrote a PhD-research proposal together with IISH-researchers Matthias van Rossum and Ulbe Bosma, with the court records as main body of sources. This proposal turned into the four-year project 'Colonial Girl Power', focusing on the socio-economic position of women in the early modern Dutch empire. Using court records, baptismal registers and last wills, it is my goal to study the many, various ways in which women tried to improve their positions. Several colonial cities in the Indian Ocean and Atlantic Ocean will serve as case studies. The examples in this article derive from Batavia (nowadays Jakarta, Indonesia) and Paramaribo (Suriname).

Examples of female upward mobility can frequently be found in the colonial archives. VOC-sources featuring Elizabeth Rijke in the second half of the 18th century serve as an interesting example. Elizabeth's first entry in the colonial archives of Batavia was in 1759, when she married the 31-year old burgher Pieter Wint of Maastricht at the age of 17.

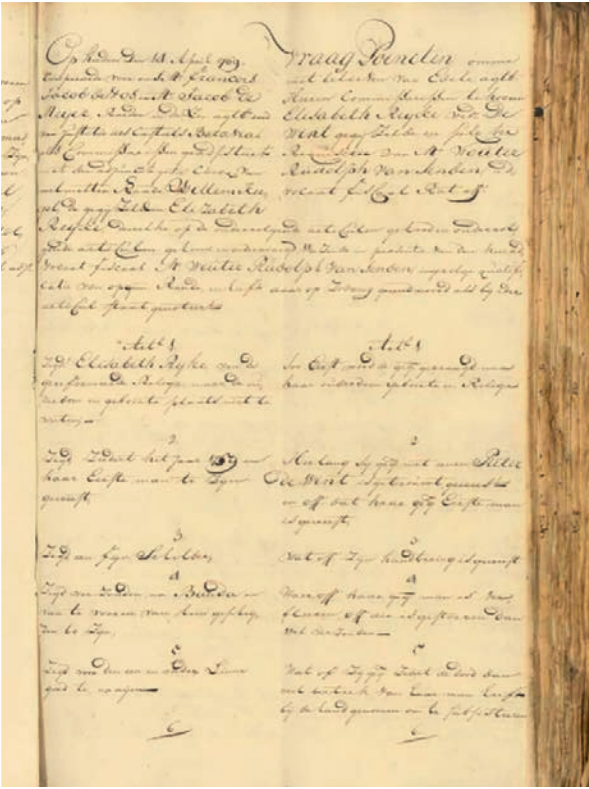


Marriage register Batavia, 1718-1807

Elizabeth is described as 'van de Caab' in this marriage record. This means she had traveled from the Dutch Cape Colony in Southern Africa to Batavia. Her geographical last name is an indication of a background in slavery since these kinds of names were often given to enslaved men and women to note from which place they were transported to Batavia. Having arrived in Batavia, Elizabeth lived in the house of an anonymous gentleman, who later migrated back to the Dutch Republic. She probably worked in an enslaved position for this man. Perhaps he freed and baptized her upon his return to the patria, enabling Elizabeth to marry Pieter. Ten years later, in 1769, we come across Elizabeth again in a trial before the VOC-court of Batavia.



Nationaal Archief, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 9491, fl. 625-780 (1769).



Nationaal Archief, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 9470, fl. 465-514 (1762).

The VOC-clerks noted that Elizabeth was a widow at that time – it was quite common for Dutch men to die early in Southeast-Asia because of the unhealthy climate and dangerous work activities. In the interrogation of Elizabeth, we read that after the death of Pieter, Elizabeth had been able to retain her own house, just outside the city center of Batavia. She earned money by sewing linen and renting out a room.

She no longer carried the slavery-stigma 'van de Caab' in her last name. Marrying a man with European status thus seems to have significantly improved Elizabeth's options, although we do not know to what extent the marriage was her own choice. Without the enslaved women who hid in Elizabeth's house and led to accusations of slave theft, we would not have known of her life. The limited records of Elizabeth in various colonial archives provide insight into the potential of an enslaved woman to achieve social and economic success in the brief period of ten years within the early modern Dutch colonial setting. In these ten years, she went from an enslaved girl to a widow with property and capital of her own. As quickly as Elisabeth rose in the hierarchical Batavian society, as quickly she would fall: she was charged guilty for slave kidnapping and the court sentenced her to a house of correction for women.

How did upward mobility work for the diverse women in the Dutch colonial empire? What were their options, and what decided their success? Below, I will draw

attention to unmarried women serving as concubines to European men.

CONCUBINAGE AS A MEANS TO ACHIEVE UPWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY

A marriage with a European man, like the one between Elizabeth and Pieter, was not a realistic option for most women in the lower strata of colonial societies. An omnipresent arrangement across the Dutch empire however, was (enslaved) concubinage. These sexual partnerships were often involuntary on the part of the woman. The Bonn-concept of 'asymmetrical dependency' is very relevant in this respect, because even 'free' non-enslaved women were not always in a position to change or leave their concubine situation without facing terrifying ramifications. Many women held socially unequal positions within the strictly hierarchical colonial societies, and consequently had to deal with various degrees of coercion.

Concubinage is mostly absent from court records: although it was not always permitted by colonial governments, it was mostly normalized. See for example the 1762-case against the enslaved Fortuijn of the Surinamese Reijnsfort coffee plantation. Scholtz, the director of the plantation, ordered Fortuijn to bring a certain enslaved woman to him in order to spend the night together.¹ When Fortuijn refused to carry out this command, he foresaw a serious punishment and consequently ran away. In Dutch South-East Asia, concubinage was equally established as on Scholtz' coffee plantation in Suriname. When for example the Batavian bookkeeper Johannes Hoffman was not content with his wife Elisabeth Sloot because he 'never found his food ready on time', he decided to take his housekeeper Leentje as his concubine.²

Although the court records mostly give an image of concubinage as a one-way transaction, for some women concubinage was a means of upward social mobility. It could for example lead to manumission for enslaved women if they could convince their partners to grant them freedom. Free women as concubines were able to build up capital through their informal relationships. These kinds of outcomes are often found in the last wills of European men, therefore giving us an interesting insight into concubinage. Last wills from the eighteenth-century from Batavia and Paramaribo have been well preserved and digitized. This allows for a comparison between random samples of circa 80 last wills for each city.³ An important finding is a clear gender bias in favor of female testatees, in Paramaribo as well as in Batavia, i.e. when a male testator entrusted a (single, non-family) person with (a part of his) inheritance. This happened to be a woman in the majority of last wills. In other words, for single women, most of whom with a background in slavery, it was an effective

strategy to establish ties with European men. Details in the last wills show that these ties were primarily sexual in nature. Take for example the Surinamese testament of Anton Blom, drawn in September 1780 upon his return to the Dutch Republic. He was an unmarried resident of Paramaribo. A small part of his fortune (25 guilders) was donated to the Dutch reformed church of Suriname, while the largest part (600 guilders and three enslaved men and women) was given to the pregnant, non-enslaved *carboeserin* Miriam Mussaphia. A few months after Blom's departure, Miriam gave birth to a boy named Jan Blom.⁴ This clearly indicates that extramarital relations could result among others in a more secure financial status.

Two critical notes should be made while analyzing concubinage patterns in last wills. First, one should not overestimate the agency of women in extramarital relations. Nevertheless, it would be too one-sided to believe all women in these situations were passive; to a certain extent, they probably could exert influence over their social relations. Second, one should be aware of the contents of the last wills: they show us the situations in which women were appointed as testatees. Many women, however, never appeared in last wills because they lacked the chance to engage with European men. The thousands of enslaved women at remote plantations, for instance, were not in the vicinity of European households and consequently had to resort – if possible – to other tactics. Still, the last wills enable us to obtain a better view of how unmarried women in diverse situations could improve their socio-economic position.



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¹Please find all footnotes in "notes & pictures credits" at the back of the magazine.

The image shows two pages of a historical ledger from the Amsterdam Assurantie Compagnie. The left page is folio 158, dated 1776, and the right page is folio 159, dated 1777. The entries are handwritten in Dutch and include names, dates, and financial figures. The ledger is organized into columns for various financial details, including premiums and losses.

Ledger extract of the Amsterdam Assurantie Compagnie, from: SAA, Assurantie Compagnie van 1771 N.V., 556, 59, folio 158.

A STUDY INTO THE
AMSTERDAM ASSURANTIE
COMPAGNIE OF 1771 AND ITS
INVOLVEMENT IN THE SLAVE-
ECONOMY, 1771-1871:

SLAVERY INSURED

by Eva Seuntjens



Eva Seuntjens is a PhD researcher at the International Institute for Social History and the Free University of Amsterdam. She holds a Bachelor's and Master's degree in North American Studies from Radboud University in Nijmegen. She recently completed her second MA in History: Politics, Culture and National Identities at Leiden University. Her current project focuses on the role of the Dutch insurance industry in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century slave-economy.

The way in which Dutch society has come to understand its colonial past is in full swing. According to Kwame Nimako and Glenn Willemsen (PlutoPress, 2011) it was not so long ago that the pervasive myth of slavery – which many believed happened a long time ago, was far away, and did not affect Dutch society – was still very strong. However, many activist and scholarly attempts have been made to overcome the forgetfulness and to redress this distorted image that has prevailed for far too long. The preparations for the commemorative year 2023, celebrating 150 years of de facto emancipation, have set this process in full motion. In December 2022, Prime Minister Mark Rutte formally apologized for the Dutch state's involvement in slavery and promised to allocate 200 million euros to raise awareness of this past. Similarly, on July 1, 2023, King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands apologized and asked for forgiveness for the involvement of the Dutch Royal Family during the official commemoration. Both were landmark events in the commemoration of slavery in the Netherlands. While many people now have a basic understanding that slavery did indeed have a major impact on Dutch society, it is up to historians to show in what specific ways it did so.

This particular research explores the ways in which the Dutch insurance industry financed the slave-economy in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Since the abolition of Dutch slavery in the West Indian colonies in 1863, government officials have actively sought to whitewash its history. Against this backdrop, it is perhaps all the more remarkable that entire corporate archives with undeniable links to slavery have survived.

Nowadays, historians find sources that meticulously and comprehensively show how these companies financed and profited from slavery. In the current socio-political climate, many companies feel the need to face their own colonial past.

The project "Slavery Insured: A study into the *Amsterdam Assurantie Compagnie* of 1771 and its involvement in the slave-economy, 1771-1781", derives from such a need. It focuses on the involvement of the predecessor of Nationale Nederlanden Group NV, one of the largest Dutch insurance companies, and its involvement in the slave trade and slave related economy. In Dutch historiography, a major lacuna exists still when it comes to the involvement of the Assurantie Compagnie, its founders, and directors. This project aims to answer the questions regarding how and to what extent the Assurantie Compagnie was involved in the slave trade and slave-economy, and what the consequences of this involvement were for the enslaved, the company, and the owners and managers of the company. The nearly complete archive of the Assurantie Compagnie provides an opportunity to systematically examine how the company profited from slavery.

A quick glance at the ledgers immediately reveals the company's economic involvement in slavery. On July 23, 1778, Nicolaas Jan van Baggen took out an insurance policy with the Assurantie Compagnie on the "lives of enslaved persons" for an insured value of 20,000 guilders. He paid a premium of 3.5 percent, which meant that, after deducting a broker's fee of 50 guilders, the Assurantie Compagnie received a premium of 650 guilders (see image 1). Similarly, the firm Christiaan Cruijs & Zoon took out insurance on the lives of enslaved people in 1774, along with a cargo of sugar. Preliminary research shows that this latter type of involvement was more common than insuring enslaved people for the Assurantie Compagnie. Another example of the company's involvement shows Jan Wils' account, who took out an insurance for several plantations in Berbice, a former Dutch slave colony bordering Surinam. He renewed this insurance every year from 1772 to 1781 (see image 2). In 1771, Wils bought two plantations in Berbice named St. Elizabeth and Alexandria. It is possible that he took out the insurance for these plantations. In total, the Assurantie Compagnie received 11.850 guilders in premiums for these insurances. While these are just a few examples of how the Assurantie Compagnie profited from slavery, they are indicative of the company's – and the larger insurance industry's – involvement.

The Dutch insurance industry was involved in the entire production chain of the transatlantic slave trade. Insurance policies could be written for each individual step in the production process of the transatlantic slave trade.

First, the ships (the hulls), on which enslaved people and other goods were transported, could be insured. Then the enslaved people themselves were insured as part of the "cargo" during the journey from Africa to the West Indies. Occasionally, entire plantations were insured, including the materials, houses, and enslaved people on them. Finally, colonial products such as cotton, sugar, and coffee, produced by enslaved hands and transported to Europe were insured. Back in the Dutch Republic, fire insurance was taken out on the warehouses where colonial goods were stored.

Based on these different stages, this research identifies multiple forms of involvement in slavery. The insurance of key components of the slave-economy indicates direct involvement in slavery. The insurance of essential infrastructure of the slave-economy shows a different type of involvement. Finally, the Assurantie Compagnie and its directors invested in plantations, in plantation loans, and ships, which shows another indirect involvement in slavery. Although there were many different ways to get involved, the majority of them involved maritime trade.

Long-distance trade in general, and slave voyages in particular, were risky ventures where weather, piracy, and navigational instruments, cartography, and sandbanks could greatly affect the outcome. Slave journeys were especially dangerous because of the threat of revolt. Enslaved Africans did not board ships willingly, and they often vehemently resisted their enslavement: According to Karin Lurvink (Cambridge University Press, 2019), one in five to ten slave ships experienced a revolt. Resistance to slavery, however, could take many forms. Some enslaved captives jumped overboard, others starved themselves to death, mothers were known to kill their babies in order to save them from a terrible fate, and others resorted to violence. In order to manage some of these risks, insurance was purchased. But the loss of enslaved people was reimbursed by underwriters only under very specific conditions. Back in the Dutch Republic, insurance claims could cause legal hassle when underwriters and insureds tried to settle a claim after enslaved people had died.

Both underwriters and insureds profited from these slave-based insurances. For policyholders, it reduced the risk of potential capital loss, while for underwriters, the slave trade meant a source of income. The precise extent to which the Assurantie Compagnie profited from slavery needs further research.

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.



The Kayapó village in the southeastern Amazon in the state of Pará, Brazil. ©all images in the article: Taynã Tagliati

IN THE SOUTHEASTERN
AMAZON STATE OF PARÁ, BRAZIL

ETHNOGRAPHIC WORK AMONG THE MEBENGOKRÉ- KAYAPÓ INDIGENOUS GROUP

by Taynã Tagliati

“Fieldwork”, although commonly used in anthropology, is not the term I find most appropriate to refer to my stays in the Kayapó villages and their surroundings. Instead, ethnographic work seems to me to be less susceptible to the already well-established divisions in science between “field” and “office”. The Kayapó village is not a field in the sense that the scientist goes and collects “samples” or data. The village is where people and more-than-humans live, establish and disestablish relationships, produce kinship and familiarize plants and animals. Thus, understanding the place where people live and think as a territory in a depersonalized, uprooted and objective way, as the term “field” does, doesn’t seem to do justice to what the Kayapó *emplacement* actually is. Therefore, when referring to this important part of my research, I use the terms “ethnographic work” or “practice”.

Since 2021, I have carried out approximately nine months of ethnographic work among the Mebengokré-Kayapó indigenous group, who today inhabit the southeastern Amazon in the state of Pará, Brazil.

The region is marked by socio-environmental conflicts, and the disappearance or murder of environmental leaders and activists is a common problem. The most urgent (socio-environmental) issues for both the local population and biodiversity are related to fires and mining. The fires usually start in August/September and last until November or the end of the dry season, and their purpose is to make room for pasture where cattle are placed, which in turn will mainly feed the market in China and Europe. Mining, on the other hand, consists of illegal and “artisanal” mining, which, as well as creating various social problems and bringing diseases to the indigenous people through contact with miners, pollutes the rivers with highly toxic substances, the main one being mercury.

Although mining is prohibited within indigenous territory, miners are constantly invading land and poisoning rivers and people. Even though both ranching and mining are highly lucrative activities, the region is extremely short of the most basic public services, such as bus lines, roads, hospitals, sanitation, etc. To complete this mosaic, the region is surrounded by immense indigenous territories homologated by the Federation as demarcated indigenous lands for indigenous use only. This is the local context of the region where I have spent nine months of the last two years making annual visits. In this report, I will focus only on my last stay in the Kayapó Indigenous Land, between May and June 2023.



Annatto fruits being prepared to have its seeds taken and cooked to transform into a paste.

Living in a Kayapó village opens up and sensitizes all the body’s senses. It’s no coincidence that the indigenous people have such sophisticated senses. There is a certain degree of synesthesia in painting one’s face with annatto paste (*bixa orellana*), where the sweet, ochre scent of the seed is inseparable from its characteristic color, a vibrant orangey earth-red. The dye extracted from the genipap and mixed with water and charcoal also perfumes and embellishes Kayapó bodies, endowing them with a sweet, soft smell in combination with the body painting of psychedelic graphisms that imitate the bodies of animals and other beings. Body painting blurs the vision of spirits that cause illness, which is why children are always painted.



Hand application of genipap ink.

Constant activities in my ethnographic work involve collecting and transforming the fruits that give rise to annatto and genipap. Couples often go in search of the genipap fruit, which for painting purposes should never be ripe. But when eaten ripe, genipap slightly numbs the tongue. We recently went into the forest to collect *bàri pra ô* (*Casearia sylvestris* Sw.) bark, which is removed from the trunk by hitting it firmly and gently with a hammer. The bark is then burnt and, now in charcoal form, mixed with genipap seeds to become a dye that penetrates the skin and stays for up to two weeks. Human skin and tree bark mix and generate the cosmopolitical Kayapó body, one that absorbs, encompasses and appropriates the bodies of other

beings to compose itself. The body that uses more-than-human qualities to deceive the spirits and please the eye. In the village I learned that Kayapó bodies are sometimes half tree, half tortoise, half fish, half jaguar, half beings from other societies. These various parts, added to practices that are too numerous to mention here, compose an entirely Kayapó body.



Removing the bark of bàri pra ô (*Casearia sylvestris* Sw.).

When we go hiking in the forest, my adoptive parents hear very distant sounds and identify exactly where they come from: "a monkey is hitting the Brazil nut shell on the rocks", "a peccary is running". Doing ethnography with them requires a re-education of the body and its senses, it requires listening, smelling, feeling the forest carefully and making sense of what you listen, smell and feel. It means using the body as a means of apprehending and comprehending the territory. A good sense of smell should be able to identify the therapeutic qualities of vines, leaves and barks. When we don't know a plant species we come across along the way, I learned from my Kayapó father to take a sample of the bark and smell it. The smell tells us about the essence of beings and what illnesses that species can cure. It is from the smell that the Kayapó are able to identify which animals passed through that area earlier.

Documentation is not the strong point of my ethnographic research, although it is present. Every amateur anthropologist knows the importance of a field diary and detailed daily notes. At first, I wrote in my notebook every day, but I realized that the notebook is a great marker of differences between me and the Kayapó, and this difference was often shown through asymmetrical power relations. Therefore, I gradually abandoned the notebook, and in the end, I used it to write down words and phrases in the indigenous language and occasionally to write a sentence or



The making of beads ornaments is an extremely important female practice.



Conducting an ethnographic interview.

two about something important I had seen or heard. This freed me to take part in important activities, such as accompanying the women in washing clothes, dishes and bathing in the river and making bead ornaments with them. Despite this, I spent many hours interviewing and recording stories. The exercise of orality is central to the Kayapó, and most of the time when I wanted to do an interview, the interviewee would start telling a story. I therefore have more oral histories than interviews.

Another important point in ethnographic practice is the relationship with food. During my last month in the village, in June this year, my husband accompanied me. Because he is married to me, he became part of the fictitious kinship relationships I was already in, since I was "adopted" in the literal sense. Hence, I referred to people in the village as father, mother, sister or whichever form would fit that relationship. However, my husband's relationship with the community was not yet concrete. On his third day, a wild boar was hunted and my partner transported the animal from the forest to the river and skinned it, following the recommendations of his father-in-law - my father - who told him how to do it. From then on, my husband was often invited to go fishing with my brothers, because he had shown that he was capable of feeding others or taking part in food production. Fishing became a constant activity, though always in small quantities.

We rarely eat alone in an indigenous village. I am not referring to the fact that meals are collective, but to the fact that one person is always feeding others. When I ate Brazil nuts, I learned to throw some on the ground for the macaws. When I ate fruit, I left the peel and some parts for the parakeets and parrots. When an animal is killed, the internal organs are left for the dogs. I was naively educated in these practices by a peccary. On a visit to the neighboring village, I was eating cocoa fruit when I saw a banana tree and decided to cut off a bunch. I left the cocoa for a few moments on the ground, took the machete and cut the banana bunch. When I went to pick up my cocoa, a peccary was eating it. I learned at that moment that you usually share your food with animals, who often grow up eating the same food that humans eat.

The concretization of this ethnography depended on several factors, but the most important was the indigenous receptivity. Without my interlocutors accepting my presence there as a researcher, and without them fictitiously adopting me as their daughter, sister, etc.,

my work would not have been possible. So, in order to do my research, I get involved in a series of asymmetrical bonds and relationships, where the gift is always accompanied by the social obligation to reciprocate. I don't know if I will ever be able to adequately retribute everything the Kayapó have done for me and all the doors and windows they have opened. I see the ethnographic enterprise as a lifelong commitment and responsibility.



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She is interested in anthropological theory, Amazonian ethnographies, flow and circulation of things and relations with more-than-human beings. Her project addresses visualizing social processes lived by the Kayapó, from the moment of contact with Brazilian society up until contemporary days. While considering the indigenous narratives and points of view, she explores how Kayapó establishes relations to more-than-humans and how such relations influence these processes and contact to the non-indigenous society.



Being accepted and incorporated into the Kayapó village.



The official flag designed for the "150 years of Indian immigration in Suriname" celebrations. All images of the article by ©Sinah Kloß 2023

ALL MONEY SPENT – CELEBRATING “150 YEARS OF INDIAN IMMIGRATION” IN SURINAME

by Sinah Kloß

"Everything has become so expensive since Corona. It's no longer enough for me to do my job at the food factory, so now I also drive taxi. But this is my private car. I work at the company from 10pm to 6am, then I go straight on. I drive some children to school and I have a few errands to run, but otherwise I wait for rides from the taxi office, like now," Sanjeet explains. We are standing in front of a red light on the still surprisingly empty streets of Paramaribo, the capital of Suriname, on this Monday morning in June 2023. It is not early in the morning and the shops in the center should open soon, we think. We set off timely to attend the celebrations commemorating "150 Years of Indian Immigration," which had been highly publicized for weeks, especially on social media.



The monument commemorating Indian indentured laborers in Paramaribo.

One hundred and fifty years ago, on 5 June 1873, the first Indian indentured laborers arrived in Suriname, then still a Dutch colony sometimes referred to as Dutch Guiana. They were supposed to work on the plantations for a five-year period under conditions that their descendants usually describe as "another form" or a "new kind" of slavery. Between 1873 and 1916, more than 34,000 indentured laborers were distributed to various plantations in Suriname, following a treaty between the Dutch colonial government and the British, who had already implemented the System of Indentureship in many British colonies since 1838. In total, about half a million Indian indentured laborers arrived in the Caribbean in this way. They were to fill the supposed lack of labor on the colonial plantations after the emancipation of enslaved Africans and the end of the apprenticeship system; or, more precisely, to minimize the cost of labor.

The ship that brought the first Indian indentured laborers to Suriname was called the *Lalla Rookh*, a well-known fact among the local Hindustani population. Even the museum that currently showcases Indo-Surinamese culture is called the Lalla Rookh Museum. The ship's name is also used with regard to other institutions such as the Surinamese National Foundation of Indian Immigration, which played a prominent role in preparing a program for the "150 Years of Indian Immigration" celebrations.

Driving by, it is not yet necessarily obvious that the big celebrations will take place on this day. Occasionally, you can see billboards along the road advertising cultural shows and performances at an event center not far from the city. Slowly arriving in the city center, on the other hand, the preparations are already visible: some streets are decorated with Surinamese and Indian flags and an archway has been erected at the indentured laborer monument, framed with a Surinamese flag as a kind of curtain. Fresh *malas* – flower garlands – adorn the memorial, although this is the norm and not a special preparation on this occasion, to be frank.

Later in the evening, a large parade will take place, featuring a diverse array of associations and organizations. They have spent several weeks preparing floats that thematically highlight various aspects of what is currently understood as part of Indian culture in Suriname. Most of the floats have been created by religious organizations, so it is not surprising that many of the scenes center around themes from the Hindu epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. However, there are also overarching theme floats: one that stands out is a performer dressed in *khadi*, the hand-spun cloth promoted during Indian nationalist struggles for independence, staging a hip-swinging and very rhythmically agile Mahatma Gandhi to loud Indian music.



An exhibition honoring the culture of Hindustanis in Nickerie.





Impressions of the parade in the city center of Paramaribo.

The parade will take place in rainy weather due to the persistent rainy season at this time of year. As a result, it is unlikely that it will live up to the full spectacle we had anticipated for such an event. Colorful umbrellas will mingle with Caribbean music, including *chutney* – a Caribbean style of music that draws on traditional Indian songs or Bollywood film music, overlaid with a fast, danceable soca or calypso beat. Snacks and drinks will be sold, people will sing and dance cheerfully. However, the limited crowd may not only be a result of the rainy season, but also reflect the divided opinion of the Surinamese population about the celebrations: the vast majority of those present will see themselves as part of the descendants of Indian indentured laborers and therefore as belonging to the group of "Hindustanis." The diversity of the Surinamese population – people who identify as Creole, Maroon, Javanese, Indigenous and Chinese, for example – will hardly be seen among the audience on the streets on this day.

Neither, of course, does the Indian community represent a unified group, nor has it ever done so at any point in Surinamese history. The existence of different event locations for the 150th anniversary celebrations may reveal competing interests within the community. Each planned series of events has been facing criticism in advance from the various Hindustani perspectives and groups: one celebration is predicted to be "pure money-making," as each *roti* – a particular bread filled with split peas central to Hindustani food and identity in Suriname – has usually "cost a fortune there" during earlier events of the same organizers, says a Hindustani woman on Facebook; "it is impossible to visit with a family." Another "150 Years" event in the rural area of Nickerie is considered to be a purely political event, being held at the local party headquarters of the current ruling VHP, which most Surinamese commonly identify as "Hindustani." "People who vote differently are not welcome there," we hear several times.

"I will have to work," Sanjeet tells us when we enquire where best to go, "to pay for the always-increasing electricity prices and the horrendous food costs." He

simply cannot afford to take a day off, even if it is an official holiday in the country. Another taxi driver had told us the same: he could choose to do without a "little luxury like his fridge" and catch up on some sleep, or work. High inflation and everyday things, which have become unaffordable to many Surinamese especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, dominate our small talk and conversations during this research trip.

The urgency of the strenuous situation for the majority of the population was evident already shortly before we left for Suriname: in February 2023, there were violent protests about the increasing costs of living, and the National Assembly in Paramaribo was stormed. The demonstrators accused the government of President Chan Santokhi, who took office in 2020, of corruption and demanded its resignation.

Sanjeet turns into a narrow street of the old town, where a Christian church built in colonial times still dominates the scene, not far from the presidential palace. Here is one of the few ATM machines where we usually withdraw cash. For the last few weeks, however, the ATM in the rural area has been consistently declining to dispense cash with any of our credit or debit cards. We try this point of usual cash flow, this safe haven that has served us well in previous years. Again, today, this machine only offers us a receipt with the statement that the "Transaction cannot be processed." We realize we have roughly 150 Euros for the remainder of our stay, seven days, including all travel expenses, even to the airport, an hour's drive away, and including the locally disproportionately expensive items such as diapers for our toddler. 6,000 Suriname Dollars. This is roughly the minimum amount that another taxi driver, Michael, calculated as the necessary to cover living expenses for a month.

"He just flies around, and never is in Suriname," Michael had told us. That was a few days earlier, when we had still been in Nickerie, in the border region of Guyana and Suriname. "How is Santokhi ever going to change anything here? He flies around neatly, carelessly, around

the world, Netherlands, USA, inviting everyone he likes." But who would ultimately pay for this jet-setting, he asked.

Even the President of India has come to celebrate the 150 Years Celebrations in Paramaribo. She is to give a speech on the aforementioned 5 June. Posters and flags announce her visit, which was not only critically but often proudly announced to us by Hindustanis, even those in Nickerie who would not have a chance to see her except on TV.

Leaving the ATM booth somewhat perplexed, we are back in the taxi with Sanjeet. As it is a national holiday, there is no contact person at the bank to enquire about the reason for our continuous problem, which, as we are to find out later, also affected several other international visitors. I briefly tell Sanjeet about our

problems, highlighting that it has never been an issue on any of my previous research stays in Suriname.

Sanjeet taps his fingers on the steering wheel while we think about what to do next. The big celebrations do not start before late afternoon. The shops in town are closed, and apart from that, we would have no money to buy anything in the first place.

"They spent all the money on '150 Years,'" Sanjeet laughs. He disguises his voice as he pronounces 150 years. "No more money in the banks. All gone. Spent all of Suriname's money." We all laugh, but it is not a hearty laugh. We head back to the flat, in a taxi we can still afford, to wait a little for the "big celebrations" and enjoy the small luxury of our fridge, which is not boasting with food but still stocked at this point.



A performer stages a dancing Mahatma Gandhi during the parade.



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The Island of Bau from a Dinghy
©all pictures by David Brandon Smith

REFLECTIONS ON THE 2023 GLOBAL INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY AT THE PACIFIC THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE IN SUVA, FIJI ENDURING DEPENDENCIES AND RELATIONAL HERMENEUTICS

by David Brandon Smith

In a world dominated by the impulse to equate big with better, the humble dimensions of the Island of Bau (pronounced 'mBa.u') might obscure its formative role in the history of Fiji and the broader Pacific. Still accessible only by boat and invitation, before Fiji's cession to British colonial administration in 1874, the island served as a hub from which the short-lived Kingdom of Fiji (1871-1874) derived high-chiefly power. More recently, in September 1982, it was the residence of HM Queen Elizabeth II when she visited Fiji to open a session of the Great Council of Chiefs. In 2023, the island hosted the first meeting of the newly re-established Great Council of Chiefs (*Bose Levu Vakaturaga*).



The Pacific Theological College presents a banner made of Fijian masi to the Global Institute of Theology

Bau became Christian upon the conversion of Ratu/Vunivalu (High Chief) Seru Epenisa Cakubau (c. 1815-1883) in 1854. The Island's central church, Ratu (Chief) Cakubau Memorial Church (Methodist), dedicated to the chief king's memory, continues to serve the spiritual needs of the island's three villages (Bau, Lasakau, and Soso). Completed in 1859, it is the oldest church building in Fiji. As its Gothic arches hint, the structure was built by an English contractor from Cornwall. Its walls, which approach a meter in thickness, were made from the repurposed stones of pre-Christian temples. The foundation of such a temple can still be seen under the meeting house. Its main posts are held in place by the bodies of war captives, who are said to have been buried alive while holding the posts in place as a foundational offering to the gods.

It is said that when Ratu Cakubau made his way across the humble field from the old temple to the new church – from his old life to a new life in Christ – he described it as "the longest walk of his life." By then, Cakubau was already something like a *primus inter pares* among Fijian chiefs and asserted his kingship over the islands, which prompted revolts. After he defeated his rivals at the Battle of Kaba in 1855, custom dictated that he slay and eat them, but he pardoned them instead.

Reflecting such traditions and their re-conceptualization during the period of Christianization, before the hole was carved out of the top of the church's baptismal font to hold water for the Christian sacrament, it formed the central element of another ritual. Indeed, the stone that now serves as the island's baptismal font was once the high chief's killing stone. When the mighty warriors of Bau returned from battle, they would bring back captives, place their heads on the stone, and crush them with a war club. In many cases, the warriors would then eat the victims. Yet, with Cakubau's permission, missionaries John Hunt (1812-1848 – residing on nearby Viwa Island) and James Calvert (1813-1892), who

ministered on Bau, remade the stone – a weapon of war and violence – into a symbol of peace and eternal life.

The story of Bau's Christianization is much more complicated than can be shared in this brief article– it is characterized by both presumably genuine spiritual rebirth and the practice of *realpolitik*. The unsettling (at least to outsiders) remaking of the killing stone into a baptismal font also foreshadowed the complex but far less sentimental remolding of Fijian life that would take place during the next ninety-six years of colonial administration. The turmoil that followed in the decades after its independence and establishment as the Republic of Fiji also attests to the legacy of colonialism, indentured labor, forced migration, and integration, as well as the endurance of asymmetrical dependencies. While life on Bau would remain relatively untouched in the tumult of the post-colonial era– according to my incredibly generous host on the island, one of the most defining 'modernizations' was bringing running water to the Island in the 1960s– Fiji would step into a complex area of upheaval and breakdown of the political process, even as the nation's people held fast to the promise of a better future.

I sojourned to Bau in the summer of 2023 with a delegation from the Global Institute of Theology (GIT) of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), which was hosted by the Pacific Theological College in Suva, Fiji from 15 to 30 June. The GIT invites a select number of emerging theologians, scholars, and church leaders from around the world and across the Reformed communion (representing approximately 100 million members worldwide) to gather for a period of intensive study and reflection. The theme for this year's GIT was 'Unsettling the Word in an Unsettled World.'

In addition to several 'Ecumenical Excursions,' including the extended (though still too brief) stay on the Island of Bau, participants explored topics ranging from



Ratu Cakubau Memorial (Methodist) Church



Meeting house atop the ruins of a pre-Christian Fijian temple



Entrance to the PTC's main building



Baptismal font of the church

'earth-bound preaching' and ecological hermeneutics to decolonial readings of the parables of Jesus, new approaches to Christian worship practices that employ a "search for the useable past" (inspired by the phrase of Reformed feminist theologian Letty Russell), and a reflection on historic Reformed patterns of ecclesiastical discernment through the lens of social analysis. The GIT's intense focus on the practice of preaching also gave rise to courses that emphasized the need to 'unsettle preaching spaces,' learn from 'womanist preaching to unsettle oppressions,' and explore the role of theology in interpreting and giving voice to the real-life challenges faced by people, communities, and the planet.

Participants put what they learned into practice in daily 'preaching labs.' In the labs, which were hosted in the Islander Missionaries Memorial Chapel at PTC, each participant preached a sermon that was then evaluated by the faculty and participants through the lens of the course materials outlined here. This experience was stressful for some; Indeed, for those of us who had to do 'preaching labs' in seminary, it may have evoked memories of overly harsh critiques. Nevertheless, the labs, which became a nexus of fellowship and camaraderie, challenged participants to put words to what they were learning and ground those insights in communal readings of a shared biblical tradition.

One of the most memorable classes at this year's GIT focused on approaches to theological discourse that have arisen out of Pacific contexts. The concept of 'relational hermeneutics,' which is being pioneered by the faculty of the Pacific Theological College, points a path forward for ecumenical dialogue in the face of enduring asymmetrical dependencies. In addition to drawing on indigenous knowledge that was supplanted by the arrival of Christianity in Fiji, these scholars of the Pacific and the church are charting a path forward that actively maneuvers to glimpse hidden stories of resistance and resilience in the past while simultaneously celebrating the wisdom gleaned from a global faith.

Relational hermeneutics is directed not only at the contextually relevant interpretation (or re-interpretation/counter-reading) of biblical narratives but also at exegesis of the context of the readers, focusing on respectful dialogue and face-to-face exchange between readings of the Bible, the global Christian tradition, and Pacific contexts. Relational hermeneutics thus calls for "the production of transformative possibilities and meanings."¹ The approach embodies a re-evaluation of theological education in a Pacific context and more thoughtful engagement with how theological, historical, sociological, and mixed-methods research can be rethought as "relational spaces" amid the promotion of a "new Pacific research paradigm." This proposed methodological and conceptual shift even calls for relational



An image of Ratu Cakubau still presides over the assembly hall of the Great Council of Chiefs on Bau

approaches to international development policies that prioritize mutuality, resilience, and sustainability.²

The paradigm shift advocated not only by relational hermeneutics but the broader work of the GIT and the WCRC invites scholars of asymmetrical dependency to reflect not only on how the complex history of places like Bau, with its counterpointal histories of violence, colonization, power, peace, faith, and belonging shape our understanding of history and contemporary relationships. Perhaps relational hermeneutics also challenges those who would attest to the enduring presence of strong asymmetrical dependencies across time and space to imagine a world without them – a world defined by relationships of mutuality and forbearance, of abundance and equitable distribution, of something like freedom and something like peace – a world where relationality, if not true symmetry, is possible between different actors.

Far from obscuring the scholar's view of lived realities, relational hermeneutics invites us to join with others in imagining the world as it *could* be rather than simply describing it as we think it is. Even the historians among us might find that, in learning from advocates of this evolving approach, we will develop more commonalities with the figures, events, and developments we scrutinize than we first thought possible. Such a move would be unsettling on both a methodological and a disciplinary level, but perhaps it is time that the unsettledness of the

world, society, history, and human relationships be better reflected in our assessments of the disciplines, fields, and discourses we represent.



David B. Smith

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

¹ Please find all footnotes in "notes & pictures credits" at the back of the magazine.

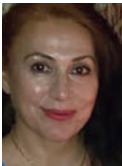
NEWS

NEW AT THE CLUSTER

Guests



Prof. Dr. Ulbe Bosma
International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam
08/23 - 11/23
Commodity Frontiers and Social Transformations (1816-1870)



Prof. Dr. Behnaz Mirzai
Brock University, Canada
07/23 - 09/23
Narrative of the life of Mahboob: An enslaved African in Iran



Prof. Dr. Luis Rosenfield
Pontificia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS), Brazil
10/23
Brazilian eugenics: philosophical foundations, intellectual networks and institutional development



Dr. Emmanuel Saboro
University of Cape Coast, Ghana
09/23 - 10/23
Visuality and Metaphors of Slavery in Ghana

New Fellows



Prof. Dr. John Agbonifo
Osun State University, Nigeria
07/23 - 12/23
Labour Relations between Monarchy and the Bronze Guild in Ancient Benin Empire



Dr. Cătălina Andricioaei
10/23 - 09/24
Domestic and Romani and non-Romani wives' denunciations in socialist Romania (1970-1989)



Daphné Budasz
European University Institute, Florence, Italy
10/23 - 03/24
Cross-cultural Intimacy, Imperial Migration and Race in British East Africa (1895-1930)



Sara Eriksson
University of California, Berkeley, US
10/23 - 03/24
The Average Person – Looking for Enslaved Labor at Hellenistic Kalaureia



Prof. Dr. Natalie Joy
Northern Illinois University, US
10/23 - 09/24
Native Americans and the American Antislavery Movement



Dr. Doris Léon Gabriel
10/2023-09/2024
Being cholo/chola in a criollo world. Cultural changes and social exclusion among Andean youth in Peruvian elite spaces



Prof. Dr. Luz Adriana Maya-Restrepo
Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia
10/23 - 09/24
African and Afro-Caribbean Women in the Court of the Inquisition in Cartagena de Indias, 17th-18th Centuries



Prof. Dr. Nigel Penn
University of Cape Town, South Africa
10/23 - 01/24
Slavery and unfree labour in the Roggeveld, Cape Colony, South Africa, c. 1750-1900



Dr. Cheikh Sene
10/23 - 12/23 and 07/24 - 09/24
Women and Slavery in Senegambia: When Gender and Identity Determine Social Position (15th-19th Century)



Prof. Dr. Sarah Zimmerman
Western Washington University, US
10/23 - 06/24
Slaves, Citizens, and Custodians of World Heritage on Gorée Island

New at the Management Team



Dr. Beatrix Hoffmann-Ihde
Exhibition Curator
Coordination of content, realization and implementation of the Cluster Exhibition (2024/2025).



WHO IS WHO AT THE BCDSS MANAGEMENT TEAM



www.dependency.uni-bonn.de/en/people/management



Emily Mutota and Beatrix Hoffmann-Ihde in a zoom discussion with Namibian partners about objects of their cultural heritage, stored at the depot of the Museum Natur und Mensch, Freiburg ©Tina Brüdert, 2021.

MEET OUR NEW CURATOR: DR. BEATRIX HOFFMANN-IHDE



©Beatrix Hoffmann-Ihde

In September 2023, I took over from my predecessor Wolfer Stumpfe as curator of the BCDSS closing exhibition. I am a scholar of Ancient American Studies and Cultural Anthropology. My special interest lies in the different aspects of material culture of indigenous groups in South America, particularly in the Amazon region and the Peruvian Central Coast in pre-Columbian times. Among other things, I have examined the transcultural processes that occur in *contact zones* between indigenous and European actors.

I have long combined my studies of material culture with my passion for museum ethnology. I am dedicated to developing and testing methods of de-colonization in order to make museums more transparent and accessible as places that produce and communicate knowledge. I am particularly interested in museums with ethnographic collections in their holdings, because as institutions of societies in the Global North, they preserve cultural heritage at a great spatial distance from its original societies. My very personal concern is to contribute to a reduction of the asymmetrical relationships between museums in the Global North and indigenous source communities and/or local societies in the Global South.



Aymawale Opoya and Palanaiwa Akajuli from the French Guayana's Wayana community assess ethnographic objects from the Wayana collection at Linden-Museum Stuttgart. ©Beatrix Hoffmann-Ihde, 2018.

The experience I gained from conducting participatory research with representatives from indigenous and/or local communities on ethnographic collections across different museums was especially significant for me. The results could be incorporated into collaboratively developed exhibitions, such as the final exhibition of the project *Mensch-Ding-Verflechtungen Indigener Gesellschaften* ('Human-Thing Entanglements of Indigenous Societies') at the BASA Museum of the University of Bonn in 2018.

At the Ethnological Collection of the *Museum Natur und Mensch* ('Museum of Nature and Man') in Freiburg, I tested a hybrid, i.e. digital-analogue work on collection holdings together with partners from Namibia.

The project contributed to the exhibition *Freiburg und Kolonialismus: Gestern? Heute!* ('Freiburg and Colonialism: Yesterday? Today!') during my time as curator at the *Städtische Museen Freiburg* ('Municipal Museums of Freiburg') in 2022/23. Thematically and methodologically, the project was closely linked to the exhibition I am currently preparing for the BCDSS. In both exhibitions, the aim is/was to uncover *asymmetrical dependency relationships* and establish a critical connection to the everyday consumption behaviors of the Global North, where most visitors come from.

The closing BCDSS exhibition will be entitled ***Verstrickt und Verwoben: Texturen der Abhängigkeit/Enmeshed and Entwined: Fabrics of Dependency***. Using textiles as an example, i.e. their production, distribution and use, the exhibition is designed to showcase different manifestations and effects of *strong asymmetrical dependency relationships* in a manner that will appeal to a wide audience, despite



Aimawale Opoya, Malausi Tikilima, Palanaiwa Akajuli and Mataliwa Kuliyanan in front of an exhibition cabinet they had designed for the BASA-Museum at Bonn University. ©Beatrix Hoffmann-Ihde, 2018.

their heterogeneous knowledge background and different interests. It is also important to me to reveal the agency of people who are trapped in such *strong asymmetrical dependencies* and how they resist them.

Working on this exhibition is hugely inspiring. I myself have already learnt an enormous amount about *strong asymmetrical dependencies* in such a short space of time and I am extremely excited about the result, which we plan to present in October 2024. So watch out!

NEW LANGUAGE POLICY AT THE BCDSS

By Imogen Herrad,
BCDSS Translator and Language Editor

You will not be surprised when I tell you that English is an international language, not only in business and culture, but also in academia. Almost three quarters of all scholarly journals are in English.*¹ (As is, of course, this magazine, which is designed to be read and understood by as many people as possible.) But *which* English? Linguists have known for a long time that there are many co-existing Englishes – Singlish, Nigerian, Cypriot, and Jamaican Englishes, to name only a few. But the standard languages in international publishing are still American (AE) and British English (BE), while all other Englishes are regarded as divergent or non-standard.

The reason behind this Euro-American-centredness is not linguistic: American English is not 'more correct' than Pakistani or Australian English. It is economic: a legacy of the last two centuries during which European and North American countries colonized and exploited large parts of the rest of the world. The vast majority of academic publishers and journals – and *all* of the most influential and prestigious ones – are based in the Global North.² Half the market is dominated by just five academic publishers: Elsevier (The Netherlands), Black & Wiley (US), Taylor & Francis (UK), Springer Nature (Germany) and SAGE (US).³

This puts an unequal burden on scholars whose first language is not American or British English. Studies have shown that for them, writing can be not only more difficult and stressful, but also more time-consuming.⁴ Many scholars whose English is regarded as non-standard employ (and pay⁵) language editing services to 'standardize' their language. If they don't, they face an increased risk of rejection: academic writing in 'non-standard' English is more likely to be rated as poor by editors – regardless of the actual quality of the text.⁶

These facts motivated us to implement a new Language Policy. After much discussion between the Publications Team and BCDSS scholars in 2022, we composed the following text:

With its mission to explore phenomena of asymmetrical dependency, the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS) and its publications series work against forms of gatekeeping which may put obstacles in the way of scholarly work in English felt by some to be non-standard. The Center understands language to be intimately connected to power structures and strives to foster an awareness of epistemic dependencies resulting from linguistic dependencies. Given that language is multiply situated and constantly evolving, the editors of *Dependency and Slavery Studies* do not insist on conformity to the traditional binary standard Englishes (British and American). Our focus is on clarity and the communicative value of English as an international lingua franca. Authors are encouraged to write in their national or regional variety of English.

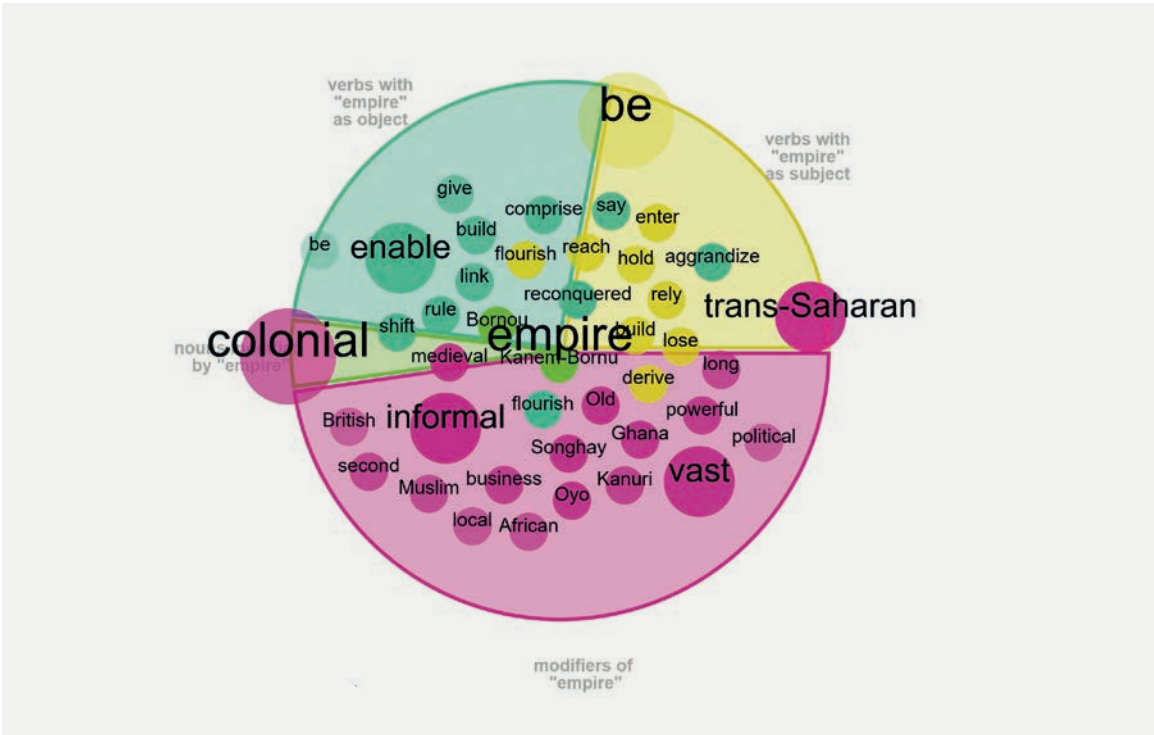
The policy initially only applied to our flagship publishing series, *Dependency and Slavery Studies*, but after further discussion we have now slightly updated and extended it to *all* BCDSS publications – including the *DEPENDENT Magazine*. That is why you might notice that in future issues, one article uses British spellings and grammar, the next is in Philippine English and the one after that in Canadian English.

You may wonder how we in the BCDSS Language Team – my colleague Kathryn Abaño and myself – now go about our work. We have been trained in the 'standard' Englishes (BE and AE), but what about the others? Have we suddenly become experts in World Englishes? Alas, we have not. But we can build on the work of linguists. The team behind the [International Corpus of English \(ICE\)](#)⁷ has been collecting material for comparative studies of English worldwide, and assembled corpora (i.e. very large collections of language as it is actually written, or spoken) of many Englishes. The ICE project includes East African, Hong Kong, Indian, Jamaican, New Zealand, Nigerian, Philippine and Singapore (Singlish) corpora. These corpora can be downloaded as text files from the ICE website, and accessed with a digital text analysis tool.

Say we get a paper by a Nigerian scholar in which we find a passage about which we are unsure, such as the use of 'Kanem Empire' and 'Kanuri Empire' without a definitive article. In BE or AE, we would write,

'the Roman Empire', 'the Kanuri Empire'. It is a feature of Nigerian English that articles are sometimes dropped. We find out by going to our text analysis tool, where we activate the Nigerian corpus and type in 'empire'. The tool searches through the 300,000 words in the corpus and shows the contexts in

which 'empire' is used. (If you want to get technical, this is a concordance search.) It gives us another two cases of 'empire' without definitive article, but many more where the article is used. So we add 'the' and move on.



A visualization of the results of our concordance search for the word "empire" in the corpus of Nigerian written English.

In addition, we keep an eye out for a new variant of English: ELFA, English as Academic Lingua Franca. Because in fact the largest community of speakers and writers of English are the internationals: non-native speakers who use it to communicate with each other. ELFA is ultimately the language most of us at the BCDSS use. It is a vehicle for communication. So when we in the BCDSS Language Team go through books and essays and articles, our top priorities are correctness – and clarity. We want readers to understand the texts. So sometimes we sacrifice a phrase that may be really nice and artistic, but that is also complicated. And occasionally we may amend a particular use of grammar that is perfectly correct in one variant of English – not to standardize or correct, but to make that sentence as clear as possible, for all readers.

It is still very much work in progress, and we learn as we go along. When we get it wrong (which sometimes we do), we hope that scholars understand.



Imogen Herrad
is translator and language editor at the BCDSS. She has lived in Berlin, London, Buenos Aires and Cardiff as a freelance writer and broadcaster, and currently works on a PhD thesis (in her spare time) about disobedience in ancient Sparta. Imogen has written an essay on decolonizing academic English, from which some of the passages in this article have been taken, for the volume "Invisibilized Agency," edited by Mònica Ginés-Blasi, which will be published in the BCDSS' *Dependency and Slavery Studies* series in 2024.

Thematic Focus 2023/2024:

RESEARCH AREA E:
GENDER AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Research Area E investigates dependencies associated with gender, sexuality, status, class, ethnicity, religion, age and other historical, anthropological, and representational aspects relevant to explaining differences among persons and human groups, both in past and present societies. It examines how the dynamic and overlapping relationships between categorical markers of social difference and their associated normativities entangle themselves with broader social structures, which create, consolidate, strengthen, perpetuate or undermine social dependencies, often at the expense of the discrimination, undervaluation and invisibilization of other collectives and individuals throughout history.

Research Area E sets the thematic focus for the BCDSS's activities in 2023/24, guiding the focus of intellectual content for:

(1) invited fellows taking up residency at the Heinz Heinen Kolleg, (2) the BCDSS Annual Conference, (3) speakers for the Joseph C. Miller Memorial Lectures (JCMML).

Research Area has put together a series of events with the thematic focus on Gender and Intersectionality:



FURTHER INFORMATION
ON RESEARCH AREA E



Impressions from the screening and conversation of "Paris is Burning" on 23 November 2023.



READING AND DISCUSSIONS

Impressions
from the Mareice
Kaiser evening

[Link to Youtube](#)



Moderated by Jeannine Bischoff, BCDSS General Manager, the event was part of our reading and discussion series (UN-)ABHÄNGIGE ANSICHTEN."

OUT NOW:



Watch our video of the reading and discussion event with journalist and writer Mareice Kaiser from 30 October 2023, held in cooperation with the Volkshochschule ('Adult Education Centre') Bonn.

Principal Investigator Karoline Noack and Jean-Pierre Schneider, Director of Caritas Bonn, queried Mareice Kaiser about the dependency relationships and feelings implicated with money, as described in her book "Wie Viel? Was wir mit Geld machen und was Geld mit uns macht" ('How much? What we do with money and what money does to us'), Rowohlt, 2022.

NEXT READING AND DISCUSSION

WITH ANNE HAEMING,
15 FEBRUARY 2024,
UNI BONN



The next reading and discussion event will feature Anne Haeming, the author of *Der gesammelte Joest. Biografie eines Ethnologen*, published by Matthes & Seitz Berlin in 2023.

Join Prof. Pia Wiegink and Postdoctoral Researcher Jennifer Leetsch on 15 February 2024 as they query the author on the creative processes involved in writing about Wilhelm Joest, a German 19th-century collector and founder of the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum collection in Cologne. The discussion will be held in English.

Further details will soon be published on our Readings & Discussion Website



BCDSS READINGS
AND DISCUSSIONS

Forthcoming: New DFG-Funded Project by Dr. Vitali Byl



African royal retainers in oriental costumes. Painting *Departure from Wilanów of Jan III and Marysieńka Sobieski*, by Józef Brandt, 1897. Public domain.

RACE AND FREEDOM:

AFRICANS IN THE POLISH- LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH ON THE EVE OF MODERNITY

Early modern proto-globalization greatly facilitated the movement of people across continents, including human trafficking for forced labor, and created new power structures in which social and racial differences were often intertwined. This shaped the modern concept of race and spread racist ideologies beyond the core regions of interaction. In this DFG-funded project, which will run from January 2024 to December 2026, Dr. Vitali Byl will explore the interracial encounters and their outcomes in pre-modern Europe, particularly in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a society that was a hinterland of the Atlantic economy while interacting with the Eurasian steppe and the Middle East.

Despite its exceptional civil and religious liberties for the gentry, the society practiced various forms of unfreedom, primarily export-driven serfdom, but also slavery of captives from battles with the Ottomans and steppe nomads. The country has also been a destination for migrations from the West and East, resulting in a unique ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity and relative tolerance. Less well known is that it also experienced an influx of Western racial ideas and racially distinct people. The study aims to investigate how Polish-Lithuanian society dealt with the racialized idea of freedom and its practical implementation towards newcomers and locals of African descent.

Dr. Vitali Byl will examine three case studies from the mid-18th to early 19th centuries. The first case study explores the African subjects of a powerful Radziwiłł magnate family, their trade routes, roles in the manor economy, places in the social hierarchy, and the cultural framework of Polish-Lithuanian ideology and culture. The second case study examines the intersection between abolitionism and serf emancipation and the Polish-Lithuanian society's ability to accommodate a racially different foreigner through the experiences of Jan Lapierre, T. Kościuszko's Black valet. The third case study focuses on a mixed-race Polish aristocrat and military officer who fought for independence and civil liberties for his country, but also participated in the French military expedition to suppress the Haitian Revolution.

The consideration of these cases represents a pioneering attempt to piece together the scattered evidence of Eastern European Black history and to provide a new perspective on regional history in a global context. It will analyze the extent to which the society's experience of (un)freedom and diversity, as well as foreign ideas about race and slavery, influenced its internal discourse, worldview, and practices towards Africans at home and abroad. The project highlights how a landlocked agrarian society like Poland-Lithuania was integrated into the global economy of forced labor, long-distance migration, human trafficking, and the exchange of ideas.



Dr. des. Vitali Byl

graduated from Belarusian State University in 2012, majoring in history with a focus on the early modern and modern history of Belarus. After graduation, he

encountered his own measure of unfree labor, performing obligatory work for the state at the "Niasvizh Museum-Reserve" – once the residence of powerful princes whose serfs and servants included Byl's ancestors. Continuing his academic pursuits at the University of Greifswald in Germany, he completed his doctoral project in 2021 on „Witchcraft in the cultural borderland: witch trials in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 16th-18th centuries." He has published in Belarusian, Russian, English, and Polish. He is a member of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Baltic Sea Region Research (IFZO) and the Interdisciplinary Witchcraft Working Group (AKIH).

CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

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.



GLOBAL VOYAGES, LOCAL SITES:
THE LONG SHADOW OF
ATLANTIC SLAVERY IN
THE ANGLO-AMERICAN
AND GERMAN PACIFIC

by Pia Wiegink



Workshop venue at the BCDSS, Niebuhrstrasse. ©BCDSS

WORKSHOP HELD IN BONN, JUNE 20-22, 2023

Held at the BCDSS in June 2023, the international workshop “Global Voyages, Local Sites: The Long Shadow of Atlantic Slavery in the Anglo-American and German Pacific” brought together scholars working on the histories of slavery and imperialism in the Atlantic and Pacific worlds with curators of museums in the UK, Germany, and Queensland, Australia. The workshop had two goals. On the one hand, it studied legacies of Atlantic slavery via the British Empire’s movement of people, money, and expertise from the Caribbean to Queensland as well as via the U.S. American movement westward to the islands of Samoa. In this sense, workshop participants examined how the abolition of slavery impacted Anglo-American colonial expansion in the Pacific and how these processes, in turn, interacted with German colonial endeavors in this region. With this historical lens, the workshop introduced a framework which enabled us to expand the



Prof. Dr. Pia Wiegink took up the position of Professor of Dependency and Slavery Studies at the BCDSS in October 2021. In her current research, she examines cultural practices of remembering slavery and its legacies in the US and Germany; she is also interested in the so-called afterlives of American slavery in Oceania. She wrote extensively on American antislavery literature and continues to work on narratives of (American) slavery and dependency and their transatlantic entanglements and circulation.

disciplinary boundaries of slavery studies and rethink the legacies and impacts of U.S. and Caribbean practices of slaving, enslavement, and racialization that emerged in the context of imperial endeavors in the Pacific. On the other hand, the workshop supplemented historical approaches with a focus on the material traces of forced migration, displacement, and coerced labor practices resulting from the colonial endeavors, analyzing modes and sites of their contemporary collection and preservation. Furthermore, scholars and curators discussed the ethics of exhibiting objects acquired in the context of imperial endeavors, possible repatriation of objects, and contemporary artists’ reflections on these discourses and debates.



Panelists Pia Wiegink and Katharina Fackler ©BCDSS

While the workshop itself was organized by Cluster professor Pia Wiegink, its central idea of considering the material legacies of what transatlantic slavery “did” to peoples and places in the Pacific was very much a collaborative effort. It was also the first outcome of a joint project by scholars from Australia, the UK, the US, and the BCDSS, and was funded by Bonn University’s Global Cooperation Fund. Over the course of two and a half days, the hybrid workshop featured two keynote lectures, six thematic panels, a curators’ conversation, and a joint visit to and tour of the Oceania collection of the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum in Cologne.

Each of the two keynotes brought together in a unique way the workshop’s dual perspective on histories of slavery and contemporary forms of collecting and exhibiting. In his opening lecture “Cambridge Museums in the Black Atlantic,” Jake Subryan Richards, a scholar of international history at the London School of Economics and Political Science, spoke about his recent curatorial work – the exhibition *Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance*, which opened in September 2023 at the University of Cambridge’s Fitzwilliam Museum. The exhibition reinvestigated the museum’s entangled history with the transatlantic slave trade. Richards’ lecture drew attention to the intricate relations between processes of collecting and acquiring, on the one hand, and various modes of dependency, coercion, forced labor, and enslavement, on the other. His lecture emphasized the

donor’s family involvement in and profit from the trade in human beings, and reflected on the politics of naming the museum after them. Also, by working with Steven Shapin’s term “invisible technicians,” Richards drew attention to the often-neglected role of indigenous and enslaved people in the collection of materials, preparation of specimen, or in the production of artworks. On the workshop’s second day, the opening lecture “In the Wake of Atlantic Slavery: Antislavery Sentiment and Visual Culture in Australia and the Pacific” by art historian Penny Edmonds (Flinders University), connected these histories of Atlantic slavery with histories of blackbirding and colonization in the Australasian world. Her lecture zoomed in on contemporary South Sea Islander women artists’ creative responses to and interventions into the colonizers’ archives that document forced migration and coerced labor practices in Australia. In particular, Edmonds discussed the work of Jasmine Togo-Brisby and her creative engagement with the visual regimes of the nineteenth-century photographic plantation records as a way of re-examining the presence and labor of female South Sea Islanders on these plantations.

Six thematic panels complemented these inputs at the beginning of each workshop day; each panel addressed different aspects of the entanglements of transatlantic slavery and imperial endeavors in the Pacific. The first panel featured papers by historian Trevor Burnard, who joined via Zoom from the Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation in the UK, and by historian of slavery and documentary filmmaker Emma Christopher (University of New South Wales). While both scholars shed light on the transferal of people, money, and expertise from the post-emancipation Caribbean to Queensland’s emerging sugar industry, they disagreed in their evaluation of this process. Whereas Burnard argued that, despite clearly identifiable historical trajectories, Caribbean slavery was ultimately distinct from the labor practices on Queensland sugar plantations, Christopher emphasized the continuities and semblances between both exploitative systems. Panel II then shifted the perspective to methodological questions regarding microspatial historical research and histories from below. Christian DeVito (BCDSS) critically inquired into the concept of global slavery and pleaded for a greater epistemic sensitivity to microspatial perspectives and spatial peculiarities. Complementing DeVito’s theoretical reflections, Emma Thomas (UNSW) presented a case study on coerced labor and recruitment practices in the late nineteenth century German Pacific. Panel III zoomed in on the history and literary representations of colonial Samoa, opening with a paper on coerced labor practices, mobility, and resistance of workers on Samoan coconut plantations by historian Holger Droessler, who joined via Zoom from the Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts. The historian’s paper was complemented by a paper by literary scholar. Deirdre Coleman

(University of Melbourne) connected Atlantic and Pacific slaveries through the work of the British writer Robert Louis Stevenson, who lived and died in Samoa. Stevenson, Coleman showed, frequently referred to the Haitian Revolution in his writings on Samoa. The workshop's first day concluded with two papers that established further connections between the discourses of transatlantic slavery and unfree labor practices in the Pacific. Katharina Fackler (NAS, Bonn) explored forms of dependency and their intricate connections to slavery in nineteenth-century African American whaling narratives. Pia Wiegink presented research on nineteenth-century writings advertising German emigration, showing how antislavery rhetoric resurfaced prominently in these promotional texts as a way of encouraging emigration of German farmers to colonial Queensland.

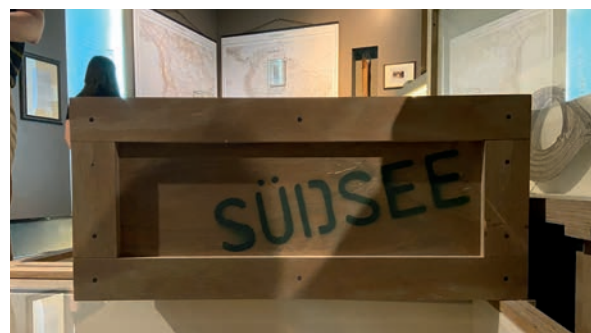
Following the already-mentioned opening lecture by Penny Edmonds, the workshop's second day featured two panels that focused on the remnants of colonial pasts and histories of slavery in the present. Christian Reepmeyer (German Archaeological Institute/KAAG) discussed how colonial buildings and colonial urban planning represented and enforced forms of dependency of colonized communities in the German Pacific. His paper also introduced contemporary heritage preservation initiatives which work to identify archaeological remnants of resistance and empower indigenous communities to control and supervise restoration processes. Anthropologist Tarisi Vunidilo (University of Hawaii-Hilo), who joined via Zoom from Fiji, reported on her involvement in the project "Sensitive Provenances – Human Remains from Colonial Contexts" at the University of Gottingen. She spoke on the complex procedure of returning ancestral remains from Germany to their places of origin and on the debates regarding restitution and repatriation that accompany this process. Complementing Vunidilo's discussion on repatriation, but shifting the focus towards Australia, anthropologist Carsten Wergin (University of Heidelberg) examined how the politics of repatriation are entwined with histories of (colonial) extractivism as well as with issues related to environmental injustice, the preservation of living cultural heritage, transnational institutional collabora-

tions, and with the empowerment Aboriginal Australian communities. The final presentation by Hilary Howes (ANU, Canberra) provided an overview and a critical discussion of the current practices (and problems) of Germany's engagement and reckoning with its colonial past.

With the concluding curators' conversation and the participants' visit to the Oceania collection of the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum in Cologne the next day, the workshop came full circle as the two curators Oliver Lueb (Curator, Oceania Collection, RJM Museum) and Imelda Miller (Curator, First Nations Cultures, Queensland Museum) discussed their work in museums in Germany and Queensland. In their conversation, they highlighted visions and challenges of decolonizing collections and enabling communities to use and benefit from these collections. Both curators were asked to present one item from their collections that they found particularly relevant for the topic of the workshop. Oliver Lueb selected the contemporary artwork "Siamani-Samoa-Selu" (2011) by Michael Tuffery, an Aotearoa artist with Samoan roots. The artwork stylistically mimics traditional Samoan hair combs; at the same time, its design also reflects on German colonial history by featuring several symmetrically arranged coconut trees – a reference to the orderly-planted rows of coconut trees planted by German planters in Samoa. Imelda Miller – a third generation Australian South Sea Islander elaborated on her effort of connecting most of the more than 700 items in the Australian South Sea Islander Kastom Collection to labor trade vessels or the Queensland sugar economy. In this context, Miller selected a wooden club donated in 1878 by a South Sea Islander laborer called Wommilly. Given the scarcity of objects donated by South Sea Islanders, this labor tool is a particularly unique object within the collection. Both of the curators' objects – the comb and the club – showcased the workshop's twofold agenda of showing how practices that originated with Atlantic slavery travelled and transformed in different colonial contexts in the Pacific and of highlighting how the histories of enslavement, dependency, and colonialism are an integral part of today's visual culture and museum collections.



Curator Oliver Lueb with conference participants, Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum Cologne. ©BCDSS



Permanent Collection, Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum Cologne
©image courtesy of Oliver Lueb

CHILDREN AT WORK AND CHILD SLAVERY IN THE LATE ANCIENT WORLD (C. 400 – C. 1000 AD)

by Christian Laes

"During the millennium from the emergence of the Roman empire to its eventual decline, at least 100 million people – and possibly many more – were seized or sold as slaves throughout the Mediterranean and its hinterlands. In terms of duration and sheer numbers, this process dwarfs both the transatlantic slave trade of the European powers and the Arabic slave trade in the Indian Ocean. (...) The modern observer must wonder how to do justice to the colossal scale of human suffering behind these bland observations: the story of the Roman slave supply must count as one of the darkest chapters of human history." (Scheidel 2021: 309)

CONFERENCE HELD IN BONN, AUGUST 29, 2023

About the year 300, several changes transformed the Roman Empire into what is now known as Late Antiquity. As so often, these transformations sometimes were drastic, but more often they happened gradually, with people hardly being aware of them. The empire was divided into smaller units, both because of military and of administrative concerns. For most of the inhabitants, tax burden increased. The new Christian religion considerably gained importance and in the fifth century became important to the degree of what one could call state religion. The Latin West and the Greek East gradually grew apart from each other, not only culturally.

More than one language would take advantage of the new faith to start a literary tradition of its own. In the East, Coptic and Syriac-Aramaic flourished, with Armenian and Georgian literature starting on the Caucasian fringes from the sixth century on. In the West, only the Gothic and the Old-Irish language gained some importance in the written records, with Latin staying predominant in the various early mediaeval kingdoms with their strong cultural diversity. In more than one way, the fifth and sixth centuries were 'catastrophic' to the West: with disruptive invasions from so-called 'barbaric' peoples, and internal wars that set under pressure an intense economic network of trade and commerces between cities and provinces that had existed for centuries. For the provinces of the Greek East, relative prosperity continued into the seventh century, when clashes with the Sasanian Persians and the Muslim Arabic invasions had a similar disruptive effect. Historians usually have the

history of late ancient slavery run up to the year 1000, when large 'predatory' castles with huge amounts of serfs became predominant for the Latin West, while the Byzantine Empire in the East lived the high days of its Renaissance under Emperor Basilus II (976-1020).



Roman mosaic of a slave boy in a kitchen. ©Alamy

Children as a whole, and surely slave children, are cases par excellence of individuals facing the status of (semi)-dependency. Both were the topic of the conference at the BCDSS that took place in Bonn on August 29, 2023.



Prof. Dr. Christian Laes

is professor of Ancient History at the University of Manchester (UK) and a Heinz Heinen Senior Fellow from February to September 2023. His research involves human life course in Antiquity. He has previously worked on enslaved children in Antiquity, and the topic of children at work in Late Antiquity was the main focus of his research at the BCDSS. Next, he is preparing a translation and commentary of the Life of Aesop – a source of novel evidence, often neglected in scholarship on ancient slavery.

In my introduction, I set out the challenges of the day. In most sources, the terminology does not allow to discern between children and slaves (a fact that is interesting by itself). Deprived of archives, historians of this period often have to do without numbers, though it is possible to formulate educated guesses. We should be aware of the danger of unjustified generalisation. The so-called 'collapse of the slave market' is one of these. The disastrous Gothic Wars in Italy (535-555) no doubt set the whole system under pressure, and numerous sources from the hugely depopulated City of Rome testify of the decrease of available specialised slaves, as there had been for centuries. At the same time, thousands were enslaved after being captured – with a possible collapse of the prices as a consequence. Yet, this did not happen contemporarily in the East. Also, we largely lack ego-documents for this period – again it should not hamper us from making an emphatical approach to enslaved individuals.

Our second presenter, Erin Thomas Dailey (University of Leicester) explored domestic slavery in the Late Antique Latin West: sexual exploitation was an inseparable facet of this, even in cases of manumission (the lines between free servants and slaves then seem to be blurred and vague). Oana-Maria Cojocaru highlighted the abundance of detail of the Byzantine hagiographical sources for this period. Despite the rich legal tradition, we are surprisingly poorly informed about many fundamental aspects in the Byzantine empire that existed for about thousand years. Such richness of detail also exists in the Greek and Coptic papyri of Early Mediaeval Egypt. It enabled April Pudsey (Manchester Metropolitan University) to ask intriguing questions about partial life stories and the possibility of sketching the bigger picture. John Latham-Sprinkle (Ghent University) ventured into a history that has never been explored before: children in asymmetrical dependency in Early Mediaeval Georgia. Research as this requires sophisticated skills in both Georgian and Russian – needless to say, only a handful of scholars over the world can achieve it. Enslavement by captivity (the case of the Georgian founder saint Nino), slave trade and eunuchs from Abchasia were key elements in this presentation. Similar rare and outstanding language skills emerged from Cornelia Horn's (University of Halle) talk on children at work in the Armenian and Syriac dossier. Again the, mainly hagiographical, sources surprised the audience. The coexistence of free and slave (child) workers and the specificity of an empire in which the ruling Muslims constituted a minority in their own region was a red thread through Julia Bray's (Oxford University) presentation on child slavery in the Umayyad and the Abbasid period. Bahar Bayraktaroğlu (BCDSS) took the audience to nineteenth century Ottoman evidence, but her revealing case stories and memoirs brought us very close to 'charming children' as they were held as

household slaves from Roman Antiquity on. They seem to have been closely tied to their households, even after manumission. The nomadic way of life existed throughout the whole period under study in Eurasia, and lasted up to at least the eighteenth century. Christophe Witzentrath (BCDSS) not only managed to rectify some clichés about nomads, he also put into perspective most relevant issues such as the involvement of nomads in slave trade (and their close contact with cities), the early introduction of children into shooting a bow or horse-riding, supply-demand and the Mongol tradition of enslavement due to debts.

Last but not least, Julia Hillner (BCDSS) paved the way for a vivid and fruitful discussion on global perspectives. We discussed how much of the source material for this period has never been systematised, let alone been made available for a larger audience. We asked questions about a possible distinction between typical slave chores and tasks for free children. Was there in fact even a great deal of intermingling between both categories? We again discussed the apparent fluidity of words for 'slaves' and '(free) children' in the various language traditions under study. We looked at how gender came in. Were there 'traditional' female roles, and did they also count for young female slaves? How does the position of (slave) children in the late ancient period compare to the broader global picture, also of later periods? Did Christianity make a difference? And do the sources allow us to reconstruct agency and personal choices of the children involved?

The reality sketched in the quotation by Scheidel at the beginning of this article counted for innumerable families and their children. Drawing on the expertise of scholars in 'less studied languages' (Armenian, Coptic, Ge'ez, Georgian, Turkish, Syriac), the conference paid attention to voices often unheard, in language traditions often unknown, and therefore underexplored. It is a starting point and an invitation to share further expertise.

RECOMMENDED READING

De Wet, Chris L., Kahlos Maijastina, Vuolanto, Ville (eds.), *Slavery in the Late Antique World, 150 – 700 CE* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

Perry, Craig, Eltis, David, Engerman, Stanley L., Richardson, David (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Slavery. Volume II. AD 500 – AD 1420* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

Scheidel Walter, 'The Roman Slave Supply', in: Bradley Keith, Cartledge Paul (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Slavery, 1. The Ancient Mediterranean World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 287-310.

Forthcoming in the BCDSS Dependency and Slavery Studies Series: Laes, Christian (ed.), *Children at Work in a Period of Transition. 400 – 1000 AD* (Berlin: De Gruyter),



The conference delegates listen to the welcoming address by Serena Tolino and Stephan Conermann.

SLAVERY IN ISLAMIC LAW AND MUSLIM SOCIETIES

by Omar Anchassi

CONFERENCE HELD IN MURTEN, SWITZERLAND, 30 AUGUST – 1 SEPTEMBER 2023

On 30 August, delegates convened in the idyllic lakeside town of Murten, Switzerland, for a conference on slavery in Islamic law and Muslim societies. The conference, co-organised by the TraSIS project team at the University of Bern and the BCDSS, represents the first major collaboration between the two initiatives, fostered by Serena Tolino and Stephan Conermann. The TraSIS project (Trajectories of Slavery in Islamicate Societies), funded by the SNSF and headed by Professor Tolino, explores three key concepts in Islamic legal thought diachronically from an intersectional perspective. Taking the 'strong asymmetrical dependencies' framework developed at the BCDSS as its point of departure, the project team understand slavery, unfreedom and coercion as continua, rather than discrete categories. This framework enriches the research of the project team, which focuses on *kafāla* (a modern form of labour guarantee based on premodern legal notions of surety), the *umm al-walad* (a slave concubine who bears her owner's child, with his recognition of paternity) and *kitāba* (manumission of an enslaved person based on a contractual agreement with their owner, involving the fulfilment of different contractual obligations). The intersectional element of the project's theoretical framework entails scrutiny of how different aspects of legal and social status – including age, gender, race, class and religion – cross-fertilise to produce various forms of exclusion. The papers presented at the conference brought these analytical concerns to a diverse range of temporal and geographic Muslim contexts, ranging from the Near East in the seventh and eighth centuries to West Africa in the late nineteenth. Other regions including Western Europe, Central and South Asia also figured.

The conference began with an illuminating keynote by Christian Müller (CNRS) titled 'New Sources for Muslim Social History? Premodern Legal Documents from a Comparative Perspective'. Professor Müller, one of the foremost scholars of Islamic legal studies and the current president of ISILS (the International Society for Islamic Legal Studies), explored the complex interplay between normative Islamic legal texts, juristic thinking and socio-legal reality, illustrating their relationship with reference to documentary sources on slavery. The lecture provided delegates with an opportunity to reflect on the importance of reading diverse sources – literary, documentary or otherwise – alongside each other, affording glimpses into social history. The day's proceedings concluded with a pleasant evening walk along the lakeshore. A number of delegates even took advantage of the excellent weather and went for a swim.



Laura Emunds (foreground) discusses slavery in Islamic law with Christian Müller (l) and Jonathan Brown (r).

The following day, witnessed the delivery of the bulk of the conference papers. Ismael Montana and Jonathan A.C. Brown, of Northern Illinois and Georgetown University, respectively, discussed two interesting texts dealing with the abolition of slavery in North and West Africa. Montana's paper addressed *al-Taḥqīq fī mas'alat al-raḡīq* (An Inquest: Being an Examination into the Question of Slaves) of the Tunisian scholar and jurisconsult *Muḥammad Bayram al-Khāmīs* (d. 1889), a sophisticated apologetic work written partly to rebut accusations made against Islam by the French orientalist Ernest Renan in an 1883 lecture. Brown's paper explored a nineteenth-century West African treatise of uncertain authorship written against anonymous advocates of the view that Black Africans ought to be enslaved merely on the basis of their race. Samy Ayoub (University of Texas at Austin), their co-panellist, presented a complex inheritance case involving the estate of a manumitted slave, contested by the grandchildren of the ruler of Egypt, *Muḥammad 'Alī* (r. 1805–1849). This case illustrated how the consequences of slavery continued to figure in Egyptian courts notwithstanding the abolition of the slave trade in 1877.



Samy Ayoub explains the impact of slavery and clientage on inheritance cases.

The second panel of the conference, Clientage and Relations of Dependency, focused on the interstitial status of persons not quite fully enslaved nor able to enjoy unfettered agency as legal persons. Laura Rowitz, a doctoral candidate on the TraSIS project, presented on the *kafāla*, a form of labour control widely practiced in the Gulf and in countries such as Lebanon, characterised by some scholars as a form of modern slavery. Laura Emunds, also pursuing her PhD as part of the TraSIS team, discussed the interesting case of slaves subject to *kitāba* in Islamic law. Their freedom to act is circumscribed in various ways by jurists, though they typically enjoy a far greater degree of agency than fully enslaved persons. Various juristic views on the mobility of slaves subject to this contract, and on the eligibility of slaves who earn their livelihood through begging for this arrangement were discussed. Mehdy Shaddel, a doctoral candidate at Leiden University, argued that the institution of clientage (*walā'*) was originally a means of integrating converts to Islam into the tribally organised *dīwān* (register of persons entitled to government pensions) in the early Islamic period. This research has wide-ranging implications for scholarship on taxation under the Umayyad and early Abbasid regimes.

The third panel, Labour and the Regulation of Slavery in Legal and Non-Legal Sources, featured papers on enslavement from disparate regional contexts. Emma Kalb, a postdoctoral researcher at the BCDSS, spoke on slave concubines in the Mughal court, drawing on legal formularies, chronicles and other sources. Her co-panellists focused on Iberia and North Africa. Cristina de la Puente (CSIC), a leading scholar of Islamic law, presented on the regulation of the loaning and leasing of slave labour, drawing on formularies, legal responsa and handbooks. Her paper featured sources from the eighth to sixteenth centuries, and illustrated the implications of juristic debates for the broader conceptualisation of slavery, including the character-

isation of slaves as human beings and/or property. Teresa Pelàez-Domínguez, a doctoral candidate at the University of Valencia, shared her fascinating archival research on the lives of Muslim galley slaves in sixteenth and seventeenth century Iberia. Documentary sources allow one to trace the careers of such persons in considerable detail, and the status of Muslim slaves held by Christian powers presents an interesting (and in some limited ways, not unfavourable) contrast with Iberian convicts and *Buenaboyas* (salaried oarsmen).

The final panel of the day featured two papers on Dependency and Household Relations in Early Legal Sources. Elizabeth Urban analysed the earliest layer of Islamic legal material (eighth and ninth centuries), commenting on how freedwomen figure therein. She noted the presence of the unusual term *mawlayāt* (female *mawālī*, or clients), and discussed their liminal status in these texts. The present author, drawing on sources from the same period, presented on an archaic aspect of Islamic law that was marginalised by Sunni jurists: the use of slaves for purposes of sexual hospitality. The day ended with a tour of Murten and a walk along the lake ably led by Kacem El Ghazzali, the student assistant on the TraSIS project.



The conference delegates enjoy a walk in the centre of the idyllic lakeside town of Murten.

The final panel of the conference took place on the morning of 1 September, devoted to Concubinage and the *Umm al-Walad*. Turkana Allahverdiyeva, a doctoral candidate at the BCDSS, explored a legal suit involving illicit enslavement in early modern Bakhchysarai, the capital of the Crimean Khanate. The paper drew on Crimean court records (in Ottoman Turkish) currently held in St Petersburg. Magdalena Moorthy Kloss, of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, presented an account of the life of a slave concubine in medieval Yemen, whose marriage strategies exemplified the intersectional approach of the conference, and the TraSIS project more broadly. The conference concluded with a series

of reflections from the organisers, Stephan Conermann and Serena Tolino, which built on the keynote lecture. The plan to publish the proceedings was discussed, with an agreement to submit first drafts by January 2024.

Overall, an excellent time was had by conference delegates, with stimulating discussions set against the idyllic backdrop of Murten.

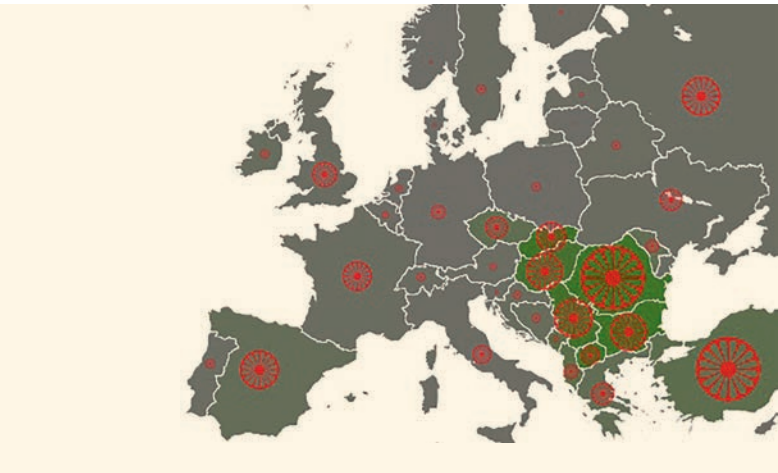


Dr. Omar Anchassi

is a postdoctoral researcher on the TraSIS project at the University of Bern. He entertains broad interests in Islamic intellectual history and is currently preparing his habilitation thesis on the reception of modern European astronomy by the 'ulamā' (religious elites). Omar was previously an Early Career Fellow in Islamic Studies at the University of Edinburgh, twice a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Exeter, and a Postdoctoral Research Officer at the KFCRIS in Riyadh.

ENTANGLEMENTS OF THE ROMA WITHIN EUROPEAN SOCIAL-POLITICAL CONTEXT

by Susana Macías Pascua



Populations of the Romani people by country, showing the „average estimate“ published by the Council of Europe



Susana Macías Pascua is a PhD Researcher at the BCDSS and a member of the Research Area A "Semantics-Lexical Fields-Narratives." Her research focuses on early modern Spain, specifically the entanglements that connect religion, the law, economic-political institutions, and social interactions in historical relation to the Romani collective Kale (Spanish *gitanos*). It attempts to understand the antagonism between royal decrees designed to limit their mobility and regulate their socioeconomic life, and the Kale's „refractory resistance" to the law's assimilationist purpose. Her goal is to provide a historical narrative of the *gitanos* that goes beyond the stereotypical image of the outcast.

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON ROMANI ASYMMETRICAL DEPENDENCIES

On June 6-7, 2023, the Bonn Center for Dependencies and Slavery Studies brought together an eclectic group of researchers and scholars for a multidisciplinary debate about the status of the Romani people in Europe. The workshop enabled a number of Romani and non-Romani speakers from different academic backgrounds, career stages, and geographies to share insights and reflections concerning the history, social participation, and political experiences of one of the oldest minorities on the continent. Under the theme *Entanglements of the Roma within European socio-political context*, papers avoided distinct cultural characterizations that frequently distinguish the minority from the rest of the population and focused on the relational aspects between the surrounding communities and the ethnic group.

The perception of the Roma and their social situation is generally misconstrued. As Europe's largest minority, the Roma have lived through the continent's history for over six hundred years, yet they often receive marginal attention in historical and social accounts. Due in part to the minority's inability to leave written evidence of their experiences for much of their history, most interpretations of their lives and history have focused on historical narratives of stigmatization and ostracism. Even in academia, there is an overwhelming tendency to assume that Roma have always been a marginalized community. Many authors continue to believe that portraying Roma as a perpetually oppressed group will draw public attention to them and help to improve their position and quality of life. This, however, is a flawed rationale that reinforces negative perceptions of the Romani community as a whole, not to mention that such an approach implicitly assumes the Roma's inability to recognize their own agency and social and political participation in past and present societies. Fortunately, more research is being conducted, and more historical examples show that, rather than being passive victims of deep-seated marginalization, the Roma have played every imaginable role in all societies they have lived in, and many of them have been perfectly capable of becoming the architects of their own lives.

This reality is not in dispute with the fact that the integration of the Romani communities across the continent has been uneven. With that in mind, the workshop deliberately employed the formula of "Romani asymmetrical dependencies" in order to better address those (in)effective mechanisms of social incorporation that might explain the shaping of Romani history as an unabridged phenomenon of marginalization.

Three panels organized the eleven presentations of the researchers invited to the workshop. "Shaping Space"

drew attention to the contrasting experiences of reception and incorporation at two poles of the historic span after the arrival of the Roma in Western Europe. The variety of primary sources available in central European archives, ranging from 15th-century chronicles and administrative documents to monumental inscriptions, poses interpretative challenges to the initial Romani migration into the Holy Roman Empire. Through surprising encounters, negotiations, and a diversity of social relations between the Romani and local communities in late medieval Germany and Switzerland, the new historical possibilities that emerge from medieval documentary evidence compete with *antiziganist* and teleological narratives of history towards exclusion. In one of the speaker's words, "reassessing medieval primary text reveals that modern *antiziganism*, far from a natural and immediate European response to Romani lifeways, demanded that local communities forget previous modes of incorporation."

The characteristic dynamism of the late medieval period contrasts with the implementation of demographic policies that are so typical of modern times. A historical leap of five centuries brought us to the 20th century. We assessed the asymmetrical incorporation of Romani communities into urban spaces at the hands of two strongly centralized regimes with very opposite political signs. The 1950s housing policies of Francoist Spain resembled, in their failure, the Romanian communist regime's measures to provide residence and accommodation for the massive influx of domestic migrants to the cities. The Romani communities in both circumstances lived through strikingly comparable instances of communal empowerment, typically fueled by "the rural and community profile" that the Roma still adopted. The complex way in which the Romani population fitted into the new urban rhythms derived in a dynamic matrix of dependency that canalized the ability of the Roma to avoid, modify, and even contest the asymmetrical dependency relations created by the social, economic, and political context.

The former principalities of Transylvania, Wallachia, and Moldavia were the sole setting of all the papers on the second panel. "Laboring Roma" shed light on the minority's living conditions and afforded activities in the Romanian territories where Romani communities were enslaved from the 14th century until the mid-19th century. The Roma in that area formed groups of 30-40 families based on their profession and named after their economic activity. Despite the enslaved Roma's lack of juridical personality, this occupational grouping enabled them to acquire a social status within Romanian society that ran parallel to the internally stratified Romani communities. The *lăutari* (musicians), a special category of Roma who enjoyed a much better position than others with a right to regulate their profes-

sion through guilds, are particularly significant in this regard. The active participation of the Romani *lăutari* in Romanian festivities eventually revealed the aesthetic and cultural dependence of the 19th-century coexisting local ethno-cultures on Romani artistic involvement.

The last panel, "Long-Lasting Symbols," analyzed symbolic articulations that obscure the image of the Roma as a standardized and unchanging collective. From the romanticization of their ways of life as an ideal of freedom in 19th-century literature to the creation of the folklorist icon in the 20th century, these images have diminished the efforts to understand the complexity inherent to Romani communities. The discourses surrounding this imagery are constructed around protective narratives of self-definition, which further complicate comprehension. The archetype of the pariah epitomizes the ultimate objectification of the Romani people. With the cinematographic character created by one of the most prolific filmmakers of Romani extraction in the 20th century, Charles Chaplin, the panel closed with a discussion about the ways in which these long-lasting symbols may be employed to *re-signify* political practices that lead to transnational recognition and intra-ethnic association.

There are few conclusive outcomes that can be drawn on such a complex social topic. However, it was recognized that studying the situation of the Roma requires recognizing that the historical portrayal of Romani individuals as a homogeneous group, irreversible victims of marginalization, is an inaccurate and flawed construct, for it conceals, even with its flaws, a much more complex and dynamic process of social and cultural dependence. This was the key consensus that brought all of the event attendees together. Recognizing Romani people's social accomplishments and active participation in the countries and cultures in which they live is critical when approaching their history from an appropriate epistemological perspective. *Entanglements of the Roma* brought to light that the minority's social and political asymmetries ultimately reflect the same historical inequalities and inconsistencies that exist in the societies into which they have been incorporated. By balancing the different aspects of their own diversity, the international workshop on Romani Asymmetrical Dependencies served as a platform for discussing scholarly work on Romani history in order to develop historical narratives that free the minority of any incapacitating stigma.



Forging on shackles in Aleksandrovsk (Sachalin), from: De Windt Siberia, p. 95

LAND OF EXILE, DEPRIVATION AND RESURRECTION SIBERIA AS A NARRATIVE SPACE IN HISTORY, LITERATURE AND THEATER

by Elena Smolarz

REPORT ABOUT A COURSE OFFERED BY BCDSS LECTURER ELENA SMOLARZ IN COOPERATION WITH THEATER BONN

Is there life after "the civil death"? How does exile influence prisoners' life? How to speak about experienced deprivation in an enforced relocation? What narrative or performative possibilities do history, literature and theater offer for processing traumatic pasts? Such were the issues we addressed in our course on the representation of Siberian exile in history, literature and theater. This experimental course came about thanks to the cooperation between the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies, the interdisciplinary practice area of the Faculty of Philosophy, and Theater Bonn.

Since the conquest and colonization of Siberia by the Russian Empire in the 16th and 17th centuries, this region has been perceived and memorialized not only as a borderless frontier with diverse mineral resources, landscapes and animal species, but mainly as a penal colony, a place of violence, breeding and forced labor both inside and outside Russian society. While in the official imperial discourse banishment to Siberia was seen as an efficient disciplinary and penal measure, in the intellectual discourse of the 19th century it symbolized imperial repression, senseless deprivation and dehumanization.

The course focused on the representation of Siberia as a place of exile, as depicted in the memoirs of Decembrists (participants of the 1825 uprising) and their wives, in the novels "The House of the Dead" (1862) by Fyodor M. Dostoevsky (1821-1881), "Resurrection" (1899) by Leo N. Tolstoy (1828-1910) and in the opera "Siberia" (1903) by Umberto Giordano (1867-1948). Special attention was paid to the reconstruction of the historical, literary and artistic context as well as to the analysis of literary narratives and symbolic representations. How was the exile perceived and described by the actors involved? Which aspects of captivity were emphasized? What literary or artistic devices were used for this purpose? This gave students an overview of individual narrative strategies for the representation of the Siberian exile as well as the artistic processing and staging of banishment.



Courtyard of Tschita Prison, from: N.J. Edelmann, *Verschwörung gegen den Zaren*, Pahl-Rugensteinverlag, Köln 1984, p. 13.

We began our exploration of various sources with historical documents, such as those from imperial institutions and prison administration. A valuable addition were the memoirs of the Decembrists, aristocratic rebels who were exiled to Siberia for an attempted overthrow of power in 1825. Some of their wives renounced their status privileges and followed them into exile. These memoirs give us a fascinating insight into everyday life in exiles, the social order, working conditions and daily struggle to preserve human dignity under undignified conditions. The agony of forced labor, the suffering of deprivation, but also the joy of hard-won improvements of living conditions and the hope of a new beginning are among the leitmotifs of the memoirs of Mariia Volkonskaia, Aleksandr Muraviev, Evgenii Obolenskii and Nikolai Lohrer.



Decembrist A.I. Odojewski, from: N.J. Edelmann, *Verschwörung gegen den Zaren*, Pahl-Rugensteinverlag, Köln 1984, p. 15.

In his novel "The House of the Dead" (1862), Fyodor M. Dostoevsky described precisely and authentically life in a Siberian prison camp based on his own experiences during his exile (russ. *katorga*) from 1849 to

1853. In the book, Dostoevsky portrays a range of prisoners and guards of the camp. He addresses the stigmatization of the convicts and their indiscriminate treatment, which disproportionately affects softer and more mentally vulnerable prisoners harder. The vividly depicted everyday life in the *katorga*, social order among inmates, fates of individual prisoners, their wishes, hopes and attempts to make their existence more bearable give faces and voices to the gray mass of Siberian prisoners.



Decembrists inside Tschita prison, from: N.J. Edelmann, *Verschwörung gegen den Zaren*, Pahl-Rugensteinverlag, Köln 1984, p. 14-15.

The novel "Resurrection" (1899) by Leo N. Tolstoy is said to have served as a model for the libretto of the opera "Siberia" by Umberto Giordano (1867 – 1948) and tells the story of a noble landlord who, serving on a jury, recognizes in an accused prostitute a maid he had seduced on his aunts' estate. He feels complicit in her fate and strives to have the verdict revised. Finally, he follows her into Siberian banishment, even when she turns down his marriage proposal and chooses another inmate. The novel addresses the (typical) fate of a servant girl, her unprotectedness, social relegation due to abuse by the landlord, the inefficient court system, and her way to *katorga* with political penal workers. The imperfections of the legal system of that time serve as a background for the author's moral reflections on "true justice", moral purification and resurrection.



Course participants during the guided tour of the Bonn Opera House ©Emma Szabó

One of the most exciting parts of our course was the opera tour with the opportunity to look behind the scenes and experience the stages of the opera production up close.

Visiting the opera performance "Siberia" was the crowning finale. The innovative staging of the opera by the Russian director Vasily Barkhatov gave an additional profound meaning to an originally described love story of the mistress Stefania to Vasily, a soldier.

The love story is told from the perspective of an elder lady, the daughter of Stefania and Vasily, who gradually reconstructs individual scenes of her family history and witnesses the beginning of a love affair, the escalation through Vasily's duel with one of Stefania's suitors, Vasily's banishment to Siberia, Stefania's renunciation of her luxurious life in Saint Petersburg and following her lover, harsh living conditions in the Siberian labor camp, the well-guarded but also fragile marital happiness and "the final release".

This incredibly emotional story moved us to tears and touched our "sore spots", our various repressed or unprocessed experiences. Here we had to realize that unlike text sources, which are usually understood and analyzed rationally, the opera production appealed directly to our emotions. This is the great potential of artistic presentation and approaches to the subject of banishment and forced labor. They have the power to touch the audience, evoke emotions, and spark a certain inner change. We are sincerely grateful to

all the people who made this experience possible, including Stefan Plasa (Interdisciplinary Practice Area of the Faculty of Philosophy), Rose Bartmer (Theater Bonn) and Jeannine Bischoff (BCDSS). We would also like to thank Emma Szabó and Thilo Beu for providing pictures of the opera tour and the opera performance.



Stage photos of the opera "Siberia" at Theater Bonn, 2023 © Thilo Beu



Dr. Elena Smolarz

is a postdoctoral researcher and lecturer at the BCDSS. Her current research is focused on coerced mobility in Central Asia in the 19th century and on transformation of autochthonous societies in Southern borderland regions under Russian imperial influence with special focus on spatial and social mobility. She teaches research methods and representations of freedom and dependency in archival documents, narrated sources and in theatrical performances.

Feedback by participants of the Bonn Opera House tour and the performance of "Siberia".

"The opera tour was a very exciting insight into the thrilling production processes and has again clarified the amount of preparation work necessary for an opera performance. For me, the costume workshop and the explanation of the costume master about the process of creating the costumes was especially fascinating: I could have spent the entire tour time just looking at this area and I wouldn't have gotten bored with the many details, unusual sewing machines and the costumes that were just being worked on."

"The work is slightly influenced by motifs borrowed from Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. The additional story of an elderly lady in search of her roots, illustrated with the video episodes, has an incredibly emotional effect. It carries the audience away and gives the story a new meaning, i.e. reconciliation with the past, integration of the hidden episodes and forgotten family members into the family history and finally healing of the family system."

"During the performance itself, the film interludes and the archive scene in particular took me away emotionally due to biographical references. The opera shows a kind of overdrawn, fictionalized Russia, but the references to the novels discussed in the seminar are nevertheless clear."

"Symbolic reunion of the family in the last scene seems very touching. The elderly lady concludes her journey and mission by reconstructing her family's history through letters found by chance in the Saint Petersburg apartment and through archival research in Irkutsk. She scatters her brother's ashes on the spot where her mother died. Thus, the circle is closed."

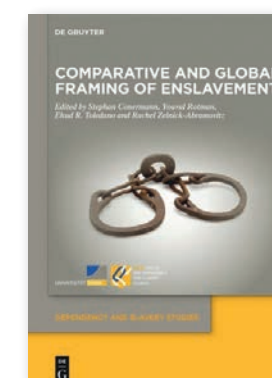
"Especially impressive was the last choral scene, a symbolic resurrection of numerous nameless exiles. Deceased prisoners seem to be waiting for their resurrection, as their stories are told, their lives are remembered, and they regain their place in the collective memory space."

NEW PUBLICATIONS

COMPARATIVE AND GLOBAL FRAMING OF ENSLAVEMENT

Volume 9 in the BCDSS series "Dependency and Slavery Studies" (DSS)

by Stephan Conermann, Youval Rotman, Ehud R. Toledano and Rachel Zelnick-Abramovitz



Stephan Conermann, Youval Rotman, Ehud R. Toledano and Rachel Zelnick-Abramovitz, eds., *Comparative and Global Framing of Enslavement* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2023) ISBN: 9783111293165

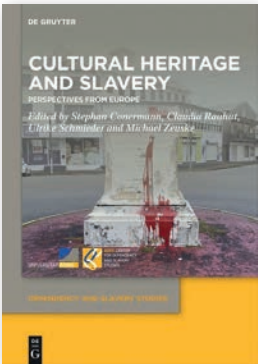
The study of enslavement has become urgent over the last two decades. Social scientists, legal scholars, human rights activists, and historians, who study forms of enslavement in both modern and historical societies, have sought – and often achieved – common conceptual grounds, thus forging a new perspective that comprises historical and contemporary forms of slavery. What could certainly be termed a turn in the study of slavery has also intensified awareness of enslavement as a global phenomenon, inviting a comparative, trans-regional approach across time-space divides. Though different aspects of enslavement in different societies and eras are discussed, each of the volume's three parts contributes to, and has benefitted from, a global perspective of enslavement. The chapters in Part One propose to structure the global examination of the theoretical, ideological, and methodological aspects of the "global," "local," and "glocal." Part Two, "Regional and Trans-regional Perspectives of the Global," presents, through analyses of historical case studies, the link between connectivity and mobility as a fundamental aspect of the globalization of enslavement. Finally, Part Three deals with personal points of view regarding the global, local, and glocal. Grosso modo, the contributors do not only present their case studies, but attempt to demonstrate what insights and added-value explanations they gain from positioning their work vis-à-vis a broader "big picture."

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CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SLAVERY - PERSPECTIVES FROM EUROPE

Volume 10 in the BCDSS series “Dependency and Slavery Studies” (DSS)
by Stephan Conermann, Claudia Rauhut, Ulrike Schmieder and Michael Zeuske



Stephan Conermann, Claudia Rauhut, Ulrike Schmieder and Michael Zeuske, eds., *Cultural Heritage and Slavery - Perspectives from Europe* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter 2023) ISBN: 9783111327785

In the recent cultural heritage boom, community-based and national identity projects are intertwined with interest in cultural tourism and sites of the memory of enslavement. Questions of historical guilt and present responsibility have become a source of social conflict, particularly in multicultural societies with an enslaving past. This became apparent in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020, when statues of enslavers and colonizers were toppled, controversial debates about streets and places named after them re-ignited, and the European Union apologized for slavery after the racist murder of George Floyd. Related debates focus on museums, on artworks acquired unjustly in societies under colonial rule, the question of whether and how museums should narrate the hidden past of enslavement and colonialism, including their own colonial origins with respect to narratives about presumed European supremacy, and the need to establish new monuments for the enslaved, their resistance, and abolitionists of African descent.

This volume addresses this dissonant cultural heritage in Europe, with a strong focus on the tangible remains of enslavement in the Atlantic space in the continent. This may concern, for instance, the residences of royal, noble, and bourgeois enslavers; charitable and cultural institutions, universities, banks, and insurance companies, financed by the traders and owners of enslaved Africans; merchants who dealt in sugar, coffee, and cotton; and the owners of factories who profited from exports to the African and Caribbean markets related to Atlantic slavery.



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CASTRO MARIM: WHERE SIN BECAME SALT IN PORTUGAL'S ALGARVE, 1450–1836

Volume 17 in the Joseph C. Miller Memorial Lecture Series
by Timothy J. Coates and Geraldo Pieroni



Timothy J. Coates and Geraldo Pieroni, *Castro Marim: Where Sin Became Salt in Portugal's Algarve, 1450–1836* (Berlin: EB Verlag, 2023) ISBN: 9783868934472

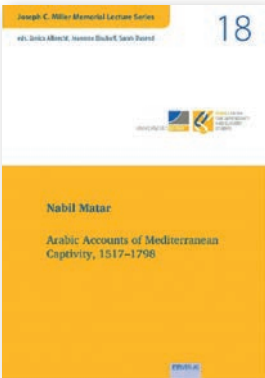
Castro Marim, in SE Portugal, was a site of internal exile for several thousand minor sinners and convicts from the 1400s until the 1830s. The punishment was revived by the Estado Novo dictatorship a century later. During early modern times, the guilty could flee to several border towns for sanctuary. The state's courts and later courts of the Inquisition directed minor offenders to this town, typically for two to three years. These newcomers were forced to either enter the local work force or flee. Here we see a detailed example of social control and coordination between the early modern Church and state. Crime, sin, punishment, redemption, sanctuary, the Enlightenment, monopolies, and smuggling interact with this system of forced labor. Sanctuary, internal exile, and town of free people created a unique legal and social space. This labor force was long-lasting, flexible, and useful. Tax evasion and smuggling forced Lisbon to create neighboring Vila Real de Santo António, with tighter fiscal control and free labor which would eventually supersede this forced labor system in Castro Marim. Internal exile was a semi-independent judicial component linked to manpower needs overseas, ending as those demands increased.



Download via open access:

ARABIC ACCOUNTS OF MEDITERRANEAN CAPTIVITY, 1517–1798

Volume 18 in the Joseph C. Miller Memorial Lecture Series
by Nabil Matar



Nabil Matar, *Arabic Accounts of Mediterranean Captivity, 1517–1798* (Berlin: EB Verlag, 2023) ISBN: 9783868934496

The history of captivity in the early modern Mediterranean has been studied exclusively through European and Ottoman/Turkish sources. But from Aghadir to Alexandretta, the language of piety, travel, religious disputation, and chronicle was Arabic (sometimes written as Garshuni). An extensive archive has survived in Arabic describing the experiences of Muslims, Eastern Christians, and Jews in European captivity. After all, from the middle of the seventeenth century on, British and French fleets, with their advanced naval capabilities, seized large numbers of captives from the 'other shore' (to cite Braudel) – captives who have been ignored in scholarship but survive in numerous sculptures from Spain and Germany to Malta and Hungary. This study continues the research into the Arabic archive by introducing further accounts about captivity by European pirates and privateers, showing how the Mediterranean became the scene of Christian masters and Arabic-speaking slaves. Not surprising, by the nineteenth century, a Moroccan traveler prayed that the Mediterranean become a barrier/hājiz against European depredations.



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SYSTEMS OF DEPENDENT LABOUR IN ROMAN IMPERIAL QUARRIES. THE CHAÎNE OPÉRATOIRE AS A METHOD FOR IDENTIFYING DEPENDENCIES

Volume 19 in the Joseph C. Miller Memorial Lecture Series
by Dennis Mario Beck



Dennis Mario Beck, *Systems of Dependent Labour in Roman Imperial Quarries. The Chaîne Opératoire as a Method for Identifying Dependencies* (Berlin: EB Verlag, 2023) ISBN: 9783868934595

Quarries are an interdisciplinary research topic for scholars who are interested in technical organization, economy, work processes and supply chains. In antiquity, the quarrying and trade of stone were highly dependent on persons from a variety of legal status groups and their cooperation in networks and institutions. Research shows that during the high Roman Empire, some quarries both belonged to the Roman emperor and were operated by an administrative structure that was highly dependent on him. Although the administrations were organized in a strict hierarchy, they depended much more on the emperor and the officials he employed than on the legal statuses of individuals. Slaves and freedmen gained importance due to their specialization in business. Characteristic is the cooperation of these actors within different fields of work in the economy, but in many cases it cannot be determined in detail merely from the sources, and requires research models. By using the chaîne opératoire and analyzing the quarry at Simitthus as an example, the paper shows to what extent this methodology is suitable for identifying dependency relationships between individuals. In addition, inter-agency and spatial relations can serve as indicators of dependencies among the actors, and network analysis offers insights into administrations in imperial quarries.



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VIRGINIA'S EASTERN SHORE AND EDMUND SCARBURGH: INDIGENOUS LABOR AND THE PLANTATION ECONOMY IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY



Kristalyn Marie Shefveld,
*Virginia's Eastern Shore and
Edmund Scarburgh: Indigenous
Labor and the Plantation
Economy in the Seventeenth
Century*
(Berlin: EB Verlag, 2023)
ISBN: 9783868934601

Volume 20 in the Joseph C. Miller Memorial Lecture Series
by Kristalyn Marie Shefveld

English settler colonies introduced a new market structure to the Native peoples of the Chesapeake watershed. Alongside trade in goods, traders and merchants exchanged peoples for labor. The Eastern Shore of the Virginia colony provides an interesting case study that provides a clear picture of the importance of Native laborers alongside African and English laborers in the early plantation economy. Power dynamics in colonial Virginia were characterized by social hierarchies, economic interests, and the exercise of authority by influential individuals. By examining cases of illegal indenture and enslavement of Native peoples by Colonel Edmund Scarburgh in the 17th century, one can see that Scarburgh emerges as an unstoppable vigilante both at the time and in historical memory, because of his accumulation of wealth and power through the Indigenous slave trade as well as his transatlantic trade interests. Physically, and in many ways legally, isolated from the rest of the Virginia colony, the case study presented herein serves as a window into the power machinations and ambitions of one man and his desire to build his plantation empire unchecked by any conventions or rules of law.



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EL(-GOD) AS "FATHER IN REGALNESS". MINE M IN SERABIT EL KHADIM AS A MIDDLE-BRONZE-AGE (C. 1900 BC) WORKING SPACE SACRALISED BY EARLY ALEFBETIC WRITING



Ludwig D. Morenz,
*"El(-GOD) as 'Father in Regalness'.
Mine M in Serabit el Khadim as a
Middle-Bronze-Age (c. 1900 BC)
Working Space Sacralised by Early
Alefbetic Writing."*
BCDSS Working Paper 13 (2023)
ISSN 27479331

Volume 13 in the BCDSS Working Paper Series
by Ludwig D. Morenz

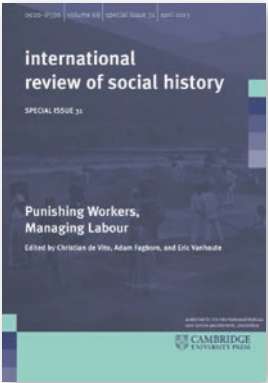
This paper grew out of an archaeological field season conducted in southwestern Sinai by the Department of Egyptology at the University of Bonn during November and December 2022. It specifically discusses the social and cultural relations between Egyptians and Canaanites in southwestern Sinai during the Middle Bronze Age (the first half of the second millennium BC), focussing on the inscription S 357 which was carved into the rock face inside a large copper and turquoise mine. By invoking the god El, the inscription sacralized the workspace. This paper seeks to understand mine and inscription within a cultural-historical polygon made up of landscape, ethnicity, economy, religion, and media. Die folgenden Überlegungen basieren auf einer archäologischen Feldkampagne der Abteilung für Ägyptologie an der Universität Bonn vom November und Dezember 2022 in den Süd-West-Sinai. Konkret werden die Sozial- und Kulturbeziehungen zwischen Ägyptern und Kanaanäern im mittelbronzzeitlichen Süd-West-Sinai (erste Hälfte 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.) diskutiert. Im Zentrum steht die Inschrift S 357, die im Inneren einer großen Kupfer- und Türkisgrube in die Felswand gemeißelt wurde. Mit der Anrufung des Gottes El wurde der Arbeitsbereich sakralisiert. Mine und Inschrift werden im kulturgeschichtlichen Fünfeck von Landschaft, Ethnizität, Ökonomie, Religion und Medien zu verstehen gesucht.



Download via open access:

PUNISHING WORKERS, MANAGING LABOUR

New Special Issue by Adam Simon Fagbore, Christian de Vito and Eric Vanhaute



Adam Simon Fagbore, Christian
de Vito and Eric Vanhaute, eds.,
*Punishing Workers, Managing
Labour*,
Special Issue of *International
Review of Social History* 68
(2023)
ISSN 2405836X

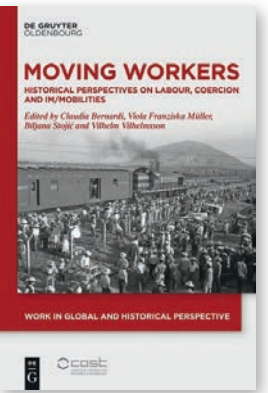
What is the historical role of punishment in the management of labour? This is the central question of this Special Issue. In order to answer this question, the contributors look into the histories of blinded slaves in ancient Mesopotamia, flogged peasant farmers in pharaonic Egypt, convict officers in the prisons of colonial India, and blacklisted factory workers in the nineteenth-century United States, as well as rural workers in the medieval Frankish kingdoms, soldiers and domestic servants in early modern Scandinavia, working children in colonial Bolivia, textile workers in Lombardy, enslaved Africans in Brazil and the US, and household workers in Late Imperial China. The introduction suggests ways to compare the role of punishment in the management of labour across space and time. The editors claim that the effective management of labour required the systematic differentiation of the workforce; to that end, the imposition of diversified forms of punishment did not merely reflect existing labour distinctions, but also contributed to their creation.



Download via open access:

MOVING WORKERS: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON LABOUR, COERCION AND IM/MOBILITIES

New book by Viola Müller



Claudia Bernardi, Viola Franziska
Müller, Biljana Stojić and Vilhelm
Vilhelmsson, eds.,
*Moving Workers: Historical
Perspectives on Labour, Coercion
and Im/mobilities*
(Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2023)
ISBN: 9783111136516

This book explores how workers moved and were moved, why they moved, and how they were kept from moving. Combining global labour history with mobility studies, it investigates moving workers through the lens of coercion.

The contributions in this book are based on extensive archival research and span Europe and North America over the past 500 years. They provide fresh historical perspectives on the various regimes of coercion, mobility, and immobility as constituent parts of the political economy of labour.

Moving Workers shows that all struggles relating to the mobility of workers or its restriction have the potential to reveal complex configurations of hierarchies, dependencies, and diverging conceptions of work and labour relations that continuously make and remake our world.



Download via open access:

LIFE ON THE FARM IN LATE MEDIEVAL JERUSALEM: THE VILLAGE OF BEIT MAZMIL, ITS OCCUPANTS AND THEIR INDUSTRY OVER FIVE CENTURIES

New book by Bethany Walker

Bethany Walker, ed.,
Life on the Farm in Late Medieval Jerusalem: The Village of Beit Mazmil, its occupants and their industry over five centuries, Monographs in Islamic Archaeology (Sheffield: Equinox, 2024)
ISBN: 9780000000000

Studies of Jerusalem in the post-classical periods have traditionally centered, unsurprisingly, on the Old City, isolating it from the regional setting in which it operated on a daily basis. The agricultural hinterland of Jerusalem – comprising a network of smaller settlements, agricultural terraces, fields, cisterns, watch towers, and local market-places that together fed the city – have not been a focus of archaeological research until very recently.

Life on the Farm in Late Medieval Jerusalem offers a rare glimpse into the daily life of a single rural household and its intimate, but ever-evolving, relationship with Jerusalem from the 14th through the early 20th centuries. It does so through a tightly integrated, multi-disciplinary study of one astonishingly well-preserved farmstead in its agricultural setting, how both settlement and farmland developed together over time, and how these changes impacted the socio-economic development of Jerusalem during the Mamluk and Ottoman Sultanates. The life history of this place is thus written on the basis of archaeological, botanical, and geological data, all interpreted against a rich textual record of land sales, field development, conflict, and cooperation.



Download via open access:

A “MOORS’ LOVEFEAST” AND MASKED ENSLAVEMENT IN THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MORAVIAN CHURCH

Journal article
by Josef Köstlbauer



Josef Köstlbauer,
“A ‘Moors’ Lovefeast’ and Masked Enslavement in the Eighteenth-Century Moravian Church,”
Journal of Global Slavery 8, no. 2-3 (2023): 178–206
ISSN: 2405-8351

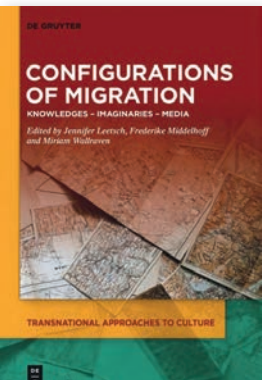
This article analyzes context and circumstances of an event described as a “Moors’ lovefeast,” which took place in the Moravian Church settlement of Herrnhaag in December 1742. Several of the “Moors” in attendance hailed from the West Indies, others from North America and Africa. Likewise present were a Malabar, a Tatar, and a German Sinto. Adding to the cosmopolitan luster of the Herrnhaag congregation, their presence broadcasted a powerful message of missionary success and eschatological expectation. Some of these men, women, and children were or had been enslaved, but the prestige bestowed on these so-called “Moors” contributed to masking their enslavement. A close reading of the available sources shows how contemporary practices of enslavement fed into Moravians’ methods of representing missionary success as well as their unique spirituality and eschatological vision.



Download via open access:

CONFIGURATIONS OF MIGRATION: KNOWLEDGES – IMAGINARIES – MEDIA

Edited volume by Jennifer Leetsch, Frederike Middelhoff and Miriam Wallraven



Jennifer Leetsch, Frederike Middelhoff and Miriam Wallraven, eds.,
Configurations of Migration: Knowledges – Imaginaries – Media, Transnational Approaches to Culture (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2023)
ISBN: 9783110783797

In a global context in which phenomena of migration play an ever more important role, the ways individual and collective experiences of migration are covered in the media, represented in culture, and interpreted are coming under increasing scrutiny. This book explores the complex relationship between creative engagements with migration on the one hand, and forms of knowledge about migration on the other, inquiring into the ways aesthetic practices are intertwined with knowledge structures. The book responds to three pressing research questions. First, it analyses how fictional texts, plays, images, films, and autobiographical accounts mediate forms of knowledge about migration. Second, it identifies the ways in which specific media approaches and aesthetic practices influence people’s ideas about and awareness of migratory experiences in a globalized world. Finally, it delineates how historical perspectives help us compare epistemological approaches to migration in the nineteenth, twentieth, and early twenty-first centuries, and how these approaches affect the way critics and the public responded to and thought about different forms of (forced) migration. Bringing together renowned scholars working across disciplines, it investigates the possibilities and limitations that different media present when it comes to reflecting on, communicating, and imagining experiences of migration, and how these representations in turn create ways of knowing and understanding migration.



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Organized by Pia Wiegink
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in cooperation with
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UNSERE KINDER”

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Researcher, IISH Amsterdam)
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Contributions identified by name reflect the opinion of the author(s) and are not to be understood as official statements by the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS).

NOTES & PICTURE CREDIT

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UPWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY IN THE EARLY MODERN DUTCH COLONIAL EMPIRE by Hanna te Velde (pp. 25-27):

¹ *Nationaal Archief*, 1.05.10.02, inv.nr. 806, fl. 179-182 (1762).

² *Nationaal Archief*, 1.04.02, inv.nr. 9470, fl. 465-514 (1762).

³ Not yet published dataset of eighteenth-century last wills of Batavia and Paramaribo, sample years 1720, 1740, 1760 and 1780.

⁴ *Nationaal Archief*, 1.05.11.14, inv.nr. 43, fl. 65-70 (1780).

ENDURING DEPENDENCIES AND RELATIONAL HERMENEUTICS - THE PACIFIC THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE IN SUVA, FIJI

by David Brandon Smith (pp. 40-43)

¹ *Faafetai Aiaovā*, 'Taking Selfies: Honouring Faces (Alo) in Theology and Hermeneutics,' in *The Relational Self: Decolonising Personhood in the Pacific* (PTC Press: Suva, Fiji, 2017), 257.

² See Upolu Lumā Vaai and Aisake Casimira, *Relational Hermeneutics: Decolonising the Mindset and the Pacific Itulagi* (PTC Press: Suva, Fiji, 2022).

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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.

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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.

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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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