



BONN CENTER FOR DEPENDENCY AND SLAVERY STUDIES

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BCDSS Newsletter No. 9 / September 2021

NEWS

BCDSS PROFESSORSHIP APPOINTMENTS AT RECTOR'S OFFICE

Congratulations to Julia Hillner, Pia Wiegink, Claudia Jarzebowski and Christoph Witzenrath

The historians Julia Hillner and Claudia Jarzebowski as well as the American Studies scholar Pia Wiegink will take up their professorships at the Cluster starting in fall, completing the team of professorships established as part of the Excellence Strategy. Christoph Witzenrath, also a historian, already researches and teaches at the BCDSS. At the reception at the university's Rector's Office, Rector Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Michael Hoch officially presented the appointment certificates to our four Cluster Professors on 30 August.

The four professorships lie at the heart of research at the Cluster of Excellence. "I am really pleased that we have now filled all four positions. We succeeded in attracting four outstanding researchers to our cluster," says Prof. Dr. Stephan Conermann, the Cluster's speaker. "We are all looking forward to the collaboration with great joy and excitement. Together, we will continue to drive the research forward and lay the foundation for renewed funding."

"With its thematic focus, the Cluster of Excellence bears a unique selling point throughout Germany and is an important pillar for the humanities at the University of Bonn," says Rector Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Michael Hoch. "The newly appointed colleagues will strengthen the cluster excellently and sustainably with excellent contributions in research and teaching."

[Find out more here.](#)

DEPENDENT 21-2 OUT NOW

DEPENDENT is the research magazine of the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies. Issue 2021/2 of our Cluster magazine has a particular focus on Research Area B “Embodied Dependencies”. In it, we inform you, among other things, about the concept of the BCDSS’ Growing Exhibition “Slavery in Context” and about representations of slaves in ancient Mediterranean visual art.

The BCDSS has been lent the library on ancient slavery by the former Mainz Academy of Sciences and Literature project Forschungen zur antiken Sklaverei (Research on Ancient Slavery). Specialist librarian Johannes Deißler kindly gave us a short interview about the history and the unique treasures of this collection.

Prof. Volker Kronenberg, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, spoke with us about what fascinates him about the BCDSS. (We’re pleased to say that this is quite a lot!)

Our Researcher Malik Ade shares his experience from his insights last field trip to Nigeria and his research about Moremi, a popular figure in Yoruba folklore.

And of course, as in every issue, we give you an overview of all the latest news and our latest publications, as well as, past and upcoming events.

[Find the full content here.](#)

BCDSS MASTER PROGRAMS

We are proud to start into the second year of our 2-year Master program “Dependency and Slavery Studies in October. In addition, we are now able to offer the 1-year program “Slavery Studies”, too. We cannot wait to meet our new students!

[Find out more about our Master Programs here.](#)

NEW HEINZ HEINEN FELLOWS ARRIVING AT THE BCDSS

For the Academic Year of 2021/2022 the BCDSS is welcoming its International and Internal Heinz Heinen Fellows:

Doctoral Fellows

Name	Project	Fellowship duration
André Luís Bezerra Ferreira <i>Federal University of Pará</i>	The memories of the “sertões”: captivity, slavery and freedoms of indigenous and mestizo people in the Amazon (18th century)	10/21-03/22
Ruth Ennis <i>University of Leipzig</i>	The construction of “white slavery” as a transnational problematique between 1870 and 1904	06/21-11/21
Anne Vater <i>University of Hannover</i>	Gortynian debt bondage	12/21-05/22

Postdoctoral Fellows

Name	Project	Fellowship duration
David Beresford-Jones <i>University of Cambridge</i>	Transformation of ecological dependency and evolutionary change with focus on the Andean Region	10/21-12/21
Klara Boyer-Rossol <i>Independent researcher</i>	Slavery, Dependencies and Circulation of Knowledge in the 19th century South West Indian Ocean	10/21-09/22
Bogdan Chiriac <i>Independent researcher</i>	Enslaved Roma’s petitions for freedom in the Romanian Principalities	10/21-09/22
Frank Cirillio <i>Yale University</i>	The Abolitionist Civil War	12/21-8/22
Christopher Degelmann <i>Technical University of Dresden</i>	Gossip and the power of the weak in democratic Athens	05/22-06/22
Thomas Dorfner <i>Gotha research center of the University of Erfurt/ RWTH Aachen University</i>	Mammon for the Missions. Trade and Fundraising of the Moravian Church in the Atlantic World (1760–1815)	01/22-02/22

Mònica Ginés-Blasi <i>Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), Barcelona</i>	Trading Chinese Migrants: International Networks of Human Traffic in Treaty Port China (1830-1930s)	10/21-09/22
Lori de Lucia <i>Boston University</i>	The relationship between race and slavery in the Mediterranean	09/21–12/21 07/21–02/23
Claudia Rauhut <i>Free University of Berlin</i>	Materializing Slavery Within Caribbean Activism for Reparations: Transregional Perspectives from Jamaica and Cuba	10/21-05/22
Firat Yasar <i>Düzce University</i>	An Attempt at Revision: Writing about Crimean Slavery in its own Terms and in a Comparative Perspective	10/21-09/22

Senior Fellows

Name	Project	Fellowship duration
Daisy Chioma Onyige <i>University of Port Harcourt</i>	Asymmetric dependency and agency in the gendered nature of slavery in crime and punishment in Ogba customary law of Nigeria	10/21-9/22
Emma Christopher <i>University of New South Wales</i>	The legacies of Atlantic slavery in the Pacific cotton and sugar industries	01/22-06/22
John F. Chuchiak <i>Missouri State University</i>	Human Plunder: The Role of Maya Slavery in Post-classic and Early Conquest Era Yucatan, 1450-1550	09/21-10/21 virtual 11/21-04/22 in person
Ludolf Pelizaeus <i>Université de Picardie Jules Verne</i>	History of human trafficking in the early modern period in German-speaking countries.	09/21-04/22
Boudewijn Sirks <i>University of Leiden/ All Souls College, Oxford</i>	Reciprocal dependencies between persons in Italy and in Gaul under the Merovingians and the early Carolingians, and in Spain under the second Visigothic Kingdom	10/21-04/22

Internal Fellows

Name	Project	Fellowship duration
Martin Aust <i>Eastern European History</i>	Histories of Forced Labor. Poland and the Soviet Union under German Occupation, Polish and Soviet Forced Laborers in Germany 1939 - 1945	04/22 – 03/23
Nikolai Grube <i>Anthropology of the Americas</i>	Dimensions of slavery and extreme dependency among the Maya	04/21 – 03/22
Julia Hegewald <i>Asian and Islamic Art History</i>	Artistic Communities and Patronage in Asia: Dependencies and Freedoms	10/21 – 09/22
Martin Schermaier <i>Roman Law and Comparative Legal History</i>	The legal framework of unfree labor in late medieval theology and jurisprudence	04/22 – 09/22
Christian Schwermann <i>Ruhr-Universität Bochum Chinese Language and Literature</i>	“Domesticating the People” (chu min 畜民). The Invention of Human Resource Management in Ancient China	04/21 – 03/22

[Find out more about our Heinz Heinen Fellowship Program here.](#)

CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

ANNUAL CONFERENCE "EMBODIED DEPENDENCIES"

September 22–23, 2021

The conference “Embodied Dependencies” of Research Area B intends to approach the material evidence of asymmetrical dependencies by examining “embodied dependencies” in human societies from archaeological, art-historical and anthropological perspectives, exploring their historical breadth and variety.

The conference will help to establish an inventory of material evidence of asymmetrical dependencies and its range of expression and information as an important site of asymmetrical dependencies next to the written word. Taking into consideration the “material turn” as well as recent debates on environmental history and bio-history, the conference also aims to relativize the modern/Western focus on written culture from a pre-colonial perspective. Hence the conference will be organized along four thematic panels: Bodies, Representations, Resources, and Spaces.

[Click here for more information.](#)

IN THE GRIP OF THE SUPERNATURAL

September 28–30, 2021

The conference is looking to explore the connection between the phenomenon of dependency and the realm of the supernatural God, angels, demons in late antique and early medieval Christianity. In most ancient cultures heaven and earth are seen as forming one large hierarchical pyramid. This vision is shared by Christianity: there was no strict demarcation between the natural world and the realm of the supernatural; instead, the physical and metaphysical realities (which were, of course, perceived by our natural faculties in different ways) were seen as forming part of an all-encompassing view of the universe. In this universe clear structures of dependency existed which crossed the borders between the physical and the metaphysical, both linking and organizing heaven and earth. The conference intends to study these structures in greater detail and thus to enhance our knowledge of dependencies in the ancient and early medieval world.

[Click here for more information.](#)

ARTISTIC COMMUNITIES AND PATRONAGE IN ASIA

October 14–15, 2021

This international conference brings together specialist from different disciplines, focusing on Asian artists and their communities. All conduct research on extreme forms of dependency and the freedoms found within these contexts.

The life and practice of traditional Asian artists are governed by a number of different forms of dependence. This can be the financial reliance on sponsors, such as private benefactors or religious institutions. Furthermore, they are bound by religious texts, such as iconographic, iconometric or architectural treatises, dance manuals, the formalized canons of various religious schools or by religious, sectarian, social and gender conventions. On a more basic level, especially architecture is governed by the local climate and depends on the availability of building materials. These and other issues will form the focus of this symposium.

[Click here for more information.](#)

**CALL FOR
PAPERS****CALL FOR PAPERS: TRANSFORMING SPIRIT BODIES
“CHANGING MATERIALITIES AND EMBODIED DEPENDENCIES”****September 29–30, 2022****International Conference organized by Sinah Kloß, Lena Muders, and Taynã Tagliati (Research Group “Marking Power”).**

Bodies are never fixed and stable, but transform over time, and in different contexts. This applies to both human bodies and to the bodies of nonhumans, including spirits, ancestors, and ghosts. All bodies may be considered to exist in a variety of conditions, matters, and elements. They can be conceptualized as hot or cold, fluid or dry, volatile or solid, open or closed, etc., depending on factors, such as the social and ecological environments they are embedded in, or the individual’s life stage. Bodies may change according to their immediate, distant, or transcendent surroundings. They may be actively or unconsciously manipulated and modified by social actors (including humans, spirits, animals, objects, deities, etc.). They may also visualize, materialize, and performatively (re-)create the power relations and asymmetrical dependencies that humans and nonhumans experience, and are influenced by, in their everyday lives.

This conference focuses on the bodies and embodiments of spirits, their (im-)materialities, and the bodily transformations, which they may be subject to in different socio-cultural contexts. It draws attention to the embodied experiences of asymmetrical dependencies among humans and spirits and to how the sensory experiences of interdependence are negotiated in their interactions.

[Find the Call for Papers and more information here.](#)

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION**“WHAT IS NEW IN THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF MOBILITIES? CURRENT ISSUES, LATEST TRENDS”****18 February 2022; Registration by 15 January 2022**

Digital Workshop (World Café), jointly organized by BCDSS and partner institutions. We encourage scholars from all academic levels to participate.

Please register by sending a short statement of motivation (max. 200 words)

‘Mobility’, ‘movement’ and ‘motion’ have developed into major fields of research in the social sciences and humanities over the last years, implied by the ‘new mobilities paradigm’ and the ‘mobility turn’, which strongly resonated in archaeology. We will introduce and discuss some of the latest theoretical and methodological trends in archaeological research on mobilities, clustered around our six thematic tables: Migration and Material Culture, Mobilities and Gender, Religious Travels and Sacred Geographies, Mobilities and Resources, Mobilities and Asymmetrical Dependencies and Post Mobility.

[Find more information.](#)

JOSEPH C. MILLER LECTURE SERIES

Please **register** for each online presentation via events@dependency.uni-bonn.de. We will send you a unique link for the **ZOOM lecture**.

After the individual presentations there will be an opportunity to ask questions to the speaker.

LECTURE
SERIES

September 20 (online), 4 pm

Caroline Wallis (University of Helsinki, Finland):

Symbolic acrobatics and economic phenomena in early Mesopotamian states: balancing calendars, stars, gods, debts and social structures in the first millennium BCE.

September 27 (online), 4pm

Alessandra Batty (currently affiliated to the University of Bonn):

Tracking dependency in late-antique Roman domestic architecture: the example of the Domus del Ninfeo at Ostia (III, VI, 1-3)

October 4 (online), 4pm

Johannes Auenmüller (Museo Egizio, Turin, Italy):

The Display of Social Relations and Dependencies: Case Studies from Pharaonic Egypt

October 25 (online), 4 pm

Marcos Abreu Leitao de Almeida (Harvard University, USA):

TBA

November 8, 4 pm

Elisabeth Herrmann-Otto (University of Trier, emerita):

TBA

November 15 (online), 4 pm

Denis Regnier (University of Global Health Equity, Kigali; Ruanda):

TBA

November 22, 4pm

Martin Ebner (University of Bonn, Germany):

TBA

November 29, 4 pm

Clara Almagro (Goethe University Frankfurt):

TBA

[Visit our events website for more dates.](#)

LECTURE SERIES: CONTROL, COERCION, AND CONSTRAINT. THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN OVERCOMING AND CREATING STRUCTURES OF DEPENDENCY

During the winter semester 2021/2022 and the summer semester 2022, a lectures series organized by the [Centre for Religion and Society \(ZERG\)](#) and the [Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies \(BCDSS; Research Area C\)](#) will explore the question of the role of religion in both overcoming existing and creating new forms and types of dependencies.

The lectures series will take place on **Tuesdays at 18:15 hrs (Hörsaal X in the Hauptgebäude)**. It is planned as a hybrid event which is to be delivered in Bonn before an audience and simultaneously streamed on the internet.

[Find more information and the list of all lectures here.](#)



JOSEPH C. MILLER MEMORIAL LECTURES SERIES



Bruno Lamas:

When Looms Begin to Weave by Themselves: The Decomposition of Capitalism, Automation and the Problem of "Modern Slavery"

Joseph C. Miller Memorial Lectures Series, Vol. 6.

Berlin: eb Verlag 2021.

Aristotle once said that if looms were to weave by themselves masters would not need slaves. The historical trajectory of capitalism seems to place humanity in the exact opposite situation: on the one hand, the accelerated scientific development of the productive forces and the rise of automation processes, on the other hand, a diversification and intensification on a worldwide scale of forms of “unfree labour,” often classified as “modern slavery.” Several studies have approached these phenomena as remnants of “pre-capitalism;” others see them as moments of an “ongoing primitive accumulation;” still others interpret them as extreme cases of “fully functional capitalism” or “neoliberal capitalism.” In this paper the author intends (i) to show the different theoretical problems of these approaches and (ii) to argue that the phenomena of “modern slavery” are more adequately understood through a perspective of global decomposition of capitalism, a process that began with the third industrial revolution of microelectronics and is now accelerating with the emerging automation, intensifying a violent logic of demobilization of labour power and containment of “superfluous” populations.



Fernanda Pirie:

Moral Dilemmas in Slave-Owning Societies: Evidence from Early Legal Texts

Joseph C. Miller Memorial Lectures Series, Vol. 7.

Berlin: eb Verlag 2021.

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

BCDSS CONCEPT PAPER SERIES



Julia Winnebeck, Ove Sutter, Adrian Hermann, Christoph Antweiler and Stephan Conermann:

On Asymmetrical Dependency

BCDSS Concept Paper I

Extract from the Introduction: “In this paper, we discuss some basic theoretical assumptions related to the emerging field of dependency studies. Our aim in doing so is to provide tools towards analyzing key dynamics of how social relations of asymmetrical dependency are formed across time and space. We want to develop an approach grounded in social and cultural theory which can help us define in our empirical work the way/s in which elements of the world relate to each other to create, maintain, or subvert such dependencies. We do not seek to provide a comprehensive and empirically saturated account, as we believe that at this stage of the theoretical debate a strict proposal to use one particular theoretical approach would not serve the purpose of helping to connect the variegated research projects of the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS). Nevertheless, our reflections might help researchers to position their individual projects within existing theoretical frameworks and to further develop a theoretical understanding of asymmetrical dependency.”

[Read the whole Concept Paper here.](#)

[Visit our publications website for more information.](#)

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