

# LABOUR THAT HEALS THE SOUL. THE MEANING OF THE PRISONERS' WORK IN THE PRISONS OF THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

FELLOW WORKSHOP  
UNIVERSITY OF BONN  
OCTOBER 12-13, 2023



hosts the Cluster of Excellence "Beyond Slavery and Freedom", which aims to overcome the binary opposition of "slavery versus freedom". We approach the phenomenon of slavery and other types of strong asymmetrical dependency from methodologically and theoretically distinct perspectives.

In the early modern period, forced labour went hand in hand with imprisonment and had an inherent punitive logic. In the context of the centralisation of absolutist power for the "state of common good", a complementary view of the work of imprisoned delinquents emerged: it had to be increasingly conveyed as a means of human improvement. Work became the antithesis of idleness, and in the penitentiaries of Europe the convicts not only had to be made to work for fiscal purposes, but the poor also had to be (re)educated to work. This new moral-theological conception of work developed into a transconfessional and transcultural phenomenon. The planned workshop brings together case studies from different cultural contexts: Austrian Lombardy, German lands, the Russian Empire, Denmark, the center part of the Habsburg Empire (Vienna), England, France, and it takes an outlook on the socialist discourses on work in the Soviet Union. It will ask about the genealogy of the discourse of labour and the possible transfers and retransfers of the concept of penal labour as a means of correction. How much humanism and how much rationalism underlay this change? The workshop is also intended as a contribution to a global history of confinement.

**Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS)**  
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## CONTACT

**Workshop Organizer:**  
**Katja Makhotina**, BCDSS Fellow, University of Bonn

Please visit the [conference website](#) for more information

Please **register** for the conference **by October 9, 2023** via email to **Jan Hörber**, Event Coordinator  
[events@dependency.uni-bonn.de](mailto:events@dependency.uni-bonn.de)



Picture credits: Volker Lannert/University of Bonn;  
Stadsarchief Amsterdam / Allard, Hugo

Thursday, October 12, 2023

10:00 AM CEST: **Introduction**

**Katja Makhotina**  
(BCDSS Fellow)

**Panel I**

11:00 AM

Preventing and punishing crime. Forced labour in Austrian Lombardy between Casa di Correzione and Ergastolo

**Andrea Giuliani**  
(University of Rome "Tor Vergata")

11:45 AM

"Violence, Work, and Deportation: Intersecting fields of coercion in the Viennese Workhouse (18th century)"

**Teresa Petrik**  
(University of Vienna)

12:30 PM – Lunch Break

**Panel II**

1:30 PM

Work as a Prescription against Idleness: The Discourses of the First Disciplinary Institutions of Early Modern Russia

**Katja Makhotina**  
(BCDSS Fellow)

2:15 PM

"Caught between poor relief and penal labour: Cases from the prison workhouse at Christianshavn, 1769-1800"

**Emilie Luther Valentin**  
(University of Southern Denmark)

3:00 PM – Coffee Break

**3:30 PM – Excursion to Cologne for the visit of the former Gestapo-prison at the EL-DE Haus**

7 PM – Dinner  
(speakers and organizer only)

Friday, October 13, 2023

**Panel III**

10:00 AM

"New solutions to 'perennial' problems of labor discipline: The Crowley ironworks, England, c. 1700, reconsidered"

**Hillary Taylor**  
(University of Cambridge)

11:00 AM – Coffee Break

11:30 AM

Working Soviet? - What was actually Soviet about working in late socialism?

**Alexandra Oberländer**  
(Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin)

12:30 PM

Concluding remarks

**Katja Makhotina**

A city walk (optional)