

Call for Papers

Workshop

TraSIS (Trajectories of Slavery in Islamicate Societies) and the BCDSS (Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies)

Murtensee, 30 August-1 September 2023

Recent scholarship on various forms of dependency has demonstrated that a straightforward freedom/slavery binary does not help to account for how slavery operates in different historical and social contexts. In this workshop, we aim to contribute to discussions on the necessity of transcending this binary, focusing in particular on legal sources from Islamicate contexts.

We invite scholars working on any aspect of slavery and law (both normative texts and legal practices) to join us for a workshop convened jointly by the TraSIS project (Trajectories of Slavery in Islamicate Societies) and the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS). It will take place from 30 August to 1 September 2023 in Murtensee (Bern Canton, Switzerland).

Contributions should contribute to the main research questions of the workshop, namely what one can learn about slaveries and strong asymmetrical dependencies from legal sources, and the extent to which legal sources can shed light on the relevant social practices. We are interested in papers focusing on both normative sources and sources shedding light on legal practices related to slavery and strong asymmetrical dependencies. In particular, we are interested in papers reflecting on how intersectionality can shed light on different forms of slavery and/or papers pursuing a comparative approach between different legal schools. We are also open to other methodological approaches.

The TraSIS project, financed by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), focuses on three legal categories related to slavery, namely the *umm al-walad* (a female slave who bears her master's child), the *kitāba* (agreement between a slave and their master whereby the slave purchases their freedom in installments) and the *kafāla* (a form of legal guarantee in commercial law which became in the 20th century a legal instrument for either the tutelage of children, especially in the Maghreb, or for labour migration control in the Gulf, Lebanon and Jordan), focusing in particular on the 19th and 20th centuries.

The Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies hosts the Cluster of Excellence “Beyond Slavery and Freedom: Asymmetrical Dependencies in Pre-Modern Societies”.

Researchers from a range of humanities and social science disciplines at the Center explore a range of social dependencies including slavery, serfdom and debt bondage across epochs, regions and culture from interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary perspectives, working with the concept of “strong asymmetrical dependencies”.

Both English and Arabic papers are welcome, but unfortunately, translations between languages will not be available, so a good comprehension of both languages is expected.

Please submit abstracts of no more than 500 words by 15 January 2023 to serena.tolino@islam.unibe.ch. All costs relating to presenting at the workshop will be covered.

Successful applicants will be notified by February. Drafts of the papers are due by the end of July 2023. The papers will be published open access in a peer-reviewed publication.