

Proposal for a Poster Presentation

Phil.-hist. Forschungstag 2023, 27. März | 13:00 - 17:45 | Unitobler

TraSIS: Trajectories of Slavery in Islamicate Societies. Three Concepts from Islamic Legal Sources

Participants:

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In our poster we would like to present the SNSF financed project *TraSIS: Trajectories of Slavery in Islamicate Societies. Three Concepts from Islamic Legal Sources* (PI: Serena Tolino).

TraSIS started in August 2022 and will run till 2026. It aims at providing cutting-edge research on the legal history of slavery and coerced labour in Islamicate societies, a term that refers to 'the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even when found among non-Muslims', in contrast to 'Islamic', which refers to things related specifically to Islam as a religion (Hodgson 1974: 59).

TraSIS is designed to serve as the unifying umbrella for four sub-projects (SPs). The first three of these will each explore a legal concept which can clearly be situated beyond the slavery/freedom-binary: *the umm al-walad*, the *kitāba*-contract and the *kafāla*, focusing on Sunni sources. The fourth SP will address these three concepts with a focus on Shiite and Ibādī sources. Based on the assumption that a straightforward slavery/freedom binary does not help to explain how different forms of slavery operated in different historical and social contexts, TraSIS aims at transcending this binary, focusing on three concepts that can be considered 'trajectories of slavery'.

This will allow us to reconstruct for the first time a comprehensive picture of how these three trajectories of slavery/coerced labour were understood by scholars from different sectarian-legal traditions

TraSIS is also the first research project to explore slavery and coerced labour by focusing on both normative legal texts and legal practices, and that looks simultaneously at Sunni, Shiite and Ibādī sources. Our chronological focus is on the 19th and 20th centuries. By focusing on this period, TraSIS will challenge the supposedly linear paradigm that views slavery as a largely pre-modern phenomenon that disappeared with abolition. The wide variety of source material enables us to tackle the following research objectives:

1. Research and analyse the meaning of Arabic concepts referring to slavery and coerced labour in specific regions;
2. Identify continuities and ruptures in the discussions on slavery and coerced labour in the Islamic legal discourse;
3. Uncover the multiplicity of voices and approaches to slavery and coerced labour in the modern period;

4. Uncover if legal understandings of slavery and coerced labour were affected by the axes gender, ethnicity, class and religion.

Bibliography

Hodgson, Marshall G. S. 1974. *The Venture of Islam. Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 1, *The Classical Age of Islam*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.