

World Christianity Studies & Asymmetrical Dependency (WCSAD)

Working Group

Monthly Table Talk

“Slaves of Religion:” A Connected History Between Portugal, Brazil and Africa with Dr. Robson Pedrosa Costa

Date: Tuesday, January 14, 2024
from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. (CET)

Location: Zoom

Registration: To register, please email
David B. Smith (dsmith@uni-bonn.de)

In this month's Table Talk, Dr. Robson Pedrosa Costa will present his postdoctoral project carried out at the University of Lisbon. The objective of the talk is to demonstrate the role of the Order of Saint Benedict in the process of legitimizing, constructing, and perpetuating slavery in Brazil. The presentation and discussion will thus bring to the fore the religious, political, and economic links between Portugal (where the Congregation's headquarters were located– in Tibães), Brazil (where the Benedictines built a rich heritage by exploiting enslaved labor), and Africa (from whence the enslaved people were trafficked). The Order of Saint Benedict of Brazil was linked to the Portuguese Congregation until 1827 when they decided to separate. Benedictine monasteries followed the guidelines and directives established both by the highest law of their congregation (the Rule of Saint Benedict, created in the 6th century) and by the guidelines created every three years (through the General Chapters). These laws had at their core three fundamental concepts: family, obedience, and punishment. Thus, this Table Talk will emphasize the religious and conceptual aspects that supported paternalism and moralistic Christian discourse around enslavement in Brazil's Benedictine communities.

Dr. Robson Pedrosa Costa

is a teacher at the Federal Institute of Pernambuco, Brazil, and Researcher at



the Centre for History at the University of Lisbon and Federal University of Pernambuco, Brazil. He recently completed a postdoctoral fellowship with funding from the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions program, within the scope of the project *Slaves of Religion: Paternalism and Resistance, Brazil*. In 2022, he published the book *Paternalism, Transgression and Slave Resistance in Brazil*. In 2024, in partnership with Cassia Roth (University of California), he received the Kimberly Hanger Article Prize (2024) from the Latin American and Caribbean Section of the Southern Historical Association, Tennessee State University. He is currently researching slave-owning slaves in Africa, as well as questions related to gender, motherhood, marriage, and religious orders in Brazil.