The Iberian Slave Trade: A Global History

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Brown University
Watson Institute
The Joukowsky Forum
Portugal and Spain accounted for the majority of the enslaved Africans taken to the Americas, Asia and Europe before the eighteenth century, when several European powers actively participated in the trade in human beings. The first slave ship that crossed the Atlantic to Europe sailed to Portugal in the middle of the 15th century; the first slaves taken to the Americas landed in Spanish territory at the end of the 15th century. During three centuries the slave trade was almost entirely dominated by Portugal and Spain. The operation of the Iberian slave trade deeply intertwined with the growth of Iberian colonialism in the Americas and increasing Portuguese presence in Asia and Africa. This seminar surveys key turning points in the history of the Iberian slave trade in Modern times.

10:00 - Introductions

10:10-12:40 - Session 1

Chair: Tatiana Seijas (Pennsylvania State University)
Mary Hicks (Amherst College): "The Corporate Slave Trade: Continuities in Maritime Investment Practices from Portugal to Brazil"

Pablo Sierra (University of Rochester): "Articulating Slavery: The Encomenderos de Negros and the Infrastructure of the Slave Trade to Mexico, 1600-1669"

Toby Green (King’s College): "Legal Pluralisms and Subjectivities of the Enslaved: Law, Identity and Contestation of Power in the Early 17th Century Pan-Atlantic World"

Commentator: Roquinaldo Ferreira (Brown University)

14:00-16:30 - Session 2

Chair: António de Almeida Mendes (University of Nantes)

Iván Armenteros (University of Barcelona): "The Changing Faces of Slavery in Medieval Iberia (11-15th Centuries)"

Kara Schultz (Vanderbilt University): "Guinea Slaves for the Mines of São Vicente: The Early Slave Trade to Brazil Through Spanish Sources"

Stephanie Hassell (Duke University): "The Portuguese Slave Trade from East Africa to Goa, 16th -19th Centuries"

Commentator: Joseph Miller (University of Virginia)

Organizers:
António de Almeida Mendes (Antonio.dealmeidamendes@univ-nantes.fr), Roquinaldo Ferreira (roquinaldo_ferreira@brown.edu) and Aanor Le Mouël (aanor.le-mouel@univ-nantes.fr)

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