

Visiting Professor: Jeroen Dewulf (University of California Berkeley)

Dear professors, dear colleagues, dear DIMAS members,

The University of Regensburg is delighted to welcome Jeroen Dewulf as a visiting professor. He will be in Regensburg for 10 days from 26 January to 5 February as part of the Regensburg-Berkeley Visiting Professorship Program, which is supported by the Regensburger Universitätsstiftung.

Jeroen Dewulf is [Queen Beatrix Professor in Dutch Studies and Professor in the Folklore Program at the University of California](#), Berkeley. At Berkeley, he is also director of the Center

for Portuguese Studies, as well as the academic director for UC Berkeley Study Abroad. DeWulf is currently a visiting professor at the LMU Munich and is coming to Regensburg as part of the partnership between the University of Regensburg and UC Berkeley. His main research areas are Dutch and Portuguese colonial history, the transatlantic slave trade, and the cultural, folkloric, and religious traditions of the African-American community.



He published the following books, among others: [*The Pinkster King and the King of Kongo: The Forgotten History of America's Dutch-Owned Slaves*](#) (2016), [*From the*](#)

[*Kingdom of Kongo to Congo Square: Kongo Dances and the Origins of the Mardi Gras Indians*](#) (2017), [*The Congo in Flemish Literature: An Anthology of Flemish Prose on the Congo, 1870s–1990s*](#) (2020). His most recent book, [*Afro-Atlantic Catholics: America's First Black Christians*](#) (2023), won the 2024 John G. Shea Prize.

During his time in Regensburg, he will be collaborating with the Department for Interdisciplinary and Multiscalar Area Studies (DIMAS), the Leibniz ScienceCampus Europe and America, the Regensburg European American Forum (REAF) and the Faculty of Catholic Theology. He looks forward to exchanges with other colleagues in Regensburg, so please contact him or attend the following presentations to get in touch.



30.01.25, 12:15, ZH4

Flying Back to Africa or Flying to Heaven? Competing Visions of Afterlife in the South Carolina Lowcountry and Caribbean Slave Societies

This lecture presents a new theory on the famous African American folktale of the flying slaves, including the legend that only those who refrained from eating salt could fly back to Africa. Published in 1977, Toni Morrison's novel *Song of Solomon* gave worldwide attention to this intriguing myth in Black America. Scholarly interpretations of the folktale have focused primarily on sources relating to the cultural heritage of Blacks from the South Carolina and Georgia Lowcountry, once the region with the highest concentration of enslaved Africans in mainland North America. Several variants of this tale can, however, be also found in the Caribbean. This analysis of historical documents in combination with ethnographic and linguistic research traces the tale back to Central Africa and present a new interpretation of its original meaning by relating objections to eating salt to the Kikongo expression "curia mungua" (to eat salt), meaning baptism, and claims that the legend originated in the context of discussions among the enslaved about the consequences of a Christian baptism for one's spiritual afterlife.



Cooperation with REAF and the Know In Netzwerk

03.02.25, 16-18, H24

Your Way to Berkeley! Exchange Program Information Event



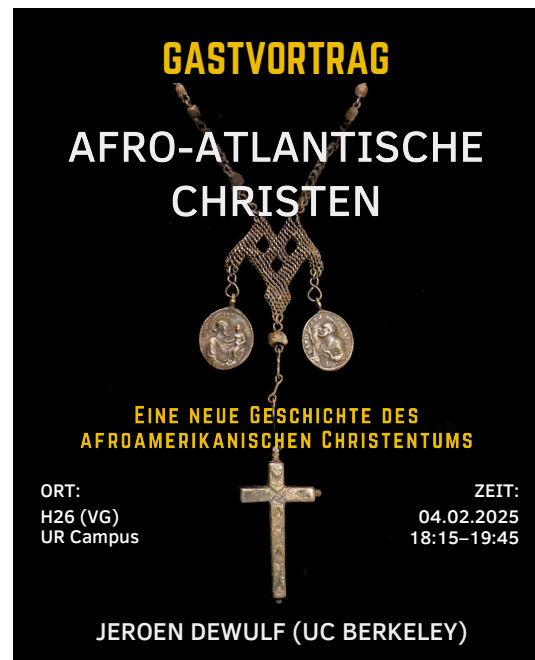
Interested in a research stay in the USA? The director of the exchange program between the University of Regensburg and the University of California Berkeley, Prof. Dr. Jeroen DeWulf, is coming to Regensburg! He invites you together with Prof. Dr. Timothy Nunan (UR, DIMAS) to find out more about UC Berkeley and the exchange program. All interested parties, but especially current and future doctoral students and their supervisors, as well as Regensburg professors from all disciplines are invited to attend. The event will take place from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the H24 (Vielberth Building) - American pizza included, while stocks last!

Cooperation with DIMAS – Timothy Nunan

04.02.25, 18:15, H26

Afro-Atlantische Christen: Eine neue Geschichte des afroamerikanischen Christentums (Presentation in German)

Bei der historischen Entwicklung des Christentums der afroamerikanischen Gemeinschaft wird traditionell die Rolle von weißen Missionaren betont. Dieser Vortrag verändert die Perspektive und konzentriert sich auf den langfristigen Einfluss afro-atlantischer Christen – Afrikaner, die bereits vor ihrer Ankunft in Amerika Varianten des frühneuzeitlichen portugiesischen Katholizismus angenommen hatten. Dieses Forschungsprojekt liefert Beweise dafür, dass zu den ersten Generationen versklavter Afrikaner eine erhebliche Anzahl afro-atlantischer Christen gehörte, die die Grundlagen für zukünftige religiöse, soziale und politische Aktivitäten der afroamerikanischen Gemeinschaft legten. Historische Dokumente verdeutlichen die Bedeutung insbesondere eines Identitätsmerkmals: Bruderschaften. Daher argumentiert dieses Buch, dass die Geschichte des afroamerikanischen Christentums mit der Geschichte der afroamerikanischen Bruderschaften einhergeht und dass sich die Strukturen dieser Organisationen trotz der großen Veränderungen, die durch veränderte soziale Bedingungen ausgelöst wurden, von zentraler Bedeutung zur Entwicklung des afroamerikanischen Kirchen in Amerika waren. Durch die Verlagerung des Fokus auf afro-atlantische Christen verändert sich das Verständnis der Geschichte des afroamerikanischen Christentums dramatisch. Von passiven Zuschauern verwandeln sich Mitglieder der schwarzen Gemeinschaft in aktive Pioniere, die eine Form des Christentums mit afrikanischen Wurzeln entwickelten und anschließend in Amerika verbreiteten.



Cooperation with Leibniz-WissenschaftsCampus, Fakultät für Katholische Theologie – Yves Kingata and Laura Lieber (KT/DIMAS)

Please note also: A new call for applications for the Berkeley-Regensburg Doctoral Exchange program will be launched around July 2025 for the 2026/27 academic year. With warm regards on behalf of all the colleagues involved in bringing Jeroen Dewulf to Regensburg and making him welcome here,

Laura Niebling
24.01.2025