

## Interview

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### **Incorporating the Averse. Emulating Freemasonry? An Approach to racial and hermeneutical entanglement in the Abakuá religious exercitatio**

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#### **What were the reasons that led you to focus your research on Freemasonry?**

I am very interested in the circulation of knowledge in relation to Afro-descendant communities and European schools of thought. The secrecy of elitist spaces such as Freemasonry who by its own laws, Anderson's Constitutions, legitimized discrimination against subaltern, racialized or unborn free subjects. The Afro-descendants seemed to comply with all the requirements so as not to be incorporated into Freemasonry, even after they were manumitted. And despite these discriminations there were exceptions not only at the individual level but also at the collective level.

#### **Which sources did you use?**

My primary sources were Anderson's Constitutions the constitutive documentation of Masonry. In addition, documentation related to social and/or religious Afro-descendant associations from Africa to their enslaved community in the diaspora. It was also necessary to study not only manuscripts but also Masonic and Afro-descendant symbology and iconography, which in colonized geographies such as Saint Domingue and Cuba shared adoptions and integrations.

#### **What were the main difficulties you encountered? How did you surmount them?**

The greatest difficulties were accessing the documentation or religious knowledge of African and Afro-descendant fraternities, since they are associations that in most cases have made hermeticism a tool with which to handle time and a barrier against incorporating elements of Western religious culture. Although, as shown by this secrecy - like Freemasonry itself -, it was also permeable, flexible and dynamic, which has allowed them to continue to be active today.

## **What major historical problems have your work resolved?**

The relationship of Freemasonry with racialized subjects, despite individual exceptions, especially during and after the events of the slave trade, slavery and racial segregation.

## **Please, could you summarize the essence of your thesis in two lines?**

How Afro-descendant associations of a secular-political and religious character have negotiated spaces of influence against Freemasonry.

## **What were personal and professional lessons you have learned from this research?**

How to shatter the vision of a Eurocentric story. To illustrate how the referents of the so-called subaltern communities - especially regarding gender and race - have been able to cross over the borders of knowledge.

## **Now, what are your professional plans?**

To write a book on my dissertation and publish some articles. Also, to continue my work on the circulation of knowledge between African-descendants and Western school of thoughts.

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