Slaves and Slave Agency in the Ottoman Empire

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DÍA	Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi. İstanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları
	Merkezi, 1988–2013.
İΑ	İslâm Ansiklopedisi: İslâm Âlemi Coğrafya, Etnoğrafya ve Biyografya Lûgatı. Is-
	tanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1940-1988.
IRSH	International Review of Social History
TSAB	The Turkish Studies Association Bulletin
IJMES	International Journal of Middle East Studies
IRSH	International Review of Social History
JESHO	Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient

Encyclopeadia of Islam: New Edition. Leiden: Brill, 1998–2005.

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Stephan Conermann / Gül Şen

Slavery is Not Slavery: On Slaves and Slave Agency in the Ottoman Empire, Introduction

What is a Slave in the Ottoman Empire?

We would like to thank to the German Funding Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG) and the University of Bonn for its financial and infrastructural support for the initial conference *New Perspectives on Slavery: The Ottoman Empire* which took place from 28–30 June 2018 and was organized on behalf of the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies as a preparatory step for this publication.

The subject of this volume are the options and the agency available to slaves in the Ottoman Empire.¹ In order to summarise the findings of the individual contributions we will first have to consider some fundamental points. We need to discuss two key terms: 'agency' and 'slaves.' Both should be employed only after previous reflection, having been associated with a large number of very different concepts—the result of much deep thinking by many scholars about the question of how to conceptualize slavery.² A fundamental problem arises from the fact that 'slavery' is frequently equated with plantation slavery in the Americas. Especially in US American political thinking, this equation has become something of an article of faith. As a result, what is stressed is the uniqueness of the phenomenon

¹ For an overview see Suraiya Faroqhi, Slavery in the Ottoman World: A Literature Survey, OSML 4 (Berlin: EB Verlag, 2017). Additionally, note the following standard works for the study of Ottoman slavery: Y. Hakan Erdem, Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and its Demise, 1800–1909 (London: Macmillan Press, 1996) and Ehud R. Toledano, among his several publications, As If Silent and Absent: Bonds of Enslavement in the Islamic Middle East (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007). Regarding female slaves, see Madeline C. Zilfi, Women and Slavery in the Late Ottoman Empire: The Design of Difference (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

² Jeff Fynn-Paul and Damian Pargas, eds., Slaving Zones: Cultural Identities, Ideologies, and Institutions in the Evolution of Global Slavery (Leiden: Brill, 2018); Noel Lenski and Catherine M. Cameron, eds., What is a Slave Society? The Practice of Slavery in Global Perspective (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), and Michael Zeuske, Handbuch der Geschichte der Sklaverei: eine Globalgeschichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart, 2 vols. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019).

with all its repugnant cruelty—not unlike, perhaps, Germany's Historikerstreit about the Third Reich and the Holocaust.³ Attempts to compare American plantation slavery with other forms of slavery or strong asymmetrical dependencies are regarded as impermissible, as they are perceived to water down the singularity of a phenomenon thought of as beyond comparison. But doing so does not advance our understanding. Despite a plurality of opinions almost all scholars agree that the attribute characteristic of a slave is that they are a commodity that can be bought, sold and inherited. A slave is an item of personal property, completely in the possession of another person, who may use them at will. But even this minimalist definition raises several questions. Looking upon a person as a commodity has its roots in Roman law. It is impossible to overstate the strength and pervasiveness of Roman law up until the end of the nineteenth century.⁵ Interestingly, both of the monotheistic cultures that grew out of Late Antiquity, i.e. the Christian and the Islamic worlds, largely adopted Roman concepts of property and ownership. European colonial powers later carried these concepts into other world regions. But we should question the assumption that other, non-monotheistic, premodern cultures shared those same, or at least similar, concepts of law, property and ownership. That is something we learnt in many discussions with colleagues in other disciplines who work on non-European societies. The only shared factor appears to be that in all societies there were strong asymmetrical dependencies in which humans exploited their fellow humans by means of physical violence. In most cases, people were being forced to perform labour.

We use the term 'strong asymmetrical dependency' to avoid the dichotomy of slavery and freedom, and to explain (and explore) what lies between these two binaries. This intermediate space might be occupied—generally speaking—by convicts, servants, prisoners of war, coerced labour, as well as by people held in all other kinds of bondage. The Bonn Cluster of Excellence "Beyond Slavery and Freedom" provides us with a plausible working definition:

Dependencies between actors are based on the ability of one actor to control the actions and the access to resources of another. This type of control over actions and access to

³ See Reinhard Kühnl, ed., Vergangenheit, die nicht vergeht: Die "Historiker-Debatte." Dokumentation, Darstellung und Kritik (Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1987) and Klaus Große Kracht, "Der Historikerstreit: Grabenkampf in der Geschichtskultur," in Die zankende Zunft: Historische Kontroversen in Deutschland nach 1945, ed. Klaus Große Kracht (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 91–114.

⁴ This is the prevailing definition in a nutshell, see Igor Kopytoff and Suzanne Miers, eds., *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 3–4.

⁵ See for example Wolfgang Kunkel and Martin Schermaier, Römische Rechtsgeschichte, 14th rev. ed. (Köln: Böhlau, 2005).

resources is often reciprocal, and in this case, it is compatible with the autonomy of both actors. So the existence of strong asymmetries between actors is decisive for the loss of autonomy of one of them. In addition, this asymmetrical dependency between actors has to be supported by an institutional background that ensures that the dependent actor normally cannot change their situation by either going away ('exit') or by articulating protest ('voice').⁶

Comprehensive ideas had previously been proposed only in three introductory articles. The first was the 2011 introduction by David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman to the third volume of The Cambridge World History of Slavery entitled, "Dependence, Servility and Coerced Labour in Time and Space." The editors' purpose in that volume was to take a closer look at forms of dependency other than slavery and discussing some overall ideas of slavery, and how these had developed over the years. Their main intention, however, was to focus on different types of dependency and unfreedom. To this end, they considered unfreedom to be the polar opposite of freedom and free labour, expressed primarily through institutions such as indentured, convict, or bonded labour. The second discussion was initiated by Stefan Hanß and Juliane Schiel in 2014 in their introductory chapter to the volume Mediterranean Slavery Revisited entitled, "Semantics, Practices and Transcultural Perspectives on Mediterranean Slavery."8 The authors emphasize the necessity of not treating the concept of slavery in isolation, but of comparing it to other forms of dependency and unfreedom, as well as highlighting the interaction with its semantic meaning and textual context. They recommend a comparative approach, since this allows a contextualization in a historical framework and also uncovers and emphasizes both significant relations and parallels as well as differences and contradictions between the multiple forms of dependency. Finally, in a more recent introduction (2018), Stephan Conermann tackled the issue again, pointing out the terminological problems, and presenting especially the centers and studies devoted to slavery and dependency studies in German-speaking academia.9

⁶ www.dependency.uni-bonn.de/en/our-research/research-objective (accessed on 27 November, 2019).

⁷ David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman, "Dependence, Servility, and Coerced Labor in Time and Space," in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery: AD 1420–AD 1804*, vol. 3, ed. David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1–21.

⁸ Stefan Hanß and Juliane Schiel, "Semantics, Practices and Transcultural Perspectives on Mediterranean Slavery," in *Mediterranean Slavery Revisited* (500–1800) / Neue Perspektiven auf mediterrane Sklaverei (500–1800), ed. Stefan Hanß and Juliane Schiel, with editorial assistance by Claudia Schmidt (Zürich: Chronos, 2014), 11–24.

⁹ Stephan Conermann, "Sklaverei(en) in außereuropäischen vormodernen Gesellschaften: ein paar Vorüberlegungen," in *Sklaverei in der Vormoderne: Beispiele aus außereuropäischen Gesellschaften*, ed. by Stephan Conermann (= Dhau. Jahrbuch für außereuropäische Geschichte 2), (Ingbert: Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 2017), 9–24.

Regarding strong asymmetric dependencies, the question of the legal concepts at the base of strong asymmetrical dependencies in a given society is fundamental to any reflection about such dependencies. And here, again, we must be very cautious not to take our own legal understanding as universal. 'Law' should be understood as a culturally shaped institution, a societal set of rules that can exist in writing, but that may just as well consist of a bundle of shared values, norms and practices. ¹⁰ Only once we have understood this constantly changing and evolving body of regulations can we essay a meaningful description and comparison of the phenomena under consideration.

Slaves were property in the Ottoman Empire, so the Islamic law on property applied to a person who had become a slave. As an example for the normative rules of Islamic law we cite the comments by the Hanafite legal scholar, Burhan ad-Din Ibrahim b. Muhammad al-Halabi (d. 1549), in his work Multaga al-abhur (The Confluence of the Oceans). 11 In his chapter about the legal status of slaves he writes that a slave is fully human in terms of religion, but not fully answerable due to his dependent status, and not fully obliged to undertake holy war. In all other respects he is an object. His special status comes about in these ways: bondage results from either birth or capture in war, i.e. when a non-Muslim who is not protected by contract or a grant of protection is captured by Muslims; it never results from sale of debt, self-sale, or the sale of children. Slaves have personal rights: they can marry. A male slave may marry up to two slave women. A slave woman can marry a free man, but he must not be her master; and vice versa. A slave requires their master's permission to get married; a master may force his slaves to marry. The master's permission implies his liability, including the person of the slave for the latter's pecuniary obligations associated with the marriage, such as bridal gifts and alimony; in other words, the slave can be sold to

¹⁰ This is also the subject of the Bonn Käte Hamburger Kolleg Recht als Kultur ("Law as Culture," www.recht-als-kultur.de/en/). For good overviews, see Werner Gephart and Daniel Witte, eds., Recht als Kultur? Beiträge zu Max Webers Soziologie des Rechts (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2017) and Jan Christoph Suntrup, Umkämpftes Recht: Zur mehrdimensionalen Analyse rechtskultureller Konflikte durch die politische Kulturforschung (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2018).

¹¹ E.g. in Gotthelf Bergsträsser, Gundzüge des islamischen Rechts, ed. and rev. Joseph Schacht, (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1935), 38–42. Quoted in Stephan Conermann, Art. "Islam," in Handwörterbuch der antiken Sklaverei (HAS), vol. 2, ed. Heinz Heinen, (Stuttgart: Steiner 2017), cols. 1516b–23a. On further discussion on legal issues in Islam, see Shaun Marmon, ed., Slavery in the Islamic Middle East (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 1999); Kurt Franz, "Slavery in Islam: Legal Norms and Social Practice," in Slavery and Slave Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean (12th to 15th Centuries), ed. Reuven Amitai and Christoph Cluse (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), 51–141. Among some of the most representative works on slavery in the Ottoman jurisprudence, see Hasan Tahsin Fendoğlu, İslâm ve Osmanlı Hukukunda Kölelik ve Câriyelik (Istanbul: Beyan, 1996) and Nihat Engin, Osmanlı Devleti'nde Kölelik (Istanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı, 1998).

cover these. An unmarried female slave is sexually available to her master as a concubine, but not a male slave to his mistress. A slave's children inherit her status, but if a master acknowledges a child as his it will be free and equal in status to himself. Legal protection for slaves is weaker than for free persons: the deliberate killing of a slave means the law of vengeance (= talio) will apply, even against a free person, but injury alone will not. Slanderous accusations of fornication against a slave will result not in the 'legal punishment' (hadd), which could include the death penalty, but merely 'castigation.' A master may only apply hadd against his slave with the permission of the imam (the caliph). In other respects, slaves are protected in the same way as (other) possessions. A slave does not enjoy the protection of the law against their master: talio, and even more so reparations, are claims under private law brought either by the injured party or the holder of authority, which in both cases would be the master himself. As such, a claim would be null and void, since the plaintiff would be identical with the defendant. A slave's entitlement to take legal action against their master would not be extended to such cases. But there is official supervision to make sure a master fulfils his religious obligations towards his slaves: he must not work them too hard and must allow them sufficient rest. Constant violation can result in him being made to sell the slave. A slave is not legally capable, but a male slave can act on his master's behalf and can be the executor of his master's will, if all the heirs are minors. His word is valid in property transactions, and, if he is of good repute, also in certain religious matters, but he cannot testify in court. A slave is entitled to upkeep from their master; a house slave—unlike a slave engaged in commerce —also to alms at the end of Ramadan. A slave can be held criminally liable, although his master will have to assume the proprietary liability; he can free himself from this obligation by handing over the slave. A master can invest his slave with legal capacity, either for a single occasion such as when the slave wishes to contract matrimony; or generally, to enable him to trade. This authorisation does not apply to unilaterally disadvantageous transactions, such as an endowment or the freeing of oneself from talio through payment of a fine.

There are strong religious overtones to manumission. In some cases it can be an obligation as atonement for wrongdoing, and it often features in sworn commitments. A slave gains legal freedom if they become the property of a person related to them to a degree that would be an impediment to marriage (such as a foster brother). A slave who has given birth to a child recognised as his by her master (*umm walad*) gains her freedom after his death. Her master no longer has power of disposition over her, except for manumission or a manumission contract by which she does not lose her right to freedom in the event of his death. He cannot hand her over, instead he pays the equivalent of her value. He can, however, dispose of her in marriage. In order to facilitate manumission, decisions will be made in her favour in case of doubt. Where her entitlement to

liberty is incomplete, she will be given the chance to earn her freedom through work. Special forms of liberation are manumission in the event of death, and the sale of a slave to themselves: the slave is instantly free and owes his master the price. There is also a contract requested by the slave to purchase their freedom, usually in instalments: the slave is free immediately inasmuch as nobody can dispose of them; as soon as the full sum is paid, liberty is complete. A tie of loyalty (wala', clienthood; both patron and client were called mawla, pl. mawali) continued to bind the manumitted slave to their former master, now their patron. This bond had implications that could affect the right of inheritance and in some ways also marriage.

So even these legal, normative concepts granted slaves in the Islamic world a number of personal rights that meant that there were certain options available to them, even though life in practice could be very harsh. However, normative texts tell us nothing about practice: they only provide a reference framework.

Numerous handbooks on slavery assume that slaves were marginalised within the framework of this institution. Slaves were, it is claimed, social outsiders by definition. But we should question even this basic assumption. If we look at the Ottoman institution of *devṣirme* (levy of boys), which is frequently taken to be a form of slavery, it quickly becomes clear how problematic even basic definitions are.¹²

In the fourteenth century the Ottomans had decided to create an additional army. For this new unit, the Janissary Corps (*Yeniçeri Ocağı*), young Christian boys were recruited by force.¹³ The new system was given its normative-legal framing through the official "Laws of the Janissaries" (*Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyan*), which describes the recruitment and training of novices in ideal-typical fashion.

The process of conscription began with an application from the *yeniçeri ağası* to the Sultan. If the request was granted, designated units went out to the villages where they demanded a list of baptised boys from the priests, on the basis of which the recruitment was carried out. Ideally, the boys were to be between ten and 18 years of age, physically healthy, handsome, unmarried, uncircumcised and intelligent. Only one son per family could be recruited to ensure that the

¹² On what follows see Gulay Yilmaz, "Becoming a Devshirme: The Training of Conscripted Children in the Ottoman Empire," in *Children in Slavery Through the Ages*, ed. Gwyn Campbell, Suzanne Miers, and Joseph C. Miller, (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2009), 119–34. For impressions from the real world of the Janissaries (in this case in Syria), see Linda T. Darling, *The Janissaries of Damascus in the Sixteenth Century, Or How Conquering a Province Changed the Ottoman Empire*, OSML 6 (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2019).

¹³ On the subject of children in slavery in the Islamicate societies, see Kristina Richardson, "Singing Slave Girls (Qiyan) of the 'Abbasid court in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries," in Children in Slavery Through the Ages, ed. Gwyn Campbell, Suzanne Miers, and Joseph C. Miller, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009), 105–18; Fuad Matthew Caswell, The Slave Girls of Baghdad: The Qiyan in the Early Abbasid Era (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

families would not lose their livelihoods. The youths were rounded up in the centre of the village. After a thorough inspection, the recruits were divided into groups and prepared for the march to Istanbul. This included issuing them with special, very conspicuous clothes and distinctive hats in order to prevent attempts to escape on the way to the capital. There, the boys were converted to Islam, circumcised and given Islamic names. Those best qualified were deployed to the royal palaces, where there were schools with various different focuses. Their basic training took seven years, followed by another seven of further, specialised education. There were lessons in Turkish, Arabic, literature, Qur'an studies, Islamic law and theology, as well as teaching on administrative and military matters. The students were paid a small stipend. A very small cohort made it to the Topkapi Palace, where they received more training to prepare them for the highest offices. The rest were put in mid-ranking administrative posts.

All those who were not selected for school education were sent to the kapıkulu regiment in order to prepare them for their career in the military. They received a two-stage training. First, they were sent to a family in Anatolia or Rumelia for five years in order to socialise them as Turkish Muslims. On their return to barracks they were instructed in military, religious and administrative subjects. They gradually replaced those of the Janissaries who were away at war. In addition, they acted as guards, firefighters or police. Eventually, they became regular soldiers in the kapıkulu regiments. The rigorous division of recruits into military units under the leadership of an instructor over time created a strong sense of solidarity. Each regiment appears to have set up its own waqf to provide for comrades in need or bereaved family members. It seems that loans were also available. This would also explain why many Janissaries were able to conduct business on the side, a phenomenon that increased significantly in the seventeenth century.¹⁴

If we look at this system overall, it becomes clear that we cannot refer to it as slavery in the sense previously defined. The youths were not bought or regarded as chattels. They were not marginalised or placed on the edge of society. Quite the reverse: their careers might take them to the highest administrative or military posts. And yet each of them was officially the Sultan's *kul*—a very ambivalent term which we plainly cannot translate simply as 'slave.'

¹⁴ Gilles Veinstein, "On the Ottoman Janissaries (Fourteenth-Nineteenth Centuries)," in Fighting for a Living: A Comparative Study of Military Labour 1500–2000, ed. Erik-Jan Zürcher (Amsterdam University Press, 2013), 126.

Slave Agency in the Ottoman Empire

The contributions in this volume focus on the options available to persons in situations of strong asymmetrical dependency in the Ottoman Empire, i.e. their agency. This somewhat imprecise term requires clarification. John Robb in one of his articles gave a lot of thought to the applicability of the concept to questions in the field of cultural science: ¹⁵ agency is connected to very specific social contexts and particular situations. Like power, agency is not an isolated quality: it is conceivable only in relation to other people (or indeed other animals, or material objects). This can also be explained with the term 'interagency,' a concept that has now been adapted for social history studies. ¹⁶

Even where we act to achieve a goal that only affects ourselves, we act along the lines of an identity and adhere to practices and meanings that ultimately evolved through interaction with others. We act within familiar fields of action and opportunity that are epistemically recognizable to us. Goal oriented action is possible only where it agrees with power structures, cultural ideas and forms of behaviour we find familiar. A group, too, can have agency—but a group's agency may radically differ from that of the sum of its individual members.

If we look at slavery and other forms of strong asymmetrical dependency in the Ottoman Empire against this background, it becomes apparent very quickly that here, again, we have a familiar problem with our sources. In most cases, we can observe an individual's agency only indirectly. The persons we are interested

¹⁵ John Robb, "Beyond Agency." World Archaeology 42 (2010), 493-520. The concept of agency was initially proposed for social history by Edward P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (New York: Vintage, 1963) and Eric J. Hobsbawm, "From Social History to History of Society," Daedalus 100 (1971): 33-52. The flexibility of the concept was that it was capable of being adapted in further fields of studies such as environmental history: Markus Holzinger, Natur als sozialer Akteur: Realismus und Konstruktivismus in der Wissenschaftsund Gesellschaftstheorie (Opladen: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2004); in human-animal studies, for example, Gesine Krüger, Aline Steinbrecher, and Clemens Wischermann, eds., Tiere und Geschichte: Konturen einer "Animate History" (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014). Pleading for a more attention to commodities in sociological studies, Roßler suggested the concept of agency as a central term for science and technology studies. Gustav Roßler, *Der* Anteil der Dinge an der Gesellschaft: Sozialität - Kognition - Netzwerke (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2016). Two outstanding studies in this regard should also be mentioned: Arjun Appadurai, The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective, 10th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); and Alfred Gell, Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory, reprint (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007).

¹⁶ On initial studies on interagency, see Viviane Despret, "From Secret Agents to Interagency," History and Theory 52 (2013): 29-44, and David Gary Shaw, "The Torturer's Horse: Agency and Animals in History," History and Theory 52 (2013): 146-67 and Juliane Schiel, Isabelle Schürch, and Aline Steinbrecher, "Von Sklaven, Pferden und Hunden: Trialog über den Nutzen aktueller Agency-Debatten für die Sozialgeschichte," Schweizerisches Jahrbuch für Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte 32 (2017): 17-48.

in very rarely express themselves: they simply do not get a chance to talk. But that is not to say that even people in the worst forms of asymmetrical dependency are wholly without agency. Sociological studies on the social order in National Socialist concentration camps¹⁷ and Soviet penal and labour camps have shown that even within structures of absolute power there can be specific socialization processes that lead to the formation of differentiated camp societies.¹⁸ Although any such society lies at the very edge of sociality, it does represent a closed social system. Within the mundane "web of dependencies and antagonisms" (*Geflecht von Abhängigkeiten und Antagonismen*)¹⁹ of the system, the inmates were possessed of (well documented) agency.

We merely wanted to stress here that a person always has options, even within the most rigid and asymmetrical forms of society. These options depend on the given context and situation and always result from the relationship with other people, animals (if you like) and material objects.

Which forms of slavery can we identify from the contributions in this volume for the Ottoman Empire? Some collectives spring to mind:

1) Galley slaves (the chapter by Gül Şen). Galley slavery was widespread throughout the Mediterranean. There was usually a shortage of slaves, among other reasons due to the enormously high death rate in battles. Pirates in particular took advantage of this 'gap in the market' and sold captives to the all naval powers involved. Leaving aside volunteer fighters, Ottoman rowing ships used three different groups of enslaved people as oarsmen: a) prisoners of war, b) the private slaves of dignitaries or wealthy people, c) slaves who had been purchased officially. Interestingly, members if all those groups were paid a (modest) wage. Forced recruitment was also heavily used. In compensation, affected households were granted a partial tax exemption (avārız). In the Ottoman Empire galley slaves—as state slaves (*mīrī esīr*)—were sent to the naval arsenal in Istanbul. If the guards agreed, the slaves were able to transact small-scale business among each other. If the fleet was not at sea, the oarsmen were employed on land for work in the arsenal, or to carry out repairs on roads or fortification and defence works. Şen notes that the entire cycle of the 'production' of galley slaves, i. e. their recruitment, their everyday life at sea and at the Arsenal, as well as their employment outside of the Arsenal, bears a strong similarity with practices employed by the Republic of Venice, over many centuries the naval rival of the Ottoman Empire in the Mediterranean.

¹⁷ It is important here to distinguish concentration camps from extermination camps such as Auschwitz.

¹⁸ For example Wolfgang Sofsky, *Die Ordnung des Konzentrationslagers*. 3. ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1993).

¹⁹ Sofsky, "Die Ordnung des Konzentrationslagers," 23.

- 2) Eunuchs (Jane Hathaway's contribution). 20 There were countless eunuchs from various regions other than Africa in the Ottoman Empire, but only African eunuchs were deployed in the palace harem at Istanbul. The conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and the subsequent construction of the Topkapı Sarayı marked a turning point. The new building complex had initially housed female slaves used as concubines, until Hürrem Sultan (circa 1502-58), wife of Süleyman I (r. 1520–66) moved into the palace with her entire household. Over the course of the sixteenth century the harem in the third courtyard grew to encompass more than 1200 female individuals. Within the Topkapı Sarayı there were not only the African eunuchs who oversaw the harem, but also a large number of white eunuchs who were tasked with guarding the Sultan's audience chambers and training the court pages. The rivalry between, on the one hand, pages and white eunuchs, and on the other the women of the harem and the black eunuchs, ran as a common thread through the history of the Ottoman Empire up until the nineteenth century. For a long time after Murad III (r. 1574-95) had moved into the part of the building that housed the harem, the negotiation of central questions of power at the core of government happened only among these groups. The history of the Chief Harem Eunuch (darüssaade ağası) begins in 1574 with the appointment by Murad III of Habeshi Mehmed Agha to this post. A further important step towards its institutionalisation was the year 1588, when the Sultan officially assigned supervision of the foundations of the holy sites in Mecca and Medina to the darüssaade ağası. Some of the Chief Harem Eunuchs also acted as patrons of the arts, personally commissioning richly illuminated manuscripts and overseeing the production and representation of magnificent codices.
- 3) Female palace slaves (Betül İpşirli Argıt's article). Female palace slaves or concubines ($c\bar{a}r\bar{\imath}ye$) in the harem of the Ottoman Sultan are a very interesting group. İpşirli Argıt's article focuses on the lives of concubines after their departure from the palace, and their continued links with it. Leaving the palace did not break those bonds but merely changed them insofar as they continued to influence different part of the women's lives, such as marriage, their place of residence, financial situation, and social ties. These contacts were very important for both sides. They were connected by an asymmetrical relationship based on benefits and mutual responsibility. The high-status benefactor on one side was mirrored by his or her lower-status protégées on the other. The patron gave financial and emotional benefits in a number of ways, and the women responded

²⁰ Her contribution is based on her recently published monograph: Jane Hathaway, *The Chief Eunuch of the Ottoman Harem: From African Slave to Power-Broker* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

²¹ See also İpşirli Argıt, Betül, Hayatlarının Çeşitli Safhalarında Harem-i Hümayun Cariyeleri, 18. Yüzyıl (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınev 2017).

by providing services, loyalty and fidelity. These relationships demonstrated a benefactor's generosity and power, while at the same time enhancing his legitimacy. The manumitted palace slaves not only gained responsibilities, but also prestige, identity, a sense of belonging, and influence. They also assumed functions and key roles as components of the palace institution and, in a wider sense, government politics.

4) 'Ordinary' slaves (the contributions of Veruschka Wagner, Joshua M. White, Yehoshua Frenkel, and Sarah & Johann Buessow). Ottoman court registers list slaves as partners in a variety of different bilateral agreements (such as work, purchase, marriage and manumission contracts); as the accused in unsuccessful escape attempts; as plaintiffs (for example in cases where they attempt to prove that they are not in fact slaves) and as beneficiaries (e.g. of endowments, inheritances or donations). Both essays look primarily at manumission documents. They are involved in four main types of disputes: (a) Contesting a manumission without other conditions, usually understood as a pious act. Since, as a rule, this form of granting freedom had no effect on the relationship between master and slave, conflicts normally arose when the heirs questioned manumission after the master's death. (b) Challenging a contractually agreed manumission. These contracts, which were usually drawn up shortly after the purchase of a slave, stipulated that the slave was to be freed after rendering a clearly defined service or paying a fixed sum of money. Such a slave could not be resold. They would frequently stay on, after manumission, in their former master's service. (c) Disputes over a slave's umm walad status (see above). (d) Evidence of not being a slave. In the Ottoman Empire Muslims were from time to time illegally sold as slaves, so such cases were not uncommon. In his extra edition and translation of 18 court cases in total, Frenkel provides the readers with personal fates and life stories of numerous enslaved men and women in particular.

Relations between slave owners and slaves were complex, even after a slave had been freed. We should not allow ourselves to be distracted by the term 'free.' Having been manumitted from slavery merely meant that a person had ceased to be a commodity owned by another person. For a Muslim, this 'freed' state included a number of other rights. But 'freedom' for a manumitted former slave did not come with any particular social status. We have seen that important imperial offices could be held by persons who nominally were slaves. Moreover, quite a few 'free persons' were among those who were most socially disadvantaged.

Further contributing to the largest group of dependency categories in this volume, with a geographical focus on Palestine, Buessow and Buessow provide the only study on the period immediately following abolition in late-Ottoman Palestine. Their analysis of the Ottoman census after the year 1880 (especially the registers for Dayr Ghassāna and the Jerusalem Saray) and tracing agency in the semantics of the registers could only be achieved through particularly arduous

work. The semantics of slavery and dependency is still one of the most difficult terrains of this research field. The authors state that, strikingly, there are no official administrative terms that directly refer to slaves in the Ottoman census after the year 1880. Instead, there are numerous, more indirect, linguistic markers, such as the omission of family names or stereotypical first names for slaves. Despite the official abolition of slavery, these identity markers still denoted a slave origin. The vast amount of biographical information included in the census enables us to gain a deeper knowledge of the agency of slaves or slave descendants in late-Ottoman Palestine—and there were many different forms of agency. In contrast to the major cities of Cairo or Istanbul, where there were numerous communal self-help institutions and structures, slaves in Palestine relied more on "micro communities." Both during servitude and afterwards, connections within the domestic sphere, i. e. the household, were essential for the slaves and their descendants if they wanted to get their chance, as exemplified by individual census entries.

Beside these major groups, there is another that is a category not of slaves per se, but one closely related: slave traders as individual merchants (the chapter by Zübeyde Güneş Yağcı), and traders who supplied slaves to the Crimean rulers (the chapter by Natalia Królikowska-Jedlińska). In a broader sense, this category played a tremendous role in the Ottoman slave-holding households and the imperial palace, since the assurance of a regular slave supply for the capital was possible only because of this group of dealers, albeit in two different contexts: Güneş Yağcı discusses the phenomenon from the perspective of the slave traders rather than the slaves, whereas the term or profession of 'slave traders' may conceal situations in which people did have a minimum level of agency: forced recruitment, i. e. capturing, forced transportation, and so forth. Traders were the agents between the sellers and buyers, between the buyers and the slaves. Although they contributed to the economy and fulfilled the never-ending demands of the imperial palace and elite households for possessing slaves, little is known about the networks of slave traders, and where these traders came from. Women, and from the 17th century onwards also Janissaries, were among the slave traders. According to data collected by Güneş Yağcı from several archival documents and the registers, it was clear that the slave traders were obliged to treat their "commodity" properly. Court decisions demonstrate, on the one hand, that any form of exploitation of the slaves by their traders was prohibited; on the other hand, slaves experienced all kinds of illegal treatment, such as being forced into prostitution or being sold to not enslaved Ottoman subjects (Muslim or non-Muslim). With the latter group in particular, the state authorities could not always protect its subjects against being sold into slavery. The enormous economic profits for the traders will have played a huge role in this illegal practice. Królikowska-Jedlińska presents a study of a different slave trade that has many

parallels to, but is geographically far removed from, this Istanbul-based slave trading, in the furthest reaches of the Ottoman Empire: the Crimean Khanate. This was a tributary state where a kind of slave-trading institution provided Istanbul with slaves once a permanent borderline had been agreed between the Ottoman Empire, Poland-Lithuania, and Muscovy, in the Treaty of Karlowitz. For the Crimean Tatars, Circassia was now the only remaining "slaving zone." Drawing on Jeffrey Fynn-Paul's work, who introduced the concepts of "slaving zones" and "non-slaving zones," Królikowska-Jedlińska demonstrates how the Crimean Tatar rulers, who claimed sovereignty over the Circassians in the northern Caucasus, established a "slaving zone" there and enslaved people to satisfy Ottoman demands between 1670s and 1720s. The Circassians were forced to pay a tribute of slaves to each new occupant of the Crimean throne. Local Circassian rulers vigorously negotiated with Crimean rulers to lower their obligations toward the khanate; they also sought alliances with Moscow. Different forms of dependency existed in Circassian society, which were complex in their social structures and religiosity. This complexity is likely to have enabled the Circassians to refuse to take part in the Crimean campaign in the Caucasus in 1721–23. The agency of enslaved Circassian society—lying at the periphery of the Ottoman Empire—appears in its military refusal and its ability to negotiate.

In addition to the chapter by Şen, Suraiya Faroqhi and Christoph Witzenrath provide two comparative perspectives, looking at the Mughal Empire and Russia respectively. Faroqhi covers a broad period (the early 16th to the mid-19th centuries) and ventures into an unknown and particularly difficult terrain in Ottoman slavery studies in her comparative study of the Ottoman and Mughal Empires. However, instead of comparing enslavement in both empires in a big picture, she pursues the question of slave agency. Tracing agency in the sources is particularly difficult, as even successful examples remain undocumented since the capacity of slaves to show initiative was limited by law. The two empires differed from each other, although both shared the same Hanefi version of Islamic jurisprudence, its application, and the production of legal sources. Confirming the results of other chapters in this volume dealing with manumission contracts, Faroqhi defines this legal practice as a form of agency available "in theory." She discusses the difference between a kul and ordinary slaves, inasmuch as the former cannot be sold or given away, whereas the latter could always be resold or given as gifts. She compares three types of enslavements in both empires: military slaves (mamlūks) were used by the Mughals only in small numbers, in contrast to the Ottomans. The presence of female slaves in courtly harems and households confirms that most slaves worked in the households as servants and if female, they served as concubines to their masters. Miniatures painted around 1600 depict dancers and musicians at the Indian courts, who must have enjoyed some respect for their performances. Military slavery, by contrast, was an

exceptional case. Eunuchs did not exist at the Mughal court to the same extent that they did at the Ottoman court: Because of the mixture of female and male members at the court, there was little need for them. The existing eunuchs tended to the properties of members of the imperial family, a function similar to that of the Chief Black Eunuch at the Ottoman court, who supervised the imperial foundations of a pious nature. The possibilities for agency among elite slaves were not comparable to those of 'ordinary slaves' in both cases. Another comparative perspective is provided by Christoph Witzenrath relating to the Muscovite Empire. In contrast to the limited sources for South India, Witzenrath notes the tremendous amount of documentation available in the Muscovy archives. In his detailed picture of the treatment of returning slaves by the legal scholars in Muscovy, issues of interagency crop up along with the question of loyalty, an intriguing and overlooked aspect of slavery. The former slaves from the Ottoman Empire submitted petitions to the Muscovite authorities reporting their experiences in captivity, which served to examine their loyalty to the tsar. Knowing that the Ottoman Empire was very attractive to most captives, the Muscovite administration evaluated these former captives in most cases as "loyal," following their active decision to return to Russia. The whole bureaucratic process thus produced an interagency between the petitioners and administrators. Some of the captives became part of diplomatic negotiations, translation, or ransoming procedures.

Last, but not least, Ehud R. Toledano provides us with a theoretical discussion of slavery and dependency studies by exploring diverse models of global enslavement. He presents recent theoretical and methodological thoughts in a global framework as a road map for further studies of slavery and dependency. Focusing on societies in the Middle East and North Africa, he suggests a comparative approach in order to understand the mechanisms of human bondage as 'the most evasive and complex phenomena in human history.' Referring to the concepts of asymmetrical dependencies and agency, Toledano discusses some of the earlier as well as some recent models of enslavement. He introduces the changing notion of individual enslavement from a master-slave dyad to an enslaver-enslaved relationship, elaborated in his prominent 2007 book As If Silent and Absent, referenced throughout this volume, where enslavement appears as the most extreme form of dependency. In several types of enslavement in the Ottoman and other Islamicate societies, evidently the slaves could exercise agency in various contexts and frames. As confirmed by the case studies in this volume, elite kul individuals enjoyed much more agency than the ordinary slaves in households or elsewhere. Further, agency changed over the centuries and in geographical contexts in the Middle East and North Africa depending on a given period and context, reflecting a continuum on which agency was distributed and displayed, where all types of bondage are positioned.

Geographically, the chapters in this volume are divided into four major categories comprising Istanbul, Jerusalem, the Mediterranean, and the northern border (Crimean Khanate and Russian Empire), while chronologically most studies cover the Early Modern Period from the 16th to 18th centuries. A chronological order is considered only when two or more chapters contain the same thematic section.

To sum up, even if we cannot conceive the options open to Ottoman slaves from their own point of view, what has become clear is that there was potentially a very large spectrum of agency. We have uncovered a highly dynamic web of slaves, masters, freed/women/men, households, as well as religious, legal, and administrative institutions. Slavery in the Ottoman Empire is multifaceted. It cannot be clearly defined.

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General Considerations

Models of Global Enslavement

Throughout human history, enslavement was one of the most intriguing economic, social, and cultural practices affecting the day-to-day life and demographics of many historical societies. Not a few approaches and methodologies have been deployed in the efforts to study, understand, and explain that form of human on human exploitation. While most of the research in modern scholarship has been empiric and society-specific, the universal aspect has attracted theorists from early stages. My own work on bondage in Ottoman and other Muslim-majority societies has been grounded in concrete case-studies, I have also sought and received inspiration from insightful comparative and model-driven contributions by sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and economists.

Although—as will be argued further below—historians tend to be skeptical about such input, these works can offer seminal ideas for enriching the problematique and stimulate an agenda for broader and deeper explanations of what is arguably one of the most evasive and complex phenomena in human history. Thus, the current chapter will survey and critique some of the more recent theoretical models for the study of enslavement, offering at the end my own view of how a comparative approach might be incorporated into our work to further understand bondage in MENA societies. In the back of this conversation, two central notions will figure in this: the first frames enslavement in the broader socio-cultural construct of 'asymmetric dependencies;' the other examines the concept of 'agency' in relationships embedded in bondage and legal unfreedom.

Let us begin with a brief reference to the notion of asymmetric dependencies. This is what I would call an intuitive construct, not a notion extensively developed discursively to become an analytical tool or an essential building block in a model or a theory. In fact, there is no writing in sociology or social history about asymmetrical dependencies. A definition exists in psychology and semantics, as in some science disciplines, but whenever it has been used, what it means was taken for granted and simply applied literally. While this is hardly the place to fill the gap, I would still like to note how I understand and use it here and elsewhere.

For me the notion of asymmetrical dependencies is a great enabler, facilitating the placement of enslavement—and obviously other such relationships—in a broader and deeper social context. This means that whereas enslavement has its own unique properties, it does also share commonalities with other social relationships that are, as I have for some time now defined bondage, 'involuntary' and 'unequal,' but significantly also 'mutual.' This broadens the scope of our conversation about modes of exploitation that are perhaps less extreme in their 'degree' of domination, but are still on the main scale of the domination-exploitation 'kind.'

To some historians, such positioning of enslavement dilutes its pure evil nature and mitigates the practice as the ultimate horror that humans can inflict on humans over an extended period of time and in large scale, as opposed, say, to genocide. Whereas I would certainly put enslavement also on the 'continuum' of crimes against humanity, it seems to me wrong to withdraw it from the discussion about asymmetrical dependencies. The second reason for keeping enslavement as a sub-category within asymmetrical dependencies leads us naturally to the notion of agency. Unlike the concept of asymmetrical dependencies, agency has evolved through a range of theorizing and model construction in several disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, psychology, economics, and political science. In an insightful survey of the literature, John Robb, an archeologist, argues that agency is "a notoriously ambiguous concept," but that it can be—and has effectively been—reworked and redefined over the past decade or so.

As he scans the notion of agency in various disciplines, beginning with social theory and seguing to archeology, Robb reaches the conclusion that it is "inherently contextual and situated. Hence, agency is not a characteristic of individuals but of relationships; it is the socially reproductive quality of action within social relationships." Thus, if agency stems from action, or rather the ability to act, then we have to go back, argues Robb, to notions that locate action within structure (e.g. Giddens) and habitus (e.g. Bourdieu), and seeing agency "as involved in a dialectic between structure and action." When we transition to hierarchical societies, political dynamics reflect action as the outcome of the exercising power and inducing or coercing others to act according to the will or intention of an ambitious, dominant individual or a group or such individuals. A different view of agency in such societies stresses its property as a socially reproductive mechanism and its reciprocal nature. Thus, the past as internalized and interpreted by individuals and collectives, forming the essence of their

¹ John Robb, "Beyond Agency," World Archaeology 42 (2010): 493-520; the quote is on 493.

² Robb, "Beyond Agency," 494.

³ Robb, "Beyond Agency," 495; the rest of the paragraph draws on 496-98.

identities, both enables and directs action, determining the extent of agency by setting the range of possibilities and constraints.

In any event, here we shall adopt a notion of agency that is socio-culturally and historically specific. For the purpose of assessing enslaved agency, a particular concern of this chapter, we shall not use it as a universal, reified notion, but rather as specifically encountered and identified in the actions taken, intentionally or unintentionally, by enslaved women and men in Ottoman societies during the 18th and 19th centuries. Agency here is viewed as gendered, ethnicity-driven, agedetermined, relationship-based, and habitus-grounded. The notion of personhood is also important for both the enslaved and their enslavers. Following Bruno Latour's suggestion regarding "material agency," we view agency not only as a quality emanating from—and possessed by—humans, but also as a capacity that "material things," and I would add animals, are endowed with by nature. For Robb as well, agency is fundamentally material "because material things mediate and form the context for relationships between people, and because people form important relations with material things."

Without going into Latour's intricate conceptual framework of the agent qualities of Gaia, the distinction of matter (de-animation) and materiality (interrelation between the historicity of agents and the narrativity of the accounts about them), or the directionality of causality (from the past to the present versus from the future to the present),⁶ suffice it here to stress the important implications of attributing material agency to actants (that thereby become actors) in the world the enslaved made in, say, 19th-century Istanbul or Izmir. This segues us to both the specificities of Ottoman and other Islamic forms of enslavement as to the comparative and universal dimensions of the practice. First, we move to examine some of the global models suggested in the literature, both early and recent, as we consider the commonalities, but also the divergences, of the ways in which enslavement was being practiced in societies around the world for centuries and even millennia.

For more than a century, the study of enslavement has formed a major branch of social, economic, and political history as well as in the disciplines of sociology and anthropology. The pervasiveness of the phenomenon in almost all known human societies has nonetheless created a sort of "division of labor" in the scholarship devoted to enslavement. The role played by bondage in certain societies, and the existence of descendent communities actively committed to the unearthing of their enslaved past and heritage, have been the leading factors in

⁴ See my definition of the "enslaved-enslaver attachment," below. See also, Robb, "Beyond Agency," 502.

⁵ Robb, "Beyond Agency," 494.

⁶ Bruno Latour, "Agency at the time of the Anthropocene," New Literary History 45 (2014): 14-16.

promoting the study of enslavement in a specific country or society. Not surprisingly therefore, servility in the Atlantic world, especially in the US and Brazil, has dominated the first decades of writing in the field.

Although a number of studies were dedicated to Greek, Roman, and other empires in antiquity, as to medieval European and non-European bondage, the bulk of the output, and often the methodological sophistication, have been in early modern and modern enslavement in the Atlantic world. The high numbers enslaved in the Antebellum South, the fact that the available sources for research readily lent themselves to economic and quantitative analysis, their quality, and the keen interest by African-Americans, as by students of post-emancipation US history, have all accounted for the outpouring of research in the first decades of writing, which still persists today, although to a palpably reduced extent. A similar trend is noticeable in Brazil, where high demand for scholarship on the heritage of enslavement and race relations has produced a larger number of works than in the US, though the overwhelming majority of these is accessible only in Portuguese.

Only a decade and a half ago, Cooper, Holt, and Scott dated the beginning of "the enormous interest in comparative slavery" to Frank Tannenbaum's Slave and Citizen (1946), which peaked "in the 1960s and 1970s...." They added that "Tannenbaum's book, as well as Stanley Elkins' Slavery (1959) and several others, used comparison to make a point about the contemporary United States. ..."7 That, of course, was the meaning of "comparison" at the time, namely between north and south America, still well within the world of Atlantic enslavement. Another small trace of comparison can be noticed in work done on the US South versus enslavement in antiquity.8 Indeed, only from the second half of the 1990s, global-scale comparative work has included non-Atlantic enslaving societies, among them Muslim-majority ones. An important move in that direction has been the publication of the canonical Cambridge World History of Slavery in three volumes.9 Chronologically arranged, these offer work by leading scholars on enslavement in Europe, Russia, Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, the Indian Ocean, and South-East Asia. While the balance of chapters in these volumes still privileges the treatment of slavery and the slave trade in Atlantic societies, the dam has clearly been breached.

⁷ Frederick Cooper, Thomas C. Holt, and Rebecca J. Scott, *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 1–2.

⁸ Ronald Findlay, "Slavery, Incentives, and Manumission: A Theoretical Model," *Journal of Political Economy* 83 (1975): 924–26.

⁹ David Eltis et al., eds., *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, vol. 2 (in preparation), vol. 3 (published in 2011), and vol. 4 (2017). Vol. 3 has actually been in preparation from the early 2000s, beginning to reflect the shifting view on global, comparative enslavement.

The inclusion of other areas and the move towards a truly global understanding of enslavement owes a great deal to the efforts of scholars working on non-Atlantic societies, including Muslim-majority ones. The study of the history of enslavement in those parts of the globe has achieved in recent years volume, dynamics, and maturity that make it one of the leading, cutting-edge sub-fields in Middle Eastern and North African studies. With a respectable list of monographs and articles published over the past decade or so, ¹⁰ we are now able to contribute insights that help also better understand neglected phenomena in Atlantic slavery as well, such as the nature of the relationships formed in household bondage, not just in gang servile labor on large estates and cash-crop plantations. Non-Atlantic societies, especially in the Indian Ocean world and Muslim-ruled areas, offer their specific and often different forms of slavery, and their diverse notions of abolition and post-emancipation histories. How far we have come is evident in the changing notion of "comparative" described above.

This "comparative turn" in enslavement studies has—inadvertently—invited scholars with theoretical inclinations to offer models for explaining the many varieties of human bondage in history. It is not surprising, therefore, that we are also witnessing a pike in new overarching theories that seek unifying models. To be sure, there were earlier waves of competing models, going back to the Nieboer-Domar hypothesis, ¹¹ Alfred Zimmern's self-manumission, ¹² Gilberto Freyre and Frank Tannenbaum on Brazil-US comparative post-emancipation realities, ¹³ and Moses Finley's Slave Societies, ¹⁴ to name just a few. These will be briefly discussed in the first section of the chapter. But before we move on to actual "models," let me add a point specifically about our own area of MENA concentration.

As we develop our understanding of regional varieties and suggest nuanced typologies, it becomes clearer that we are dealing with enslavement of the kind closer to what Moses Finley described as "societies with slaves," rather than "slave societies" (see also further below). Enslavement in Muslim-majority so-

¹⁰ Some of the better known works are by the following authors: Ehud R. Toledano, Hakan Erdem, Eve Troutt Powell, Madeline Zilfi, Chouki El-Hamel, Muhammad Ennaji, Ismael Musa Montana, Behnaz Mirzai, Terrence Walz and Kenneth Cuno, Alaine Hutson, Michael LaRue, Paul E. Lovejoy, Amal N. Ghazal, and Matthew S. Hopper.

¹¹ H.J. Nieboer, Slavery as an Industrial System: Ethnological Researches (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1900); Evsey D. Domar, "The Causes of Slavery and Serfdom: A Hypothesis," Journal of Economic History 30 (1945): 18–32.

¹² For some interesting comments on that, see Findlay, "Slavery," 923-34.

¹³ Jean M. Hébrard, "Slavery in Brazil: Brazilian Scholars in the Key Interpretive Debates," *Translating the Americas* 1 (2013): 47–95, specifically on that, 50–53.

¹⁴ For the basics of the Finley model, see Moses I. Finley, Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology (London: Chatto and Windus, 1980), 147–50. For a thorough critique of the model, see Noel Lenski, "Framing the Question: What is a Slave Society?" in What is a Slave Society? The Practice of Slavery in Global Perspective, ed. Catherine M. Cameron and Noel Lenski (Cambridge: CUP, 2018), Chapter 1.

cieties was more akin to the Indian Ocean "model" than to the Atlantic one, with all the caveats that such large-scale generalizations *cum* inaccuracies inevitably entail. Slavery in non-Atlantic societies was, by and large, more female-dominated than the male-dominated Atlantic ones, more domestic and less agricultural, more integrative and less exclusionist, and more inclined to gradualist emancipation than one-step abolition. *Inter alia*, it is that last divergence that has been least studied thus far, i.e. the transition from (graded) enslavement to (graded) freedom. Within the study of MENA enslavement, emphasis has been—in descending order—on African and Circassian domestic servile labor in urban elite households, *kul/harem* and *gholam* bondage, menial and agricultural labor performed by enslaved persons, and some work on galley slaves. Admittedly, only little work has been done on enslavement in the regions bordering the Black Sea or the slave trade conducted on its waters.

Some Early Leading Models

Perhaps the earliest attempt at an economic model of enslavement is the Nieboer-Domar hypothesis, which asserts that "in cases of land abundance and labor shortages, the use of slavery was likely to become a vital alternative means of increasing production." Although it has been effectively used by scholars to explain the rise of agricultural enslavement in certain parts of the world, the hypothesis also came under criticism, and revisions have been offered. Erik Green, for example, points out that in the Cape Colony during the 18th century, enslavement emerged as an urban phenomenon. Also, "the use of slaves increased in parallel with other forms of labour, and the role of slaves can be understood only in relation to a wide range of existing labour contracts." To this he adds that

[o]nce established, slavery came to play a significant role in facilitating increased production on the settler farms... [and that] slavery became a major form of labour was partly a consequence of its existence in the urban areas and partly of how it could be combined with other forms of labour.

Another fairly early economic model of enslavement is Sir Alfred Zimmern's selfmanumission theory, which posits the existence of two essential types of en-

¹⁵ Nieboer, *Slavery as an Industrial System*; Evsey D. Domar, "The Causes of Slavery and Serfdom: A Hypothesis," *Journal of Economic History* 30 (1945): 18–32. For analysis and revision of the model, see Erik Green, "The Economics of Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century Cape Colony: Revising the Nieboer-Domar Hypothesis," *IRSH* 59 (2014): 39–70 (the quote is from 39).

slavement. Slavery is commonly associated with plantation slavery in the southern United States, as also with the servile labor used in the ancient world, e.g. on silver mines in Athens, Nubian gold mines, and on the large estates of Sicily and southern Italy in Roman times. In economic terms, in that type of slavery large numbers of enslaved men performed simple, repetitive tasks, making for economies of scale in supervision costs. The other type of enslavement, noticeable in antiquity too, is more akin to the one we encounter in Muslim-majority societies, where a large variety of tasks is present, from domestic servility to positions of authority, e.g. kul/harem/gholam bondage. In that type, a variety of incentives were deployed to ensure that the enslaved would cooperate and be productive. Zimmern argues that "the object of the slavemaster as an economic man is to give his apprentices the maximum amount of motive for working while leaving them the minimum amount of profit from their work." The enslaved could then accumulate the resources necessary to obtain manumission.

Ronald Findlay takes Zimmern's model and develops it further. In his theory of slavery and manumission, Findlay argues that "the effective labor provided by slaves is a function of both the level of supervision costs incurred by the owner and the incentive payments received by the slaves." He further posits that "the optimal combination of supervision costs and incentive payments is determined together with the input of physical capital," and that "the length of time it would take for a slave to purchase his freedom out of savings from his incentive payments is derived and is shown to vary inversely with the rate of interest." Fogel and Engerman corrected Zimmern's model by adding that US South coercion also included a system of incentives that mitigated its harshness. Accepting that, Findlay then proceeds to develop a series of mathematical equations and a chart, to establish the connection between enslaver-income, enslaved-earnings and savings, and manumission.¹⁸

Two leading historians of Brazilian enslavement proffer the view that "Brazilian historians and economists are doing more studies on their institution of slavery than is now occurring in the United States, despite the imbalance in the size of the historical profession in the two countries." As I have argued more generally above, the sheer size of Brazil's enslaved population, the duration of the

¹⁶ Alfred Zimmern, "Was Greek Civilization Based on Slave Labour?" Reprinted as chapters 4 and 5 of *Solon and Croesus* (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), the quote is from 122. For comments on that, see Findlay, "Slavery," 923–34.

¹⁷ Findlay, "Slavery," 923.

¹⁸ Findlay, "Slavery," 927–32; citing (926) Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974).

¹⁹ Herbert S. Klein and Francisco Vidal Luna, *Slavery in Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), ix.

practice, and the demand by descendants for historical research into their heritage have created this large-scale flow of studies. About the latter factor, writes Jean M. Hébrard that only as late as the 1970s, "the history of slavery [in Brazil] became a central focus of intellectual debate, including heated disputes over politics and memory. Once this had begun, nothing could stop the rush of research or the sheer intensity of argument that still characterizes this extremely rich area of Brazilian academia." Whereas the work of Gilberto Freyre, carried out both in Brazil and the US, opened up the issue of race and enslavement in Bahia and elsewhere, much of the later scholarly work done in Brazil has remained in Portuguese, lamentably outside the main discourse about enslavement.

Freyre's major contribution to understanding Brazilian enslavement and its aftermath provided a sort of another "model." He believed that the patriarchal social order that emerged on the colonial sugar plantation and within its "big house" (casa grande), where enslavers and enslaved lived together, produced for both men and women, Africans and Portuguese, the mestiçagem ("mixture") that characterized Brazilian society. Freyre saw in that social order opportunity for integration and progress, not racial degradation. Interracial relations under mestiçagem were less harsh than those of other colonial empires, he argued, adding that the Portuguese colonist saw the slave a human in servitude, and was able to distinguish between the enslaved as commodity and the enslaved as racialized being. Despite the violence of Brazil's enslaving society, it did not dehumanize the enslaved, the freed, and their descendants, and was able to integrate them.²¹

Frank Tannenbaum developed Freyre's ideas into a specific model comparing Brazil-US post-emancipation realities.²² He drew a clear dichotomy between Catholic and Protestant post-enslavement societies, in which Catholic-dominated societies demonstrated a milder, "race mixture" construction of race, whereas in Protestant ones racial segregation prevailed. As in most other models, such clear-cut categories attract much debate and criticism, in this case in both the U.S. and Brazil. Twenty-five years later, Carl N. Degler tested Tannenbaum's controversial model in his *Neither Black nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in*

²⁰ Jean M. Hébrard, "Slavery in Brazil: Brazilian Scholars in the Key Interpretive Debates," Translating the Americas 1 (2013): 49.

²¹ Freyre's book, entitled Casa-grande e senzala: formação da família brasileira sob o regime de economia patriarcal (Rio de Janeiro: Maia e Schmidt, 1933), was translated into English by Samuel Putnam in 1946 as The Masters and the Slaves (Casa-grande & senzala): A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization (New York: Knopf, 1946). See also, Hébrard, "Slavery in Brazil," 52–53.

²² Hébrard, "Slavery in Brazil," specifically on that, 51–53. For details, see Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen* (New York: Beacon Press, 1947).

Brazil and the United State,²³ which won the Pulitzer-Prize in 1971. Degler's extensive comparative work rejected the view that it was the humane nature of Brazilian enslavement, in contrast to the US experience, that avoided rigid segregation and allowed Afro-Brazilians to profit economically and retain more of their African culture than in the US. Degler argued instead for a combination of demographic, economic, and cultural factors as the basis for US-Brazilian differences: with greater numbers of enslaved Africans and a more significant degree of racial mixture, northern Brazilian provinces enabled class to overrule racial divergence (the syndrome of "money whitens").

The last model in this section is Moses Finley's famous, and fairly widely accepted, distinction between "slave societies" and "societies with slaves." His *Encyclopedia of World Sociology* article, published in 1956, defines for the first time the line separating these two types of enslaving societies:

The distinction is particularly sharp as between *genuine* slave societies—classical Greece (except Sparta) and Rome, the American South and the Caribbean—on the one hand, and *slave-owning* societies as found in the ancient Near East (including Egypt), India, or China, on the other hand... What counts in evaluating the place of slavery in any society is, therefore, not absolute totals or proportions, but rather *location* and *function*. If the economic and political elite depended primarily on slave labor for basic production, then one may speak of a slave society.²⁵

In subsequent works—*The Ancient Economy* (1973) and *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (1980)—Finley further elaborated his views about what he called "genuine slave societies." He came to see these as having a significant enslaved population, which he put at 20% or more. The enslaved population also had to be a major surplus-producer, and they must have possessed a significant cultural influence. Finley described Classical Greece and Rome as the original "genuine slave societies," but later added the US South, the colonial Caribbean, and Brazil to that category. This model conveniently bridges the following three decades, when "model production" seemed on the wane, as the globally comparative approach to enslavement was beginning to form in monographs written at the turn of the century and during the first decades of the next. Special research

²³ Carl N. Degler, Neither Black nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United State, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1971).

²⁴ For the basics of the Finley model, see Moses I. Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1980), 147–50. For a thorough critique of the model, see Lenski, "What is a Slave Society?"

²⁵ Finley, Encyclopedia, 308 and 310.

²⁶ Finley, Ancient Economy, 71, and Finley, Ancient Slavery, 147-50.

²⁷ Finley, Ancient Slavery, 77, 148. See also, Keith Hopkins, Conquerors and Slaves (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 99–100.

activity occurred around the 2007 bicentennial of the 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act in the Atlantic.

Some Recent Models

A connecting link in theoretical enslavement models was Orlando Patterson's influential sociological model, published in 1980.²⁸ His *Slavery and Social Death:* A Comparative Study, a massive scholarly endeavor globally covering the variety of bondage forms, defines enslavement as "the permanent, violent domination of natally alienated and generally dishonored persons."²⁹ It is on the "honor question" that I criticized Patterson's understanding of elite enslavement in the Mamluk Sultanate, as in the Ottoman and Qajar empires.³⁰ Insisting that "... while they [i. e. mamluks/kuls/gholams, ERT] may have been greatly honored by their doting masters," he asserts that "none of these slaves were in themselves honorable persons ... [since] to be honored does not imply that one is honorable."³¹

My argument with Patterson on this point is that the distinction between being honored and being honorable is so hollow and detached from the realities we recognize in Ottoman, Qajar, and other Islamic societies, that it casts doubt on the actual understanding of the status, role, and relational position of *kulsl gholams* or *mamluks* as historic beings, both individually and as a socio-political group. Dror Ze'evi and others have further criticized Patterson's notion of kinlessness with regard to Ottoman *kuls*, given the known ties they continued to maintain with their original families back in their countries of origin. The notion of "genealogical isolates" that Patterson attributes to members of the servile military-administrative elite defies later anthropological understanding of kin, genealogy, and the forging of attachment to family, community, and tribe.³²

²⁸ Orlando Patterson, Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980). For critique by historians of Patterson's model, see John Bodel and Walter Scheidel, eds., After Slavery and Social Death (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2017).

²⁹ Patterson, Social Death, 13.

³⁰ Ehud R. Toledano, "Ottoman Elite Enslavement and 'Social Death," in *After Slavery and Social Death*, ed. John Bodel and Walter Scheidel (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2017), 136–49.

³¹ Patterson, Social Death, 331-32.

³² Dror Ze'evi, "My Slave, My Son, My Lord: Slavery, Family, and State in the Islamic Middle East," in *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa: A Comparative Study*, ed. Toru Miura and John Edward Philips (London: Kegan Paul International, 2000), 75–76. For kinship and genealogy, see Dale F. Eickelman, *The Middle East: An Anthropological Approach* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1981), 85–87 and 105–7, the quote is from 105; Rudi Paul Lindner, Review of "Paul Wittek. *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire: Studies in the History of Turkey*,

Following Patterson's sociological model that went into circulation in the 1980s, a well thought-out anthropological theory of enslavement was published by Claude Meillassoux in 1986.³³ The model derives from precolonial African slavery and examines the various social systems that made large-scale enslavement possible. It advances the argument, now well within scholarly consensus, that the practices of enslavement were far more complex and pervasive than previously suspected. Working out of his West African empirical data, Meillassoux treats enslavement and kinship, reaching similar conclusions to those of Patterson on that issue, as he talks of enslaved persons as "Unborn and Reprieved from Death" and their resistance as "Revenge of the anti-Kin." But he also looks at "Aristocratic Slavery" (our military-administrative, or elite, enslavement), and "Merchant Slavery," which examines the economics of the trade and its agricultural context. Another French social anthropologist, Alain Testart, produced a sociology of enslavement in his 2001 book *L'esclave*, la dette et le pouvoir: Études de sociologie comparative.34 Testart stressed the exclusion of the enslaved, which was enshrined in law from ancient Greece and Rome to pre-colonial Africa and beyond.

From the 1990s, a contentious debate evolved between enslavement scholars working on the Atlantic, most notably David Eltis, David Richardson, and Paul Lovejoy, and those, led mainly by Gwyn Campbell at McGill's Indian Ocean World Centre (IOWC). Campbell argues that Indian Ocean enslavement presented a distinct and different model from the Atlantic one.³⁵ In the Indian Ocean, he asserts, the enslaved were overwhelmingly female, domestic, and non-African, whereas in the Atlantic, African males and gang labor in agriculture prevailed. The issue still is, how true the Atlantic/Indian Ocean distinction is across the board, or whether we have a variety of enslavement types in both worlds, perhaps only to different degrees.

In recent years, the current comparative phase in enslavement studies has produced at least three new attempts to offer comprehensive, global models. Dale

¹³th-15th Centuries, ed. Colin Heywood (Royal Asiatic Society Books. London: Routledge, 2012), H-TURK, 14 June 2014; and Lindner, "Stimulus and Justification in Early Ottoman History," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 27 (1982): 217.

³³ Claude Meillassoux, Anthropologie de l'esclavage: le ventre de fer et d'argent (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1986); an English translation was published five years later, The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991). See also Martin A. Klein, "Towards a Theory of Slavery [Note Critique]," Cahiers d'études africaines 26 (1986): 693–97.

³⁴ Alain Testart, L'esclave, la dette et le pouvoir: Études de sociologie comparative (Paris: Errance, 2001), 28–31.

³⁵ The argument is presented in the Introduction as in the various chapters of the edited volume: Gwyn Campbell, ed., *The Structure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (London: Routledge, 2003).

Tomich's "Second Slavery" sees 19th-century enslavement in the Atlantic world as a new economic phenomenon with special characteristics that had not developed naturally from its predecessors. Tomich and his main collaborator Michael Zeuske believe that enslavement in the Americas during that period was a thoroughly modern practice, not an antiquated, obsolete institution that was eased out of existence because it conflicted with modernity. The proper context for understanding the dynamics of enslavement and abolition is the world economy, and that both constituted, as Tomich writes, "complex, multiple, and qualitatively different relations within the global processes of accumulation and division of labor ..." He adds that

The second slavery consolidated a new international division of labor and provided important industrial raw materials and foodstuffs for industrializing core powers. Far from being a moribund institution during the nineteenth century, slavery demonstrated its adaptability and vitality ... Nevertheless, the transformation of the world economy made the conditions of the existence of slave labor more vulnerable and volatile than previously ... Price competition in an expanding world market and the growth of wage labor made the productivity of labor more important ...

Jeff Fynn-Paul's "Slaving Zones" is another interesting attempt at creating a global explanation of enslavement patterns.³⁷ "Slaving Zones" were places from which slaves could be captured or purchased; they tended to be populated by non-monotheistic societies. Monotheistic societies, on the other hand, created "no-slaving zones," which were theoretically, and often effectively, off limits to slaving. Some societies were internally fractured along race, creed, or ethnicity lines, allowing the enslavement of weaker groups even within no-slaving zones. Thus, fractures can exist even within a given society, when some groups, "such as criminals, or the poor, or people of a certain race, creed, or ethnicity might be legitimate slave targets, while others are off limits." Hence, argues Fynn-

³⁶ For various aspects of this model, see: Dale W. Tomich, "The 'Second Slavery': Bonded Labor and the Transformation of the Nineteenth-Century World Economy," in *Through the Prism of Slavery: Labor, Capital, and World Economy*, ed. Tomich (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 69–71; Tomich, "Commodity Frontiers, Conjuncture and Crisis: The Remaking of the Caribbean Sugar Industry, 1783–1866," in *The Second Slavery: Mass Slaveries and Modernity in the Americas and in the Atlantic Basin*, ed. Javier Laviña and Michael Zeuske (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2014), 143–64; in the same volume: Michael Zeuske, "The Second Slavery: Modernity, Mobility, and Identity of Captives in Nineteenth-Century Cuba and the Atlantic World," 113–42, and Anthony E. Kaye, "The Second Slavery: Modernity in the 19th-Century South and the Atlantic World," 175–202.

³⁷ An outline of the model appeared in Damian Alan, "CFP: Slaving Zones: Cultural Identities, Ideologies, and Institutions in the Evolution of Global Slavery," An International Conference to be Hosted by Leiden University, The Netherlands, 1–2 June 2015, published on *H-SLAV-ERY*, November 13, 2014. The volume based on that conference is in the making: Jeff Fynn-Paul, Damian Pargas, and Karwan Fatah-Black, ed. *Slaving Zones: Cultural Identities, Ideologies, and Institutions in the Evolution of Global Slavery* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

Paul, "identity and ideology play[ed] key roles in determining the actual boundaries of slaving zones, often just as much, or more, than political and economic organization."

The latest theory "on the market" is Noel Lenski's "Intensification Model." Although Lenski's latest work deconstructs the Finley model ("slave societies" versus "societies with slaves"), and leaves not one of its stones unturned, what he offers as an alternative is, in the end, a revised and adjusted version of Finley's main building blocks. Thus, his Intensification Model suggests two sets of four components each, in order to classify societies according to their "intensity" degree in relation to "true slavery," or "ideal-[type] slave society" according to his definition. This is a thoughtful method of measuring the variables, or aspects of enslavement, for both "master" (enslaver) and "slave" (enslaved), which in turn spreads each given society on comparative charts. The charts are then collapsed into a "Cartesian grid" that reflects their relative standing to the ideal-type and to each other. The Lenski model, therefore, builds on and improves Finley's rather than supplants it altogether. Even by Lenski's own admission, Intensification "keep[s] alive the spirit of Moses Finley's inquiry," while "alter[ing] his terms for the debate."

Accordingly, Lenski provides a "benchmark for comparing" structures of dependency which is not "a binary but a scale, or rather a series of scales," in his terms vectors of intensification. What this does is to apply the same analytical device used for quite some time to study enslavement within societies to a comparative study across enslaving societies. For, graded continuums of enslavement, and their more recent extension to graded continuums of freedom, are analytically quite akin to Lenski's set of graded scales that measure all enslaving societies throughout the ages by the yardstick of an ideal-type, freshly defined "true slavery." For many historians who are interested in what models have to offer, Intensification might float a bit too many variables and parameters, putting forth a matrix that requires extensive quantification, which is far more complex to apply in comparison to Finley's or Patterson's models. Especially where data are scarce, inaccessible, or unreliable, simplicity and clarity are a real virtue for scholars working in such challenging environments.

In sum, most models in the past, as the more recent ones by Tomich-Zeuske and Lenski, emphasize quantitative economic elements. However, Meillassoux, Testart, Patterson, and Fynn-Paul stress "softer" components drawn from anthropology and sociology, such as identity and ideology, or "systems of meaning," in Clifford Geertz's "parlance." But, for historians, all past and present models pose a major difficulty, which of course goes well beyond enslavement

³⁸ Lenski, "What is a Slave Society?"

studies. This, and my own interpretative schema, are discussed in the next and last section of the chapter.

Conclusion

Professional historians would immediately notice that Noel Lenski's "demolition job" on Finley's model³⁹ somehow misses the main point of Finley's and most other models. This is mainly because historians do not expect models to work in all places and at all times, and counter-evidence does not invalidate what the model is supposed to do for us, i. e. tighten the analysis and render accessible new explanations. Inductive work, from the evidence to the generalization, assumes that there will always be "exceptions to the rule;" we do not work with governing laws, notations, or equations. All models are "constructs" derived from empirical studies done by historians, and the notion of "Slave Society" was, in Lenski's words, "invented with the good intention of comparing slaveholding practices across societies." For the many historians, past and present, who have found Finley's model "useful," Lenski's assertion that it "became reified into a vaguely articulated, seductively exclusive category of sociological analysis" has not been a major concern, even if we accept much of the criticism Lenski levels at the ways Finley's model was applied to specific enslaving societies.

Most societies in the Ottoman and Qajar empires, many Islamic, and not a few Indian Ocean ones as well, practiced enslavement for much of their history in meaningfully different ways from most modern-time Atlantic-world societies. Others in the Atlantic world during certain periods of time enslaved and treated bonded persons in ways that were similar to Ottoman, Qajar, other Islamic, and Indian Ocean societies. And conversely, during certain periods of time, the latter —including African ones—practiced enslavement in ways that were similar to those that prevailed in the Atlantic world. Finley's "slave societies" versus "societies with slaves" has captured that distinction quite succinctly and effectively for many historians, inaccuracies and all. In fact, even historians who find Finley's model useful for drawing large-scale distinctions among societies that practiced enslavement, often, as I have done too, replace its bipolarity with a continuum of degrees of bondage. In fact, Finley himself argued that "the ancient world was characterized by a continuous spectrum of various degrees of

³⁹ Lenski, "What is a Slave Society?"

⁴⁰ Lenski, "What is a Slave Society?"

⁴¹ For example, see Ehud R. Toledano, "The Concept of Slavery in Ottoman and Other Muslim Societies: Dichotomy or Continuum?" in *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa: A Comparative Study*, ed. Toru Miura and John Edward Philips (London: Kegan Paul International, 2000), 159–76.