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Merchant Capital and Slave Trading in the Western Indian Ocean, 1770–1830

Recent scholarship demonstrates that European slave trading in the Indian Ocean was more extensive and historically significant than hitherto believed, and that this commerce was an integral component of a global European trade in chattel labor. British, Dutch, French, Portuguese, and other Europeans shipped a minimum of 567,900–733,200 African, Indian, Southeast Asian, and other chattel laborers within the Indian Ocean basin between 1500 and 1850, a substantial proportion of whom were traded during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Southeastern Africa and Madagascar also exported 386,000–542,700 slaves into the Atlantic during the same period.

While the outlines of the European trades that transported a minimum of 953,900–1,275,900 slaves within and beyond the Indian Ocean world between 1500 and 1850 are now discernible, much less is known about how this transoceanic traffic was financed. Recent archival research and published scholarship on the slave trade to the Mascarene Islands of Mauritius and Réunion and the activities of Gujarati merchants in Portuguese Mozambique provide new insights into the economics of European slave trading in the western Indian Ocean between c. 1770 and c. 1830, insights that invite comparison with the economics of slave trading in the Atlantic world. The information now at our disposal underscores that the economics of European slave trading must be viewed from a pan-regional perspective that includes a careful consideration of the ways in which metropolitan merchant capital interacted with colonial merchant capital; the important but hitherto ignored role of Gujarati merchants in financing the transoceanic traffic in chattel labor in the western Indian Ocean; and the need to examine the ways in which various European slave trading networks in the Indian Ocean world were interconnected with one another.

Pepijn Brandon  
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Capitalism and Slavery in the Very Long Run: The Changing Functions of Slavery in the Dutch Empire (Sixteenth–Nineteenth Centuries)

The old debate instigated by Eric Williams whether slavery laid the basis for industrial capitalism has often been declared irrelevant for studying the Dutch case, since despite the
early capitalist orientation of its economic structures, the Netherlands were a nineteenth-century latecomer in the ranks of industrializing nations. When industrialization finally gained speed in the second half of the nineteenth century, the relative importance of the West-Indian slave colonies for the Dutch economy had long dwindled. However, this flat-out rejection of the role of slavery in the making of “modern” capitalism in the Netherlands rests on a narrow and simplistic reading of the Williams Debate, as well as of the actual involvement of the Dutch in slave economies in both the eastern and western components of their empire. This paper will take a long view to show that slavery fulfilled changing functions in the expansion and consolidation of Dutch capitalism at different stages of its development—some directly related to capital accumulation, others to the creation of an imperial infrastructure, the shifting of commodity frontiers and the expansion of global trading networks. It will challenge the prevailing periodization of Dutch involvement in slavery, which dates the beginning of “real” involvement in more or less accidental encounters with the slave-trade in the second quarter of the seventeenth century, and sees the last quarter of the eighteenth century as the end-point of significant economic involvement, even though the Dutch only abolished slavery in the West Indies in 1863.

**Mariana Candido**
Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Notre Dame

**African Business Women in the Age of Second Slavery in Angola**

This paper explores the role of African women in the transition from slave exports to legitimate commerce in the mid-nineteenth century. Looking at the case of Teresa Ferreira Torres Barruncho, it examines the mechanisms African women employed to accumulate property, including human beings. After the ban on slave exports in 1836, West Central Africans started looking for new economic activities and shifted their focus and energy to the trade in commodities as legitimate commerce expanded in Benguela. In the process, African women achieved new social and economic positions in the colonial setting, accumulating dependents and goods. Teresa Ferreira Torres Barruncho amassed a large number of slaves and land, and became the most important cotton producer and exporter in the 1860s. She married at least 4 times, challenged local rulers’ land claims, and controlled more than 300 slaves on one of her farms. The concentration of dependents, including enslaved ones, consolidated wealth in fewer hands and altered notions of land access and rights. This study emphasizes African women’s role as active agents of change at the coast and in the interior of Benguela during this time of economic transformation, making extensive use of kinship and economic networks that already existed.

**Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch**
Professor Emeritus of African History, Diderot Paris–VII University

**L’esclavage africain au XIXe siècle, partenaire indissociable de la traite atlantique**
This paper aims to explain how Western capitalism emerging in the nineteenth century is connected to African slavery, in the Americas as well as in Africa. Expansion, then destruction of the second slavery in the Americas was interconnected with the expansion of slavery in Africa. All throughout the nineteenth century, according to previous and nevertheless significant concepts, the Western “capitalist mode of production” was fed from the African “slave mode of production.” This connection varied according to time and places. In the first half of the century (c. 1780–1840), the Atlantic slave trade drastically increased. Then, in the second half of the century, the Atlantic slave trade decreased, and then disappeared. The paper begins by questioning what we mean by the African “slave mode of production.” Then we analyze the varied forms correlating Western capitalism with diverse African areas: in Western Africa, the abolition of the Atlantic trade interfered early, and forced Africans to enter the capitalist system as early as the beginning of the century (similar to the situation in the cotton belt in the United States), thanks to the intensification of local slave labor producing raw materials for export. These African products (such as oil seeds and dyeing wood) were necessary for the Industrial Revolution. In Eastern Africa, on the contrary, the slave trade drastically increased in the Indian Ocean toward the end of the century, thanks to the progress of Western industrialization: no longer sold in the Atlantic Ocean, Western armament was massively sold to the Muslim Mediterranean world. When the Suez Canal was opened (1869), European guns invaded the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. In both cases, the result was similar: African societies intensified their “slave mode of production,” which was closely connected to Western capitalism.

Christopher R. DeCorse  
Professor, Department of Anthropology, Syracuse University  
Slavery, Africa, and Political Economies of the Atlantic World

The past millennium has been a period of dramatic transformation in West Africa, including changes in economy, social organization, sociopolitical systems, and the associated materialities of these phenomena. Beginning in the fifteenth century, Atlantic exchanges intricately linked Africa, Europe, and the Americas and engendered dramatic changes for all of the societies involved. The advent of European commerce, the Atlantic slave trade, abolition, the beginning of colonial rule, and postcolonial reformations each heralded new patterns of both economic exchange and cultural interactions that reflected global economic patterns, as well as African social, cultural, and political structures. Many of these events and upheavals are to a larger extent poorly known and their extent poorly represented in European documentary sources. Archaeology provides a key source of information—in many instances the only source of information—of the transformations that these varied intersections stimulated. Drawing on archaeological and historical sources from across West Africa, this paper assesses the longue durée of the West African past, contrasting change and transformation during the past millennia. I consider how transformations within West Africa reflect both change and alterations in the wider world-system, as well as the varied local
economic, political, and cultural formations that shaped European-indigene interactions and economic relations.

Janet Ewald  
Associate Professor, Department of History, Duke University  
Captive Labor and Semi-Captive Labor: The Second Slavery and Maritime Contract Labor in the Indian Ocean, c. 1770–1900

I have argued elsewhere that, beginning c. 1770, a second slavery as characterized by Tomich and Zeuske for the Atlantic—that is, a massive redeployment of labor to new lands—emerged in the western Indian Ocean. I have also argued for the links between the Atlantic second slavery and western Indian Ocean second slavery. Both developed in the global context of the eighteenth century, particularly the late eighteenth century. That context included, in both regions, a re-working of the relationship between merchant capitalists and the authority of the state. In addition, the industrialization associated with the Atlantic second slavery also bore a direct impact on the second slavery in the western Indian Ocean. This paper takes these two commonalities between the Atlantic and Indian Ocean second slaveries in a different direction. Here, I use the successive importance of merchant capital/industrial capital to tease out the entwined relationship between the second slavery in the western Indian Ocean and the formation of a semi-captive maritime labor force on British steam liners in the Indian Ocean. This semi-captive labor force consisted of Indian and African mariners working under a uniquely restrictive maritime labor contract sometimes known as “East India Articles” (EIA). The EIA made these men semi-captive by requiring that they must return to the Indian Ocean (usually Indian) ports in which they had enlisted. This stipulation trapped the seafarers in a circulating pool of cheap labor, hired at the low wages that prevailed in Asian ports. EIA seafarers did not exercise the mobility that all other seafarers possessed; no other seafarers labored under the requirement to return to their port of enlistment. One group of EIA mariners physically linked the captive slave labor force of slaves with the semi-captive industrial maritime labor force: African freedmen, who almost invariably worked below deck, with coal that fueled the engines of the ship. How bondsmen became industrial workers, performing the newest and most dangerous labor on board steam vessels, at low wages, is one part of my narrative.

But the second slavery and the EIA entwine in another way. Although not exactly simultaneous, the two forms of labor developed parallel to each other and under the impact of merchant capital/industrial capital. The late eighteenth-century reworking of relationships between merchant capitalists and European governing institutions in the western Indian Ocean contributed to the emergence of both the second slavery and EIA. Beginning around 1820, the goods produced by European and North American factories, and the desires of consumers made affluent by industrialization, impelled the Indian Ocean slave trade deep into the African interior. By the 1840s, some bondsmen performed port labor in Arabia, and likely in other places where slavery was legal, that supported industrial transportation. Bondsmen who
became freedmen in British territories or vessels fell under the tight wing of British protection—which sometimes directed them to industrial work or work in industrial sites. Finally, in a kind of mirror image of the late eighteenth-century tension between the governing East India Company and private merchants, a coalition of government officials and industrial entrepreneurs cooperated to ensure a semi-captive labor force, which included African freedmen, for British steam liners.

Henry Lovejoy  
Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Colorado, Boulder  
The Commodification of Freedom in Colonial Cuba during the Nineteenth Century

In the 1850s, British abolitionists and missionaries recorded financial details for 70 self-emancipated Africans and their descendants from Cuba in England. They were traveling from Havana, where they had been slaves, to Abéjőkútá, which is a city in what is now modern-day Nigeria. The majority of these people were “Lucumi,” which was a colony designation that slave traders generally labeled people from the Bight of Benin hinterland and who spoke the Yorùbá language. This circum-Atlantic movement of people from Africa to Cuba to England and back to Africa raises questions about how a Yorùbá community raised enough money in a slave society to buy their freedom and pay for their voyage home. This paper provides a closer examination of the personal finances, expenditures, and saving mechanisms of a group of enslaved Africans who raised substantial capital in colonial Cuba and engaged in gradual self-purchase, called coartación. This process was a lengthy and legal endeavor, which required strategic financial planning among people earning miniscule annual salaries between 300 and 650 dollars per year. In this case study, evidence affirms how Yorùbá, likely from the Ë̀gbá subgroup, organized along ethnic lines to establish and operate traditional African savings, credit, and banking institutions called èsúsú and/or àjọ. In Havana, they pooled the little money they could earn, and effectively engaged in rotating credit and savings associations to subsidize their freedom and return to Africa.

Paul E. Lovejoy  
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The Jihad Movement and the Development of Second Slavery in West Africa in the Nineteenth Century

Between 1780 and 1850, the political map of West Africa was transformed through a jihad movement that overthrew most established governments and installed new regimes based on strict adherence to Islamic law (shari’a). This political movement was based in part on opposition to the transatlantic slave trade and effectively completed a process of self-imposed isolation from the Atlantic world that ended only with the European conquest of the region,
which was effectively completed in 1903, despite sporadic resistance thereafter. Based on a profound intellectual outpouring of literature in Arabic and the radical teaching of Muslim clerics, *jihad* fulfilled several aims that consolidated a new political order, despite frontier pockets of opposition and the inability of the *jihad* leadership to adhere always to its principles and stated aims. Nonetheless, the economic transformation ushered in a period of massive enslavement and economic development that paralleled the rise of the second slavery in the Americas. Because of its politically sanctioned isolation, Islamic West Africa had a dramatic impact on the shape of the Atlantic world, whose contours did not include a major region of Africa, which demographically could have supplied all of the enslaved population for the Americas in the last decades of the eighteenth century and the whole of the nineteenth century, but instead accounted for well less than 10 percent of the enslaved population sent to the Americas.

**Patrick Manning**
Andrew W. Mellon Professor of World History, Emeritus, University of Pittsburgh

The Second Slavery in Africa: Migration and Political Economy in the Nineteenth Century

In the author’s long-term research on levels of African population and migration, 1650–1950, estimates for the nineteenth century have emerged as a set of problems of particular interest and complexity. For the era before 1800, the retention of captives in Africa was overwhelmingly as a byproduct of the export slave trade: as a result, the number of enslaved people in Africa was relatively modest, and it grew slowly, along with the export slave trade. During the nineteenth century, however, waves of enslavement developed in many parts of Africa, and such enslavement had steadily less and less to do with the export slave trade, as the latter declined sharply after 1850. As a result, the estimation of African population and migration for the nineteenth century is now seen to require explicit estimates of the number of people captured and held in slavery for each African region and over time (the overall analysis is organized by decade).

With some important exceptions (such as work by Gwyn Campbell, Paul Lovejoy, Shane Doyle, and the late Dennis Cordell), the literature in African history has been vague in its assessment of the expansion of continental slavery in the nineteenth century. Similarly, the literature has been vague on the political economy or the “business model” of such enslavement. What ambitions and benefits set the initiative and the timing of those who seized, sold, and exploited so many people as slaves? How does this pattern fit with broad changes in African economies and with shifting patterns of the global economy?

This paper is to present an introductory overview of two big questions addressed here: it sketches a narrative, both regional and continental, of the rise and decline of enslavement in nineteenth-century Africa, and it offers speculations as to the motives, functions, and consequences of the expanded enslavement as it is presented in the narrative.

**Tâmis Parron**
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The Global Space-Time of the World-Economy: Slavery and (the New History of) Capitalism

I propose in this paper that the constantly changing space-time of the world economy is key to understanding the rise and fall of nineteenth-century Black slavery in the Americas. While scholars of the so-called “new history of capitalism” have renewed the field of research on slavery and capitalism by challenging many assumptions of modernization theory, area specialization keeps scholarship within the bounds of methodological nationalism or the metageography of area studies. As a result, we are currently able to ground the growth of American, Brazilian, or Cuban slavery on industrial capitalism, but we still lack a more precise understanding of the changing global space-time produced by industrial capitalism that reshaped the systemic conditions of Black slavery in the nineteenth century. To overcome this shortcoming, I put forth in this paper the concepts of periphery-intensive commodity market integration (PCMI), center-intensive commodity market integration (CCMI) and the making of the Indo-Pacific complex (IPC) as different moments of the axial division of labor that, recasting the space-time of the world system, both determined and was determined by the rise and fall of Black slavery in the nineteenth-century Americas.

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African Labor and Industrial Progress in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Germany

Germany has not been prominent among the colonial/maritime powers who dominated European expansion and the plantation system(s) established in the Americas and beyond. Only from the 1880s, after the belated creation of a German nation state, did the country acquire overseas possessions, mostly in Africa. Rather recently, this colonial empire has attracted scholarly interest with regard to the question of whether and to what extent it needs to be understood as a harbinger of the even more aggressive subjection and exploitation of eastern European regions during the Second World War—with the First World War also seen in such continuity (Conrad 2013; Naranch & Eley 2014; Kundrus 2014; Zimmerer 2005).

Yet, Germany’s nineteenth-century colonial interest needs also to be considered as a continuation of previous central European entanglements with the Atlantic world, which can be traced back to the Iberian expansion of the fifteenth and sixteenth century. German entrepreneurs had in fact been involved with the slave trade, plantation economies, and the processing of colonial products through the centuries, part of it being run under Spanish, French, British, etc. flags (Brahm & Rosenhaft 2016; Weber 2005, 2015).

To date, these two strands of research are hardly interconnected. The paper here proposed will look at Wilhelmine colonial enterprise from a modern and from an early modern perspective. It will do so by also examining the role of such plantation products (rubber, palm
oil, sisal, kapok, etc.), which were of importance for Germany as the hotbed of the Second Industrial Revolution, from which the modern chemicals industry and the electrical industry have emerged. Much of it—e.g., rubber for electrical insulation and many other industrial needs—was produced with semi-coerced African labor (Eckert 1998; Eleazar Wendt 2018).

Michael Zeuske
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Second Slavery and Hidden Atlantic: Accumulation and Capitalism of Human Bodies between Africa and the Americas in the Nineteenth Century

The capital and much of the funding for the development of second slavery in the Americas (Cuba, Brazil, United States, Puerto Rico, Suriname, Guyana, Martinique, Guadeloupe) was generated by illegal trade between the West African coasts, as well as with Mozambique between 1808–1874 and by legal means in the internal slave trade, above all in the United States and Brazil and partially in Cuba between 1808–1888. This capital was channeled between Africa and the Americas by the infrastructures of violence. The paper analyzes the significance and role of the Hidden Atlantic for the development and stabilization of second slavery, especially in Cuba, and also considers the links between the Caribbean and the U.S. South, and Bahia in terms of smuggling by factors, captains, and slave traders.