

2| Black Enslavement: Arab and European Compared

Black Power Pan Africanism (BPPA) TRACT#2

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In the words of Bernard Lewis: “In the horrors of the abduction of Africans from their homes for delivery to Islamic and American purchasers, there was little to choose, . . . Nor was there much difference in the dangers and hardships of the journey, until the human merchandise reached its ultimate destination across ocean or desert.” [Lewis *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, p. 100]

	Europe and The Americas: ca 1440-1900	Arab-Islamic lands: ca. 600-1900 AD
Numbers enslaved	<p>“Almost 11.7 million African slaves were shipped to the Americas; perhaps as many more found their way to the Islamic countries of North Africa, Arabia, and India.” —[Lovejoy, <i>Transformations in Slavery</i> p. 21]</p>	<p>“In an admittedly rough estimate, Mauny puts the total drain of African slaves to the Muslim lands at fourteen million.” —[Lewis, <i>Race and Slavery in the Middle East</i>, p. 135, n. 14] These estimates, by Lovejoy [11m.] and Mauny [14m], make the number drained to the Muslim lands in some 15 centuries comparable to that to the Americas in five centuries.</p>
Capture & trafficking conditions	<p>The now famous 18th century British Anti-Slavery model of a slave ship (the <i>Brookes</i> model) with enslaved Africans packed below deck like sardines, provides the most graphic image of the Middle Passage. The men were packed and secured in irons to platforms below deck, and had to either crouch or lie down in the tightly confined space. They were made to lie in their own vomit and filth. The women and children were placed in a separate section below deck or in a secured area above. The unhygienic and overcrowded conditions led to the spread of such diseases like dysentery, or the flux, infected people being forced to stay below deck, sometimes until death. Their bodies would eventually be removed and thrown overboard. The living would experience the pain and agony of the sick and dying.</p> <p>The ship’s crew sailed the ship, attended to naval duties and policed the enslaved Africans. They whipped, punished and ridiculed the Africans, and played an integral role in maintaining their inhumane conditions. The crew also often raped the women enslaved on board.</p> <p>http://www.antislavery.org/breakingthesilence/main/04/index.shtml</p>	<p>For those who were enslaved, the dangers involved forced marches, inadequate food, sexual abuse, and death on the road. The Sahara crossing was the greatest risk for many slaves. The trip was so long, and food and water so carefully managed, that the slightest mishap from a raid on the caravan or an empty water-hole could eliminate whole coffles of slaves. Still other captives, the prime boys, faced castration because the price for eunuchs was always very high – and no wonder the price was high, since death from unsuccessful operations could be as large as nine boys out of ten.</p> <p>—[Lovejoy, <i>Transformations in Slavery</i>, p.34] This 19th century evidence shows just how dangerous the crossing could be: “A Turkish letter of November 1849, sent by the reforming Grand Vizir Mustafa Reshid Pasha to the Ottoman governor of Tripoli, refers to the death by thirst of sixteen hundred black slaves, on their way from Bornu to Fezzan in southern Libya” —[Lewis, <i>Race and Slavery in the Middle East</i>, p. 73] In 19th century Arab slaving caravans in eastern Africa: Slaves suspected of fugitive intentions had their necks "secured into a cleft stick as thick as a man's thigh, and locked by a crossbar. Sometimes a double cleft stick was used and one man locked at each end of it." Routinely, men, women and children were killed or left tied to a tree, for the scavengers to finish off when they couldn't keep up with the caravan, either through illness and exhaustion, or starvation, or both. Mostly, they were finished off with a blow from a rifle butt, or their skull smashed with a rock, as in the case of the child whose mother complained that she couldn't go on carrying him and the heavy ivory tusk. Ammunition was too precious to waste on a slave. —[Agyeman, “Pan Africanism vs. Pan Arabism”, 1994 p. 43]**</p>

Types of Enslavement	Europe and The Americas: ca 1440-1900	Arab-Islamic lands: ca. 600-1900 AD
Military Slaves	<p>I have found only one report of the use of black African military slaves by Europeans, but that was in Africa itself and by colonizers: “When [the Germans] raised the first Schutztruppe for Cameroun, captain Freiherr von Gravenreuth purchased 370 slaves from King Behanzin of Dahomey; these slaves, born in many different parts of West Africa, formed the core of the Cameroun, military force” -[Gann & Duignan, <i>The rulers of German Africa 1884-1914</i>. p.116]</p>	<p>Most of the military slaves of Islam were white. . . . Black military slaves were, however, not unknown After the slave rebellion in southern Iraq, in which blacks displayed terrifying military prowess, they were recruited into the infantry corps of the caliphs in Baghdad. . . . [The Tulunids in Egypt] relied very heavily on black slaves. . . . When the Tulunids were overthrown, the restoration of caliphal authority was followed by a massacre of the black infantry and the burning of their quarters. . . . Under the Fatimid caliphs of Cairo black regiments [were] an important part of the military establishment. . . . With the fall of the Fatimids, the black troops again paid the price of their loyalty. . . . While the white units of the Fatimid army were incorporated by Saladin in his own forces, the black regiments were disbanded. —[See Lewis, <i>Race and Slavery in the Middle East</i>, pp. 65-67] For the African military slaves, the tendency was, once they had outlived their usefulness, to be betrayed into slaughter by those they served self-sacrificially. ---[Agyeman, “Pan Africanism vs. Pan Arabism”, 1994 p. 42]</p>
Eunuchs Domestic slaves	<p>Example: At Jefferson’s Monticello, besides cooks, dishwashers, butlers and maids, there were slaves employed in the barracks of the big house in weaving, dying, distilling, shoemaking, tailoring, blacksmithing and wagon-making. There were also cabinet makers, masons, carpenters, bricklayers and slave children employed in a nail factory. Some maids also served as concubines to Jefferson. [See Carl Anthony, “The Big House and the Slave Quarter: Prelude to New World Architecture” pp.107, 108]</p>	<p>Known as the "guardians of female virtue", the African eunuchs served at harems throughout Arabia. Thousands of African boys between eight and ten years old were castrated every year and the survivors of the crude and painful operation were reared into eunuchs.--[Agyeman, “Pan Africanism vs. Pan Arabism”, 1994 p.42] <u>Egypt (19th century)</u> Black slaves for domestic use were very common during the nineteenth century in Egypt, in Turkey, and other Ottoman lands; and some survivors can still be met in these countries. The Nubian porter, servant, or hawker remains a familiar figure in Egypt to this day. African women were often kept as concubines. —[Lewis, <i>Race and Slavery in the Middle East</i>, p. 74] <u>Zanzibar (until 1964 when the Arab Sultanate was overthrown)</u> developed the convention that, once born an African, one was "a slave forever, even in the next world." Indeed, the Africans were called <i>washenzi</i> — "uncivilized beings of a lower order" — and, on this account, were considered to be deserving of every abuse. Thus, it was customary to have the wombs of pregnant African women opened so that capricious Arab women could see how babies lay inside of them, even as it was fashionable to have Africans kneel for Arab women to step on their backs as they mounted their mules. --[Agyeman, “Pan Africanism vs. Pan Arabism”, 1994 p. 43]</p>

<p>Economic Slaves: Mines, Plantations And ranches</p>	<p>Black slaves farmed the plantations in the Americas, producing crops like sugarcane, tobacco, cotton, indigo, coffee, rice; they worked the plantation factories that made refined sugar, molasses, rum, snuff, cigars from the crops; others worked in the mines of Brazil (gold and diamond); of Peru (silver); Columbia and Mexico (Gold); yet others worked on the ranches in Brazil.</p>	<p>In the central Islamic lands, black slaves were most commonly used for domestic and menial purposes, often as eunuchs, sometimes also in economic enterprises, as for example in the gold mines of ‘Allaqi in Upper Egypt (where according to Ya’qubi, “the inhabitants, merchants and others, have black slaves who work the mines”), in the salt mines, and in the copper mines of the Sahara, where both male and female slaves were employed. The most famous were the black slave gangs who toiled in the salt flats of Basra. Their task was to remove and stack the nitrous topsoil, so as to clear the under-soil for cultivation, probably of sugar, and at the same time to extract the saltpeter. Consisting principally of slaves imported from East Africa and numbering some tens of thousands, they lived and worked in conditions of extreme misery. They were fed, we are told, on “a few handfuls” of flour, semolina, and dates. They rose in several successive rebellions, the most important of which lasted fifteen years, from 868 to 883, and for a while offered a serious threat to the Baghdad Caliphate.”</p> <p>--[Lewis <i>Race and Slavery in the Middle East</i>, pp.56-57]</p> <p>In nineteenth century Egypt, African slaves were imported for economic use, chiefly agricultural. Slave gangs were employed in sugar plantations and on irrigation works; the boom in Egyptian cotton during the American Civil War enabled newly prosperous Egyptian farmers to spend “some of their profits in the purchase of slaves to help them in the cultivation of their lands.”</p> <p>--[Lewis <i>Race and Slavery in the Middle East</i>, p.77]</p> <p>In southern Iraq, according to [19th century] British consular reports, agricultural labor in the pestilential climate was largely assigned to black slaves imported by sea. . . . There were also some black laborers in the cities. Thus even Snouck Hurgronje noted that “shining pitchblack Negro slaves” were used in Mecca for “the hardest work of building, quarrying, etc.” and believed that “their allotted work . . . is generally not too heavy for them, though most natives of Arabia would be incapable of such bodily efforts in the open air.”</p> <p>--[Lewis <i>Race and Slavery in the Middle East</i>, p.101]</p>
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<p>Slavery seen as apprenticeship in civilization</p>	<p>Robert E. Lee (1807-1870): “The blacks are immeasurably better off here than in Africa, morally, socially and physically. The painful discipline they are undergoing is necessary for their instruction as a race, and I hope will prepare and lead them to better things. How long their subjugation may be necessary is known and ordered by a wise Merciful Providence.”-[Robert E. Lee, Letter to his wife, December 27, 1858. quoted in Wilfred Cartey, <i>Black Images</i>, New York: Teachers College Press, 1970, p. 2]</p> <p>‘Twas mercy brought me from my <i>Pagan</i> land, Taught my benighted soul to understand That there’s a God, that there’s a <i>Saviour</i> too; Once I redemption neither sought nor knew. --(1773) [Phillis Wheatley, quoted in Jahnheinz Jahn, <i>Neo-African Literature</i>, p. 37]</p>	<p>In Islamic tradition, slavery was perceived as a means of converting non-Muslims . . . as a form of religious apprenticeship for pagans. —[Lovejoy, <i>Transformations in Slavery</i>, p.16]</p> <p>According to Snouck Hurgronje, who visited Mecca in 1885: As things are now, for most of the slaves their abduction was a blessing. . . . They themselves are convinced that it was slavery that first made human beings of them .”—[Lewis <i>Race and Slavery in the Middle East</i>, p. 82]</p>
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<p>Replacement Frequency & Survival in population Today</p>	<p>In Haiti under the French, “Blacks were literally worked to death. The average life span after being sold into slavery was about seven years” —[Carruthers, <i>The Irritated Genie</i>, p. 24]</p>	<p>An obvious question, since so many blacks entered the central lands over so long a period, is why they have left so little trace? There is nothing in the Arab, Persian and Turkish lands that resembles the great black and mulatto populations of North and South America. One reason is obviously the high proportion of eunuchs among black males entering the Islamic lands. Another is the high death rate and low birth rate among black slaves in North Africa and the Middle East. In about 1810, Louis Frank observed in Tunisia that most black children died in infancy, and that infinitesimally few reached the age of manhood. A British observer, some thirty years later, found conditions even worse: “The mortality among the slaves in Egypt is frightful,-- when the epidemical plague visits the country, they are swept away in immense multitudes, and they are the earliest victims of almost every other domineering disease. I have heard it estimated that five or six years are sufficient to carry off a generation of slaves, at the end of which time the whole has to be replenished.” —[Lewis <i>Race and Slavery in the Middle East</i>, p. 84]</p>
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**In 1871, a British government Committee on the East African Slave Trade, described the traffic and pointed out that

The persons by whom this traffic is carried on are for the most part Arabs, subjects of the Sultan of Zanzibar On arriving at the scene of their operations they incite and sometimes help the natives of one tribe to make war upon another. Their assistance almost invariably secures victory to the side which they support, and the captives become their property, either by right or by purchase In the course of these operations, thousands are killed, or die subsequently of their wounds or of starvation, villages are burnt, and the women and children carried away as slaves. The complete depopulation of the country between the coast and the present field of the slave dealers’ operations attest the fearful character of these raids. . . .The slaves are marched in gangs, the males with the necks yoked in heavy forked sticks, which at night are fastened to the ground, or lashed together so as to make escape impossible. The women and children are bound with thongs. Any attempt to escape or to untie them, or any wavering or lagging on the journey, has but one punishment—immediate death. The sticks are left behind, and the route of a slave caravan can be tracked by the dying and the dead. The Arabs only value these poor creatures at the price which they will fetch in the market, and if they are not likely to pay the cost of their conveyance they are got rid of. The result is, that a large number of the slaves die or are murdered on the journey, . .

—[Report from the Select Committee on Slave Trade. East Coast of Africa. Vol. XII. 420. 1871. p. iv. quoted in Kwesi Kwaa Prah, *The African Nation*, Cape Town: CASAS, 2006, pp251-252]

According to Hermann Wissman (1835-1905) whose force of mercenaries, the Schutztruppe, helped to destroy the Arab trade in ivory and slaves in East Africa, between four and five persons perished for every slave who reached the coast. —[See Gann & Duignan, *The Rulers of German Africa 1884-1914*, pp. 64-67, 195]

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