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CHAPTER 5

Iberia's Old World Slaving Zones in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Periods

William D. Phillips, Jr.

1 Introduction

The terms "slaving zone" and "no-slaving zone" are coinages of Jeffrey Fynn-Paul in an article published in *Past and Present* in 2009.¹ That article was the inspiration for the conference that Fynn-Paul and his colleagues organized at Leiden University in June of 2015: "Slaving Zones: Cultural Identities, Ideologies, and Institutions in the Evolution of Global Slavery."² This paper, growing out of my presentation at that conference, examines the appropriateness of Fynn-Paul's terms for the late medieval and early modern sources of slaves in Iberia. My concentration is on the slaves brought to Iberia from other parts of the eastern hemisphere. I am deliberately omitting Iberia's connections to the Americas and Asia in order to focus on the Old World sources: in other words, people enslaved within Iberia, and others brought from North and sub-Saharan Africa, the Canary Islands, the eastern Mediterranean, and the Black Sea areas.

To quote Fynn-Paul's most concise definitions of the terms in question: a *slaving zone* is "the geographical area impacted by a given society's demand for slaves,"³ whereas a *no-slaving zone* is "the area considered off limits for slave trading by that society."⁴ He asserts that the distinction between these two sorts of zones goes back to ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, to mention only those areas that could be called part of the greater Mediterranean

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¹ Jeffrey Fynn-Paul, "Empire, Monotheism, and Slavery in the Greater Mediterranean Region from Antiquity to the Early Modern Era," *Past and Present*, no. 205 (Nov. 2009), 3–40. I regret that I missed that article when I prepared by 2014 book and that I missed two of Fynn-Paul's other articles that also would have been of help to me.

² Damian Alan Pargas, Karwan Fatah-Black, Felicia Rosu, and Maartje Janse.


region. Fynn-Paul also posits that "the creation of the Christian and Islamic monotheistic blocs was a major turning point in the history of the Greater Mediterranean slave system, since these empires came to adopt a religio-ethical taboo against the enslavement of the majority of their inhabitants.... In the process, they created ... the world's first 'perfect' no-slaving zones. Perfect no-slaving zones largely eliminated many of the means by which traditional slaving societies maintained slave supplies, including economic and judicial paths to enslavement of zone inhabitants.... [T]he rise of Christian and Islamic monotheism created a hyper-exploitation of African and Russian [by which I believe he means Eastern European and Black Sea] populations which has continued until quite recently in both regions." Although Fynn-Paul's statement appears at first reading to be categorical, the placing of quotation marks around the word "perfect" and the use of the limiting term "largely" allow for some hedging.

Over a century ago, H. J. Nieboer published a still-influential book on slavery in world history in which he listed the ways people were enslaved and how slaves were freed. Some people, Nieboer said, were born as slaves to a slave mother. He went on to demonstrate that free-born people could become slaves in several ways that depended on whether they were part of the slave-holding group or outside it. Outsiders could be captured in war or kidnapped. They could be purchased from slave dealers, who acquired their slaves in a variety of ways. For the insiders, there were several ways for them to become slaves. Those who failed to repay a debt could be enslaved in some societies. Slavery could be imposed as a punishment. Marriage of a free person to a slave sometimes resulted in the enslavement of the free person. People could voluntarily offer themselves as slaves to escape extreme poverty or to avoid starvation. Nieboer then described how slaves

7 Voluntary slavery was a common practice in early modern Russia, Richard Hellie, *Slavery in Russia, 1450–1725* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). Other examples of this in the societies of the greater Mediterranean in the Middle Ages and the early modern period. Because the terms of self-sale were usually limited to a specified number of years, some scholars have denied that self-sale was equivalent to real slavery. Henri Lévy-Bruhl, "Théorie de l'esclavage," in his *Quelques problèmes du très ancien droit roman* (Paris: Domat-Montchrestien, 1934); reprinted in *Slavery in Classical Antiquity: Views and Controversies*, ed. Moses I. Finley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960; reprint, 1969), 151–69; particularly 154–56. For medieval and later examples of voluntary self-sale in various Christian regions see, as examples, Vicenta Cortés Alonso,
could become free. One way was by redemption, either individually, usually arranged by the captive's family, or collectively, usually arranged by the captive's monarch or polity. Many slaves attained freedom by manumission, usually those who could amass sufficient resources to purchase their freedom. Masters could adopt slaves or marry their slaves, and both cases often brought freedom for the slave. Finally, Nieboer listed "dedication to a god" as a path to freedom. Nieboer's categories, despite being formulated over a century ago, have been influential on the subsequent study of slavery in various times and places and remain useful for a comparative approach to the study of slavery. Much has changed in our understanding of slavery over that same period, but one important strand remains: the insistence that one of the most important criteria for the ability or inclination to enslave or not to enslave is insider versus outsider status. Peoples and their rulers over the centuries have been reluctant or have refused to enslave those they considered part of their own group. The grounds for this have usually been religious, though they can rest on ethnic or linguistic grounds as well. Fynn-Paul has shifted the grounds of analysis of the outsider-insider dichotomy from the usual social and often religious grounds, to a geographical explanation, for those brought into a society from different regions as captives or slaves were by definition outsiders.


8 Some of Niebohr's other arguments about how certain geopolitical and economic situations supposedly led to slavery have subsequently been contested and rebutted, but his general categories and definitions of slavery remain valid.

9 This distinction between outsiders, who could be enslaved, and insiders, who usually could not be enslaved, appears in most studies of slavery in the greater Mediterranean area. For the explanations of the French anthropologist Claude Meillassoux, see his introductory chapter, "Kin and Aliens," in The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold, trans. Alide Dassnois (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 23–40.
Fynn Paul also states the familiar “several ways in which most societies, from prehistoric times up to the present, have created and maintained slave populations.” Those ways, similar to those of Nieboer, are:

1) Capture in war or kidnapping
2) Purchase through a more or less organized market system
3) By judicial enslavement for crimes or debts
4) Voluntary sale of one's own self or one's family into slavery
5) Legal enslavement of the offspring of slave women.

Let us now look at how all these definitions fit in Iberia. Briefly stated, slaving practices were complicated by the history of the peninsula itself. The Muslims conquered most, but not all of the Iberian peninsula in 711. The area under Muslim control passed through a number of stages—as a province of the Damascus caliphate, to an independent emirate, then to an independent caliphate. After the early eleventh century, when the Iberian caliphate was abolished, Muslim Spain was a collection of independent city-states, called party or taifa kingdoms. While all of this was going on, Christian polities in the north in a series of conquests gained ground at the expense of Muslims. After the mid-thirteenth century, the kingdom of Granada in the south was the only remaining Muslim stronghold. After the fall of Muslim Granada to the Christians in 1492, all Iberia was under Christian control, even though there remained Muslims and converted Muslims (the Moriscos) living within the Christian kingdoms. In addition to the differences between Muslim and Christian laws and customs regarding slaves, variations in law and practice were to be seen throughout the peninsula at various times.

At this point I should stress that late medieval and early modern Iberia contained societies with slaves but were not slave societies, to use the terms that M.I. Finley propounded in the 1950s and commonly used by scholars of slavery. For Finley, a slave society had to have a population in which slaves made up some 30% of the population and in which slave labor accounted for a significant portion of the economic output of that society. For Finley, there were only five places and times that fit the category of a slave society: ancient Greece and Rome, parts of colonial Latin America (particularly Brazil), the

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11 The study of slavery in the Iberian Peninsula has increased dramatically over the last three decades. For a survey in which many of the most important works are synthesized, see William D. Phillips, Jr., *Slavery in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).
European-controlled Caribbean islands, and the United States in the period before the Civil War. No medieval or early modern society in the Greater Mediterranean region—Muslim or Christian—fit that category. Instead, they then were "societies with slaves." For Iberia, the numbers and percentages of slaves in various towns and cities varied from less than 1% to 4–5%, with a very few exceptional places with somewhat higher percentages. Iberia's polities, both Muslim and Christian, were societies with slaves, not slave societies.

2 Muslim Iberia's Slaving Zones

Muslim Spain, or al-Andalus, was part of the wider world of Islam and shared ways of slaving with that wider world. One important method of acquiring slaves was simple raiding: with cross-border raids into Christian territory or seaborne raids on Christian-held coasts. Late Muslim Spain's most important slaving zone was the Christian portion of Iberia. More distant were other slaving zones outside the peninsula: sub-Saharan Africa and the Balkan and the Black Sea regions. In those regions there were well-developed slave trades with deep historic routes. The Muslim world had a constant demand for sub-Saharan slaves that continued through the Middle Ages and long after 1500, even maintaining a sizeable volume during the period of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Some of those slaves who survived the desert crossing eventually reached Spain. The expansion of the Ottoman Turks in the Balkans

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in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries brought many new slaves to the market, and some of those enslaved people reached Muslim Spain.

3 Muslim Spain’s No-Slaving Zones

The Muslim no-slaving zone is familiar to scholars of slavery and of Islamic and Mediterranean history: the dar-al-Islam, the area under the control of Muslims, where free Muslims, Christians, and Jews could not be enslaved arbitrarily. Could al-Andalus fit the definition of a “perfect” no-slaving zone? Not completely, because there were exceptions, in which free Muslims could become enslaved.

There are still many gaps in the scholarly treatment of slavery in the world of Islam and its component parts. The history of slavery and especially its nuances for those regions still await full scholarly treatment. As Bernard Lewis wrote in 1990, “The documentation for a study in Islamic slavery is almost endless; its exploration has barely begun.” Later scholars have made similar statements. Examples include comments by Shaun Marmon in 1999, John Hunwick in 2002, and Cristina de la Puente in 2008. The tide has begun to


15 “Although chattel slavery played an integral role in Muslim societies in the Middle Ages for more than a thousand years, this particular institution has, until recently, received only minimal attention from specialists in Middle Eastern social history.” Shaun E. Marmon, “Domestic Slavery in the Mamluk Empire,” in Shaun E. Marmon, ed., Slavery in the Islamic Middle East (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1999), 1.

16 John Hunwick offered an explanation of why the study of slavery in the Muslim world has not developed any more than it has. “[U]ntil quite recently Arab scholars were reluctant to probe this aspect of their past. Politically, in terms of Arab relations with sub-Saharan Africa, the less said the better, and it was also useful to depict the enslavement of black Africans as a uniquely European sin.... A second reason for the lack of studies on Africans in slavery in the Mediterranean Islamic world is the lack of a constituency within such societies that would press for an investigation of its past history and present condition.... Finally, ... [there] has been the lack of interest in the matter in the American and European academy.” John Hunwick, “The Same but Different: Africans in Slavery in the Mediterranean Muslim World,” in The African Diaspora in the Mediterranean Lands of Islam, ed. John Hunwick and Eve Troutt Powell (Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener, 2002), ix-xii.

17 Cristina de la Puente covered similar ground and noted that Muslims often “have approached the question of slavery in an apologetic fashion” and have bowed to the “weight
turn, but slowly. The scholarly community is learning more and more, and the Leiden conference of 2015 and this current volume are already adding to the store of knowledge.

We may now look at what we do know of exceptions to the definition of al-Andalus as a “perfect” no-slaving zone. Our knowledge is limited about judicial enslavement for crimes and debt, but one example is that of the free Muslims who became slaves because they were on the losing side during the revolt of ʿUmar Ibn Ḥafṣūn in the tenth century.¹⁸ We can find some examples of voluntary sale of one’s own self or one’s family into slavery. The ones I am most familiar with are not from Muslim Granada but from the remnant Muslim community in late medieval Christian Valencia. Muslims and recent converts could contract for periods of voluntary bondage and receive a sum of money to pay off debts that they could not otherwise satisfy. The periods of servitude were specified, but the volunteers ran the risk of being sold into permanent slavery if they failed to make the required payments. Debtors could sell themselves or their children to satisfy the debt, usually for a temporary term after which the pawn would become free again.¹⁹

In discussing the legal enslavement of the offspring of slave women we confront the question of concubinage. In the school of Islamic law prevalent in Iberia, jurists held that if a Muslim master impregnated his slave, whether she were Muslim or not, he could acknowledge paternity. At that point, the pregnant woman became an umm walad. As such, she could not be sold to anyone, her child became a free person at birth, and the slave herself also became free at that point. Commentators with a soft view of slavery among the Muslims often suggest that this was the normal trajectory for an enslaved woman who


bore her master's son, yet this was not always the case. The master had the choice of recognizing the child as his own or rejecting his responsibility. If he failed to acknowledge paternity, the woman and her child remained slaves.  

To sum up this section, we can see that exceptions to the general rules in Muslim Iberia suggest that the region cannot be considered a "perfect" no-slaving zone. At best, it was "largely" a no-slaving zone, to use Fynn-Paul's caveat, in which exceptions are found.

4 Christian Iberia's No-Slaving Zones

Now we turn to Christian Iberia's slaving zones. The Christian regions of Iberia—the Crown of Aragon, the kingdom of Navarre, the composite realm of Castile-León, and the kingdom of Portugal—all shared similar social and economic conditions. They each had local laws and customs, but their legal systems all rested on a basis of Roman law and had many similar characteristics.

A great change took place in the mid-fourteenth century in the Christian states of the western Mediterranean, including the Iberian states. Before that, slavery was on the decline with little demand for slaves and with that small demand satisfied by the capture of Muslims in wars and raids. Then the Black Death hit. The great pandemic caused the deaths of a third or more of the European population in a period of three years.  

Among the catastrophic consequences of the plague was an increase in slavery. Local free survivors of the plague could demand higher wages and better working conditions, so the costs

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of free labor for employers escalated. Those with money who sought servants and manual laborers turned to buying slaves as a cheaper alternative to free laborers. More women than men appeared in the Iberian slave markets in Christian Iberia in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This set of facts fits well with the Italian evidence for the period that points to a strong growth of slavery following the Black Death, especially domestic slavery and notably that of enslaved women.22

Slaves from many origins ended up in the Christian kingdoms of Iberia following the first plague pandemic. New sources of slaves from the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea regions began to supply the markets of Iberia in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as merchants brought back Albanians, Tartars, Russians, Caucasians, and other Crimean peoples. Albanians also fled from the Turkish advance in the Balkan Peninsula in the 1380s. Some, in desperation, sold themselves into slavery and ended up in Venice, and dealers transported some of them onward to Mallorca and Catalonia. Turks and Armenians appeared among the slaves of the Crown of Aragon, but they were only a small proportion of the total numbers.23

The town of Vic in Catalonia, isolated from the sea and from the frontier with Islam, had slaves from a surprisingly varied set of origins in the early years of the fifteenth century. Of 39 slaves sold in that period, 14 were Tartars, 7 "Saracens" from either Spain or North Africa, 6 black Africans, 2 Circassians, 2 Russians, and a Canarian, a Bulgar, and a Bosnian.24 In fifteenth-century


Christian Mallorca as well, there were slaves from a variety of origins. Most of them were Muslims, either North Africans or the descendants of Muslims who lived on the island at the time of its conquest. There were also others: Christian prisoners of war such as Sards and Genoese (more about war captives later), Canarians, Greeks, people from the Balkans, Armenians, Tartars, Russians, Circassians, Turks, and people from sub-Saharan Africa. Fynn-Paul found Tartars and Bulgarians in the municipality of Manresa in Catalonia. The slave trade from the eastern Mediterranean to Iberia diminished by the late fifteenth century, as the Ottoman Turks consolidated their control in the region.

To move to the center of the peninsula, slaves in Castile were almost exclusively Muslim before the fifteenth century. Castile was not heavily involved in Mediterranean trade and purchased few slaves from Mediterranean merchants. Rather, Castilian slavery was fed by the reconquest and the raids into Muslim territory, and, within the territories under Castilian rule, Andalusia was the most prominent location where slaves were used, with Sevilla having the largest population of slaves. Cádiz had a sizeable number of slaves at the end of the fifteenth century, both because many citizens of the town owned a small number of slaves, and because many Muslim slaves passed through Cádiz before being sold elsewhere, notably in Valencia. In Cádiz, too, we see evidence of a few Jews sold as slaves. On increasingly rare occasions, slaves from Eastern Europe could find themselves in Andalusia.

The Portuguese were the main European slave traders in Atlantic Africa in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, even though Spaniards operating from Andalusia and the Canaries acquired some black slaves and brought them to Spain. In the first decade of the Portuguese African slave trade,


ca. 1434–1443, the Portuguese often raided for slaves along the Saharan coast, but they soon came to realize that purchasing slaves was more acceptable to the local African rulers and that trade also made better economic sense.\textsuperscript{29}

The black African slaves included people from various ethnic groups in West Africa. Spaniards and Portuguese of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries referred to the place of origin for many sub-Saharan slaves as “Guinea,” a word that passed into English. It probably derived from a corruption of the name Jenné, a principal trading city just south of the Sahara. The area called Guinea corresponded to modern Senegal, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea-Conakry, and parts of Mali and Burkino Faso. Other slaves came from the Kongo kingdom and Angola, as well as from the Cape Verde Islands, though most of them had been captured on the mainland. The slave trade expanded significantly into new areas. Up to about 1550, most were Mandinga and Jolofs/Wolofs, and as the century progressed more and more came from Kongo and the islands of Santo Tomé and Cape Verde.\textsuperscript{30} These latter islands were entrepôts, and slaves from many regions were assembled there.

Wars of conquest also produced slaves. War captives could be exchanged for prisoners on the other side in the conflict or they could be ransomed. Those who were neither exchanged nor ransomed could be enslaved.

In the conquest of the Canary Islands, some of the defeated were enslaved, but the slavery of the Canarians turned out to be a short-lived phenomenon. The first European captains who entered the Canaries in the fourteenth and fifteenth century enslaved many of the natives, either legally in the case of the groups that resisted or illegally in the case of the groups whose leaders signed treaties and were thereby supposedly exempt from enslavement. Despite


official watchfulness, the conquerors violated the rules at times and enslaved members of the treaty bands. Members of allied bands who later rebelled or refused to carry out the terms of their treaties could be enslaved as "captive of second war" (de segunda guerra). Native slaves were used both as laborers in the Canaries and as commodities for sale elsewhere, mainly in Andalusia or in Portuguese Madeira.  

An example of this is shown in a royal order that Queen Juana of Castile in 1513 issued to Alonso de Lugo, governor of the Canarian islands of Tenerife and La Palma, and to his associates. The queen's order reviewed the fact that after the conquest was over many of the bands in the islands became Christian and their members married in the Christian religion. Later, they offered twenty-five of their children as hostages guaranteeing their continued allegiance to the peace settlements. Lugo and his associates illegally took the twenty-five children to Seville and sold them as slaves, alleging that they were captives taken during warfare with hostile bands. Queen Juana ordered that Lugo and his deputies had one hundred days to locate the twenty-five, free them, and return them to their homes. Natives of the Canaries did not make a substantial or a long-lasting addition to the international slave trade and did not even fill the labor needs of the Canaries. The indigenous Canarian population was small to begin with, and the isolated island peoples fell victim to diseases common in Africa and Europe. Manumission was common for those who did become enslaved. 

War also produced captives when Spain conquered cities in North Africa, beginning with Melilla in 1497, and continuing with Oran in 1509, Tripoli in 1511, and Tunis in 1535, along with other Moroccan ports and inland cities. These conquests produced prisoners who were sold as slaves by the Spanish monarchy, by war leaders, and by ordinary soldiers, who received one or two

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slaves as part of their share of the booty. Most captives ended up in Spain where they remained until ransomed or longer if they could not arrange their ransoms.\textsuperscript{33}

5 \hspace{1em} \textbf{Christian Iberia's No-Slaving Zones}

Let us now look at Christian Iberia's no-slaving zones, that is, the interior of the Christian kingdoms. According to Fynn-Paul's definition, for a no-slaving zone, "capture in war or kidnapping" and "purchase through a more or less organized market system" should supply most or all the slaves. And, of course, the offspring of enslaved women were slaves, with occasional exceptions. For a "perfect" no-slaving zone, "judicial enslavement for crimes or debts" and "voluntary sale of one's own self or one's family into slavery" should not supply any slaves.\textsuperscript{34} Christian Iberia consequently was not a "perfect" no-slaving zone, for we can find exceptions to the rule that local inhabitants who shared the same religion or who were subjects of the Christian monarchs could not be enslaved.

Free-born people could become slaves in relatively limited and statistically insignificant ways in Christian Iberia. Violations of law and custom could lead to enslavement for the guilty, but the numbers of slaves produced as a consequence of such actions were probably slight. According to the provisions of the thirteenth-century Castilian law code, Christians who aided the Muslims by providing them with naval stores or ships or who navigated Muslim ships were to be enslaved when captured.\textsuperscript{35} Valencia's chief bailiff (bayle general) and his staff in the fifteenth and sixteenth century had responsibility for the sale of other slaves that came to be owned by the crown. These were generally transgressors such as vagabonds, unlicensed beggars, and convicted adulterers, whose crimes were punished by enslavement.\textsuperscript{36}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{33} Martin Casares, \textit{Esclavitud en la Granada}, 167–69.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Fynn-Paul, "Empire, Monotheism, and Slavery," 8.
\item \textsuperscript{35} \textit{Siete Partidas}, partida iv, título 21, law 4, Burns ed., 4:978.
\end{itemize}
One special category of judicial enslavement occurred in the Crown of Aragon. In the fifteenth century communities of Muslims (Mudejars) and Jews lived under their own authorities, who could judge the conduct of the members of their own community and punish transgressors. However, the Christian monarchs placed certain limitations on the punishments that could be imposed. Muslim and Jewish judges could not enforce the death penalty or corporal mutilation on convicts, even though their own law codes called for those penalties. In such cases, the guilty persons fell under royal jurisdiction and became slaves of the crown. They could be sold or granted to private Christian owners whom they would serve as slaves.37

There was, of course, penal servitude throughout the early modern period in Iberia, when convicts were condemned to the mines, the galleys, presidio service, naval arsenals, and public works projects such as walls and bridges. But penal servitude was not the same as slavery, because those in penal servitude had term limits on their sentences. During the period of their sentences, moreover, they could not be bought, sold, transferred, or donated, as slaves could be.

The term “galley slave” is so common that we tend to believe that all rowers on galleys were always slaves. That is not true for the Christian states of Iberia. Free, salaried oarsmen provided the crews of the galleys during the Middle Ages. The practice of sending convicts to row began under Fernando and Isabel at the end of the fifteenth century, and these forzados gradually replaced the free oarsmen over the course of the sixteenth century. An increasing number of crimes were punished by condemnation to the galleys, and by the late sixteenth century penal servitude in the galleys had become a common sentence for convicted commoners. Convicted criminals from the nobility and the clergy were usually exempt, though the clergy who committed capital crimes could end up in the galleys.38

Forzados alone could not fill the demand for galley rowers, despite the increasing number of crimes punishable by galley service and despite the increasing rate of convictions. Their numbers consequently came to be supplemented

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37 This procedure became less used in the thirteenth century. Catlos, *The Victors and the Vanquished*, 222–23.

prisoners or war, they were either ransomed by their compatriots or exchanged for Aragonese prisoners.\textsuperscript{45}

I have already mentioned the Canarians, who could be enslaved after they converted to Christianity if they rebelled against Castilian rule. A counter-example is the fate of the Comunero rebels early in the sixteenth century. The Comuneros were members of a league of mainly northern Castilian cities that rebelled against what they perceived as Charles I's efforts to impose unfamiliar Habsburg administration and foreign officials in Castile. Charles's government put down the revolt harshly and severely punished the leaders, but the rebels were not enslaved.\textsuperscript{46}

In the late sixteenth century the Morisco revolt in southern Spain ended after several years of hard fighting. Although the Moriscos were Christian—at least nominally—they were certainly rebels against the crown and many were enslaved, largely because royal officials doubted the sincerity of their conversions (or those of their ancestors). A similar set of events took place in the early 17\textsuperscript{th} century, when the Moriscos faced expulsion from Spain. Those who resisted the expulsion could be enslaved, and some were, as were others who returned to Spain after having been expelled and were apprehended.\textsuperscript{47} The Dutch rebels against the Spanish crown in the late sixteenth century did not suffer enslavement, though they suffered other harsh penalties. Again, we have an example of Christians not enslaving Christians, even though many were Protestant.\textsuperscript{48} So it seems that the very traditional religious distinction between those who could be enslaved and those who could not remained valid for the most part. Christians should not enslave Christians but they could enslave


\textsuperscript{46} Among the many works on the Comuneros, see two books by Joseph Pérez: \textit{La revolución de los Comunidades de Castilla} (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1977, 1999) and \textit{Los Comuneros} (Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, 2001).


\textsuperscript{48} Martín Casares, \textit{Esclavitud en la Granada}, 175.
Muslims and Christian Moriscos who rebelled. Likewise, the Christian Sards and the Canarians became subject to enslavement when they rebelled.

Self-sale and a variation—debt slavery—and the sale of one's family into slavery were unusual in Iberia, though examples appear in medieval Christian Spain. In the Crown of Aragon in the high Middle Ages, as we previously saw, Muslims and recent converts could contract for periods of voluntary bondage and receive a sum of money to pay off debts that they could not otherwise satisfy.\textsuperscript{49}

The legal enslavement of the offspring of slave women was almost always the case in Iberia as elsewhere in the greater Mediterranean. Slave mothers produced slave children, and free mothers produced free children. This neatly posed proposition holds true in almost all cases, but, as with most absolute statements in history, there were exceptions. Scholars recently have found deviations from the general rule in the late Middle Ages in Iberia and other parts of the Mediterranean world. In late medieval Barcelona, for instance, free fathers who had a child by a slave woman belonging to a third party could claim the child as free, with a payment to the mother's owner. A medieval law code of Valencia, the Furs, provided that masters who impregnated their slaves were obliged to free the mothers and the children produced. If an owner refused to recognize his obligation, the slave could take him to court. There were also provisions for a child born to a slave woman and a free man who was not the master to be recognized as free.\textsuperscript{50} In normal circumstances, nonetheless, and without the intervention of the owner or a third party to change their status, slave women bore children who were slaves.

6 Conclusion: How Useful is the Idea of Slaving Zones?

Having seen that both Muslim Iberia and Christian Iberia had areas that could be defined as slaving zones and no-slaving zones, we can now assess the utility


\textsuperscript{50} Debra Blumenthal, Enemies and Familiars: Slavery and Mastery in Fifteenth-Century Valencia (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 174–78, 186. Josep Hernando, Els esclaus islàmics a Barcelona: Blancs, negres, llors i turcs: De l’esclavitud a la llibertat (s. xiv) (Barcelona: Institució Milà i Fontanels, 2003), 242. Hinojosa Montalvo, Esclavos, nobles, y corsarios, 96. For other parts of the Mediterranean, see for example, Sally McKee’s examples of children born to slave mothers and free fathers in medieval Italian areas inherited their fathers’ status. “Inherited Status and Slavery in Late Medieval Italy and Venetian Crete,” Past and Present 182 (2004): 31–54.
of the concept and the definitions. A constant theme in the history of slavery from Roman times onward in the Greater Mediterranean is that various groups always made distinctions about who could be enslaved legally and who could not. With the rise of what Fynn-Paul calls the monotheistic blocs, the usual grounds for distinguishing between people who could be enslaved and those who could not was first and foremost on the grounds of religion. So, emphasizing slaving zones and no-slaving zones is in some ways a new packaging of familiar concepts.

One additional consideration should be mentioned. Fynn-Paul lumps together varieties of people when he mentions Russia and Africa as slaving zones. I would prefer to split the analysis along ethnic, religious, and linguistic lines. For the Black Sea regions, there were Russians but also Tartars, Circassians, Bosnians, Bulgarians, and Albanians as well as others. For Africa, the Iberian documents mention Guineans, Angolans, Congolese, Senegambians, and those from Benin, São Tomé, and the Cape Verde islands. Not to mention the very real distinction between North Africa and the lands below the Sahara. Moreover, of course, some parts of Africa were off limits because their rulers and part of their population had converted to Christianity. The kingdom of Kongo from the sixteenth century is the prime example. Other African kingdoms were off limits for political reasons. So we need more nuances to make the concept viable.

The concept of slaving zones and no-slaving zones provide, nonetheless, a useful shorthand and help to explain some big questions in the history of slavery—especially how New World slavery developed and whether European racism was the reason that sub-Saharan Africans came to make up the vast majority of the victims of the Atlantic slave trade. A large part of the explanation is that sub-Saharan Africa was a region that had supplied slaves primarily to the world of Islam through the Middle Ages and secondarily to some Christian parts of the Greater Mediterranean. By the end of the fifteenth century, it was the last of many traditional Old World regions of supply. Western Europe was Christian. The Slavic peoples of eastern Europe had become Christian, as had many other inhabitants of the Balkans and the Black Sea regions. The Ottomans had mainly completed their absorption of the Balkans. That left sub-Saharan Africa, where Europeans and Africans cooperated to enslave and transport other Africans across the Atlantic in unprecedented numbers. All things considered, Fynn-Paul's exercise is a useful one in encouraging experts studying slavery in various areas to reexamine their ideas by analyzing

how well the concepts of slaving and no-slaving zones work for the places they study and to consider how their particular areas fit into the larger story of slavery and its manifestations throughout the centuries.

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