SLAVERY, RACE, AND gender are invariably joined in the Western imagination. Two broad events gave rise not only to a full historiography but also to a colorful and sensually rich iconography as well, one that did much to further a collective historical memory: the Mediterranean trade in captives during the Ottoman–Spanish wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the Atlantic slave trade—the historical, political, and social consequences of which are still very much in evidence today.

It is thus widely held, and naively so, that slaves had to possess a skin color or be of a geographic origin different from that of their owners. It is perhaps too easily forgotten, however, that slavery, throughout the course of its long history, has not always been rooted in ethnic difference, or that it has sometimes had that connection, but only partially or occasionally. The risk is also that one ignores the fact that membership in a specific ethnic grouping, with its particular racial, linguistic, and cultural characteristics, did not necessarily have to be a reason for slavery or its opposite. Slavery, although a constant in human society to the present day, has adopted highly diverse forms, and often the differences in systems of slavery coexisted during the same historical period or, conversely, systems have experienced diachronic evolution that alters them substantially, even within a short time frame.¹

A key question concerns how specific cultures describe and refer to slavery in written texts. Sources do not always reflect social reality, but rather, in many cases, an idealized image of reality. Arabic sources of the Islamic West often do not distinguish between male and female slaves, but refer to slaves (abid) generically. So, too, they often do not distinguish between domestic slaves and concubines, using, for example, the term jariya for both categories of women and, occasionally, also free young women. On the one
hand, concubinage in texts from al-Andalus (Islamic Spain) seems usually interesting to their authors from one of two perspectives: First, from a legal point of view, in which lawyers try to resolve conflict situations related to coexistence within the home, often in relation to the legitimate wives of the master, or in cases of sales, where jurists need to describe the slave sold. On the other hand, historical chronicles mention concubines who have given birth to elite sons. In this case, as seen in this chapter, ethnicity is one of the few elements that allow the identification of the mother. The sources usually specify whether the caliph's mother was free or slave, and mention her name and geographic origin. In the first case, lawyers deal with concubinage in a general way and typically do not give examples of real concubines, whereas in the second case we are dealing with individual women, about whom, however, the texts provide little personal or biographical information.²

There is a need to catalogue what is known of the ethnic origins of women slaves in al-Andalus (eighth–fourteenth centuries CE)—that is, the territories of the Iberian Peninsula under Muslim domination. This requires grappling with various methodological problems, because the topic is one for which Andalusian Arabic sources offer comparatively little information.³ The extant written evidence does not allow for a recreation of the overall history of ethnicity in al-Andalus, nor can firm conclusions be reached regarding the ethnic origin of female or male slaves for any period or place in al-Andalus. Nonetheless, a wide range of genres of Andalusian Arabic sources, which are plentiful and immensely rich where other types of information are concerned, do yield valuable data. The details referring to the ethnic origin of slaves appear mostly in isolated form and are few in number, but are not insignificant. The fact that they are omitted frequently is also significant, and the point deserves consideration as well. Texts are important because they provide information about slavery, but also because they omit some relevant details, sometimes on purpose.

For various reasons, this project might seem overly ambitious, because of the chronological length of the period chosen, the long history of al-Andalus, and the geographic complexity of the terrain. As is well known, al-Andalus endured for nearly eight centuries, from the start of the eighth to the close of the fifteenth century (711–1492 CE),⁴ and, indeed, for even a century more, if we take into account the communities of Muslims—the so-called Moriscos—who continued to live in Spain after that date until their definitive expulsion in 1609 CE.⁵

The history of al-Andalus was also neither politically nor administratively homogeneous. Andalusian territory changed hands any number of times as a result of both internal convulsions and external invasions. The territorial expanse of al-Andalus also shifted during these 800 years, ostensibly because of the southward expansion of the Christian kingdoms during the so-called Reconquest (Sp. reconquista). The size of al-Andalus was reduced gradually and significantly, and thus, over long stretches of time, even during periods of relative stability, the border fluctuated in one direction or another.⁶ Last, Andalusian territory did not always remain cohesive, and the power of different polities was quite uneven. During the eleventh century, even, there were various Andalusian
kingdoms at one and the same time, governed by figures of different ethnic and political origin, some among them of slave origin, as in the case of certain of the Taifa kingdoms. 7

The history of al-Andalus, like that of all other territories of the Islamic world, must be studied, therefore, in terms of shifting geographic and political realities. Moreover, it is necessary to bear in mind its particular standing as a borderland; many Arabic sources describe al-Andalus as the "land of jihad." Various hadiths (Prophetic teachings) that are cited in later works refer to al-Andalus as "the gate of Paradise" or "the house of jihad and the home of the ribat (frontier fortress)." Although these hadiths are also related to other places in the Islamic world—North Africa for example—it must not be forgotten that the westernmost extreme of the vast Islamic realm would live through incessant secular conflict with the Christians of the peninsular North, a changing and difficult relationship with huge cultural and social repercussions. 8

All of these circumstances are to be taken into account when undertaking a study of the ethnic origin of women slaves in al-Andalus. War against the infidel and the capture of slaves were closely interconnected activities. To approach the subject, we must certainly take into account the ethnic origin of the rulers and the characteristics of the administrative systems they imposed on their respective territories; 9 and, second, the extent of their political, and thus military, power. Their capacity to conquer determined how and where captivity occurred during each historical period. These factors will be decisive in contextualizing the references to slaves in Andalusian Arabic sources.

A related issue concerns the manner in which Andalusians conceived of different ethnic groups. Descriptions of peninsular Christians, for instance, are vague and have more to do with perceptions of dress and (a lack of) personal hygiene than with skin color. Knowledge of the Other seems to have been slight and, grosso modo, Arabs divided the peninsular lands that did not belong to al-Andalus into three large territories with blurred borders. They call the inhabitants of the northwest, "Galicians"; those of the central north, "Basques" (Vascones); and those in the northeast, "Franks." 10

The origin of individuals, both free and enslaved, becomes even more difficult to investigate as one tracks the Arabization and Islamization of the Iberian Peninsula. For one thing, at particular moments, a great many individuals of Hispano-Roman and Berber origins claimed false Arab genealogies to gain access to prestigious social and economic rank.

These many issues inform the following discussion. The evidence offered by the different genres of Arabic/Islamic historiography is considered, drawing particular attention to the methodological problems that stem from their use to evince conclusions regarding the complex subject of the interconnection of race, gender, and slavery in al-Andalus.

SLAVERY IN THE ARABIC SOURCES OF AL-ANDALUS

Works either written by Andalusian authors or that mention al-Andalus are numerous and belong to many diverse genres. During the past century or so, many of these works
have been edited carefully, often translated, and, of course, studied closely. The often impressive results provide us with a broad view of many aspects of Andalusian political, cultural, and social history. Nevertheless, and despite this abundance of material, the sources have limitations, which are, in most cases, common to Arabic texts from the premodern period from other regions of the Islamic world. Their authors were typically urban dwellers, attached to their specific elite, intellectual circles, composing works for their peers. This circumstance means there is scarcely any information about the Andalusian rural world or smaller population centers, about which often only the name is known. Furthermore, the authors tend to leave out information known to their readers, taking for granted facts and circumstances that would be a source of enrichment for us today. In relation to the ethnic origins of female slaves, further stumbling blocks arise. In some genres, for instance, as seen later in this chapter, it is clear that Andalusian authors often relied heavily on Eastern (e.g., Iraqi and Egyptian) sources. Thus, at times, it is difficult to work out whether the content consists of original narratives and descriptions from the Andalusian world or if anecdotes and texts from the Arab/Islamic Near East were simply copied in an exercise of literary transmission well known in the Islamic field and well studied in the case of Andalusian historiography.\(^{11}\)

The practice of slavery is reflected in all the genres, although the results are highly diverse depending on the type. Andalusian historical chronicles typically deal with elite politics; they provide important details about fortress life and governing elites, but say comparatively little about the rest of Andalusian society.\(^{12}\) The slaves described, therefore, are those of the court: concubines, servants, eunuchs, and others. This information, however, is never systematic; these individuals are scarcely ever the protagonists in such accounts, appearing usually only in passing. Interest in the origin of given slaves is shown on rare occasions, although enormous confusion still exists regarding the terminology used by the chroniclers.

Debate surrounds, for example, the term *saglabi* (pl., *sagaliba*), literally “Slav”; the word alludes, in other words, both to the geographic and ethnic origin of these slaves.\(^{13}\) Historians have long been inclined to think that the term designated palace eunuchs, and this must have been the case initially.\(^{14}\) But, systematic study of these individuals shows that, over time, the term *saglabi* was used to identify “white” slaves, who performed important roles, regardless of whether they were eunuchs. In al-Andalus, they were possibly captive Christians from the peninsular North. One of the *sagaliba*, Mujahid, after the fall of the caliphate, became king of the small eleventh-century Taifa kingdom of Denia and had a son who succeeded him in office. There are almost no textual references that show that slaves were imported from such far-off lands. Perhaps the only such reference comes from Eastern geographer Ibn Hawqal (d. after 973 CE), whose information on al-Andalus proves at times to be highly unreliable:\(^{15}\)

One very well-known export article consists of slave boys and girls who have been taken from France and Galicia, as well as slave eunuchs. All the eunuch slaves to
be found on the surface of the earth come from al-Andalus. They are made to undergo castration near this country; the operation is carried out by Jewish traders. The slaves are descended from Japheth: their home country, which is vast, extends over a great length. The warriors of Khurasan come into contact with them in the region of the Bulgars. They are taken as prisoners to this province; their virility is left intact, and their bodily integrity is preserved. The slave territory is immense.

The text is widely cited in modern scholarship. Unfortunately, however, there is little further evidence, whether in Arabic or Christian sources from the Iberian Peninsula, to support the claims contained in the passage.

The term *abid* also raises questions surrounding the ethnic origins of slaves. The term appears in accounts of the Umayyad caliphate of Cordova to designate units of military slaves. Strangely enough, Western historians have typically translated *abid* in this context as “black slaves,” despite the fact that the color of their skin is not mentioned in any chronicle. In fact, careful reading of the historical sources shows that when Arab authors wished to indicate that a particular slave was black they typically added the adjective *aswad.* It may simply be that modern scholars have projected backward the modern sense of the term—that is, in identifying all *abid* as black.

When the chronicles mention female slaves, they typically do not specify origin, with the exception of the mothers of lords (*amirs*) and caliphs. In Andalusian courts, female slaves were often Berbers imported from North Africa and were also highly valued in the Middle East because they were stereotyped as being ideal sexual partners, whereas their Christian counterparts were particularly prized for their capacity for domestic work. Of the first Umayyad ruler, Abd al-Rahman I (r. 756–788 CE), for example, it was said that “his mother was an *umm walad* (mother of the master’s child) named Rah, a captive of the Zanata tribe”—that is, a Berber of the Nafza tribe, taken to Syria. Likewise, the mother of Abd al-Rahman II (r. 822–852 CE) was “an *umm walad* named Halawa, a Berber *muwallada*” (an individual of mixed slave and free origin). Although there were free Berber women in al-Andalus, it is also known that slaves of this origin were traded at every point in its history.

An especially striking anecdote is told regarding another Berber slave mother, Athl, whose son was the ruler al-Mundhir (r. 886–888 CE):

His mother was a Berber named Athl. Her intention had always been to become the mother of a caliph, and so she despised and disdained members of her tribe. One day her maternal uncle seized her and took her to Cordova, where he sold her. Her buyer was Sakan, the mother of Hashim ibn Abd al-Aliz, the vizier. Sakan sent Athl to her son Hashim, a gracious and handsome man, who found himself before a haughty and honourable slave who aspired to the highest rank. He felt affection for her and tried to approach her, but the slave turned away. He then attempted to lie with her, but she rejected him in disgust; he desired her, but she refused and told him: “I neither desire nor need men; I am not glad to be your slave or that of anyone
like you; I desire a caliph, for this belly must be made pregnant by a caliph and you are not one, or even the descendant of one.” This made him furious; he turned from her then called her name, but she did not reply. When he touched her, she moved away, so he struck her, making her bleed. Seeing the blood, she broke down in tears and said: “I do not believe that you will escape the hand of one whose mother was brought to such a state,” which made him laugh, and he left her. She gathered her clothes and headed for the house of Ibn al-Salim, to whom she recounted what had occurred, and he informed her that she was free. The imam Muhammad heard about this and decided to marry her. Eventually he made her pregnant with al-Mundhir, who was to reign after him. That is how God fulfilled the desires of this woman. Al-Mundhir was born seven months after his conception and he was the one who would eventually kill Hashim ibn Abd al-Aziz.

As in other cases, the anecdote about the maternity of Athl serves simply as a vehicle for the chronicler to present a premonitory tale in which the real protagonists are the prince (al-Mundhir) and the favorite vizier of his father, Muhammad (r. 852–886 CE)—that is, Hashim ibn Abd al-Aziz. On the one hand, the arrest and death of the vizier are justified by the ill treatment he meted out to the mother of the Umayyad ruler; and, on the other, the destiny of sovereigns is shown, as on so many occasions, to have been written in advance. For present concerns, it is interesting that the woman is mentioned to have turned her back on her tribe; her Berber origin is shown not to have stood in the way of her achieving high rank at court or giving birth to a prince.

Other mothers of princes were Christians. Differing accounts exist concerning the mother of al-Hakam I (r. 798–821 CE). The Dhikr bilad al-Andalus states that “his mother was an umm walad named Zukhruf, who had been given as a present to his father by Charlemagne, the son of Pipino, when he signed a treaty with Abd al-Rahman al-Dakhil.” The work’s editor, Luis Molina, asserts, however, that this version of the story appears only in the one source and is contradicted by others. Indeed, elsewhere, we are told that Charlemagne had proposed a marriage covenant to her but it had been rejected. Molina considers that this must have been true, because the sources would not have omitted the news of a Frankish princess in the harem of Hisham I (r. 788–798 CE). The mother of the first Umayyad caliph of al-Andalus, Abd al-Rahman III (r. 912–961 CE), was also a Christian (rumiyya), named Muzayna, Muzna, or Hazm.

In other instances, the name of the slave is mentioned, as in the case of Tahr, the slave mother of Emir Muhammad, who died in childbirth, but no reference is made to her origins—Ashshar, the mother of Abd Allah (r. 888–912 CE), and Murjan, mother of al-Hakam II (r. 961–976 CE). In the case of the Almoravid rulers of the Maghrib, chronicles refer to various black concubine mothers who were the mothers of the rulers themselves or the concubines of their sons.

References to female slaves outside of elite political circles are rare; rarer still are references to their origins. In a few cases, allusion is made to the possession of a particularly
valuable slave, this in anecdotes in which the aim is to demonstrate the power and wealth of the family to which the slave belonged. The best-known example concerns Ibrahim ibn Hajjaj (d. 900 CE), a notable of Seville and Carmona; he has a female slave singer and poet from Baghdad named Qamar brought to him. The text quotes examples of her verse, and describes her as having been always sumptuously dressed. Matthew Caswell has studied the text in his work on the palace slave singers of Baghdad. The sources also indicate that, after the ninth century, the court of Abd al-Rahman II (r. 822–852 CE) acquired slave singers from the Islamic East. Al-Maqqari states that the Umayyad ruler attached to his palace a wing called Dar al-madaniyyat ("the residence of the women from Medina"). Part of the royal household, it housed slave girls imported from the city in question, among them Fadl and Alam, both of whom were of Baghdadi origin, sold to the Umayyad house in Medina. It was also during this period that Andalusian slaves were sent East for training—a case in point, Qalam al-Bashkunsiyya. In these instances, the references are to geographic, not ethnic, origin—the latter being of no interest and scarcely ever receiving mention. These slaves were highly coveted because of their exquisite training as singers; it also appears that the model of the Abbasid court was of particular interest, with the more modest Andalusian court seeking to emulate the behavior of its counterpart in the Iraqi imperial capital.

Information on slavery in biographical dictionaries, a genre that was widely disseminated in al-Andalus and of which lengthy works of great value have been preserved, is unfortunately thin and purely anecdotal. The dictionaries are devoted mainly to charting the transmission of the Islamic religious and legal tradition through biographies of ulama (religious scholars, experts in the religious sciences). The authors tend to be interested mainly in the intellectual biographies of their subjects, leaving little space for vital personal questions. Few allusions to slaves occur apart from the occasional remark that a scholar possessed a male or female slave. Typically, these references concern the service provided by the slaves, with little further description of them as individuals. When authors highlight such information, it is because they deem it to be genuinely exceptional, although they might not express it directly. There is mention, for instance, in the biography of Abu Hafs al-Qu‘ayni, a man of letters, that he fell in love with a black slave.

The anecdotal references to male and female slaves in biographical dictionaries, although scarce in number and scattered across works of many different periods, seem to furnish real information regarding Andalusian figures. Works of other genres, such as Andalusian literary sources, do not appear to deal in concrete social realities, reliant as they are on all manner of well-worn literary convention. Literary sources, both in prose and verse, sometimes represent the odd slave, but often do so in a hackneyed way. In addition, these texts show a clear Near Eastern influence, so that it is hard to distinguish what is properly Andalusian from a literal copy of texts produced a great distance away. We may add as a generalization that they do not pay attention to the ethnic origins of the women slaves described, not even in the infrequent listings of their physical features.
Arabic legal sources provide the greatest amount of information on slavery. These are texts produced by scholars of the Maliki tradition ("school") of jurisprudence, the predominant Islamic legal tradition of al-Andalus and North Africa. These works alone make it possible not only to classify categories of slaves but also to consider the obligations and rights that shaped their role in society. As largely normative texts, however, the legal works cannot be counted on to shed light on social patterns rooted in specific periods and locales. The very partial evidence contained in these works goes to such issues as the ethnic identity of slaves, for example, and the problematic issue of the forms of labor demanded of slaves. The question of ethnic origin is particularly difficult. Ethnicity, whether of slaves or free persons, has no relevance as a category in Muslim legal doctrine. Although other factors, such as gender or religious affiliation, were fundamental in determining the rights and obligations of the distinct categories of slaves and, consequently, for understanding the social roles they performed, ethnicity/race lacked legal meaning because theoretically "all men are equal in the eyes of God." These are issues, of course, that relate to the theoretical and ethical conceptions of slavery.

The evidence in question typically occurs in passing details. In some instances, for example, the Maliki texts mention the color of slaves or their geographic origin as an example of what they wish to spell out in theoretical or doctrinal terms. One of the richest sources in this sense are the collections of notary forms—that is, documents intended as procedural models (waṭḥā'iq). Details contained therein inform us about local customs and peculiarities. The jurist Ibn al-Attar (d. 1008 CE), in a document dealing with the transfer of ownership of a slave (and thus his labor), includes the following passages:

*Salam* sale contract model: *Salam* sale of some slaves for others So-and-so, son of So-and-So, has paid in advance (sallafa) So-in-so, son of So-and-so, his Galician (jil-liqi) slave of the following name, [by profession] carpenter or bricklayer, in exchange for foreigners (ajami), or Berber or black slaves, whose descriptions are as follows. The debtor (musallaf) So-in-so has received the slave whose personal details were given in the moment of contract [owing in exchange] the two slaves mentioned supra whom he will have to deliver to [creditor] So-and-So on the first of x month in x year, in accordance with the traditional use of Muslims in relation with salam contracts concerning slaves. Creditor (musallif) [So-and-So] will have to be believed with regard to what he demands from [Such-and-Such], without need to swear an oath, in the event of legal proceedings being instigated. [The witnesses] testify to this. Then you [the notary] must complete the agreement. Before the date, the following must be said: "[This act takes place] in the presence of the slave delivered in salam, whose personal details have been given, and once he has acknowledged his condition as a slave vis-à-vis the creditor (musallim) [So-and-So] until the time of delivery (taslim) mentioned [above]. [This deed] is [drawn up] on x date.

Legal context (fiqh): The advance (tasrif) of [a slave] for [others] is only lawful when [the latter pursue] different trades. For example, giving an artisan in exchange
for two slaves who are not, or two non-artisan slaves in exchange for an artisan, under the obligation of describing both the slave and his trade. Should neither of them have a trade, and there only be differences in [the degree of] their beauty, the advance payment of one for the other would not be lawful. [Accordingly], delivery will be made of the secretary, the accountant and the grammarian in exchange for slaves who are not grammarians, secretaries or accountants. [Likewise, there will be] advance payment of one female slave for another: [delivery will be made of] the cook and the baker in exchange for two female slaves who are not qualified as cooks, or bakers. There [cannot be agreed on] an exchange of female slaves when [there only exist] differences in their beauty and their skin color (tabayun).46

The two related passages contain significant information. Although the notary documents are theoretical, as models to be used in relevant cases, the notary often makes evident the actual, practical circumstances to which the legal act applied. So, for example, in referring to the slave who is to be the object of exchange, the latter’s ethnic background is to be specified. Ibn al-Attar, in drawing up the model, suggests that the most frequent origins among them during the tenth century were “Galician,” Berber, and black.

The importance attached in these texts to the origins and physical features of slaves arises in the model documents used for other types of contracts as well. So, for instance, Ibn al-Attar provides a notary model for the case of transferring the services of a slave, a practice known as ikhdam:

So-and-so, son of So-and-so, grants to Such-and-such, son of Such-and-such, the services of his Galician slave [name provided], whose details are such-and-such (or his female Galician or Frankish slave, of this name and whose details are as such-and-such). [This being] a valid transfer of the usufruct of services (ikhdam), without right of retraction or option.47

Race does not appear as a factor influencing the jurisprudence of the document, nor does it involve a legal principle. What the texts imply clearly, however, is the following. First, the beauty of the slave and his or her physical qualities influenced the way in which he or she was assessed, although beauty per se was not related directly to a particular ethnicity. Second, the slave’s ethnic origin served as a descriptor and, therefore, was used to classify the individual slave and, thus, distinguish him or her from other slaves.

Typically, legal contracts require detailed descriptions to prevent fraud or a procedural error from taking place. In a fifteenth-century claim document from Granada for the sale of a country house (masriyya),48 one reads the following description of individuals:

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. God bless our lord Muhammad and his family. The black man, Mubarak, a freedman of Muhammad al-Shamhani, on behalf of himself and Faraj and Mas’ud, his two youngest sons,
who find themselves in his custody, and the school teacher, Ali ibn al-Ahsan al-Husayni, on behalf of the black woman, Zumurrud (Emerald), a freewoman of the warden Muhammad al-Balansi.49

The text has historiographical value because it is a real document and not a standard form or model to be filled in, like those collected in the books of watha‘iq mentioned earlier. Extant documents of this kind come uniquely from fifteenth-century Granada; these survive precisely because of the Christian conquest of the territory.30 This fragment, as in the previous cases, references a slave’s color as a distinctive physical feature.

In some documents, however, the notaries indicate, by implication rather than design, that color was more than simply a way to describe an individual. These references suggest that social prejudices were at play that fell outside the concerns of theoretical jurisprudence but could have practical consequences when different legal acts were enforced. In such cases, ethnicity acted, if not as a determining factor, then certainly as a feature that was taken into account when determining the legality or illegality of the contract or transaction.

Thus, in a form referring to a possible fraudulent sale of a slave by reason of belonging to a different ethnic grouping, Ibn al-Attar proposes the possibility of someone holding a particular origin in abhorrence and recording this in a document or through an oath:

If [the slave] was not of the type (jins) that it was held up to be [i.e., that it belonged to a “superior” type or group], there are no grounds for action [on the part of the purchaser], unless it was previously known that he detested this type, through an oath or something similar. If such should be the case, [the slave] was to be returned, even if its jins were better than the kind that motivated its purchase.51

Skin color was unquestionably a distinctive feature deemed relevant in a marriage. Notary Ibn Mughith of Toledo (d. 1067), for instance, records a legal discussion regarding whether a black woman can be repudiated after marriage when the husband did not previously know she was of that color.52 This is a sample case of hypothetical fraud; the bride was not described correctly before the marriage. Although the legal response is that such repudiation is unlawful because, according to Maliki doctrine, the only cause for inequality between spouses was to be religion, it can be seen in this case that jurisprudence acted as a brake on situations that must have occurred with relative frequency both where free women, as in possibly the case of this spouse, and slave women were concerned.

Documentation from the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile during the medieval period is comparatively rich. Notary documents contained therein, for instance, provide very thorough descriptions of slaves and do so using a genuine classification of these individuals according to skin color: black, almost mixed race, mixed race, light mixed race, white, and so on. The issue arises whether, if real documents and not only models had been
preserved in al-Andalus, there would not be similar documentation that provided precise
descriptions of this kind, and not just of a general nature.\textsuperscript{55}

Maliki legal texts included market treatises (\textit{hisbat al-suq}) as well,\textsuperscript{54} which contain sig-
nificant information on the sale of slaves. A particularly interesting example was written
in al-Andalus by al-Saqati, an early thirteenth-century market inspector from Malaga.
Pilar Coello has studied the text closely.\textsuperscript{56} It contains the usual section on the rules to be
followed to prevent fraud in slave trading, but includes, as well, a separate, lengthy sec-
tion that provides detailed information about different categories of slaves, their ethnic
origin, and the usefulness they had in connection with their perceived origin. Coello
shows, however, that the author of the text drew almost verbatim from the earlier trea-
tise of Ibn Butlan al-Baghdadi (d. 1066), the \textit{Risala fi shi\'a al-raqi\'q wa-taqlib al-abid},
in which specific guidelines are provided for the purchase of slaves. The latter text is
devoted in large part to the discovery of physical defects in slaves through physical exami-
nation.\textsuperscript{58} The following is a fragment of al-Saqati's text, and it must be treated with great
cautions where the history of al-Andalus is concerned:

Among the types of fraud and deception [by these merchants] is the selling of slaves
of one type (i.e. origin) for another, those of one race for another. Much has been
said about slaves (\textit{mamalik}), their categories, appearance and nature, and what is
useful about each kind, with all sorts of discussion on the subject. They say that the
female Berber servant [is suitable for] physical pleasure; the Christian (\textit{rumiyya})
for looking after money and accounts; the Turk for producing sons; the Ethiopian
(\textit{zanjiyya}) for breastfeeding; the Meccan for singing; the Medinan for physical
appearance; and the Iraqi for gaiety and flirtation.\textsuperscript{57}

The text shows the significance attached to ethnicity and race in determining the price
of a slave and how deception in this area constituted fraud (thus rendering a sale null and
void). In another passage in the same work, al-Saqati states that it was a frequent occu-
rence for a slave to be sold as \textit{rumiyya}—in other words, as a Christian, when she was not
of that religion.\textsuperscript{58}

Al-Saqati's text also suggests clearly that slaves, and particularly in regard to their abil-
ity to perform different trades, were typecast (a practice one finds still today in countries
with large migrant worker populations). The fragment, however, like references else-
where to Hindu and Yemeni slaves, raises a serious question: Were Ethiopian, Meccan,
and Turkish slaves traded in al-Andalus? Not only does no other source provide evi-
dence of this kind, but one has also to question whether “exotic” slaves would have been
imported to the territory when Christian, black, and Berber captives were widely avail-
able; it is they who are referred to in the different categories of texts cited earlier. Not
even in the Alcazar, apart from the \textit{saqaliba} and singing slaves (\textit{qiyan}) mentioned earlier,
do references occur to slaves from such faraway places as, as has been shown, the word
\textit{saqabi} soon ceased to designate Slavs as such, as occurred in Western languages. Also, in
regard to singers, it took little time before it was decided to send peninsular slaves to the East for their training.

Slaves in al-Andalus were typically the product of wars, either through direct capture or indirectly in the sense of being the descendants of captives; the majority of these slaves came from regions close at hand. This does not contradict the fact that the color of their skin or the stereotypes that were in circulation regarding their (possible) origins had a significant impact on the prices that were fixed for their sale, as is shown in short passages in different Andalusian sources. So, for example, the odd illustrative text from different historical moments demonstrates that the prices of Christian slaves sometimes plummeted, so plentiful were they. This occurred, for instance, under the government of al-Mansur (d. 1002), chamberlain to the caliph Hisham II, who, at the end of the tenth century, waged numerous campaigns in the North, bringing to al-Andalus great numbers of captives that were, in turn, sold in local markets. The devaluation of their price was so sharp that the chronicles mention it as a significant circumstance.

Furthermore, in an extract from a legal agreement, Ibn Sahl (d. 1093), an eleventh-century jurist, discusses the case of a black woman who was returned to her seller because, 70 days after the sale—that is, when the legal waiting period for having sexual relations with the new owner (istībra) had transpired—she had not menstruated. The point is that Ibn Sahl specifies that she was a black slave whose selling price had been extremely high. The fact that her membership in a particular ethnic grouping might vary the price is confirmed by evidence contained in other types of sources. An anecdote is told, for example, of a Jewish trader who upped the price of the female slaves he was bringing from the Christian North when it became clear to him that the governor of the city of Merida, who would later become the Emir Muhammad, had taken a fancy to them. And, as Marín has pointed out, a treatise on medicine, Book of the Pillow by Ibn Wafid of Toledo (d. 1067), refers to a medicine designed to remove the paleness of the complexion of slaves (although, in this case, the reason might not be to lend them a more beautiful color, but rather a more healthy appearance).

CONCLUSION

Information on male and female slaves in Andalusian Arabic texts is scarce and fragmentary. It stands to reason, of course, that slaves would be acquired from regions closest at hand. Thus, it was that, until the mid eleventh century, the majority of slaves appear to have come from the peninsular North or were Berbers captured in North Africa. Later, the Christians became the victors and, consequently, captors of captives (from the twelfth century onward, references to “Saracens” abound in Christian sources). The Andalusians of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, governed by North African dynasties, very likely supplied themselves in North African markets, with, presumably, a corresponding increase in the number of sub-Saharan among the slaves.
This is information regarding captives. Unfortunately, we know little about individuals born into slavery. Nor do the sources refer to the color of freed men and women; in many cases, it seems, manumitted slaves did not stand out physically from the rest of the populace. In the case of female slaves, it is known that their integration into host families was greater through concubinage and acquisition of the legal status of umm walad, which, of course, required acknowledgment of paternity by the owner. Christian/Latin sources, as noted earlier, reveal that female slaves ended up integrating to such a degree that the matter of their origins became blurred—that is, as they merged with host families through marriage or manumission.

Other kinds of analysis could be tested, although there is reason to be skeptical about the possible results. An onomastic study, for instance, of Andalusian women slaves ought to provide interesting information about their origins, yet the sources very rarely mention their names. When they do, especially in the case of slaves working in the court, everything seems to indicate that they were given Arabic names, either because they were born as slaves and their owner had named them or because their original, given names had been changed. Typically, as in the case of slavery in other societies, it was traders themselves who changed the names. Women slaves are frequently given a poetic name—Qamar, Ajab, Subh, and so on—which tends to indicate their slave condition, but only on rare occasions do the sources provide further information about the individual. In the case of Subh, a favorite of al-Hakam II and the mother of Hisham II, the sources do add the appellation al-bashkunsiyya—that is to say, “Basque”—which would suggest she was born in that region, where she would have been captured, or she was already born into slavery in the Fortress of Cordova and was the descendant of Basque slaves. Significantly, her brother, who also resided at the Cordovan court, is referred to as a fata (“page”), with no further information on his origins.

This can be a clear example of how sometimes authors consider ethnicity interesting in relation to female slaves but not to male slaves. It is highly likely that Subh’s race was considered significant because she was a concubine and the caliph’s mother. Race probably had sexual connotations in Andalusian society, related directly to beauty and color, as in other Muslim societies. The critical question is why Andalusian sources tend to mention only in passing the ethnic origin of female slaves, and do not explain how this ethnic origin was perceived or appreciated socially. One reason could be that authors considered it unnecessary because prejudices about race, slavery, and gender were widely known. Nevertheless, the most likely reason has to do with the Andalusian authors themselves. We know most of them received a thorough education in Islamic sciences—Hadith, law, Quranic studies, and so on—and they were deeply influenced by Muslim religion and by religious social ideals, where ethnicity does not make juridical sense. Maliki jurists insist repeatedly that physical characteristics do not have legal consequences and it can be a reason for omitting descriptions or making comments against the ideals of religious jurisprudence.
NOTES

1. On race and slavery in the Islamicate world, see Lewis, Race and Color, and Braude, “Cham et Noé.”

2. On concubines and slave mothers, and their integration into the Muslim–Andalusian family, see de la Puente, “Los límites legales del concubinato,” Slaves in al-Andalus, and “Free Fathers, Slave Mothers and Their Children.”

3. A first result of this work was presented at a congress organized by Shaun Marmon at Princeton in March 2012. I take the opportunity here to express my thanks for the invitation to take part in the meeting, where I had the chance to discuss its contents with various specialists in the field, whose remarks and suggestions I am also sincerely grateful for.

4. Kennedy, Muslim Spain and Portugal; Constable, Medieval Iberia; Jayyusi, The Legacy of Muslim Spain.


6. Manzano, “Creation of a Medieval Frontier.”

7. Wasserstein, Rise and Fall of the Party Kings.

8. On captives in al-Andalus, see, for example, Vidal Castro, “El cautivo en el mundo islámico”; and de la Puente, “Mujeres cautivas en ‘la tierra del islam.’”


11. Makki, Las aportaciones orientales.

12. Lincham, History and Historians.


17. Felipe Mafllo observes similar confusion on the translation of the word wasif. See his translation into Spanish of Ibn Idhari, Bayan al-mugrib, 53 (Arabic text); de la Puente, “Sin linaje, sin alcurnia, sin hogar,” 181–182. Meouak draws this distinction between black slaves (abid) and white slaves, but he does not give any example from Andalusian sources where the term abd was used for a black slave, see Meouak, “Esclaves noirs et esclaves blancs,” 25–26.

18. Concerning the families of Andalusí Umayyads, see Vallvé, “Sobre demografía y sociedad en al-Andalus.”

19. Marín, Mujeres en al-Andalus.

20. See Dhiker bilad al-Andalus, 90, 116. Luis Molina points out in a note that some authors made her a native of Nafza (Ibn al-Abbar, Kitab al-hulla al-siyara’, 1:35). In the Bayan, 47, 49, 73, it says that she was called Rah or Ridah and that she came from North Africa. Also see Marín, Mujeres en al-Andalus, 123.


22. Marín, Mujeres en al-Andalus, 123.
23. The Umayyad Emir Muhammad of al-Andalus (r. 852–886 CE), son of Abd al-Rahman II and father of the amir al-Mundhir.

24. Dhikr bilad al-Andalus, 126–127, 161–162; and 124–158, where the author only mentions her name.

25. See the account of the imprisonment of the vizier and his death in Ibn `Idhari, Bayan al-mugrib, 2:115–116, 118–119, 190–191. It is of interest to note that the vizier wrote poems from prison to his slave `Aj, some verses of which are cited.

27. Dhikr bilad al-Andalus, 104, 133.
29. Dhikr bilad al-Andalus, 131, 169. Molina says that all the authors call her Muzna, except Ibn Hazm (d. 1064), who calls her Hazm.

30. See Dhikr bilad al-Andalus, 126–127, 161–162; and 124–158.
31. Dhikr bilad al-Andalus, 120, 155.
32. Dhikr bilad al-Andalus, 127, 163.
33. Dhikr bilad al-Andalus, 141, 178; and Ibn Idrari, Bayan, 2:233.

34. See the description of the women of this North African court in Marin (Mujeres en al-Andalus, 127), who provides examples.

36. Caswell, Slave Girls, 137, where Ibrahim ibn Hajjaj is called an amir.
37. Al-Maqqari, Nafl, III:140.
40. Ibn Bassam, Dhakhira. Even more extraordinary is the case of Abida, a black slave given as a present to Dahhun (d. 815 CE), who became his concubine and a wise transmitter of oriental prophetic traditions. See Ávila, “Las mujeres sabías.”

41. On women in the literary sources, see Del Moral, “Contribución a la historia de la mujer a partir de las fuentes literarias andalusíes.”
42. Cahen, “Considérations sur l'utilisation des ouvrages de droit musulman par l'historien.”
43. De la Puente, “Mano de obra esclava en al-Andalus.”
44. Concerning Andalusian kutub al-watba 'iq, see Ortiz, “Formularios notariales de la España musulmana.” See also the description of these texts provided by Tyan, Le Notariat et le régime de la preuve par écrit dans la pratique du droit musulman; and Zomeño, “Abandoned Wives and Their Possibilities for Divorce in al-Andalus,” 111–113.

45. Salam is a type of contract according to which the price of a clearly defined item is paid in advance on the understanding that the contract will be executed and the sold item received at a later date.

48. Al-Masriyya means a country house or a storeroom built on the upper floor of a house.
49. Seco de Lucena, Documentos arábigo-granadinos, note 36; see also Zomeño, “Del escritorio al tribunal: Estudio de los documentos notariales en la Granada nazarí.”

50. Shatzmiller has studied these documents in Her Day in Court.
52. Ibn Mughith, al-Muqni’ fi ‘ibn al-shurut, 28–29, 64. When this is a case of marriage, a free black woman would most usually be the subject. Regarding this assumption, see also Lewis, Race and Color, 92; and Marin, Mujeres en al-Andalus, 128.
33. Ferrer i Mallol and Mutgé, De l'esclavitut a la llibertat.
34. On market treatises in al-Andalus, see Chalmeta, El señor del zoco en España.
35. Coello, "Las actividades de las esclavas según Ibn Butlan"; see al-Saqqati, Kitab fi adab al-hisba.
36. Ibn Butlan, "Risala fi shira 'al-raqiq wa-taqlib al-'abid."
37. Al-Saqqati, Kitab adab al-hisba, 49.
38. Al-Saqqati, Kitab adab al-hisba, 47–53; and see Marín, Mujeres en al-Andalus, 383.
39. Bariani, Almanzor.
42. See Dhikr bilad al-Andalus, 126–127, 161–162, and 124–158.
43. Al-Nubahi, Marqaba al-ulya, 56.
44. Marín, Mujeres en al-Andalus, 384.
45. At an even later period, captures of Christians occasionally took place with economic repercussions that were of relevance to the chroniclers, such as the Almohad expedition to Evora in 577/1181–1182, in which 400 women were seized and then put up for sale in Seville. Ibn 'Idhari, Bayan al-mugrib. 
46. Meouak, "L'onomastique des personnages d'origine 'slave'; Marín, Mujeres en al-Andalus, 41–44.
47. Bariani, "De las relaciones entre Subh y Muhammed"; Marín, "Una vida de mujer: Subh."

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