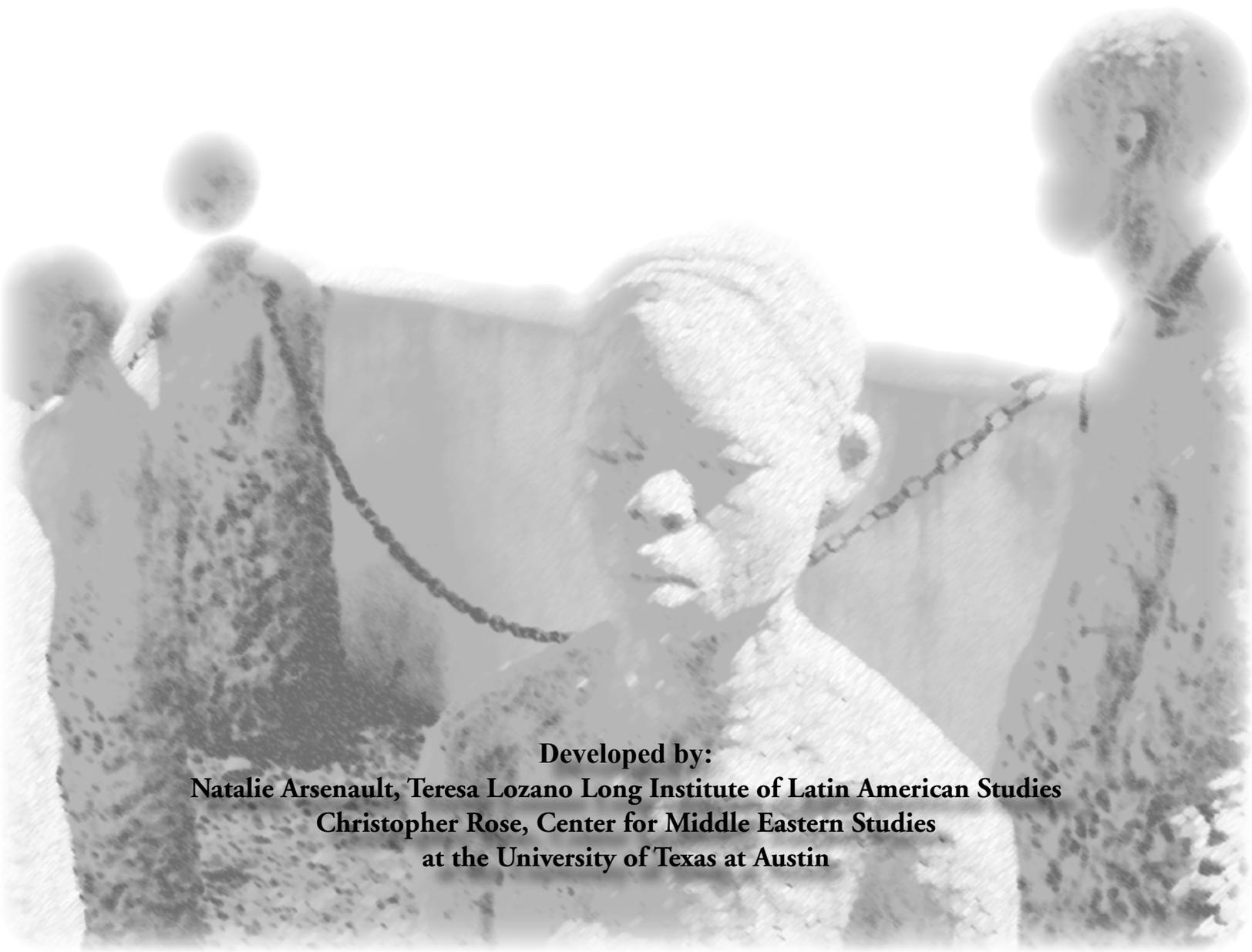


# **Africa Enslaved**

**A Curriculum Unit on Comparative Slave Systems  
for Grades 9-12**



**Developed by:**

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CIA World Factbook, 1997.

## SLAVERY IN OTTOMAN EGYPT

Slavery has existed in Egypt since ancient times. Records from the New Kingdom era (around 1500 BCE) depict rows of captives being paraded before the kings and nobles of ancient Egypt, and it is rather safe to assume that slavery existed in some form or another from antiquity until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Egypt became part of the Ottoman Empire in 1517, when Sultan Selim II won a quick and decisive military campaign against the *Mamluks*, who had ruled Egypt for several hundred years. The *Mamluks* were of slave origins, originally from the Turkic tribes of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Originally hired as soldiers by the Kurdish general Salah-al-din, the *Mamluks* took power in Egypt after his short-lived dynasty ended in 1250 CE. The *Mamluks* worked among themselves to continue the propagation of their ranks. Each year, new slaves would be brought in from Central Asia and trained in military techniques and affairs of the state. The *Mamluks* divided their ranks into “households,” to which the new slave’s loyalty was assigned. Upon reaching puberty, the slaves were manumitted and then became full members of the household, allowed to marry and buy slaves of their own to continue the process. The system was a meritocracy: through hard work and dedication, a *Mamluk* would be promoted through the ranks. At the highest level, a ruling council would elect a sultan as head of state from among their ranks. Infighting was common (only six of the *Mamluk* sultans died of natural causes), but the relative stability of the system allowed Egypt to flourish as a center of culture and learning during the *Mamluk* era.

After the Ottomans took control in 1517, the *Mamluks* became vassals of the Ottoman Sultan in Istanbul, but held on to their authority and prominent position in Egyptian political and cultural life. In 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Egypt, and French forces occupied the country for three years. After the French left, an Albanian-born general named Mohammad Ali was appointed the new Ottoman Governor of Egypt. Mohammad Ali soon began wielding considerable power and acting independently from the Sultan in Istanbul. In 1811 Mohammad Ali massacred most of the remaining *Mamluks* following a grand banquet at the Cairo Citadel. Although this broke their power, *Mamluks* continued to be bought and sold, and they held important positions in the army and served as the governors of various provinces until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

The long history and association of slaves and slavery within Egypt meant that by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, slavery was a well-known and well-defined institution in the country. For most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the slave population of Egypt was between 20,000 and 30,000 out of a total population of five million. The number of slaves in Cairo, a city of a quarter-million people, was estimated to be between 12,000 and 15,000 at any given point until 1877. Every town of significant size in Egypt had a slave market, the largest of which was the Wakalat al-Gallaba, the Sudanese merchant’s *caravanserai* in central Cairo.

For most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the majority of slaves imported into Egypt were women. Overall, there was a steady decline in the number of male slaves imported until the worldwide cotton boom that accompanied the American Civil war from 1861-65. Nearly all of the slaves were destined for domestic servitude in middle- and upper-class households. During the cotton boom, however, many more people in the lower classes were able to afford slaves to assist with agricultural work.

In the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, under significant pressure from the European powers, the Egyptian government began to respond with a series of declarations and anti-slavery laws. In 1856, the importation and sale of white slaves was forbidden. The Anglo-Egyptian Convention of 1877 banned the import and export of Sudanese and Ethiopian slaves, and allowed British naval forces to search any vessel suspected of carrying slaves in Egyptian territorial waters. Neither the 1856 law nor the 1877 convention actually banned the practice of slavery itself. In this case, the government preferred to allow the practice to die out naturally.

In 1882, the Egyptian government defaulted on some of the massive loans that it had borrowed to pay for the construction of the Suez Canal. Shortly afterwards, the British and French occupied the country, supposedly for the purpose of stabilizing the country’s finances. In reality, the British Consul-General in Cairo became the effective ruler of the country. The new administration began to enforce the 1877 laws banning the trade and reduced the number of active sellers of slaves from 32 in 1883 to three in 1886.

Under similar pressure, the Ottoman Sultan firmly banned the trade in 1889, shutting off both supply and demand to neighboring areas. In 1904, the British consul general in Cairo was able to report that slavery had been completely eliminated in Egypt.

**Comprehension Exercises:**

1. What is a *Mamluk*? Why would a nation governed by *Mamluks* be more accepting of the practice of slavery?
2. According to the text, what were some of the likely duties of slaves in Egypt during the 19th century? For whom would they have worked?
3. How would the American Civil War have led to a boom in cotton production in Egypt? How would this, in turn, have led to an increase in slaves working in agriculture in Egypt?
4. How did the worldwide abolition movement affect Egypt? Do you think that European abolitionists had a clear picture of what slavery was like in Egypt? Why, or why not?

## LEGAL STATUS

### Reading 1: Ahmad Shawfiq on Slavery

*Ahmad Shawfiq was a French-educated Egyptian intellectual. After attending an 1888 speech by a French abolitionist in Paris condemning Islam for the evils of slavery, Shawfiq wrote a book in response. L'esclavage au point de vue Musulman was intended to defend Islam to European abolitionists on the basis of its humane views toward slaves and the institution of slavery.*

From the noble Qur'anic verses and the Prophetic *hadith*, and the statements of the imams and the testimonies of history which we have enumerated in the previous sections, it is clear without doubt or dispute that the Islamic religion narrowed the confines of slavery and worked to eradicate it at source, since it laid down conditions and imposed restrictions that had to be observed in order for enslavement to take place, just as it clarified the paths and explained clearly the means by which deliverance from its clutches might be achieved.

If it happened that, despite all these expedients, destiny caused a man to fall into slavery, then we have seen that the Islamic shari'a did not abandon him or leave him to his own devices, but extended over him the wing of protection and the banner of safekeeping, and considered him worthy of compassion and deserving of mercy it saw in the slave.

Hence the shari'a set forth injunctions that make it obligatory for masters to treat their slaves as they treat themselves and to strive to make them happy, to give them ease of mind, to teach them, to train them and educate them, and not to belittle them or put them down, to marry them off, both males and females, so as to hasten their release from the noose of slavery and to conduct them to the pathways of freedom.

Ahmad Shawfiq, *L'esclavage au point de vue Musulman* (Cairo: n.p., 1891).

### Comprehension Exercises:

1. According to Shawfiq, what is the ultimate goal of Islam concerning slavery?
2. What do you think Shawfiq would identify as the primary differences between slavery in the Islamic world and slavery in the Americas, based on the points he makes in this passage?

**Reading 2: Ahmet Midhat on the Status of Female Household Slaves**

*Ahmed Midhat was an influential Turkish writer who frequently wrote about slavery and the conditions of slaves in the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 19th century. Although he was an abolitionist, Midhat, himself the son of a Circassian female slave, was always quick to point out that slavery in the Empire resembled slavery in the Americas only in name, and that the status of slaves was completely different in the two systems.*

They [female slaves] are not [intended] for pleasure but for general household chores. All our female slaves perform duties that women do, from what are called in Europe maids of honor, or [just] maids, to cooks.... If the master's wife dies or falls into illness or old age, [he] takes a female slave for a concubine and there is no difference [then] between her and a legal wife. The children of that woman are [considered] legitimate.

Ahmet Midhat, "Âcaib-i Âlem," *Tanzimat Edebiyatında Kölelik*, by İsmail Parlatır (Ankara: n.p., 1987), 43.

**Comprehension Exercise:**

1. According to the passage, what is the legal status of a female slave in Islam? What is the functional status of a female slave?
2. What do you think Midhat would consider to be the main differences between a female slave in Islam and a female slave in the United States or Brazil?

## SLAVE LABOR

### Reading 1: A European Traveler Discusses Mid-19th Century Slavery in Egypt

In the absence of any official statistics on the point, no even approximate estimate of the number of the slave population in Egypt can be given. It must, however, be large, as nearly all the in-door work in every family above the poorest is done by servants of this class. From the house of the pettiest dealer or even better class mechanic, up to the palace of the Khedive, slave labour for this kind of work is the rule.

And here one of the many important distinctions between Eastern and Western servitude is at once met with. In Egypt and Turkey domestic work is done only by slaves, the cases being rare in which they are employed even in stables or light gardening, while in the West their chief value has always been as field hands. To this rule there are now in Egypt a few exceptions, in the case of village sheikhs who, after the increase of wealth consequent on the development of cotton culture during the American war, in a few instances brought slaves to help in field labour; but the work done by these is as light as that of the free fellah, and in respect of food and lodging they share the common fortune of their owner and his family.

So inwrought, indeed, is the institution into the domestic and social life of the country that the possession of one or more slaves is as essential to 'respectability' amongst one's neighbours as is that of a servant for menial work in a European family; and this social consideration has, probably, more to do with the maintenance of the institution than any question as to the relative cost of the slave and free labour.

James C. McCoan, *Egypt as It Is* (London: Casselle Petter and Galpin, nd.), 316-7.

### Reading 2: The Late 19th-Century Phenomenon of Agricultural Slavery in Egypt

The peasantry of Egypt who suddenly gained extraordinary sums of money for their cotton during the American Civil War, spent some of their profits in the purchase of slaves to help them in the cultivation for their lands ... nearly all the slaves who had applied at Mansourah [in the Nile Delta] for emancipation were agricultural, not domestic slaves.... The Fellahs, or farmer population, are glad to have the means of sending, as substitutes for themselves and children when summoned by the Government to forced labour, slaves bought at the slave marts.

Reade to Stanley. FO 141/63. Alexandria, August 8, 1867. Reprinted in Great Britain Foreign Office, *Collection of Documents Relating to the Slave Trade* (London: Glazier, 1977), reel 5.

### Comprehension Exercises:

1. According to McCoan, what is the primary function of a slave in Egypt? Who might do such work in the West? Would slaves do the same kinds of work in Egypt and the West? Why, or why not?
2. How common is agricultural slavery according to McCoan? How does the telegraph from Reade (Reading 2) support this?
3. What is the other primary use for the slaves of farmers, according to Reade?

**Reading 3: Slaves in the Khedive's Palace**

*One of the princesses in the extended ruling family of Egypt (who were primarily Turkish) recalls in her memoirs the varied and numerous functions that slaves were expected to perform in the Palace. Many of Egypt's most important and elite families would have attempted to follow this model as closely as possible.*

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the palaces of the Egyptian ruling family, white slaves were divided into the following categories:

1. *Kalfas* of the private apartments, subdivided into *hazinedars*, *odacis*, *çubukcis*, *kutucis*, *leğencis*, *oğuşdurucis*.

The *hazinedars* were the personal attendants of the master and ladies of the house. The chief *hazinedar* held one of the highest posts in the household, being entrusted with the keys to the 'hazine,' or treasure room(s), where the valuables, jewels, and other effects of her master or mistress were kept ...

The *odacis* swept and dusted the private apartments....

The *çubukcis* cleaned and presented the long *çubuks*, or pipes, to their mistress, and kept the tobacco at the right temperature....

The *kutucis* were in charge of everything that was kept in boxes (*kutu*) or chests, articles which, nowadays, would be stored in cupboards or chests of drawers....

The *leğencis* were in charges of the ewers, basins, and towels. In the days before running water, they attended to their mistress while she was bathing....

*Oğuşdurucis* were masseuses.

2. The rest of the staff, divided into *orta kalfas*, *tezrecis*, *çubukcis*, *kahvecis*, *sofracis*, *kilercis*, *fannozcis*, *çengis*, *sazendes*, and *hanendes*.

*Orta kalfas* swept and dusted halls, passages, and drawing rooms and had to be in attendance on visitors at all hours of the day. After divesting the guests of their cloaks and veils, they would give them to the *tezrecis* to be pressed with an iron....

The *çubukcis* who were not attached to the private apartments had the same duties as those who were....

... the *kahvecis* were specialists in making coffee....

... the *sofracis* were the girls who laid and served at table and cleaned up afterwards....

The *kilercis* were in charge of the storerooms (*kiler*)....

Before gas or electricity were in use, the *fannozcis* were in charge of all the candlesticks, brackets, chandeliers, and lanterns....

The prettiest and most graceful girls were chosen to be *çengis*, or dancers. With the exception of the so-called 'navel dance,' considered indecent in the Palace, they learned old folk dances....

The *sazendes* were musicians and the *hanendes* singers. Musically gifted girls and those who had a good voice were trained in Oriental and European music by teachers who came to give them lessons in the Palace....

Coloured slaves, descendants of Abyssinian and Sudanese Negroes were never employed in the Imperial Palace, but as they were cheaper than the white, there was always a great demand for them elsewhere.

Emine Foat Tugay, *Three Centuries: Family Chronicles of Turkey and Egypt* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1963), 306-308.

**Comprehension Exercises:**

1. Describe the Palace slaves. What race are they? Gender? What kind of work do they do?
2. How replaceable are the Palace slaves? How much training does each slave need in order to do his or her job?
3. What would the life of a Palace slave have been like?
4. What do you think Tugay's attitude toward black slaves would have been?

**Reading 4: Higher Education for Slave Women**

Another interesting medical training experiment of Clot Bey was the establishment of the School of Maternity—*Madrasat al-Waladah*—in between 1831 and 1832 in the school of Medicine itself. For some time, it was not possible to get young girls or women to enter this School of their own free will. The first patch of girl students was made up of ten Abyssinian and Sudanese girls bought in the Cairo slave markets together with two eunuchs sent by Muhammad Ali from his palace. In 1835, ten more slaves were added and ten orphan girls who happened to be under the treatment of the doctors in the *Bimaristan* [hospital] and who, when cured, were taken over by the Government, as their parents did not claim them, and trained as midwives; thus the total number of students was thirty-four, including the eunuchs who were also made to follow the courses.

As the girls were all illiterate, they had to be taught Arabic first, and later on ... a little French in addition to midwifery, vaccination, cupping and bandaging, and the elements of *material medica* and dispensing....

On graduation, the midwives were given the same rank as the men students of the medical school.

James Heyworth-Dunne, *An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt* (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1939), 132.

**Comprehension Exercises:**

1. What would have been the purpose of enrolling slaves in the School of Maternity? What would have been the specific purpose of enrolling eunuchs in the school?
2. What kinds of responsibilities do you suppose these slaves had in their master's homes?
3. How valuable do you suppose these slaves would have been after they graduated from the program?

## RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

### Reading 1: Liability for Crimes Committed by Slaves

The crimes of slaves can be divided into three categories: 1) crimes against other slaves, 2) crimes against free persons, and 3) crimes against property. As for crimes against slaves, there are no exceptions whether they be deliberate or accidental. If it is an accidental offense then the owner of the offending slave has the option either to hand over the slave in compensation for his offense to the owner of the slave against whom the offense was committed, or to redeem himself against the value of the slave against whom a homicide was committed, or against the extent to which bodily harm diminished the slave's value in the case of injury. If the wound did not diminish the injured slave's value then the offender has no liability.

If the offense is deliberate then the owner of the slain or injured slave has two options: 1) to seek retaliation, or 2) to take the slave who caused the injury, unless his master redeems him for the price of the slain slave, or the amount by which the value of the injured slave was diminished....

As for slaves' crimes against free persons, if the crime is accidental homicide, then the owner of the killer has the option either to hand the slave over or to redeem him against the blood money. If it was deliberate, then the ruling concerning it has already been given. If the crime against free persons involves less than homicide, then it makes no difference if bodily harm was intentional or accidental, since the slave cannot have his own blood spilt in retaliation by a free man on account of an injury....

As regards slaves' offenses against property, it makes no difference whether the property belongs to a free person or a slave, for it is accountable to the slave who committed the offense....

Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Gharnati al-Kalbi, known as Ibn Juzayy (d. 1340), *Qawanin al-ahkam al-shar'iyya wa-masa'il al-furu' al-fiqhiyya*, (Beirut: n.p., 1974), 381-82.

### Comprehension Exercises:

1. According to the law, what is the value of a slave vs. a free person? How can you tell?
2. What recourse does a free man have if a crime is committed against him by a slave? Does it seem likely that the same recourse would be available if the crime were committed by a free man? Why, or why not? Cite examples from the text that support your answers.
3. Ibn Juzayy says that "the slave cannot have his own blood spilt in retaliation by a free man on account of an injury." What does this mean? What underlying values can you infer from this statement?

**Reading 2: Legal Recourse for a Female Slave**

*Ehud Toledano, a scholar on late Ottoman slavery, discovered the following account of a female slave who was impregnated by her dealer and sold to another man (an illegal act). When she was returned to the dealer, the dealer's wife attempted to induce an abortion by beating the girl, who fled to a neighbor's house and eventually made her way to the court. There is, sadly, no record of what finally happened to her or her child. Most likely, she was freed at the conclusion of the hearing; her child, however, was probably awarded to its biological father and it is unlikely that she ever saw the child again.*

Question: When did you come to Cairo? Who was the person who brought you? Where did you stay when you arrived? To whom were you given by the person who had brought you here?

Şemsigül: I came here two years ago. The person who brought me from Istanbul was the slave dealer Deli Mehmet. I was sold to the palace of Mehmet Ali Paşa... After I had stayed at Mehmet Ali Paşa's for five months, it was suspected that I was pregnant. A midwife was brought in to examine me, and she verified that I was indeed pregnant. So they summoned Deli Mehmet and returned me to him. He then took me and brought me to the home of Mustafa.

Question: By whom did you become pregnant?

Şemsigül: I became pregnant by Deli Mehmet.

Question: Where ... did he have sexual relations with you? And since you became pregnant, why did he sell you [this being illegal]?

Şemsigül: In the boat, on the way here, he forced me to have sexual relations with him.... Before the sale, I told him, " ... I think that I am pregnant by you." ...He went away, brought back some medicines and made me drink them [to induce an abortion]. Finally, he sold me to the palace.

Question: Your answer is well understood. When they said at the palace that you were pregnant, they returned you, and you went to Mustafa's house. But now you need to explain ... what was the state of your pregnancy?

Şemsigül: ... I went to the home of Mustafa and stayed there for about ten days. While I was there, Deli Mehmet's wife came to the house and cursed me ... she wanted to hit me, [but] Mustafa's wife prevented her from doing so. Mustafa sent me to the house of Deli Mehmet. When I got there, Deli Mehmet's wife brought in a private midwife and demanded that she perform an abortion on me. At that, the midwife said, "This pregnancy is [too far] advanced. ..." Having said that, she left, but Deli Mehmet's wife insisted, saying, "I shall put an end to this pregnancy." She said to Deli Mehmet, "Let us beat this slave and put an end to her pregnancy," to which Deli Mehmet replied "I am not going to beat her." But the woman ... fetched a clothespress, hit me with it several times ... and then beat me with a mincing rod.

At that point, one of the neighbors, a peasant woman ... went to the house of Selim Bey. When she told them ... the wife of the dignitary [...] came to the house of Deli Mehmet. She had mercy on me and said, "I shall take her and perform the abortion." She then took me to her house but left my condition as it was... When the child was to come into the world, Deli Mehmet's wife came and stood at the bedside. When he was born, she took the child into another room and passed him through her shirt to show that she was adopting him. To me she said that the child had died....

Ehud R. Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 60-62.

**Comprehension Exercises:**

1. What about this document surprises you?
2. What does this document tell you about the right of a slave to protest maltreatment? Would a slave in Brazil, Haiti, or the Swahili Coast have the same right? What about a slave in the United States? How can you tell? Cite examples from the text that support your answer.

## SLAVES & RELIGION

### Reading 1: Edward Lane on the Religiosity of Black Slaves in Egypt

The male black slave is treated with more consideration than the free servant; and leads a life well suited to his lazy disposition. If discontented with his situation, he can legally compel his master to sell him. Many of the slaves in Egypt wear the Turkish military dress. They are generally the greatest fanatics in the East; and are more accustomed than any other class to insult the Christians and every people who are not of the faith which they themselves adopted without knowing more of its doctrines than Arab children who have been but a week at school.

Edward Lane, *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1908), 159.

### Reading 2: Slave Converts to Islam

As soon as a slave boy becomes the property of a Mussulman master he is circumcised, and has an Arabic name given to him. ... It very rarely happens that any uncircumcised boys come from the west; and I never knew of any instance of a Negro boy following the pagan worship of his father, and refusing to become Mussulman; though I have heard it related of many Abyssinian slaves, who, after having been converted from idolatry to the Christian religion, by the Abyssinian Copts, were sold by them to the Mussulman traders. I have been told of several of these slaves, particularly females, so steadily refusing to abjure their faith, when in the harem of a Mohammedan, that their masters were finally obliged to sell them, in the dread of having children born of a Christian mother, which would have been a perpetual reproach to the father and his offspring. In Soudan, the slaves, though made Mussulmans by the act of circumcision, are never taught to read and pray; and even in Egypt and Arabia this instruction is seldom given to any but those for whom their masters take a particular liking. It may be observed, nevertheless, that they are greater fanatics than the proudest Olemas, and that Christians and Franks are more liable to be insulted by slaves than by any other class of Mussulmans.

John Lewis Burckhardt, *Travels in Nubia*, 2nd. ed., (London: n.p., 1822), 290-300.

### Comprehension Exercises:

1. What religion were slaves generally expected to convert to? How genuine do these conversions appear to have been?
2. What do you make of Lane's statement that black male slaves are "generally the greatest fanatics in the East?" Does Burckhardt confirm this statement? Why do you think this is the case?

## REBELLIONS, RUNAWAYS & EMANCIPATION

### Reading 1: Instructions for Manumission of a Slave

There are six reasons for manumission, the first of which is voluntary manumission seeking divine reward, since this is one of the noblest of deeds. The remaining modalities are obligatory and they are 1) manumission resulting from the swearing of oaths, i.e., acts of atonement [for having broken a vow]; 2) resulting from mutilation; 3) resulting from partial freeing; 4) resulting from family relationship.

Mutilation: whoever intentionally mutilates his slave in a visible fashion, i.e., if he cuts off his fingertips or the extremity of his ear or the tip of his nose, or if he cuts any part of his body, shall be punished and the slave freed without his authorization. Injury is only defined as mutilation if the slave thereby suffers gross disfigurement....

Partial freeing: If anyone frees part of his slave, or a single limb, the rest of the slave is freed without his consent....

As for manumission on account of a blood relationship: this is occasioned by slaves' entering into ownership [of a blood relative]. According to the mass of mainstream jurists ... male persons related by descent or ascent to a person into whose possession they pass through purchase or inheritance, or other means, are to be freed without the owner's authorization.

Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Gharnati al-Kalbi, known as Ibn Juzayy (d. 1340), *Qawanin al-ahkam al-shar'iyya wa-masa'il al-furu' al-fiqhiyya* (Beirut: n.p., 1974), 408-9.

### Comprehension Exercises:

1. According to Ibn Juzayy, what are the reasons for manumission?
2. Under what circumstances might someone free only part of his or her slave? According to Ibn Juzayy, how should this be handled?

**Reading 2: Account of a Slave Seeking Manumission**

*The British Consulate became a destination for runaway slaves seeking emancipation on the grounds of poor treatment. The following is the account of one slave who, fearing for her own safety, entered the Consulate and asked them to intervene on her behalf.*

On Monday the 17<sup>th</sup> day of September, 1877, appeared in Her Britannic Majesty's Consulate at Cairo, Kadam Kheir, a negro slave, and declared as follows:

My name is Kadam Kheir, my master's name is Sid Ahmed el Rashash. He bought me twenty five years ago. I remained in his service twenty and a half years. When he divorced, his wife gave me the choice either to remain with him or go with his divorced wife, telling me that I was free. I selected to go with his wife, with whom I lived in a separate house for three years. She died, and her sister took me in her service. After serving one year and a half in the latter's house, I found one day, that both she and her husband Sayed Ameen el Danaf, a jeweler, were trying to sell me. I fled from them and went to the house of my former master, Sid Ahmed Al Rashash, who had returned from Syria. The day before yesterday, after my master, Sid Ahmed El Rashash, had gone to his business, Sayed Ameen El Danaf, accompanied by a slave dealer and by another person, whom I presume to be the chief Quaiter (Sheh el Hara) came into my said master's house and tried to take me from there by force. I refused to go with them, and on my master's family crying and shrieking, the neighbours came to our assistance, and they were obliged to go away. Fearing a repetition of the attempt on their part, I escaped yesterday from my master's house and came to the Consulate.

Reprinted in Great Britain Foreign Office, *Collection of Documents Relating to the Slave Trade* (London: Glazier, 1977), reel 5.

**Comprehension Exercises:**

1. Briefly summarize Kadam Kheir's story. Why did she run away? What was she trying to avoid? What does her protestation tell you about her awareness of her legal rights as a slave?
2. Compare Kadam Kheir's situation to that of Şemsigül. What similarities exist between them, particularly in terms of the legal ways in which their cases were handled? Cite evidence from both texts to support your answer.

### Reading 3: Certification of the Manumission of the Slave Girl Called Halima the Black, Issued by the Islamic Court of Bani Suef

*In Islamic law, slaves rarely became 'free' in the sense that they are set adrift in society. Upon manumission, a freed slave becomes the mawla of her former master. Mawla is a legal status in which the former slave essentially becomes treated like a distant relative, and is able to use his or her former master's status in society as collateral for business transactions, etc. Since Egypt was a society where family connections were often emphasized over personal merit, this system made it possible for former slaves to engage in business transactions and act on their own.*

In the presence of both Mohammad Effendi, son of Ali Nour al-Din of the al-Muhrossa family, and Hajj Ali, son of Mohammad Al-Munifi, chief of Bani Suef, and with both bodily witnessing [this act], I affirm that I have witnessed that Yaqoub Bey, Governor of Bani Suef and the Fayyoun, has manumitted his slave girl Halima bint 'Abd Allah, who has acknowledged herself as a slave and in a condition of servitude presently. The slave girl of this Kingdom and its territories is received of a true and immediate emancipation, and this is set forth with a sincere pronouncement from her master.

With the requisite pronouncement from my person, the designated party from His Excellency her master becomes free, leaving the bonds of ownership for the openness of the Free Person. She has joined the ranks of the free Muslims, and to her comes all that other free citizens have in freedom and justice. No one from this point onwards may enslave her or cause her to become a servant except by the clientage of her rightful *walaa*, he who freed her, because it was said by the Prophet (upon him blessings and peace) "The patronage goes to the one who manumits." After his death, she shall be guaranteed the patronage of her *walaa's* legal descendants.

She is freed on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Rajab 1281. (December 15, 1864).

Reprinted in 'Amad Ahmad Hilal, *Al-Raqiq fi Misr fi al-Qarn al-Tasi'a Ashir* (Cairo: n.p., 1999), 251.

#### Comprehension Exercises:

1. What is a *mawla*? Why do you think that it was deemed necessary for freed slaves to become *mawa'il* (plural of *mawla*) instead of being set free to pursue life on their own?
2. What does this document tell you about the status of slaves? What does it tell you about the social importance of freeing a slave?

## TRANSITION TO FREEDOM

### Reading 1: Post-Slavery in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Makkah

House servants are almost invariably set free at about the age of twenty, one reason being that their occupation would otherwise bring them almost daily in contact with many free and unfree women. Also the well-to-do owner feels himself bound when possible to set up the faithful servant in a household of his own, and the liberation is itself a very meritorious work; the family tie remains as before.

There is hardly an office or position that is unattainable to such freedmen. They compete with the free-born on a footing of perfect equality, and the result shows that they are not the worst equipped for the struggle as they are numerous represented among the influential burghers and the owners of houses and business establishments. A reason why his colour is no handicap to him is that the free man also rears black children from his black concubine.

C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Leiden: n.p., 1931), 12-13.

### Reading 2: Low Fertility Rates among Black Slaves in Egypt

The numbers of blacks appears to decrease, notwithstanding the perpetual immigration. The black women are indeed many of them mothers, but nearly half of their offspring die.... [T]he mortality amongst black 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 any domineering disease. I have heard it estimated that five or six years are sufficient to destroy a generation of slaves, at the end of which the whole have to be replenished ... when they marry, their descendants seldom live.

John Bowring, *A Report on Egypt and Candia*, Parliament Papers, 1840, xxi., 92.

### Comprehension Exercises:

1. According to Hurgronje, should a black slave encounter difficulty in functioning in society on his own behalf?
2. Today, Egypt's population bears little evidence that there was once a large African slave population living and working in Cairo. Why do you think that is? Cite evidence from the passages above to support your answer.

**Reading 3: Memorandum by Consul Reade Respecting Slave Trade in Egypt**

The attention of Her Majesty's Government is hereby very respectfully called to the difficulties with which Consuls in Egypt have to contend whenever they are called upon to assist refugee slaves in obtaining their liberty.

For the slave in Egypt to become a free man, it is necessary he should be provided by the police authorities with a certificate of manumission, and this is obtained, in most cases, through the intervention of the British Consul.

Although, generally speaking, very little difficulty is experienced in obtaining the required certificate, its delivery is almost invariably accompanied by conditions which render it a very questionable matter whether the social position of the recipient is at all bettered by the acquirement of such a document.

After receipt of his certificate, the slave is detained at the Zaptia, or Prefecture of Police—sometimes for a considerable period—until some person of respectable appearance presents himself there and engages to take him to his house and treat him as ordinary domestic. Now, whether engagements of this nature are, as a general rule, faithfully carried into effect it is impossible for the Undersigned to satisfactorily determine; but he has reason to apprehend, from the difficulties which have so often been thrown in his way by the police authorities with a view to thwart all endeavours on his part to ascertain what had become of a manumitted slave after his departure from the Zaptia, that in some, if not in most, cases, the slaves when freed are restored to their former state of bondage.

August 13, 1868  
Thomas F. Reade

Reprinted in Great Britain Foreign Office, *Collection of Documents Relating to the Slave Trade* (London: Glazier, 1977), reel 5.

**Comprehension Exercises:**

1. Consul Reade's memorandum suggests that emancipating slaves is not a cut-and-dry process. Cite examples from the text that supports this.
2. What does Reade suggest happens to most of the slaves who are freed?

## ABOLITION

### Reading 1: Noble Request to the Municipality of Rawda al-Bahreyn Concerning the Abolition of the Trade in Slaves

*This plea is one of several that were sent by the Khedive Sa'id to regional governors in Egypt and the Sudan following the official ban on the trade in black slaves by the Ottoman Sultan in February 1857. Sa'id's efforts consisted largely of sending strongly worded messages like this one, and the trade was as active at the end of his reign (in 1863) as it had been at the beginning.*

As you have learned when our commands were made public, it has been forbidden to engage in the sale of the remaining categories of slaves that had been left to sell as usual. The injustice that has been passed from hand to hand as possessions has been suspended, and they have been granted absolute freedom, and the designation of 'slave' and its equivalents have been abolished completely.

It has been observed that some of the people that were making a living from this trade and purchasing slaves before this prohibition have not desisted from doing so, and because of this it is now necessary to issue a reproach. Due to this edict, the ban on the importation of slaves from abroad has been enacted, and the esteemed officials inside the government have so ordered its enforcement. It was permitted only to allow the sale of persons who were already inside [Egypt], and now this also has been disallowed in its entirety.

It has now come to our attention that not only is the ban not enforced, but that the trade has increased. This despite that the change to the legal code is set forth to be enacted in the last month of 1272 (August 1856), and that persons who have remaining stock must conclude their business in the months remaining because following the enactment of the prohibition there can be no trade or sale. Those parties who have no intentions of complying have no place in this government, and because of this, I have set forth in writing my wishes on the subject, and am sending you this official announcement asking that the necessary measures be taken to ensure that this command is carried out.

From Alexandria, 18 Dhu-l-Qa'ada 1272 (21 July 1856).

Reprinted in 'Amad Ahmad Hilal, *Al-Raqiq fi Misr fi al-Qarn al-Tasi'a Ashir* (Cairo: n.p., 1999), 260.

### Comprehension Exercises:

1. What is the purpose of this message? Why has it been sent?
2. How effective do you think this message was in carrying out its goals? (Hint: look at the date, and compare it to the dates of the other documents in this section).

**Reading 2: Lord Cromer on Slavery in 1894**

*Sir Evelyn Baring, Lord Cromer, was the British Consul General in Egypt after the 1882 occupation of the country by Britain and France, and was in effect the head of government from that time until his retirement. This is the last mention of slavery in the annual report to Parliament by the British administration in Egypt.*

284 slaves were freed in 1893 as compared to 422 in 1892. In both years by far the greater number were Soudanese women.

The numbers of slaves who apply for manumission are steadily decreasing, a fact which shows that the possession of slaves is every day becoming less frequent.

There can be little doubt that in course of time slavery in Egypt will entirely disappear, provided continual vigilance be exercised over buyers as well as over dealers.

Sir Evelyn Baring, Lord Cromer, *Report on the Finances, Administration, and Condition of Egypt, and the Progress of Reforms*. F.O., Egypt No. 1, C-7308, 1894.

**Comprehension Exercises:**

1. By this time, the buying, selling, and transferring of slaves had been illegal in Egypt for nearly 20 years. How is it possible that there are still slaves in the country?
2. What does Cromer mean when he says that “in the course of time slavery in Egypt will entirely disappear.” How do you suppose he means that it will disappear?

## GLOSSARY

A **caravanserai** is a rest-house for traveling merchants and traders. *Caravanserais* functioned as hotels, restaurants, and market-places, and often included quarters for servants and families traveling with the merchants.

**Fellah** is Egyptian Arabic for non-city dwelling agricultural workers.

**Hadith** refers to quotations from the Prophet Muhammad that are used to provide legal advice and guidance for Muslims. The *hadith* are used to supplement areas in which the Qur'an, the definitive source, is unclear or does not provide specific guidelines. For example, the Qur'an tells Muslims that they should pray, while the *hadith* provides specific instructions on how to pray.

**Khedive** (Persian for "Lord" or "Viceroy") is the title of the rulers of Egypt from 1867 onward. Prior to this, leaders were technically called *vali*, or governor, but history books sometimes refer to all leaders after Mohammad Ali as *khedive*. After Egypt gained nominal independence from Britain in 1922, the leaders of Egypt assumed the title of king. The last King of Egypt, Farouk I, was deposed in 1952.

A **Mamluk** is one of the self-perpetuating class of military slaves that governed Egypt from the 13th to the early 16th centuries. The *Mamluks* were ethnically white, imported from the Turkic tribes of Central Asia, from the Georgian or Circassian peoples of the Caucasus, or from the Balkans. Similar military slave systems existed in Iraq under the Abbassid Empire, and in the Ottoman Empire itself (the Ottoman corps were called the **Janissarys**). The *Mamluks* in Egypt were considered a threat by Mohammad Ali after he came to power in 1805. The *Mamluks* power was broken in 1811 after Mohammad Ali had most of their numbers massacred after a banquet at the Cairo Citadel.

**Mawla** refers to someone who is legally attached to another person (the **walaa**) in a manner similar to kinship.

**Walaa** refers to someone who agrees to be legally bound to another person (their **mawla**) in a manner similar to kinship. A *walaa* agrees to vouch for their *mawla* in business transactions. In matters of social intercourse, the *mawla* is judged to be part of the *walaa*'s family and assumes their social standing.

## **About Hemispheres**

Created in 1996, Hemispheres is the international area studies outreach consortium at the University of Texas at Austin. Hemispheres utilizes University resources to promote and assist with world studies education for K-12 and postsecondary schools, businesses, civic and non-profit organizations, the media, governmental agencies, and the general public.

Comprised of UT's four federally funded National Resource Centers (NRCs) dedicated to the study and teaching of Latin America; the Middle East; Russia, East Europe & Eurasia; and South Asia, Hemispheres offers a variety of free and low-cost services to these groups and more. Each center coordinates its own outreach programming, including management of its lending library, speakers bureau, public lectures, and conferences, all of which are reinforced by collaborative promotion of our resources to an ever-widening audience in the educational community and beyond.

Hemispheres fulfills its mission through: coordination of pre-service and in-service training and resource workshops for educators; promotion of outreach resources and activities via exhibits at appropriate state- and nation-wide educator conferences; participation in public outreach events as organized by the consortium as well as by other organizations; and consultation on appropriate methods for implementing world studies content in school, business, and community initiatives.