

DE GRUYTER

NARRATIVES OF DEPENDENCY

TEXTUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF SLAVERY, CAPTIVITY,
AND OTHER FORMS OF STRONG ASYMMETRICAL
DEPENDENCIES

Edited by Elke Brüggem and Marion Gymnich



UNIVERSITÄT **BONN**



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Narratives of Dependency

Dependency and Slavery Studies



Edited by
Jeannine Bischoff and Stephan Conermann

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Contents

Marion Gymnich

Introduction – Narratives of Dependency: Examining the History of Strong Asymmetrical Dependencies through the Lens of Narrative Texts — 1

Honey L. Hammer

‘I Am the Champion Who Has No Peer!’: The Language of Dependency in the Tomb ‘Biographies’ of Two Ancient Egyptian Nomarchs — 15

Markus Saur

Narrating Dependency: The Relationship between David and Solomon of Jerusalem and Hiram of Tyre in Hebrew Bible Traditions — 33

Hermut Löhr

Transforming Exodus – Second Temple Liberation Narratives from the Perspective of Historical Narratology — 47

Andrea Binsfeld

Slavery and its Narratives in Ancient Novels – Stories of ‘Decline and Fall’? — 65

Clara Hedtrich

The Dark Side of Proximity: Advice and Betrayal in the Middle High German *Rolandslied* — 79

Anna Kollatz

Dependency Narrated in a Biographic Manual from the Mamluk Sultanate: The *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’ fī a’yān al-qarn al-tāsi’* by al-Sakhāwī (1427–1497) — 105

Veruschka Wagner

Slave Voices in Ottoman Court Records – A Narrative Analysis of the Istanbul Registers from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries — 141

Gül Şen

Narrativity and Dependency: The Captivity of an Ottoman Official in Saint Petersburg (1771–1775) — 161

Alexander Bauer

'The Suffering of the Russians': The Narration of Captivity and Suffering in the Imaginations about the Ottoman Stranger in Pavel Levašov's Writings — 179

Elena Smolarz

Context Matters – The Importance of the Narrative Situation and Actors who Transmit Information for Representations of Experienced Captivity: The Case of the Enslaved Russian Captive Iakov Zinov'ev (1838) — 199

Pia Wiegink

Narrative, Affective Communities, and Abolitionist Cosmopolitanism in the American Gift Book *The Liberty Bell* (1839–1858) — 213

Michael Zeuske

Narrative Self-Representations of Enslaved People under Slavery Regimes – Myth or Reality? — 235

Zeynep Yeşim Gökçe

Reading Asymmetrical Dependencies in the Narratives of Nineteenth-Century Women Travelers in Ottoman Lands — 301

Miriam Quiering

Hierarchies and Dependency as a Narrative Legitimation Strategy for Female Leadership in an Islamist Framework: A Case-Study of Zainab al-Ghazali's Prison Memoirs — 325

Sinah Theres Kloß

Tattooed Dependencies: Sensory Memory, Structural Violence and Narratives of Suffering among Caribbean Hindu Women — 347

Index — 367

Marion Gymnich

Introduction – Narratives of Dependency: Examining the History of Strong Asymmetrical Dependencies through the Lens of Narrative Texts

1 Narratives of Dependency: A Definition and its Implications

Given that strong asymmetrical dependencies of various kinds have shaped “all human societies, past and present,”¹ it seems almost like a foregone conclusion that social phenomena such as slavery, captivity and many other types of dependency must have left traces across all sorts of narrative texts, both factual and fictional ones.² In the history of transatlantic slavery and its abolition, a particular type of narrative text has played an especially prominent role: life writing by formerly enslaved people, i.e., texts that have come to be known as ‘slave narratives’.³ Arguably, the most well-known representatives of this specific type of life writing continue to shape the ways in which transatlantic slavery is remembered today. This is certainly true for texts like Olaudah Equiano’s *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789), Mary Prince’s *The History of Mary Prince: A West Indian Slave* (1831), Frederick Douglass’ *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845), and Harriet Jacobs’s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), which are still part of the cultural memory. In the political struggle to abolish slavery in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, life writing by formerly enslaved people

1 Julia Winnebeck, Ove Sutter, Adrian Hermann, Christoph Antweiler and Stephan Conermann, “The Analytical Concept of Asymmetrical Dependency,” *Journal of Global Slavery* 8, no. 1 (2023): 4. <https://doi.org/10.1163/2405836X-00801002>. See also Damian A. Pargas, “Introduction: Historicizing and Spatializing Global Slavery,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Slavery Throughout History*, ed. Damian A. Pargas and Juliane Schiel (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023): 1, who points out that “[s]lavery has been a common – if often fluid and complex – condition in most world societies throughout history.”

2 Winnebeck et al., “The Analytical Concept of Asymmetrical Dependency”: 4, define the term strong asymmetrical dependency as follows: “The analytical concept of asymmetrical dependency seeks to replace the traditional binary opposition of ‘slavery versus freedom’ still prevalent in slavery studies with the much broader analytical concept of asymmetrical dependency, which aims to encompass all forms that human bondage and coercion have taken over time.”

3 For an overview of this type of life writing, see Audrey Fisch, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the African American Slave Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) and John Ernest, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the African American Slave Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

served as “evidentiary testimony,”⁴ which sought to “persuade readers to join the abolitionist cause”⁵ by providing insights into the immense suffering caused by chattel slavery. We can assume that life writing contributed to bringing about the end of transatlantic slavery, which is one of the many social functions narratives of dependency can fulfil.

While life writing by formerly enslaved people might be the first kind of narrative of dependency many people are likely to think of today, texts like the ones by Equiano, Prince, Douglass and Jacobs prove to be exceptions among the textual sources that represent slavery and other forms of strong asymmetrical dependency. If we seek to chart the whole range of textual representations of asymmetrical dependencies and thus establish a global archive of narratives of dependency, the texts that need to be considered prove to be extremely heterogeneous. Such an archive encompasses many text types that do not provide detailed accounts of the lives of people in asymmetrically dependent positions and instead merely offer glimpses of the experience of dependency. The contributions in this volume are first steps towards defining a global and diachronic archive of narratives of dependency by broadening the corpus of narrative texts that are examined in slavery and dependency studies. Firstly, this means including text types that are far from prototypical examples of narrativity. Cases in point are the Ottoman court records discussed by Veruschka Wagner in the present volume. Wagner shows that these highly formulaic texts can be read as micro-narratives of dependency, which provide important insights into how enslavement was dealt with in the Ottoman Empire. Secondly, broadening the archive of narratives of dependency also means re-reading canonical (fictional and factual) texts from a new vantage point. The contributions by Andrea Binsfeld and Clara Hedtrich illustrate this approach. Reading canonical texts through the lens of dependency studies is often apt to reveal new facets of these texts, drawing, for instance, attention to minor characters or challenging the implicit value system of a text.

What has been said so far already suggests that the present volume proposes a *wide* concept of narratives of dependency. Thus, in the following, ‘narratives of dependency’ will be used as an umbrella term for sources that bear features of very different genres and text types while sharing one defining characteristic: they represent the experience of strong asymmetrical dependency (in a more or less detailed manner). The term is meant to be very flexible and to subsume fully fledged accounts of the lives of strongly asymmetrically dependent people as well as micro-narratives that provide only little information on dependency. Moreover, narratives of dependency include narratives *by* dependent people as well as narratives *about* them. As Rudolf Stichweh points out, having no voice and specifically lacking “the possibility of conflictual com-

4 Anna Stewart, “Revising ‘Harriet Jacobs’ for 1865,” *American Literature* 82, no. 4 (2010): 714.

5 Mitch Kachun, “Slave Narratives and Historical Memory,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the African American Slave Narrative*, ed. John Ernest (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020): 25.

munication” are among the typical features of strong asymmetrical dependencies.⁶ Thus, it comes as no surprise that representations of asymmetrical dependencies from the perspective of dependent people are rather uncommon, especially in the context of extreme forms of dependency such as chattel slavery. Many narratives of dependency are shaped by biases; this may, for instance, mean that they take the existence of strong asymmetrical dependencies for granted. In particular premodern narratives of dependency are typically informed by the perspective of those who control the resources and actions of others and are not interested in changing the dependencies that shape society. In general, we can expect to encounter narratives that *criticise* strong asymmetrical dependencies primarily in the context of abolition movements.

Adopting a wide concept of narratives of dependency implies that the narratives that are subsumed under this term differ considerably with respect to their position on the scale between “*strong narrativity*” and “*weak narrativity*.”⁷ According to Monika Fludernik and Marie-Laure Ryan, the concept of narrativity can be defined

as a cognitive pattern, or mental representation, that is triggered by certain semiotic objects or even by unmediated life experience. We construct stories in our mind not only when we read texts or watch videos, but also when we witness an accident, watch a sports game, or revisit certain memories. These mental representations become narratives when they are captured and communicated through semiotic means such as language, image, sound, moving bodies or through combinations of various types of signs.⁸

In addition to fulfilling the fundamental requirements for narrativity, such as presupposing a time and place of action or including events and actions that are caused by agents,⁹ strong narrativity “involves a mode of narration that goes beyond the depiction of a sequence of events involving beginning, middle and end. Such narratives will focus on the mental worlds of human or human-like protagonists, this is to say, on their desires, intentions and feelings.”¹⁰ The abovementioned life writing by formerly enslaved people fulfils the criteria for strong narrativity; the accounts of captivity and imprisonment discussed by Alexander Bauer, Gül Şen and Miriam Quiering can presumably also

6 Rudolf Stichweh, “How Do Divided Societies Come About? Persistent Inequalities, Pervasive Asymmetrical Dependencies, and Sociocultural Polarization as Divisive Forces in Contemporary Society,” *Global Perspectives* 2, no. 1 (2021): 4. The characteristics of strong asymmetrical dependency as defined by Stichweh are described in terms of lack, specifically a lack of (a) access to resources, (b) control over one’s actions, (c) voice, (d) possibilities of leaving the dependent position, and (e) “inner emigration”.

7 Monika Fludernik and Marie-Laure Ryan, “Factual Narrative: An Introduction,” in *Narrative Factuality: A Handbook*, ed. Monika Fludernik and Marie-Laure Ryan, Revisionen: Grundbegriffe der Literaturtheorie 6 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020): 9.

8 Fludernik and Ryan, “Factual Narrative”: 8.

9 For a more detailed discussion of these conditions, see Fludernik and Ryan, “Factual Narrative”: 8 as well as Marie-Laure Ryan, “Toward a Definition of Narrative,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 22–35.

10 Fludernik and Ryan, “Factual Narrative”: 9.

be categorised as examples of strong narrativity. Other texts examined in contributions to this volume, however, display weak narrativity at best.¹¹ Due to the scarcity of information on human experience, many narratives of dependency lack “experientiality,” a concept that refers to the “cognitively grounded relation between human experience and human representations of experience”, “particularly the embodiment of cognitive faculties, the understanding of intentional action, the perception of temporality, and the emotional evaluation of experience.”¹² Experientiality in this sense is often missing in factual and premodern sources in general as well as in extremely short or even fragmentary texts. Yet, sources of this kind often play a vital role as narratives of dependency; they may even provide insights into the history of strong asymmetrical dependency that are simply not available from other sources.

Information on the experience of strong asymmetrical dependency has traditionally tended to be marginalised in historiography as well as in many fictional texts. Thus, research on representations of slavery and dependency often requires reading in the margins and considering sources that provide only minimal information. In his postcolonial re-readings of canonical literary texts in *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said has shown that attention to details and reading against the grain may pay off as far as references to colonialism are concerned. A similar argument can be made for references to and representations of slavery and other forms of strong asymmetrical dependency. In fact, one of the best-known examples of Said’s postcolonial re-reading of nineteenth-century British literature even refers to chattel slavery. With respect to Jane Austen’s novel *Mansfield Park* (1814), he famously argued: “According to Austen we are to conclude that no matter how isolated and insulated the

11 Fludernik and Ryan, “Factual Narrative”: 9–10 further distinguish two types of weak narrativity: “The first stems from *only partial fulfillment of the basic conditions*. For instance, a news headline is an incomplete story that needs to be fleshed out by the text that follows. A list of the events that compose somebody’s daily routine lacks the property of non-habitual eventfulness because its elements can be repeated over and over again. The report of a weather event lacks human agency; it only becomes a full-fledged story when humans or human-like creatures are emotionally affected. [. . .] The other form of weak narrativity fulfils the basic conditions [. . .], but it does so through a mode of representation that *limits itself to the transmission of information*. Such texts have a distinct plot made of sequences of events and actions but they do not foreground the mental activity of the protagonists or actants. Neglecting the ‘how,’ they privilege the ‘what’ and the ‘why.’ This reporting style is the dominant form of factual narrative, but it is also found in some types of fiction. Many medieval narratives, for instance, strike the modern reader as weakly narrative, because the expressive devices of modern fiction, such as stream of consciousness, or vivid descriptions, had not yet been developed.” Both types of weak narrativity can be encountered in narratives of dependency.

12 Marco Caracciolo. “Experientiality,” in *The Living Handbook of Narratology*, ed. Peter Hühn et al., Hamburg University, <http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/article/experientiality> [accessed 30.08.2023]. For a thorough discussion of experientiality, see Monika Fludernik, *Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology* (London: Routledge, 1996), who coined the concept.

English place (e.g. Mansfield Park), it requires overseas sustenance.”¹³ The “overseas sustenance” referred to in this quotation is a plantation on the island of Antigua, where slave labour ensures the wealth of the upper-class Bertram family, who reside in England. As postcolonial readings of *Mansfield Park* by Said and others suggest, even brief references to slavery may turn out to be very illuminating.¹⁴ Even if these references do not represent the enslaved, they at least provide glimpses of assumptions and thought patterns of the enslavers and of ideas that circulate in societies shaped by asymmetrical dependencies.

The texts subsumed here under the umbrella term ‘narratives of dependency’ have in common that they are embedded in social power relations that have a strong impact on *what* can be said about asymmetrical dependency, on *how* it is said, and on *whose voices* are likely to be heard. In other words, the information on individuals, institutions, and everyday practices provided within narratives of dependency is bound to be biased. This characteristic of narratives of dependency implies that a thorough contextualisation is called for when narratives of dependency are discussed. The original social function of a given text and its original target group are factors that are of particular importance in this context. The way texts are told is likely to be shaped by these two factors. As for instance Elena Smolarz and Markus Saur show in their contributions in this volume, different versions of the same story emerge once social functions and target groups change.

While a comparison of variants of one and the same story of dependency is certainly illuminating, a more general comparison of different narratives of dependency in terms of their content is likely to be problematic. Comparing different types of dependency is bound to cause ethical concerns. The experience of a victim of chattel slavery in Cuba has very little in common with that of an elite captive in the Ottoman-Russian war (1768–74) who partially retained his privileged position. What does seem fruitful, however, is a comparative approach and an interdisciplinary collaboration with regard to methodological questions: Given that the voices of dependent people are often hard to find (and sometimes even harder to interpret), it makes sense to enter into a dialogue about how to trace and contextualise these voices in single texts as well as in archives. Other overarching questions concern the strategies of representation, the patterns of inclusion and exclusion that can be identified in narratives of dependency. These questions can initiate a productive conversation that benefits from the participation of experts from many disciplines, including historians, social anthropologists, literary historians, and theologians.

¹³ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994): 107.

¹⁴ For a further discussion of the significance of references to Antigua in *Mansfield Park*, cf., for example, Susan Fraiman, “Jane Austen and Edward Said: Gender, Culture, and Imperialism,” *Critical Inquiry* 21, no. 4 (1995): 805–21, and Rita J. Dashwood, “The Triumph of the Estate? Fanny Price and Immoral Ownership of Property in Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park*,” *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 44, no. 4 (2021): 453–68.

By discussing strongly and weakly narrative texts that address different types of asymmetrical dependency and were produced in very different historical periods and regions, the articles in the present volume also contribute to the ongoing project of establishing a historical narratology.¹⁵ Discussing premodern texts from a narratological perspective is a challenge due to the fact that the traditional narratological categories have been defined primarily on the basis of modern texts by structuralist and postclassical narratologists alike. The weakly narrative or even fragmentary nature of many narratives of dependency renders a narratological analysis of these texts even more difficult. The aim of the following contributions is not an application of traditional narratological categories in the narrow sense. Instead, they seek to provide contextualised, “historically sensitive”¹⁶ readings of narrative texts *and* their structural features; i.e., they pay attention to “the importance of narrative’s situatedness in particular media, material and cultural environments.”¹⁷ Contextualisation, i.e., exploring the contexts shaping the production, reception and dissemination of texts is essential for an analysis of both the content and the structures of narratives of dependency.

2 The Contributions in this Volume

The (highly selective) history of narratives of dependency presented in this volume starts with Honey L. Hammer’s discussion of two ancient Egyptian tomb inscriptions from the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom. The inscriptions examined by Hammer commemorate Nomarchs’ lives and are often called ‘tomb biographies’, though, as Hammer stresses, it would be more appropriate to refer to them by the more neutral term ‘self-presentations’. The Nomarchs’ self-presentations reflect a situation that is far from uncommon in premodern societies, since the men whose tombs provide information on their social status and career were in an intermediate position in the social hierarchy. As Nomarchs, they were positioned above many dependent people while being dependent on the Pharaoh. The tomb inscriptions follow a typical pattern, including, for instance, the tomb owner’s titles and achievements and putting the emphasis clearly on his position in society. Hammer shows that this specific text type has undergone significant developments in terms of structure and content. The selected self-presentations by two Nomarchs, Ankhthifi and Sarenput I, exemplify some of these changes in the ways they negotiate the tomb owner’s in-between position in terms of motifs, rhetorical strategies, and imagery.

¹⁵ For an introduction to this field of narratology, see Eva von Contzen and Stefan Tilg, eds., *Handbuch Historische Narratologie* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2019).

¹⁶ Dorothee Birke, Eva von Contzen and Karin Kukkonen. “Chrononarratology: Modelling Historical Change for Narratology,” *Narrative* 30, no. 1 (2022): 27.

¹⁷ Birke et al. “Chrononarratology”: 27.

In the next contribution, Markus Saur discusses the ways in which dependency structures are reflected in varying depictions of the relationship between Jerusalem and the Phoenician trading city of Tyre in the historiography of the Hebrew Bible, specifically in the Books of Samuel and Kings and in the Books of Chronicles. The economic superiority of Tyre, which was based on its trade networks, makes itself felt in the way the relationship between David of Jerusalem and the Phoenician king Hiram of Tyre in the tenth century BCE is represented in different books of the Bible. In the Book of Samuel, a visit of a delegation sent by King Hiram is presented very prominently, while this visit plays a less important role in the Book of Chronicles, which serves to downplay the link to Tyre. As Saur shows, a similar pattern emerges in the accounts of the relationship between Hiram of Tyre and David's son Solomon in the Book of Kings and the Book of Chronicles. Again, the Book of Chronicles downplays the significance of Tyre for Jerusalem, for instance with regard to building the temple. The accounts interpret what actually was an asymmetrical relationship, in which Tyre was the stronger partner, as a more balanced one, up to the point where the actual power structures were reversed in the narrative.

The biblical Exodus story, which continues to serve as Hebrew foundation myth up to the present day, is examined in a further contribution from the field of Protestant theology. Hermut Löhr draws upon this highly influential story to explore what can be gained from historical narratology for the field of (biblical) exegesis. The phenomena discussed by Löhr include pseudepigraphy, i.e., texts that are associated with mythical or historical authors from the distant past (such as Henoah, Abraham, and Moses) as well as the tendency towards presenting characters as idealised representatives of a group, which can be identified both in biblical stories and in texts related to these. Löhr compares Artapanus' *Perí Ioudaíôn* and Philo's *Vita Mosis*, two texts written in the Egyptian Jewish diaspora that exemplify the reception of the Exodus narrative in Antiquity. The comparison shows that a historical contextualisation is necessary to understand the specific interpretations of the Exodus story in these two writings. Löhr argues, for example, that the way in which the Hebrews' status as slaves or prisoners of war in Egypt is presented is among the most striking features of Philo's *Vita Mosis*. In this specific textual and historical context, the idea of 'liberation' emerges as an important concept.

Andrea Binsfeld analyses representations of slavery in four novels from Antiquity. The selected fictional texts by Xenophon of Ephesos, Achilleus Tatios, Heliodorus and Chariton of Aphrodisias were written between the first and the fourth centuries AD. Binsfeld asks how much the depiction of enslaved characters in these fictional works tells us about actual enslavement at the time. In this context, as Binsfeld stresses, it is necessary to consider the functions of references to slavery in a type of literary text that was first and foremost meant to entertain its readership with stories about adventure and romance. In the four novels selected by Binsfeld, the experience of abduction and captivity is embedded in adventure and romance plots. Thus, the motif of being enslaved is a vital structural feature of the novels, which are essentially stories of en-

slavement and liberation. Moreover, as Binsfeld points out, the depiction of enslavement is apt to create both empathy for the protagonists and suspense. In all novels, however, enslavement is only a temporary phenomenon, given that the characters are of noble origin. Literary tropes like that of the ‘slave of love’ or the convention of the happy ending in stories of enslavement and liberation contribute to complicating the relationship between references to the reality of enslavement and fictional elements.

Similar to Binsfeld’s contribution, the article by Clara Hedrich also addresses representations of asymmetrical dependency in fiction. Both contributions illustrate that it may be anything but easy to relate fictional depictions of dependency to reality. Hedrich, in fact, argues that dependencies can sometimes only be grasped by reading against the grain; she uses the term ‘concealed dependencies’ to refer to depictions of social relationships in fictional texts that render dependency structures all but invisible. Hedrich discusses a story of betrayal that can be found in the Middle High German *Rolandslied*, a crusade epic written by Priest Konrad in the twelfth century. The traitor, Genelun, is a member of the courtly elite, but he still proves to be in a dependent position. This becomes apparent when the ruler demonstrates that he has control over Genelun’s life. This instance of strong asymmetrical dependency is largely concealed by the value system inherent in the Middle High German epic. The emperor’s control over Genelun’s life is taken for granted by the narrator, while Genelun is presented in a negative light due to his unwillingness to do a task which may cost his life and his criticism of the idealised emperor Karl.

Premodern, non-Western historiographic writing on the whole deserves more attention by scholars in the field of dependency studies. Anna Kollatz shows that the biographic manual by al-Sakhāwī from the fifteenth century proves to be an extremely valuable source of information from the perspective of dependency studies. This Arabic historiographic text from the Mamluk Sultanate in Cairo is useful for reconstructing emic concepts of enslavement in the Mamluk era. The cases from the manual that were selected by Kollatz illustrate the diversity and complexity of what enslavement could mean in this context. They provide insight into the careers of eunuchs as well as of *mamlūks*, elite slaves whose temporary enslavement is associated with training, but they also display stereotypes about these groups. Kollatz stresses that biographic manuals like that by al-Sakhāwī should not be read merely as a source of factual information but as narratives, with structures and patterns that create meaning. According to Kollatz, the distinct narrator’s voice and the usage of dialogues are among those features of biographic manuals that call for a narratological analysis.

In the next contribution, Veruschka Wagner focuses on another text type that has so far received little attention in dependency studies: Istanbul court records from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the Ottoman Empire, enslaved people were often eventually manumitted. This made the existence of official documents of manumission necessary. The court records examined by Wagner are highly standardized documents in terms of their structure, content, and language, which also means that they made use of recurring expressions. As Wagner shows, a typical feature of these

documents is that they seem to evoke utterances of enslaved people, even if it remains highly doubtful whether these can be attributed to an actual, ‘authentic’ voice expressing the experience of enslavement. Instead, the utterances have to be accounted for in terms of their function in the court proceedings. Enslaved people had certain rights, they had access to the court, and recording their statements was even crucial for various legal matters, especially their manumission. For this reason, utterances by enslaved people occur in various forms in the court records. Although they tend to be very short, they provide insights into the legal status of enslaved people in Istanbul, their rights, and further aspects of slavery in the Ottoman Empire.

The following three contributions discuss texts that can be subsumed under the umbrella term ‘captivity narrative’. Gül Şen examines the account of an Ottoman official, Mehmed Necâti Efendi, who was a war captive in Saint Petersburg for four and a half years in the context of the Ottoman-Russian War (1768–74). Being part of the Ottoman elite, Necâti had a privileged status, even as a war captive. This is, for instance, apparent in his access to places in Russia. Şen argues that his main target group, i.e., Ottoman officials, had an impact on what Necâti Efendi chose to present in the account of his captivity in Saint Petersburg. The captivity memoir was written down after his captivity and labelled as historiographic text (*History of Crimea*) by its author, although it contains passages featuring a first-person point of view that lead to a categorisation as ego document from today’s perspective. The hybrid character of the text is further enhanced by features of yet another genre, the Ottoman embassy reports (*sefâretnâme*). Şen examines how the account of war captivity has been shaped by a range of different narrative and rhetorical devices, including, for instance, the use of dialogue and of a dramatic mode as well as the presentation of the persona of the narrator.

Alexander Bauer examines a captivity narrative by Pavel Levašov called *Captivity and the Sufferings of the Russians among the Turks*. Levašov was an eighteenth-century Russian nobleman and diplomat whose account of his experiences as prisoner and hostage in a war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire has to be read in the wider context of narratives about Turkey that were produced by Russian diplomats at the time. These presented the Ottoman Empire as Oriental other to highlight the European character of Russia, as Bauer points out. Levašov’s text was presumably based on notes written down when he was a prisoner of war in the Ottoman Empire but was only completed after his release and return to Saint Petersburg. This memoir was at first circulated as a handwritten manuscript and was only published as a book several years later, when Russia was again at war with the Ottoman Empire. Levašov’s insistence on the veracity of his report and the issue of plausibility as well as the motifs of violence and mortal danger are among the topics discussed by Bauer. Moreover, he explores the question to what extent the narrative has been shaped by Levašov’s position as diplomat and by the target group of his text.

Elena Smolarz compares two different versions of the account of the captivity of Iakov Zinov’ev, a Russian fisherman who, after having been captured on the Caspian

Coast, was an enslaved captive in Khiva and Bukhara in the 1830s, before he could eventually return to Russia due to diplomatic agreements. There is a literary version of this story that was written by the author and ethnographer Vladimir Dal' and published in a newspaper in Saint Petersburg as well as the official testimony by Iakov Zinov'ev, which was recorded by the Orenburg Border Commission after his release and can now be found in the State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan. As Smolarz shows, these two versions differ significantly in terms of their content as well as their narrative strategies. Smolarz argues that the official testimony by Iakov Zinov'ev is typical of testimonies of released Russian captives in terms of its structure. While the version by Dal' stays close to the structure of the testimony (including, for instance, an identification formula and an account of the capture) and even presents the released captive Zinov'ev as first-person narrator, it is much more elaborate than the testimony and thus to some extent tells a different story.

Pia Wiegink uses *The Liberty Bell* as an example to discuss the ways in which the popular format of the gift book was employed by abolitionists in the nineteenth century in the context of antislavery literature. Gift books are compilations of different texts and text types; in the case of *The Liberty Bell*, which was edited by the well-known abolitionist Maria Weston Chapman, as well as in other abolitionist gift books various types of antislavery texts were presented, including poetry, letters, and obituaries. There are 15 volumes of *The Liberty Bell*, which were published by the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society between 1839 and 1858 and sold to raise funds for the abolitionist movement. By including local, national as well as international contributions *The Liberty Bell* creates the impression of an international community, a network that is linked by its shared opposition to slavery. Yet, as Wiegink illustrates, the gift books do not include Black abolitionists on an equal footing. While commemorating deceased abolitionists via poems and obituaries was an important strategy of creating an abolitionist community, there are hardly any texts dedicated to Black abolitionists. Wiegink concludes from this that Black abolitionists were by and large excluded from the affective abolitionist community that was conjured up in the gift book; they lacked a voice in *The Liberty Bell*.

In his survey of very different types of sources that provide information on enslavement in Cuba, Michael Zeuske confirms that there is a lack of texts written by enslaved people. Thus, as he stresses, research is confronted with millions of victims of the Atlantic slave trade whose voices are lost. Yet, as Zeuske demonstrates, there are in fact strategies that make at least some of the victims visible. These strategies include listening to oral (family) histories and examining texts such as notaries' protocols documenting the sale of people or their manumission as well as documents by the police or courts written in the context of criminal charges against enslaved people. There are, however, also complaints by enslaved people; these *Quejas* are a unique source, resulting from specific circumstances in Cuba, as Zeuske shows. A further type of source discussed by Zeuske are depositions of enslaved people on captured or shipwrecked slave vessels from the time after the (official) abolition of the

slave trade. Moreover, Zeuske argues that even people's names tend to provide information on their biography, given that Spanish naming conventions make it possible to see whether someone was enslaved or not. Zeuske claims that longer texts about slavery in which the victims' voices are presented are actually 'freedom narratives', given that they were written in hindsight, i.e., after slavery. This is also true for the most extensive life narrative by a formerly enslaved person from Cuba: Esteban Montejo's memories of his life in slavery, which he told to a white writer, Miguel Barnet, decades after the abolition of slavery.

Zeynep Yeşim Gökçe analyses representations of slavery in the Ottoman Empire that can be found in travel writing by British women from the long nineteenth century. Gökçe situates these representations in the context of the Anglo-Ottoman relations in the nineteenth century. At a time when Britain exerted pressure on the Ottoman Empire to abolish slavery, the depiction of household slaves, concubines and harems in elite households fascinated western travel writers. Unlike their male counterparts, women travelers had access to the harem and thus could offer their readers glimpses of this place, which tended to evoke Orientalist stereotypes. These travelogues are part of the larger project of creating an Oriental 'other' that was used to legitimise European interventions in the Ottoman Empire. Gökçe claims that the depiction of dependent women in Ottoman households also needs to be situated in the context of the legal situation of British women in the nineteenth century. In both Julia Pardoe's *The City of the Sultan; and Domestic Manners of the Turks, in 1836* (1837) and Lady Emilia Hornby's *Constantinople during the Crimean War* (1863), European and Ottoman women are presented in terms of binary oppositions that are informed by Orientalist stereotypes. According to Gökçe, the insistence on dichotomies served to hide the dependent status of British women.

Miriam Quiering discusses an Egyptian text by a female author from the second half of the twentieth century: Zainab al-Ghazali's prison memoir *Ayyām min ḥayyātī*, published in 1977. This text adopts an unusual stance towards the author's authority; Zainab al-Ghazali references dependency to justify her position as female leader within the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood, which was founded in Egypt in 1928 and sought to establish a society based on *sharī'a* law. At first sight, Zainab al-Ghazali's endorsement of traditional gender roles and her political activism seem to be at odds. Quiering argues that the author's self-presentation in her prison memoir seeks to resolve this apparent contradiction by means of a range of narrative strategies. In her memoir, Zainab al-Ghazali evokes various dimensions of dependency, some of which are secular (her imprisonment, her being dependent on her husband), while others are spiritual (first and foremost her dependency on God). She deems the latter more important than the former and claims that her dependency on God helps her overcome man-made dependencies. On this basis, she fashions a role for herself that includes breaching boundaries and defying traditional gender roles.

The contribution by Sinah Theres Kloß expands the range of narratives addressed in this volume by discussing a particular type of oral life (stage) narrative of Hindu

women from Suriname and Guyana: stories about gendered suffering that are associated with tattoos called *godna*. Hindu women in the Caribbean used to be marked with these *godnas* to indicate their status as wives. For the individual, the *godnas* serve as reminders of marriage and of the experience of structural violence. Kloß collected the oral stories by means of interviews in which the tattoo narratives were produced interactively and performatively, triggered by the tattoo as a sign with an inherent memorial function. Despite being linked to memory, tattoo narratives are also ephemeral in the sense that they are the product of a specific interactive situation, shaped by the presence and questions of the interviewer as well as by family members and other people who happen to be present. Suffering turned out to play such a prominent role in the women's life narratives that, as Kloß puts it, this particular type of story could also be referred to as 'narrative of suffering' – reflecting pain caused by oppressive patriarchal structures, by cruel husbands and in-laws.

The present volume emerged from an online workshop on "Narratives of Dependency" that was organised by Elke Brüggem and Marion Gymnich in the context of the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS) in July 2021. The workshop and this volume are part of the activities of Research Area A ("Semantics – Lexical Fields – Narratives"), one of five Research Areas of the BCDSS. *Narratives of Dependency* complements the volumes which emerged from two earlier conferences organised by members of Research Area A: *Slavery and Other Forms of Strong Asymmetrical Dependencies – Semantics and Lexical Fields*, edited by Jeannine Bischoff and Stephan Conermann as well as *Naming, Defining, Phrasing Strong Asymmetrical Dependencies – A Textual Approach*, edited by Jeannine Bischoff, Stephan Conermann and Marion Gymnich.¹⁸ Many of the contributions in the present volume were written by members of Research Area A, but the topic 'narratives of dependency' also attracted scholars beyond the Research Area.

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¹⁸ Jeannine Bischoff and Stephan Conermann, eds. *Slavery and Other Forms of Strong Asymmetrical Dependencies – Semantics and Lexical Fields*, Dependency and Slavery Studies 1 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022) and Jeannine Bischoff, Stephan Conermann and Marion Gymnich, eds. *Naming, Defining, Phrasing Strong Asymmetrical Dependencies – A Textual Approach*, Dependency and Slavery Studies 8 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023).

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Honey L. Hammer

‘I Am the Champion Who Has No Peer!’: The Language of Dependency in the Tomb ‘Biographies’ of Two Ancient Egyptian Nomarchs

1 Introduction

This paper discusses the way two members of the provincial elite of the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom Egypt are placed within a patron-client framework of dependency with the central regime as described within the context of their tomb ‘biographies’. The texts belong to Nomarchs, who were known as “The Great Headmen of the Nome”¹. The earlier text belongs to a local Nomarch of Upper (southern) Egypt, Ankhtifi, and is inscribed in his tomb at Mo’alla, dating to the early part of the First Intermediate Period (approximately 2160–2055 BC).² The later, more ‘standard’ text, belongs to Sarenput I of Aswan, also in Upper Egypt, dating to between 1956–1911 BC in the Middle Kingdom.³ The ‘biographies’ address asymmetrical dependency in that Nomarchs are in a social position of power as patron over many dependents in their respective districts, but that they themselves are also usually dependent on the Pharaoh, a point that is frequently stressed in such inscriptions, especially in times dominated by a strong central rule.⁴ In general, tomb ‘biographies’ detail the career and social standing of the tomb owner, emphasising the elements that they particularly want to be remembered for.⁵ Different factors inform the tomb owner’s biographies on their stance in the dependency framework; the time in which they were written, associated events

1 Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom: A Study and an Anthology*, *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 84 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 1988): 21–22.

2 The chronology of the First Intermediate Period is difficult to determine with any real certainty. For discussions on the First Intermediate Period and issues with dating see: Stephan Seidlmayer, “The First Intermediate Period (c. 2160–2055 BC),” in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000): 118–47; Nigel Strudwick, “The Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Egyptology*, ed. Ian Shaw and Elizabeth Bloxam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020): 619–37.

3 Wolfram Grajetzki, “The Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Egyptology*, ed. Ian Shaw and Elizabeth Bloxam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020): 638–56.

4 Denise Doxey, “‘Autobiographical’ Texts,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Egyptology*, ed. Ian Shaw and Elizabeth Bloxam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020): 996–97.

5 Elizabeth Frood, “Biographical Monuments: Displaying Selves and Lives in Ancient Egypt,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Biography*, ed. Koen De Temmerman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020): 463–76.

of the time period, and the individual backgrounds of the tomb owners' impact to what extent they are presented as a local autonomous ruler, in which the expectations and social/moral obligations towards their dependents are apparent, or a loyal and dedicated client to Pharaoh (or both, to some degree).

The phenomenon of recording aspects of one's life for burial purposes was a dynamic process that continuously developed throughout Pharaonic history.⁶ The snapshots of views provided by the two texts which are the focus of this paper give insight into the elite attitudes towards the patron-client dependency framework. However, there is a rich history of establishing these elite ideologies which contextualise themes presented in both texts. With this in mind, I explore the history of so-called 'biographical texts' and its impacts on the 'tomb biographies' of Ankhtifi and Sarenput I through the following research questions:

- How do the ancient Egyptians communicate their lives?
- Can these inscriptions be counted as 'biographies'?
- Why are they different? Is it due to the personal choices and backgrounds of the individuals, the difference in time period and circumstance, or the decorum of the times in which they were composed?

Every aspect of the development of this genre of text from something extensively formulaic to something more individual and personalised impacts how the tomb owners (re)create their world, social standing, and relationships with other 'actors' that they mention. This history of development helps document the ideologies of the ruling elite that all others, especially other officials, were expected to abide by.⁷ The aim of this paper is not just to compare the varying attitudes that the tomb owners display towards their positions within the dependency framework, but also to examine how they use language to create a world in which they can emphasise the importance of their position, whether they are framing themselves as patron or client (or both, as the case often is, but with an emphasis towards one or the other).

2 Historical Background of 'Biographical' Texts

The practice of including elaborate decoration and texts within a tomb developed during the Old Kingdom and survived through to the Roman Period,⁸ with the so-called 'biographical' texts developing and changing as the politics and social dynamics of the

⁶ For extensive discussions on the evolution of 'biographical texts', termed self-presentations, see Hussein Bassir, ed., *Living Forever: Self-Presentation in Ancient Egypt* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2019); Doxey, "'Autobiographical' Texts": 994–1006.

⁷ Doxey, "'Autobiographical' Texts": 995.

⁸ Doxey, "'Autobiographical' Texts": 994.

ancient society continued to evolve.⁹ Fundamentally, the tomb 'biographies' of ancient Egypt are texts that aimed to highlight the attributes of a tomb owner that would endear him¹⁰ to both the gods and the living; ensuring access to the afterlife while securing the necessary maintenance for his mortuary cult which would sustain his soul after death.¹¹ They present the tomb owner as his ideal self, in accordance with the pre-established ideals and expectations of the mid to high elite 'patrons'.¹² These ideals demonstrate a close thematic link regarding appropriate behaviour towards one's patron or dependents with didactic or 'wisdom' literature,¹³ also first attested in the Old Kingdom.¹⁴ The intended audience is frequently addressed at the beginning of a 'tomb biography' as "ones who live, who are on earth who may pass by this tomb"¹⁵. As the focal point of continued socializing between the living and the dead,¹⁶ every aspect of the tomb – location, structure, decoration and text – serves to maintain the continuous reification of the tomb owner as an active participant of daily life after death, and as an "excellent spirit" in the afterlife.¹⁷

The terms 'biography' and 'autobiography' should both be considered problematic with these inscriptions; the texts do not usually form a complete narrative of the deceased's life, rather highlighting key events worthy of note, and although the tomb owners seem to have had some control over the content, it is unlikely that the protagonists of these inscriptions composed the texts themselves.¹⁸ A more accurate descriptor would be 'self-presentation',¹⁹ and the typical structure of these inscriptions lends credence to this term. Self-presentations tend to begin with a list of titles and epithets which identify the tomb owner through the social positions he held during his life,²⁰ completed with *dd=f* 'he says', formally introducing the main content as being presented by the tomb owner. The main body of the inscriptions typically consists of a

9 For a summary of the changes in tomb inscriptions throughout the Pharaonic period, see Andrea Gnirs, "Biographies," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Donald B. Redford, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001): 184–89.

10 Most biographies centre on the careers of mid- to high-ranking elite men, see Christopher Eyre, "Egyptian Self-Presentation: Dynamics and Strategies," in *Living Forever: Self-Presentation in Ancient Egypt*, ed. Hussein Bassir (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2019): 10.

11 Doxey, "'Autobiographical' Texts": 994.

12 Gnirs, "Biographies": 184.

13 Eyre, "Egyptian Self-Presentation": 10.

14 Doxey, "'Autobiographical' Texts": 995.

15 My own translation of line 2 of the self-presentation of Sarenput I: *ỉ 3nḥw [tpw] t3 sw3t(y)=sn ḥr is.pn*, "O! Ones who live upon the earth who may pass by this tomb"; Eyre, "Egyptian Self-Presentation": 11–12.

16 Eyre, "Egyptian Self-Presentation": 10.

17 Eyre, "Egyptian Self-Presentation": 11.

18 Doxey, "'Autobiographical' Texts": 994.

19 For a detailed discussion of ancient Egyptian self-presentation, see Hussein Bassir, ed., *Living Forever: Self-Presentation in Ancient Egypt* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2019).

20 Doxey, "'Autobiographical' Texts": 995.

presentation of the tomb owner's ethics towards his family, nameless dependents, and the king or present a career narrative highlighting the tomb owner's skill, character and effectiveness through snippets of his professional life.²¹ In this way, the identity of the tomb owner was constructed through the lens of his social and cultural context, and not through expressions of individuality or personality.²² This does not mean that these aspects were less significant to the tomb owner, rather that such emotive individuality was not appropriate for public discourse.²³ Their goal was to be remembered well, through their position in society and the social roles they would occupy, and thus the stress in their self-presentations was on their societal, and not personal, role.²⁴

2.1 The Evolution of Self-Presentations: Early Fourth Dynasty to Sixth Dynasty

Self-presentations from throughout Pharaonic Egypt draw on established concepts of 'justice' and 'appropriate' behaviour²⁵ which build on a repertoire of stock phrases and sentiments that are justified through the inclusion of elements of the tomb owners' professional careers or other noteworthy episodes of their lives.²⁶ We can see the beginnings of a written tradition of self-presentation during the Old Kingdom Fourth Dynasty²⁷ (2575–2450 BC),²⁸ a time where the royal aristocracy held the highest official positions of state administration.²⁹ Sneferu, the first king of the Fourth Dynasty, accomplished many changes to Old Kingdom culture and organisation, including an emphasis on solar-royal (political) ideology,³⁰ building on and adapting the

21 Doxey, "Autobiographical' Texts": 995.

22 Gnirs, "Biographies": 184.

23 Eyre, "Egyptian Self-Presentation": 9–10.

24 Eyre, "Egyptian Self-Presentation": 9.

25 Doxey, "Autobiographical' Texts": 994–96.

26 Gnirs, "Biographies": 184.

27 John Baines, "Forerunners of Narrative Biographies," in *Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honour of H.S. Smith*, ed. Anthony Leahy and John Tait (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1999): 23–37.

28 The dates for the Fourth Dynasty here follow Hend Sherbiny, "Self-Presentation in the Fourth Dynasty," in *Living Forever: Self-Presentation in Ancient Egypt*, ed. Hussein Bassir (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2019): 51. Alternative dates are often referred to as it is hard to pinpoint the exact timeline of the early Egyptian state. For a discussion on 'dating', see Nigel Strudwick, "The Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period," in *The Oxford Handbook of Egyptology*, ed. Ian Shaw and Elizabeth Bloxam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020): 625–26.

29 Miroslav Bárta, "'Abusir Paradigm' and the Beginning of the Fifth Dynasty," in *The Pyramids: Between Life and Death. Proceedings of the Workshop Held at Uppsala University*, ed. Irmgard Hein, Nils Billing and Erika Meyer-Dietrich (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2016): 51–74.

30 Sherbiny, "Self-Presentation in the Fourth Dynasty": 51.

pre-established concepts of order, prosperity and legitimacy to strengthen his status as a divine ruler.³¹ His extensive pyramid construction projects at Meidum, Seila and Dahshur marked the beginning of the “Pyramid Age”,³² and are taken, in addition to his successful military campaigns to Libya and Nubia,³³ to reflect the power of the ‘state’ in its control (monopoly) over resources.³⁴ Private tombs of officials during the Fourth Dynasty, which were usually built surrounding the tomb of the king, as seen in the Giza plateau,³⁵ can be taken to further demonstrate the power of the king as a ‘visual metaphor’ for state organisation,³⁶ the king wielded the power, and the officials benefited from proximity and good service.

While the private tombs of the Fourth Dynasty maintained the traditional shape and stature of the previous dynasty, it seems the funerary goods and equipment were less, but the decoration, barring a strict and brief decrease during the reign of Khufu, increased to incorporate new scenes that were previously not in use.³⁷ It appears as though, with the use of new royal ideology by Sneferu to reinforce his position of power, the decoration and texts of private tombs developed to emphasise power by association. The small non-royal self-presentations of the Fourth Dynasty show many variations of form and content³⁸ that, rather than showing a particular evolution from one style to another, show numerous styles co-occurring but also constrained by strict decorum.³⁹ Several forms of titulary list as well as an annalistic format have been identified as the dominant formats for action-/career-/event-based self-presentations, whereas the more moral-/ethics-based biographies, still in their embryonic stage at this time, took the form of ‘commented epithets’.⁴⁰ The titulary lists can be considered the predeces-

31 Miroslav Bárta, “Kings, Viziers, and Courtiers: Executive Power in the Third Millennium BC,” in *Ancient Egyptian Administration*, ed. Juan Carlos Moreno García (Leiden: Brill, 2013): 163.

32 Rainer Stadelmann, “The Pyramids of the Fourth Dynasty,” in *The Treasures of the Pyramids*, ed. Zahi Hawass (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2003): 112–37.

33 Rainer Stadelmann, “Builders of the Pyramids,” in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East 2*, ed. Jack M. Sasson, John Baines, Gary Beckman and Karen S. Rubinson (New York: Charles Scribner’s, Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1995): 719–34.

34 Sherbiny, “Self-Presentation in the Fourth Dynasty”: 53.

35 Ann Macy Roth, “Social Change in the Fourth Dynasty: The Spatial Organization of Pyramids, Tombs, and Cemeteries,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 30 (1993): 33.

36 David O’Connor, “Political Systems and Archaeological Data in Egypt: 2600–1780 BC,” *World Archaeology* 6, no. 1 (1974): 19–21.

37 Roth “Social Change in the Fourth Dynasty”: 42–43.

38 Sherbiny, “Self-Presentation in the Fourth Dynasty”: 55.

39 Michel Baud, “The Birth of Biography in Ancient Egypt: Text Format and Content in the IVth Dynasty,” in *Texte und Denkmäler des ägyptischen Alten Reiches*, ed. Stephan Johannes Seidlmayer (Berlin: Achet, 2005): 119–24.

40 Baud identified three main types of titulary: the intrinsic narrative titulary arranges titles and epithets in chronological order of titles and epithets, including all biographical information in the titulary, the commented titulary includes a lengthy list of titles interspersed with biographical or other information connected to the titles, and the appended titulary replaces generic epithets with epithet-

sors of ‘career self-presentations’, also termed ‘action biography’ (*Handlungsbiographie*), presenting the chosen noteworthy events chronologically, and ‘event biography’ (*Ereignisbiographie*), focussing on a certain feature of the tomb owner’s life.⁴¹ Inscriptions focused on tomb protection or builder’s rewards were likewise probably the beginnings of the ‘ideal self-presentation’ or ‘ethical biography’⁴² which place the tomb owner within the elite classification of ethical morals and values, portraying the protagonist as being wholly dependent on Pharaoh and in complete accordance with the morals and expectations of the ruling elites.⁴³

Towards the end of the Fourth Dynasty this monopoly of state offices by royalty changed, and many official positions began to be occupied by non-royal officials⁴⁴ who owed their position to their family background, their competency and, most importantly, their loyalty to the king.⁴⁵ The establishment of important cult centres in the provinces allowed for a (more or less) direct line between the state and its regional officials; temples of cultic centres were provided with land and people to work said land by the ‘state’, which would benefit from all resources collected from the land through the supervision of an official whose position was owed to the continuing functionality of the ‘state’ and monarchy.⁴⁶ With the administration being occupied by increasing numbers of non-royal officials, including the office of Vizier, the role of the king became less important in granting office as many of these official roles be-

like lines referring to a specific event. The annalistic format follows the style of annals which include vertical columns of text describing the event of the horizontal title-line overhead, and commented epithets emphasise loyalty to the king through titles justified with some biographical comments while justifying rewards received through general statements of loyalty and effectiveness. See Baud, “The Birth of Biography”: 91–124.

⁴¹ Baud builds on terminologies defined and discussed by Gnirs to further characterise the nature of biographical texts through labels based on form and content. See Baud “The Birth of Biography”: 91–124; Bassir, ed. *Living Forever: Self-Presentation in Ancient Egypt*; Andrea M. Gnirs, “The Egyptian Autobiography,” in *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, ed. Antonio Loprieno (Leiden: Brill, 1996): 191–241.

⁴² Jan Assmann, *Stein und Zeit: Mensch und Gesellschaft im Alten Ägypten* (Munich: Fink, 1991): 179–80; Baud, “The Birth of Biography”: 91–124.

⁴³ Sherbiny, “Self-Presentation in the Fourth Dynasty”: 60–61; Baud, “The Birth of Biography”: 91–93.

⁴⁴ Wolfgang Helck, *Untersuchungen zu den Beamtentiteln des ägyptischen Alten Reiches*, Ägyptologische Forschungen 18 (Glückstadt: Augustin, 1954): 58; Klaus Baer, *Rank and Title in the Old Kingdom: The Structure of the Egyptian Administration in the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960): 300; Bárta, “Abusir Paradigm”: 52.

⁴⁵ Hana Vymazalová, “Self-Presentation in the Late Old Kingdom,” in *Living Forever: Self-Presentation in Ancient Egypt*, ed. Hussein Bassir (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2019): 67.

⁴⁶ Juan Carlos Moreno García, “Building the Pharaonic State: Territory, Elite and Power in Ancient Egypt in the 3rd Millennium BCE,” in *Experiencing Power, Generating Authority: Cosmos, Politics, and the Ideology of Kingship in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia*, ed. Jane A. Hill, Philip Jones and Antonio J. Morales (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2013): 190–95.

came hereditary, making kinship the most important factor of dictating office.⁴⁷ This does not mean that the king lost all importance in delegating official duties. On the contrary, the shift in attainability of office would likely ensure that the officials were continuously tied to the success of the monarchy and the ruling elites. Through the increased practice of granting offices to influential provincial officials or curating beneficial arranged marriages of princesses or provincial women, the circulation of palace-culture in the provinces was facilitated with the aim of reinforcing the power (both symbolic and political) of the King.⁴⁸ This cycle of dependency maintains the position of the King and the 'state' through ensuring the dependence of officials to the regime. These close kinship ties were also reflected in burials, which would either emphasise their closeness with the king, through use of typically royal architecture within the tomb or close proximity to a royal tomb or monument, or stress a close familial relationship with a member of the royal family or another high-ranking official through proximity to their tomb, or decoration and text within their own tomb.⁴⁹ This led to the creation of 'family tombs', in which lower-ranking officials arranged to have one or more shafts stemming from the superstructure of their tomb, leading to the inclusion of several burial chambers where presumably members of a single family were buried over several generations,⁵⁰ a practice which continued well into the Sixth Dynasty.⁵¹ The change in the administration of the late Old Kingdom brought with it a greater emphasis on kinship ties that secured one's status within the tomb context, securing family cult, stressing familial ties and, therefore, highlighting the relationships between individual family members for the purpose of securing and justifying one's rank and office.⁵²

The titular lists of the Late Old Kingdom (Fifth and Sixth Dynasties) usually comprised of honorary, judicial, administrative and priestly duties, often including lower and higher ranking versions of the same office,⁵³ with the protagonist's closeness or

47 Bárta, "Kings, Viziers, and Courtiers": 166.

48 Juan Carlos Moreno García, "Building the Pharaonic State": 194.

49 Vymazalová, "Self-Presentation in the late Old Kingdom": 71–73.

50 Miroslav Bárta, "Egyptian Kingship during the Old Kingdom," in *Experiencing Power, Generating Authority: Cosmos, Politics, and the Ideology of Kingship in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia*, ed. Jane A. Hill, Philip Jones and Antonio J. Morales (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2013): 269; Miroslav Bárta, *Journey to the West: The World of the Old Kingdom Tombs in Ancient Egypt* (Prague: Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Arts, 2011): 185.

51 Vymazalová, "Self-Presentation in the Late Old Kingdom": 73; Hana Vymazalová, "Exploration of the Burial Apartments in Tomb Complex AS 68: Preliminary Report of the 2013 Fall Season," *Pražské Egyptologické Studie* 15 (2015): 57.

52 Bárta, "Egyptian Kingship during the Old Kingdom": 269.

53 This would reflect the career progression of the deceased as they worked their way from, for example, third priest of Amun to High priest of Amun. Vymazalová notes that while the highest ranking titles were emphasised in the hieroglyphic inscriptions of the tombs, the hieratic inscriptions of the masonry often used only one title, suggesting that it was not necessarily the highest ranking title that was the most important to the individual; see Hana Vymazalová, "Old Hieratic Inscriptions from the

importance to the King being more explicitly emphasised within a narrative frame of the self-presentation proper.⁵⁴ Several types of self-presentation can still be distinguished during this time, which develop from the Fourth Dynasty examples.⁵⁵ Some typically emphasise the tomb owner's just behaviour towards their family and dependents, their duties of office and more generally their adherence to *m3't*, the cosmic order of truth and justness,⁵⁶ and the ideals of the ruling elites, presenting in a more narrative frame the phrases that by the end of the Fifth Dynasty would develop into 'ideal self-presentations'.⁵⁷ Others emphasise their more personal relationship to the king, promoting their own status through mentions of work they have done for him, rewards they have received and, occasionally, the inclusion of letters from the king or narrations of specific personal experiences that highlight a close relationship with the king.⁵⁸ Towards the late Fifth Dynasty, tomb inscriptions sometimes mention, either generally or specifically, how the tomb owner fulfilled his duties to the king by carrying out their ascribed role,⁵⁹ and it is around this time that we can see that the focus of the tomb inscription is placed on the tomb owner himself.⁶⁰ This focal shift would appear both in the royal residence and in provincial cemeteries and continued into the Sixth Dynasty, as the language shifted from the third to first person singular to accommodate the individual owning their achievements and highlighting their honours.⁶¹ Self-presentation inscriptions centring on military exploits become more popular by the late Sixth Dynasty,⁶² with the emphasis of some self-presentations shifting to portray the tomb owner as the main agent of his inscription and an active histori-

Old Kingdom Tombs at Abusir," in *Ägyptologische 'Binsen'-Weisheiten III: Formen und Funktionen von Zeichenliste und Paläographie*, ed. Svenja A. Gülden, Kyra van der Moesel and Ursula Verhoeven (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2018): 185–216.

54 Vymazalová, "Self-Presentation in the Late Old Kingdom": 77.

55 Vymazalová, "Self-Presentation in the Late Old Kingdom": 77.

56 The concept of *m3't* corresponds to the ancient Egyptian concept of 'truth' or 'justness', the cosmic order against which all acts in life would be measured. It was an ideal that meant to represent fairness and goodness to those who embodied it, the Eloquent Peasant's appeals to the Chief Steward, Rensi, comment on the nature of *m3't* and what it means to be one who embodies its qualities. 'Tomb biographies' would centre passages around *m3't* as, in the afterlife, one's heart would be weighed against the feather of Truth (*m3't*) in order to see whether the individual had led a good life. The aim was not for the heart to be lighter than the feather, but equal, having led a conceptually balanced life of no intended wrongdoing.

57 Nicole Kloth, *Die (auto-)biographischen Inschriften des ägyptischen Alten Reiches: Untersuchungen zu Phraseologie und Entwicklung*, Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur, Beihefte 8 (Hamburg: Buske, 2002): 229–39.

58 Kloth, *Die (auto-)biographischen Inschriften des ägyptischen Alten Reiches*: 229–30.

59 Kloth, *Die (auto-)biographischen Inschriften des ägyptischen Alten Reiches*: 243–46.

60 Kloth, *Die (auto-)biographischen Inschriften des ägyptischen Alten Reiches*: 254.

61 Kloth, *Die (auto-)biographischen Inschriften des ägyptischen Alten Reiches*: 243–44; Vymazalová, "Self-Presentation in the Late Old Kingdom": 80.

62 Vymazalová, "Self-Presentation in the Late Old Kingdom": 81.

cal figure,⁶³ demonstrating a shift in the arrangement and content of self-presentations between the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties.⁶⁴ This reflects the changes in the power dynamics of the administration of the late Old Kingdom, with Sixth Dynasty self-presentations incorporating themes and motifs with a more local, provincial, focus which would become typical of the later First Intermediate Period.⁶⁵ The inclusion of non-royal officials in state administration gradually led to a shift in the focus of their self-presentations from state/king-focused to more personal/locally-focused, with this class of officials eventually gaining enough power to demonstrate some increasing levels of autonomy which resulted in the weakening of the “central state”.⁶⁶

2.1.1 Ankhtifi

It is with this context that we find ourselves in the First Intermediate Period, which saw local governors rise in prominence in the governance of their local areas in a time thought of by scholars to be defined by the political fragmentation of the “centralised state”.⁶⁷ Private tomb inscriptions of this time inform us that this fragmentation provided an opportunity for local rulers to control resources previously monopolised by the royal elites, for common men to climb the social ladder (locally), and for tomb owners to stress independence and individuality in their inscriptions through an emphasis on how their (own) actions ensured the prosperity and wellbeing of their people.⁶⁸ One such ruler was Ankhtifi, Nomarch during the Ninth Dynasty, whose long string of titles includes Governor of the Horus-Throne nome and Horus of Nekhen nome, Hereditary Noble, and military titles such as troop commander, and overseer of foreign lands.⁶⁹ His tomb is the largest of two decorated tombs at el-Mo’alla with an extensive and highly individual tomb biography detailing accounts of his actions taken to stabilise his area as a self-made ‘Big-Man’ and patron:⁷⁰

Horus brought me to the Horus-Throne nome for life, prosperity and health, to (re-)establish it, and I did . . .

⁶³ Kloth, *Die (auto-)biographischen Inschriften des ägyptischen Alten Reiches*: 247.

⁶⁴ Vymazalová, “Self-Presentation in the Late Old Kingdom”: 80–81.

⁶⁵ Kloth, *Die (auto-)biographischen Inschriften des ägyptischen Alten Reiches*: 254; Vymazalová, “Self-Presentation in the Late Old Kingdom”: 82.

⁶⁶ Vymazalová, “Self-Presentation in the Late Old Kingdom”: 68.

⁶⁷ Renata Landgráfová, “Self-Presentation in the Eleventh Dynasty,” in *Living Forever: Self-Presentation in Ancient Egypt*, ed. Hussein Bassir (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2019): 89.

⁶⁸ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies*: 21.

⁶⁹ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies*: 25.

⁷⁰ Marcelo Campagno, “Lo patronal, lo estatal y lo parental en la Autobiografía de Ankhtifi de Mo’alla,” *Antiguo Oriente* 9 (2011): 89–91.

I found the House of Khuu inundated like a marshland, abandoned by him who belonged to it, in the grip of a rebel, under the control of a wretch.

I made a man embrace the slayer of his father, the slayer of his brother, so as to (re-)establish the Horus-Throne nome.

No power in whom there is the heat of [strife] will be accepted, now that all manner of evil, whose doing people hate, has been suppressed.⁷¹

The event which this excerpt narrates details the takeover of the Horus-Throne nome by Ankhtifi in a likely exaggerated retelling of the state in which he found the area and what happened as a result of his intervention. In a phrasing traditionally associated with the King, Ankhtifi claims to have been directed by the god Horus of Edfu to establish order in the Edfu nome, where the temple and image of the god resided. The self-presentation displays a more intimate than usual relationship with the god for someone of his rank. Ankhtifi presents himself as emulating Horus, the solar god of kingship and therefore the one who establishes order, by re-establishing order himself. The term *grg*, ‘to (re)-establish’ or ‘to restore’ evokes the idea of ‘re-establishing order’,⁷² a motif that is reserved for officials, royalty or divinity.⁷³ Ankhtifi takes this motif one step further by portraying himself not only as a self-made big man, but as the acting instrument of the will of Horus, justifying his position as a patron through emphasising his efficacy and position of power.

His position is further justified through his description of the state in which he found the Edfu nome. Under the rule of the House of Khuu, in an apparent state of water mismanagement and having been abandoned by its local populous, Ankhtifi describes the area as being ‘in the grip of a rebel’, or *sbí*. Alternative translations for this term include ‘opposition’, or ‘to oppose’, which carry a connotation of resistance against the king and the established order, a traditional theme found in later Middle Kingdom didactic literature, which advises the eradication of all who oppose the king.⁷⁴ In rescuing the area from ineffective rule, Ankhtifi is identifying himself as The One who establishes order, at least on an extended local level, reaffirming his position as the instrument of Horus, and an autonomous and independent ruler.

The practicality behind this takeover demonstrates the control that Ankhtifi had over people and resources. Private tombs and inscriptions form the major sources of

71 This translation follows Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies*: 25.

72 Richard B. Parkinson, *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant: A Reader's Commentary*, *Lingua Aegyptia Studia Monographica* 10 (Hamburg: Widmaier, 2012): 149.

73 Elke Blumenthal, *Untersuchungen zum ägyptischen Königtum des Mittleren Reiches I: Die Phraseologie*, *Abhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philologisch-Historische Klasse* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1970).

74 Georges Posener, *L'enseignement loyaliste: sagesse égyptienne du Moyen Empire*, *Centre de Recherches d'Histoire et de Philologie de la IVe Section de l'Ecole pratique des Hautes Etudes* 2; *Hautes Études Orientales* 5 (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1976): 96–97.

the First Intermediate Period and tell us that nomes were frequently ruled by local men who enjoyed more autonomy than Middle Kingdom texts looking in retrospect would have us assume, with most self-presentations of this time emphasising the self-made nature of these local rulers. Ankhtifi's self-presentation, however, certainly demonstrates an enigmatically high level of individuality in the career aspects and boastful language.

Ankhtifi goes on to tell us how he made the people of the nome reconcile, having suppressed all evil in the area, boasting that he had done the impossible in bringing order back to a land which was in complete disarray, effectively carrying out the will of Horus:

I invited the Council of the Overseer of Upper Egypt . . . to confer with . . . (the) Great Headman of the nome of Nekhen, Hetep.

A thing I have not found done by other headmen who have been in this nome, (it was done) by my excellent planning, by my steady council, by my nightly vigilance.

I am the champion who has no peer!⁷⁵

In this passage Ankhtifi acknowledges royal control in the form of "the Council of the Overseer of Upper Egypt" with Ankhtifi inviting them to visit the third Nome, while another man, Hetep, ruled it. The passage is written in a way that emphasises Ankhtifi as the one who is facilitating a peaceful conversation that would otherwise be a (possibly) more volatile situation. Ankhtifi boasts how it was his fine qualities that facilitated a meeting that no one else had (apparently) attempted, or succeeded at, before. The term *šm*, translated here as 'planning', carries other notions of 'conduct' or 'council', implying the diplomatic expertise of Ankhtifi, who could not only violently eradicate *sbī* from his nome, but could also bring about peaceful resolution with skilful mediation. He represents himself as a kind of 'mythic' or 'messianic' figure whose prowess, diplomacy and efficacy were beyond compare.

After this mention of royal authority in his nome, the only authority mentioned in the biography is Ankhtifi's,⁷⁶ emphasising throughout his biography that he is more effective than any man: "I am the champion who has no peer" is repeated several times throughout Ankhtifi's biography. So much so that it is worth speculating over whether this particular line is the 'punctuation mark' between the narrations of episodes from his life, or in fact the main feature of the lengthy inscriptions. The root of the word *t3y*,⁷⁷ translated here as 'champion', is simply 'to be male', which gives the clause a sense of meaning 'I am a male unlike any other', and can be taken further to

⁷⁵ This translation follows Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies*: 26.

⁷⁶ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies*: 25.

⁷⁷ Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian: Addenda and Corrigenda* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1972): 303.

mean something like ‘I am a masculine man unlike any other’.⁷⁸ The focus is always on what Ankhthifi has done to prove that he is a champion without an equal. He does not frame his position or power as something that he gained through anything other than his own actions. Most passivity in the clauses of his self-presentation tends to be used to describe other actors, not himself. He consistently frames himself, in a predominantly individual style, as a highly powerful patron who was more than capable of looking after his dependents, drawing on traditional themes and motifs to legitimise his boastful self-presentation.

2.1.2 Sarenput I

The reunification of Egypt during the Eleventh Dynasty of the Middle Kingdom, the beginning of the second millennium, brought with it a retinue of new officials who played active parts in consolidating the new regime.⁷⁹ An awareness of this key role that they played is demonstrated in the conception of a new style of self-presentation: the ‘encomiastic autobiography’, which combined a renewed sense of loyalty to the King with extensive epithets highlighting the fine character and social skills of the official.⁸⁰ The knowledge of the administrative organisation of the period is not extensive, but it has been suggested that during this time, there was a large degree of social differentiation with a “middle class”⁸¹ that enjoyed more social mobility than one would assume based on the self-presentations. The rise in this educated, “liberated ‘middle class’” has been connected to the creation and thriving nature of literature,⁸² which was facilitated by an “increased use of writing”⁸³. Writings of all genres thus form a physical testament to the value attached to eloquence and rhetorical sophistication: The Middle Kingdom was certainly, in part, characterised by its literature.

78 Ludwig Morenz, “Von pointierter Maskulinität im Ägypten des späten dritten Jahrtausends v. Chr.: Zur funerären Inszenierung des Potentaten Ankhthifi als übermenschlichem ‘Manns-Kerl,’” in *Geschlecht macht Herrschaft: Interdisziplinäre Studien zu vormoderner Macht und Herrschaft*, ed. Andrea Stieldorf, Linda Dohmen, Irina Dumitrescu and Ludwig D. Morenz (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2021): 154–55.

79 Gnirs, “Biographies”: 187.

80 Gnirs, “Biographies”: 187; Hussein Bassir, “Non-Royal Self-Presentation,” *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, ed. Anne Austin and Willeke Wendrich (Los Angeles: UCLA, 2021): 5.

81 Richard B. Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt: A Dark Side to Perfection*, Athlone Publications in Egyptology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies (London: Continuum, 2002): 65.

82 Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt*: 65; Antonio Loprieno, *Topos und Mimesis: Zum Ausländer in der ägyptischen Literatur*, Ägyptologische Abhandlungen 48 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1988).

83 Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt*: 66; Ludwig Morenz, *Beiträge zur Schriftlichkeitskultur im Mittleren Reich und in der 2. Zwischenzeit*, Ägypten und Altes Testament 29 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996): 29.

These burgeoning traits of eloquence become a new attribute, among those already established, to be boasted in the epithets of self-presentations, along with intellect, diplomacy (likely stemming from First Intermediate Period examples), efficacy, firmness, and social standing.⁸⁴ The emergence of these new accepted attributes, at first glance, portrays the relationship between official and the King as far more reciprocal due to this awareness of their role in the re-unification of the country, but the presence of heavily loyalist themes is almost always present, and stands as a reminder of the dependency dynamics at play: reciprocal does not mean equal, and individual acts or qualities do not necessarily improve your social rank without the aid of a patron.

One such self-presentation belongs to Sarenput I, tomb QH36 at Qubbet el-Hawa, a Governor of Abu (contemporary Gezirat el-Aswan) during the reign of Senwosret I. His self-presentation appears twice in his tomb, with some differences between the two copies, and this text provides an example of a ‘typical’ self-presentation in that the individual acts in accordance with the King’s wishes, demonstrating a “strongly affirmative attitude to authority”⁸⁵:

(I) made a tomb in the praise of the king, His majesty made me excellent on earth,
I was distinguished more than the governors of the nomes.
(I) have [preserved?⁸⁶] the laws of the ancient ones,
(and one) caused that I should reach the sky in a moment⁸⁷

In this decidedly traditional extract, Sarenput places himself in the shoes of dependent in stating that he built his tomb in praise of his king. The term ‘praise’ or ‘favour’, Hsi in Egyptian, infers a reciprocal relationship between the one who praises and the one who is praised,⁸⁸ but not an equal relationship. The direction of Hsi is always from a higher to lower rank,⁸⁹ so Sarenput here stresses the point that his

⁸⁴ Doxey, “‘Autobiographical’ Texts”: 999; Gnirs, “Biographies”: 187.

⁸⁵ Richard B. Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry: Among Other Histories* (Chichester/Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009): 23.

⁸⁶ The text here is missing; however, the suggestion of “preserved” follows Alan H. Gardiner, “Inscriptions from the Tomb of Si-renpowet I., Prince of Elephantine,” *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 45 (1910): 123–40.

⁸⁷ The text here follows my own translation, based on the inscriptions of the two copies of Sarenput I’s self-presentation found in Gardiner, “Inscriptions from the Tomb of Si-renpowet I”, 123–40, lines 7–8 of the architrave and door posts and lines 6–7 of the inner chamber, North and West walls.

⁸⁸ Robert Parant, *L’affaire Sinouhé: tentative d’approche de la justice répressive égyptienne au début du IIe millénaire av. J.C.* (Aurillac: Robert Parant, 1982): 294–97.

⁸⁹ Parkinson, *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant*: 83; Blumenthal, *Untersuchungen zum ägyptischen Königtum des Mittleren Reiches I*: 313–14; Erik Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many*, trans. John Baines (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982): 201–2; Denise Doxey, *Egyptian Non-Royal Epithets in the Middle Kingdom: A Social and Historical Analysis*, *Probleme der Ägyptologie* 12 (Leiden: Brill, 1998): 137–40.

tomb was built with the support and favour of the king, who also made him ‘excellent’ on earth. To be excellent, *iqr*, can also be taken to mean ‘trustworthy’, ‘skilful’ or ‘superior in rank’,⁹⁰ with a sense of the latter seemingly emphasised here as Sarenput continues to describe how he was favoured by being “advanced, *stny*, more than the governors of the nomes”. This term is written in a stative grammatical form here, indicating that Sarenput was in a state of being *stny*; ‘advanced’, ‘distinguished’ or ‘honoured’ in relation to the other local rulers, who, according to his self-presentation, were not.

His emphasis throughout the biography and particularly in this passage is on his close relationship to the king, deriving his status from his dependence and loyalty to the king.⁹¹ The passive nature of Sarenput’s advancement more than the other governors of the nomes again puts the emphasis on his favoured position with the King. This position is backed up by the depiction of Sarenput before figures of local gods in his tomb chapel and accompanying texts which talk of Sarenput rebuilding the chapel of a local deified expedition leader, the theme of re-building similar to Ankhtifi’s re-establishment of the Horus-Throne nome, both motifs that are usually reserved for the King.⁹²

“Preserving the laws of the ancient ones” could allude to the Old Kingdom as a time of strength, stability, and inspiration for the early rulers of the Middle Kingdom who, through texts possibly distributed as propaganda, promoted the notion of the First Intermediate Period as being a time of chaos and desolation. In preserving the laws of the ancients, Sarenput is upholding the order of his Lord whom he again suggests is responsible for his good fortune in saying that “one caused” him to reach the sky, drawing on cosmological metaphor to express his entry to a higher social rank. The passive nature of the statement places Sarenput as the object of the un-named (yet implied) subject’s will. Here lies one key difference from the self-presentation of Ankhtifi: Sarenput upholds the order of the King, Ankhtifi upholds the order of Horus.

The following quote, although still demonstrating his dependence on the King, is not considered ‘standard’ due to the continuation of highly imaginative and quite beautiful cosmic imagery:

I rejoiced over my being caused to reach heaven,
my head pierced the sky, I grazed the bodies of the stars,
I won rejoicing, I shone as a star,
I danced like the planets,
my town was in festivity, my troops rejoiced at what was heard⁹³

⁹⁰ The translation suggestions for *iQr* follow Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*.

⁹¹ Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry*: 25.

⁹² Detlef Franke, *Das Heiligtum des Heqaib auf Elephantine: Geschichte eines Provinzheiligtums im Mittleren Reich*, Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altägyptens 9 (Heidelberg: Heidelberger Orientverlag, 1994).

⁹³ Gardiner, “Inscriptions from the Tomb of Si-renpowet I”: 123–40.

The striking imagery of this quote grants a greatness to Sarenput which we would usually expect to refer only to gods and kings.⁹⁴ His expression of excitement, presumably at being granted a promotion by the king, is individual, though it is not unheard of for high officials of the Middle Kingdom to utilise such imaginative language to express particular aspects of their greatness during this time. He repeats that he rejoices, over being caused to reach 'heaven', with *h'ī*, 'rejoice' or 'joyful', first occurring here in a stative form; he was in a state of rejoicing at being caused to reach heaven.

If "caused to reach heaven" means receiving a higher rank as a result of his loyal behaviour, then to have his "head pierce the sky" and to "graze the bodies of the stars" could be the embellishment of his experience of this higher rank in gaining access to an environment that had previously been inaccessible. In gaining access to "the heavens", Sarenput is placed in the presence of "stars", which could refer to members of the high elite, royalty and/or the King. And he is not only among them, but he "shone as a star" himself, inferring his acceptance as a member of the high elite, an occasion which, according to Sarenput, would be a cause for "festivity", *hb*, for his dependents, a word that is also used to refer to religious festivals and royal celebrations.⁹⁵

However, the passivity of the phrase "my being caused to reach heaven" reminds us of the predominantly traditional themes utilised that place Sarenput as a loyal instrument of the re-established regime. Even though he has earned something worth celebrating, he still owes this to the King, and therefore still frames himself, predominantly, as 'dependent' in this way. In doing this, Sarenput demonstrates his reliance on the power of the king for him to maintain his position, who in turn will have been somewhat dependent on the loyalty of Sarenput.⁹⁶

3 Conclusion

We have seen that the practice of including self-presentations within a tomb was a dynamic process of continuous development, beginning with establishing the 'traditional' themes of loyalty to the ruling regime and highlighting aspects of one's career during the fourth dynasty. The fragmentation of the 'central administration' at the end of the Old Kingdom facilitated the inclusion of more unique and individual narrations which emphasise the less dependent, more autonomous nature of the local elites of the First Intermediate Period. While it does become more acceptable to boast independence during this time, Ankhtifi certainly demonstrates a higher level of individu-

⁹⁴ Maya Müller, "Egyptian Aesthetics in the Middle Kingdom," in *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists*, ed. Christopher Eyre (Leuven: Peeters, 1998): 785–92.

⁹⁵ Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*: 166–67.

⁹⁶ Parkinson, *Reading Ancient Egyptian Poetry*: 25.

ality through including rather detailed descriptions of events from his career that confirm him to be *The Patron* for his extended local area. He does this through both innovation and tradition: the assertion that he is a man unlike any other builds on traditional themes of masculinity, career, and adherence to the expectations of one's role. Traditionally, however, many themes presented in Ankhthifi's self-presentation, such as violent masculinity in establishing order, and being directed by a god, are reserved for the king. But it is this fragmentation of order facilitating a rise in self-presentation 'individuality' that continued the development of self-presentations in general; so by the Middle Kingdom, we see the beginnings of a new style of self-presentation that permitted the inclusion of themes that likely have roots in the First Intermediate Period, such as diplomacy, efficacy, or firmness. Although not stated explicitly in the previous quotes, Sarenput boasts his efficacy in relating his rewards; a fine tomb and higher rank, things he would not have achieved if he were not an able and effective client. The individuality demonstrated in Sarenput I's self-presentation mainly takes the form of beautiful metaphorical imagery that, even though it too is usually reserved for the king, is still used to emphasise the dependency of Sarenput I on the king for his social position. Even when Sarenput tells us how he acted as expected in his role of patron, it is always with a stress on this backdrop of loyalism that resurges with the re-unification of Egypt. When taking the language of dependency expressed in these biographies within the cultural and historical contexts of the times they were written, we can begin to understand that the emphasis, whether it be on autonomy or dependence on the king, did not develop in a vacuum, but was directly influenced by the practical realities of the dependency framework that ancient Egyptian officials operated in.

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Markus Saur

Narrating Dependency: The Relationship between David and Solomon of Jerusalem and Hiram of Tyre in Hebrew Bible Traditions

1 The Journey of Wenamun to Phoenicia – a Glimpse of Egypt as an Introduction

In the eleventh century BCE, the Egyptian emissary Wenamun set out on behalf of his master, the priest of Amun in the temple of Karnak, to buy timber for the barque of the Egyptian god Amun in the Phoenician city of Byblos. Wenamun arrived on the Phoenician coast after suffering adventures. As an Egyptian who had been robbed and was thus helpless, he was at first not received by the king of the city of Byblos. Wenamun's mission threatened to fail. Only an oracle given by an ecstatic priest persuaded the king of Byblos to listen to Wenamun, and he was able to present his request. The negotiations were extremely tough, but finally the king provided the wood that the Egyptians desired. Wenamun, however, remained in danger. On his way back to Egypt he stranded in Alasia on Cyprus – with this the report of Wenamun breaks off.¹

The Egyptian text is extremely important,² not only because of its linguistic characteristics and the insights it provides into ritual practices, but especially for the relationship between Egypt and Phoenicia in the interim period of the twelfth/eleventh century BCE. The attitude of the king of Byblos and the permanent threat to the Egyptian Wenamun, both on his journey and on the Phoenician coast, stand in clear contrast to older information, for example from the Amarna texts, which a few centuries earlier still testified to a broad supremacy of Egypt over Syria. In Wenamun's report, on the other hand, there is no evidence of a dependency of the Phoenician city of Byblos on Egypt; rather, it seems that the situation had clearly changed: The Egyptian Wenamun appears in Byblos as an uninvited guest and is not at all welcome as a person asking for help, while the king, Byblos and Phoenicia, on the other hand, appear as important suppliers of wood, without whose support ritual challenges in Egypt could not be met.

¹ A translation of the text by John A. Wilson can be found in: James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969): 25–29.

² Cf. Bernd U. Schipper, *Die Erzählung des Wenamun: Ein Literaturwerk im Spannungsfeld von Politik, Geschichte und Religion*, *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 209 (Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 2005).

The Egyptians, after all until recently a political and cultural superpower, are obviously in a strong asymmetrical dependency on the Phoenicians. The asymmetry consists in the striking imbalance that results from the fact that the Egyptian Wenamun becomes a supplicant to the Phoenician king. It is particularly remarkable that this imbalance is not narrated in a Phoenician text, but in an Egyptian travel report: The narrative in no way conceals the dependency but is more than clear about the relationship between Egypt and Phoenicia in the late second millennium BCE.

The way in which the story is told cannot be developed in detail here. However, it should at least be mentioned that the travel report of Wenamun is characterized by a remarkable openness with regard to dependencies in the eastern Mediterranean. The balance of power has obviously changed in such a way that the king of a Phoenician city can meet the emissary of the chief priest of Karnak with outrageous self-confidence.³ In the late second millennium BCE, political and economic transformations lead to a shift of dependencies, which become asymmetrical precisely because of this: Egypt, the high culture on the Nile, becomes dependent on its previous vassals in Syria. And the narrator of Wenamun's travel report gives a very vivid account of this.⁴ However, the pragmatics of this account remain puzzling: Who, at the end of the second millennium BCE, recounts Egypt's loss of status in Syria in such a way, and what were their intentions?

2 Israel and Phoenicia – Some Context

The relationship of the Phoenician trading cities⁵ to their partners in the eastern Mediterranean is reported not only in Egyptian texts, but also in the historiography of the Hebrew Bible.⁶

3 Cf. Gabriella Scandone and Paolo Xella, "Égypte," in *La civilisation phénicienne et punique. Manuel de recherche*, ed. Véronique Krings, Handbuch der Orientalistik I/20 (Leiden: Brill, 1995): 636: "La situation des rapports de pouvoir est donc nettement changée et, après les accents triomphalistes des textes égyptiens, royaux et privés, du Nouvel Empire, le pays de Nil redimensionné et politiquement inquiet [. . .] est en net déclin. Les cités de la côte levantine, en revanche, figurent dans le Récit d'Ounamon comme étant très actives et économiquement prospères, caractérisées, à ce qu'il semble, par un remarquable sens de l'entreprise commerciale [. . .]."

4 Cf. Josette Elayi, *Histoire de la Phénicie* (Paris: Perrin, 2013): 112–15.

5 For an introduction and an overview of several topics concerning the Phoenicians see *La civilisation phénicienne et punique. Manuel de recherche*, ed. Véronique Krings, Handbuch der Orientalistik I/20 (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

6 Cf. Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet, "Syro-Palestine et Jordanie," in *La civilisation phénicienne et punique. Manuel de recherche*, ed. Véronique Krings, Handbuch der Orientalistik I/20 (Leiden: Brill, 1995): 583–96, and – especially for the city of Tyre – Markus Saur, *Der Tyroszyklus des Ezechielbuches*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 386 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008): 107–81, 252–68, 309–14.

We can distinguish two major historiographical compositions. An older historiography can be found in the Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, whose authors used sources from the first half of the first millennium BCE. The complete text of this historical work was probably not finalized until the Persian period. Due to the influence of some theological ideas from the Book of Deuteronomy, this composition is called the ‘Deuteronomistic History’.⁷ A more recent text, found in the two Books of Chronicles and brought into its final form only in the Hellenistic period, is called the ‘Chronistic History’.⁸ Both compositions address in different ways the question of the identity of Israel and Judah: ‘Who are we? And how have we come to be where we are now?’ Given these guiding questions it cannot be surprising that the conditions of the time in which the story is told also shape the depiction of the events narrated, and that from the narrative perspective of the Persian and Hellenistic periods, the beginnings of Israel, Judah, and the kingship of Jerusalem are presented in a certain light. The distance between the events reported and the time of writing is over half a millennium. The narrative culture of these historiographies is therefore likely to feature literary elaborations and illustrations.

This is especially true for the reports of the relationship between Jerusalem and the Phoenician trading cities, and in our case especially between Jerusalem and Tyre. These relationships are reported both in the Books of Samuel and Kings and in the Books of Chronicles. Syria-Palestine in the late second millennium and early first millennium BCE was not a politically unified area but characterized by a highly differentiated urban culture and a high degree of diversity. The region was divided into the inner spheres of power of the leading cities with their respective hinterlands, and the periphery, which was notable for unclear boundaries and spheres of influence.⁹

There are some significant differences between the cities of Jerusalem and Tyre, which must be taken into account when reconstructing their relationship. These differences have a substantial influence on the question of who is dependent on whom. At first glance, Jerusalem and Tyre are influential cities in the Syro-Palestinian area, so that encounters between their respective kings should have taken place on an equal footing. However, a closer examination shows that such equality did not exist on all levels. Economically, the Phoenicians were vastly superior to Israel and Judah

7 Cf. Thomas Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: T&T Clark, 2005): 3–43, 165–83.

8 Cf. Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles. A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993): 1–49, and Jean-Louis Ska, “The Book of Chronicles through the Ages: A Cinderella or a Sleeping Beauty?” in *Chronicles and the Priestly Literature of the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Jaeyoung Jeon and Louis C. Jonker, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 528 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021): 15–50.

9 Cf. Edward Lipiński, “The Territory of Tyre and the Tribe of Asher,” in *Phoenicia and the Bible*, ed. Edward Lipiński, *Studia Phoenicia* 11 (Leuven: Peeters, 1991): 153–66.

because of their extensive trade networks,¹⁰ which was especially true for the city of Tyre.¹¹ In the field of religion, both Jerusalem and Tyre worshiped a patron god of their respective city and his goddess, which was typical for the Canaanite area.¹² In Jerusalem, worship of the god Yhwh in addition to that of Canaanite deities may have become more prevalent after the conquest of the city by David.¹³ Culturally, the most important shift in Syria-Palestine is the establishment of an alphabetic writing system that considerably simplifies the complex writing systems of Egypt and Mesopotamia, and enables literalization in completely new ways.¹⁴ Even if the beginnings of this process originated in northern Syria, the situation in terms of source material is incomparably better for Judah and Jerusalem than for Phoenicia: While only a few inscriptions have come down to us from Phoenicia¹⁵ and much information is known only from texts dating to late antiquity,¹⁶ extensive literary corpora are available from ancient Judah, whose oldest material evidence – the Dead Sea Scrolls – goes back to the second and first centuries BCE. All this says nothing about how much or how little was written in Judah or in Phoenicia – for historical reconstruction, however, we can only work with the sources that are at hand.

In terms of the relationship between Israel, Judah and Phoenicia, and more precisely between Jerusalem and Tyre, we must therefore rely on a single perspective, namely that of the Hebrew Bible in the two historical works mentioned above. In addition, we need to consult other sources, especially archaeological discoveries and information from Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Greek texts, in order to draw an appropriate image of the situation. And here it becomes quite clear – the travel report of Wenamun already points to it – that the lack of literary sources from Phoenicia does not say anything about the economical situation: According to our various sources, the Phoenician trading cities of Sidon, Tyre, Byblos and Arwad were economic capitals in the Ancient Near East due to the abundance of timber in their hinterlands and, above all, to their

10 Cf. Sandro Filippo Bondi, “Le commerce, les échanges, l’économie,” in *La civilisation phénicienne et punique. Manuel de recherche*, ed. Véronique Krings, Handbuch der Orientalistik I/20 (Leiden: Brill, 1995): 268–81.

11 Cf. Saur, *Tyroszyklus*: 224–37.

12 Cf. Edward Lipiński, *Dieux et déesses de l’univers phénicien et punique*, Studia Phoenicia 14 (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), and Hans-Peter Müller, “Geschichte der phönizischen und punischen Religion. Ein Vorbericht,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 44 (1999): 17–33.

13 Cf. Thomas Römer, *L’invention de Dieu*, Les livres du nouveau monde (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2014): 115–37.

14 Cf. David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 111–73.

15 Cf. Maria Giulia Amadasi Guzzo, “Les inscriptions,” in *La civilisation phénicienne et punique. Manuel de recherche*, ed. Véronique Krings, Handbuch der Orientalistik I/20 (Leiden: Brill, 1995): 19–30.

16 Cf. Sergio Ribichini, “Les sources gréco-latines,” in *La civilisation phénicienne et punique. Manuel de recherche*, ed. Véronique Krings, Handbuch der Orientalistik I/20 (Leiden: Brill, 1995): 73–83.

high level of expertise in the fields of crafts and art, navigation and trade.¹⁷ This was not only the case in transitional periods: The Phoenician cities were constantly dominating forces between the Mediterranean, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt and Mesopotamia.¹⁸

What the travel report of Wenamun suggests can be traced back through the period of Assyrian and Babylonian domination to the Persians and to Alexander the Great. Both Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and Alexander the Great had great trouble with the Phoenician cities, especially with Tyre, situated on an offshore island. Nebuchadnezzar failed to conquer it, and only Alexander was able to take the city.¹⁹ This background is of some importance if we want to classify what is reported about Jerusalem and Tyre in the Hebrew historiographies.²⁰ The Persian and Hellenistic periods left their marks on the narratives. The texts that tell us about the tenth century BCE are probably a better source for the Persian period and early Hellenism than for the beginnings of Israel under David and Solomon.

3 David of Jerusalem and Hiram of Tyre – Tracing the Beginnings of a Relationship

The history of the relationship between Jerusalem and Tyre is already portrayed in the texts about David of Jerusalem and the Phoenician king Hiram of Tyre.

David, king of Judah, Israel and Jerusalem, is regarded as the founder of the dynasty named after him, which ruled in Jerusalem from the tenth century until the year 586 BCE. Despite doubts occasionally expressed by scholars, we can assume that a king named David did reign in Jerusalem, since the extensive formation of tradition cannot be explained without a historical point of reference. However, more precise information about the situation in the tenth century cannot be found in the available sources. David and his reign remain largely in the dark.²¹ The literary elaboration of the historiographical narratives, however, shows the reception and transformation of the traditions of King David in later periods.

17 Cf. Elayi, *Histoire de la Phénicie*: 20–36.

18 Cf. Moshe Elat, “Phoenician Overland Trade within the Mesopotamian Empires,” in *Ah, Assyria . . . Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor*, ed. Mordechai Cogan and Israel Eph’al, *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 33 (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press – The Hebrew University, 1991): 21–35, and Saur, *Tyroszyklus*: 197–237.

19 Cf. Saur, *Tyroszyklus*: 170–77.

20 For the background of the fourth century BCE see André Lemaire, “Le royaume de Tyr dans la seconde moitié du IV^e siècle av. J.-C.,” in *Atti del II Congresso Internazionale di Studi Fenici e Punici. Roma, 9–14 Novembre 1987*, vol. 1, *Collezione di Studi Fenici* 30 (Rome: Consiglio nazionale delle ricerche, 1991): 131–50.

21 Cf. Ernst Axel Knauf and Hermann Michael Niemann, *Geschichte Israels und Judas im Altertum* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021): 130–35.

Hiram of Tyre is known mainly from the Hebrew Bible texts, but he is also mentioned in a list of kings quoted in late antiquity by Eusebius of Caesarea with reference to older sources.²² The name Hiram itself is also attested in Phoenician inscriptions, so that despite the extremely difficult source situation there can be little doubt that there was a king named Hiram who ruled the trading city of Tyre and had contacts with David of Jerusalem.

If we look first of all at the reports in Deuteronomistic historiography, at the end of the story of David's rise, we find in 2 Sam 5:1–10 the report of David's covenant with the elders of Israel in Hebron, through which he became *de facto* king over Israel, and the story of David's capture of Jerusalem, which he subsequently developed into his capital:

1 Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, and said: 'Look, we are your bone and flesh. 2 For some time, while Saul was king over us, it was you who led out Israel and brought it in. Yhwh said to you: It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler over Israel.' 3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before Yhwh, and they anointed David king over Israel. 4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years.

5 At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years. 6 The king and his men marched to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who said to David: 'You will not come in here, even the blind and the lame will turn you back.' – thinking: 'David cannot come in here.' 7 Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion, which is now the city of David.

8 David had said on that day: 'Whoever would strike down the Jebusites, let him get up the water shaft to attack the lame and the blind, those whom David hates.' Therefore it is said: 'The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.' 9 David occupied the stronghold, and named it the city of David. David built the city all around from the Millo inward. 10 And David became greater and greater, for Yhwh, the God of hosts, was with him.²³

In verses 11–12, these accounts are concluded with the following information:

11 And King Hiram of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar trees, and carpenters and masons who built David a house. 12 And David perceived that Yhwh had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.

According to v. 11, Hiram of Tyre sent a delegation to David and provided him with cedar trees, carpenters and masons so that David could build a house. The background of this support remains unclear. Clearly, however, David relied on Phoenician expertise for the construction of the palace. The interpretation of the circumstances in v. 12 is crucial: David recognized that he had been confirmed as king by Yhwh and that his kingship had been elevated. How does David recognize this? By the anointing

22 Cf. Nadav Na'aman, "Hiram of Tyre in the Book of Kings and in the Tyrian Records," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 78 (2019): 75–85.

23 All translations follow *The Holy Bible. The new King James Version. Containing the Old and New Testaments* (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 1982).

he received from the elders in Hebron? By the conquest of Jerusalem? Or by the Tyrian delegation? The alternatives are not mutually exclusive, but the sequence of events suggests that only the recognition of David's kingship by a foreign power completes the story of David's rise.

While the reports of the Tyrian delegation to Jerusalem in 2 Sam 5:11 mark the conclusion of the story of David's rise, the same scene is placed in a different context in the Book of Chronicles. David's covenant with the elders of Israel in Hebron and the conquest of Jerusalem have already been mentioned in 1 Chr 11. Only after other events have been reported do we read at the beginning of 1 Chr 14:

1 And king Hiram of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar logs, and masons and carpenters to build a house for him. 2 And David perceived that Yhwh had established him as king over Israel, and that his kingdom was highly exalted for the sake of his people Israel.

Only here do we find the information about Hiram's delegation coming to Jerusalem with cedar wood and experts to build David a house. Here, David's recognition is no longer directly related to his accession to power. Instead, the Chroniclers deconstructed the narrative context in a way that the delegation from Tyre is not any longer the climax of the story of David's rise to power.²⁴ In contrast to the Deuteronomists, the Chroniclers obviously have no interest in emphasizing this diplomatic recognition of the kingdom of David by the Phoenician city of Tyre.

This could be due to the lesser importance of Tyre at the time the Books of Chronicles were written, but it could also be related to the fact that the Chroniclers wanted to push back as far as possible the connections between Israel and Phoenicia in order not to let the influence of foreigners and strangers on the young state of Israel come to the fore too much. The Deuteronomists, on the other hand, see the connections between David and Hiram in a different light: They presuppose a period of Phoenician flourishing, which was evidently regarded in Israel not with envy, but with acceptance. Through the connection with the politically, economically and culturally important city of Tyre, David's kingship, long ago by the time the Deuteronomistic texts were being written, has a certain share in the splendor of Phoenicia.

David's *de facto* dependency on Phoenician goods and Phoenician expertise is obviously narratively shaped in different ways: While the Deuteronomists anchor Hiram's delegation in a central position in the text and thus intend to make David's rise to power appear even more brilliant, the Chroniclers seem to push the information about David's contacts with Hiram to the back of the text in order to avoid presenting David in what they see as a false light.

²⁴ Cf. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*: 285–86.

4 Solomon of Jerusalem and Hiram of Tyre – the Flourishing of the Relationship

These tendencies can also be observed as the account of the early royal period proceeds further. In the narrative about David's son Solomon in 1 Kings 1–11, the contacts between Hiram of Tyre and Solomon are reported mainly in 1 Kings 5:15–32:

15 Now King Hiram of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon, when he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father; for Hiram had always been a friend to David.

16 Solomon sent word to Hiram, saying: 17 'You know that my father David could not build a house for the name of the Lord his God because of the warfare with which his enemies surrounded him, until the Lord put them under the soles of his feet. 18 But now the Lord my God has given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary nor misfortune. 19 So I intend to build a house for the name of the Lord my God, as the Lord said to my father David, 'Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, shall build the house for my name.'

20 Therefore command that cedars from the Lebanon be cut for me. My servants will join your servants, and I will give you whatever wages you set for your servants; for you know that there is no one among us who knows how to cut timber like the Sidonians.' 21 When Hiram heard the words of Solomon, he rejoiced greatly, and said: 'Blessed be the Lord today, who has given to David a wise son to be over this great people.' 22 Hiram sent word to Solomon: 'I have heard the message that you have sent to me; I will fulfill all your needs in the matter of cedar and cypress timber. 23 My servants shall bring it down to the sea from the Lebanon; I will make it into rafts to go by sea to the place you indicate. I will have them broken up there for you to take away. And you shall meet my needs by providing food for my household.' 24 So Hiram supplied Solomon's every need for timber of cedar and cypress.

25 Solomon in turn gave Hiram twenty thousand cors of wheat as food for his household, and twenty cors of fine oil. Solomon gave this to Hiram year by year. 26 So the Lord gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him. There was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and the two of them made a treaty. 27 King Solomon conscripted forced labor out of all Israel; the levy numbered thirty thousand men. 28 He sent them to the Lebanon, ten thousand a month in shifts; they would be a month in the Lebanon and two months at home; Adoniram was in charge of the forced labor. 29 Solomon also had seventy thousand laborers and eighty thousand stonecutters in the hill country, 30 besides Solomon's three thousand three hundred supervisors who were over the work, having charge of the people who did the work.

31 At the king's command, they quarried out great, costly stones in order to lay the foundation of the house with dressed stones. 32 So Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders and the Gibleites did the stonecutting and prepared the timber and the stone to build the house.

According to 1 Kings 5:15, the contact is initiated by Hiram, who congratulates Solomon on his enthronement. Solomon then thanks him kindly and, after some references to his building plans, comes to his request for Phoenician cedar wood. Hiram agrees to the delivery of cedars and cypresses, but in turn asks for goods from Israel – according to v. 25, Solomon henceforth delivers wheat and oil to Tyre year after year. At first glance, this seems to be a meeting of partners who are balancing their interests. But this balance of interests is characterized by a certain asymmetry: While Solomon supplies his Tyrian trading partner with food year after year, Hiram delivers building material for the temple of Jerusalem only on a single occasion. According to

v. 32, not only Solomon's and Hiram's builders but also experts from Byblos are involved in the construction of the temple. The temple is obviously a joint Israelite-Phoenician project, which becomes even clearer in 1 Kings 7:13–51: According to this passage, the entire ritual-relevant interior decoration of the temple is made by a craftsman from Tyre named Hiram.²⁵ In 1 Kings 7:14, his mother is named as a member of the Israelite tribe of Naphtali in order to make the matter not too offensive – but the fact that his father came from Tyre obviously cannot be ignored.

The Deuteronomistic accounts of 1 Kings 5:15–32 and 1 Kings 7:13–51 are subsumed, shortened, and refocused by the Chroniclers in 2 Chr 2,1–15:

1 Solomon conscripted seventy thousand laborers and eighty thousand stonecutters in the hill country, with three thousand six hundred to oversee them. 2 Solomon sent word to King Hiram of Tyre: 'Once you dealt with my father David and sent him cedar to build himself a house to live in. 3 I am now about to build a house for the name of the Lord my God and dedicate it to him for offering fragrant incense before him, and for the regular offering of the rows of bread, and for burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths and the new moons and the appointed festivals of the Lord our God, as ordained forever for Israel. 4 The house that I am about to build will be great, for our God is greater than other gods. 5 But who is able to build him a house, since heaven, even highest heaven, cannot contain him? Who am I to build a house for him, except as a place to make offerings before him? 6 So now send me an artisan skilled to work in gold, silver, bronze, and iron, and in purple, crimson, and blue fabrics, trained also in engraving, to join the skilled workers who are with me in Judah and Jerusalem, whom my father David provided. 7 Send me also cedar, cypress, and algum timber from Lebanon, for I know that your servants are skilled in cutting Lebanon timber. My servants will work with your servants 8 to prepare timber for me in abundance, for the house I am about to build will be great and wonderful. 9 I will provide for your servants, those who cut the timber, twenty thousand cors of crushed wheat, twenty thousand cors of barley, twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil.' 10 Then King Hiram of Tyre answered in a letter that he sent to Solomon: 'Because the Lord loves his people he has made you king over them.' 11 Hiram also said: 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who made heaven and earth, who has given King David a wise son, endowed with discretion and understanding, who will build a temple for the Lord, and a royal palace for himself. 12 I have dispatched Hiram-abi, a skilled artisan, endowed with understanding, 13 the son of one of the Danite women, his father a Tyrian. He is trained to work in gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone, and wood, and in purple, blue, and crimson fabrics and fine linen, and to do all sorts of engraving and execute any design that may be assigned him, with your artisans, the artisans of my lord, your father David. 14 Now, as for the wheat, barley, oil, and wine, of which my lord has spoken, let him send them to his servants. 15 We will cut whatever timber you need from Lebanon, and bring it to you as rafts by sea to Joppa; you will take it up to Jerusalem.'

25 Cf. Ernst Axel Knauf, *1 Könige 1–14*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament (Freiburg: Herder, 2016): 244: "Dass ein Bronzegießer und Kunstschmied aus Tyrus geholt wird, lag im 9.–8. und dann wieder ab dem 5. Jh. nahe: die Phönizier verdankten ihre Dominanz im levantinischen Handel zu großen Teilen der Kontrolle des zyprischen Kupferexports in den fruchtbaren Halbmond und in den Mittelmeerraum, und Tyrus war die Jerusalem nächstgelegene Metropole."

In addition to wheat and oil, barley and wine are mentioned as Solomon's contributions; according to vv. 7–8, Hiram is to deliver not only cedars and cypresses, but also algum timber. The artisan requested by Solomon in v. 6 is promised by Hiram in vv. 12–13 and is also mentioned again in 2 Chr 4:11 in the context of constructing the temple furnishings and implements. But he is mentioned rather abruptly and casually, because according to 2 Chr 3:1 Solomon is the one who instigates the building of the temple and its furnishings and implements, a fact that is again clearly underlined in 2 Chr 5:1. Here again there is a noticeable attempt by the Chroniclers to minimize the Phoenician influence on the temple of Jerusalem and to portray the influence of foreigners as insignificant.²⁶

As for the dependencies at hand, we cannot ignore either their strength or their asymmetry: While Solomon supplies food on a permanent basis, the Phoenicians provide building material and craftsmanship. It would have been very easy for the Phoenicians to source their supplies elsewhere, but it would have been very difficult for David and Solomon to realize their building plans without Phoenician support. What at first glance appears to be a mutual trade relationship and is narratively presented as such reveals itself on closer examination as a strong asymmetrical dependency of Jerusalem on the Phoenicians, who seem to be in a much better economic and technical position than David and Solomon. The Hebrew traditions of David, Solomon and Hiram develop, albeit with varying intensity, a counter-narrative to Israel's *de facto* dependency on Phoenicia and attempt to conceal the actual circumstances. In this way, Hebrew historiography takes a different approach than the travel report of Wenamun, which sets out with unsparing frankness the extent to which Egypt had become dependent on the Phoenicians.

The account of another incident in the relationship between Solomon and Hiram of Tyre is found in the remarkable story of cession of territories in the border region between Israel and Phoenicia. According to 1 Kings 9:10–14, Solomon cedes twenty cities to Hiram:

10 At the end of twenty years, in which Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord and the king's house, 11 King Hiram of Tyre having supplied Solomon with cedar and cypress timber and gold, as much as he desired, King Solomon gave to Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. 12 But when Hiram came from Tyre to see the cities that Solomon had given him, they did not please him. 13 Therefore he said: 'What kind of cities are these that you have given me, my brother?' – So they are called the land of Cabul to this day. 14 But Hiram sent to the king one hundred twenty talents of gold.

²⁶ Cf. v. 12–13, where the artisan is not only presented as the son of a Tyrian but at the same time as "son of one of the Danite women", which seems to refer to one of the northern tribes of Israel (cf. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*: 544–45).

In 2 Chr 8:1–2, Hiram, by contrast, handed over the cities to Solomon:

1 At the end of twenty years, during which Solomon had built the house of the Lord and his own house, 2 Solomon rebuilt the cities that Hiram had given to him, and settled the people of Israel in them.

The different accounts allow only one conclusion: There were obviously some grey areas in the border region about whose affiliation different opinions were in circulation.²⁷ While it was still possible for the Deuteronomists to report that Solomon ceded territory to Hiram, the Chroniclers turned the matter completely upside down: For all the concessions to Phoenician influence the Chroniclers were willing to make in their account, Solomon just could not have diminished the land given to Israel by Yhwh. The Deuteronomists portray Tyre as a partner of Israel, to whom Solomon was willing to make geographical concessions in the peripheries of the north, if the construction of the temple in Jerusalem could be ensured – in fact, there is a strong dependency behind these moves by Solomon.²⁸ The Chroniclers, by contrast, portray Tyre as a neighbor of Israel ceding territory – the short note gives the impression that Tyre was in some way dependent on Jerusalem. The Chroniclers' account thus again shows the construction of narrative positions against the *de facto* Phoenician superiority – here again, a narrative is developed in order to invert the real conditions and to minimize the strong asymmetrical dependencies between Israel and Phoenicia.

The information from 1 Kings 9:26–28; 10:11–12 and 2 Chr 8:17–18; 9:10.21 about maritime expeditions by Solomon and Hiram also belong to this context. These scattered notes, more or less casually in their context, introduce a crucial topos of Phoenician culture, namely seafaring, for which the Phoenicians were famous in antiquity. This stands in sharp contrast to everything that is known about Israel's nautical expertise: While the Phoenicians were considered a sea power, seafaring and shipbuilding play only a very minor role in Israel. The accounts of joint expeditions of Solomon and Hiram transform the *de facto* dependency into a narrated togetherness: The Phoenicians are cut off from their exclusive expertise, and Israel, in the figure of Solomon, is ascribed a competence that rewrites Solomon's *de facto* dependency on Phoenicia's maritime trade.

²⁷ For the limits of the literary sources see Paolo Xella, "La Bible," in *La civilisation phénicienne et punique. Manuel de recherche*, ed. Véronique Krings, Handbuch der Orientalistik I/20 (Leiden: Brill, 1995): 67: "On ne peut déterminer avec certitude, d'après notre source, s'il s'agit d'une transaction ou bien d'une question de réglementation de frontières entre les deux États." Cf. also Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*: 621: "[T]he two notices could be seen as complementary, reflecting a territorial exchange between the two rulers [. . .]. However, both the place of this note in the sequence and the Chronicler's general view of the relationship between Solomon and Hiram would indicate that the Chronicler intended to replace rather than complement his source-text."

²⁸ Cf. Knauf, *1 Könige 1–14*: 297: "Salomos Goldsucht hat ihn abhängig gemacht."

A clear picture emerges when we read the various accounts of the relationship between David, Solomon and Hiram side by side. Tyre appears constantly as a political, economic and cultural power. The city provides the newly enthroned David with his first international recognition as a king in the form of Hiram's delegation. Hiram signs an important trade agreement with Solomon. Tyre provides building material and expertise in craftsmanship and art. And Hiram goes with Solomon to the limits of what seemed possible to the authors of the Deuteronomistic and Chronistic texts, namely the navigation from Ezion-Geber. While the Deuteronomistic texts portray the episodes in some detail and increase the splendor of David and Solomon by the splendor of Hiram, there is a noticeable effort by the Chroniclers to cover the Phoenician traces in their account as much as possible and ultimately to admit only what cannot be denied. Behind these differences stand the different intentions of the two Hebrew historiographies.²⁹ While the Deuteronomistic texts present a picture of Tyre that is best understood from the Persian period,³⁰ when under Persian rule the various satrapies and politico-religious communities lived in more or less peaceful coexistence that promoted economic and cultural exchange and mutual understanding, the Chroniclers' rejection of foreign influence rather belongs to the historical situation of Alexander's collapsed empire and the struggles between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids that erupted in Syria and Palestine in the third and second centuries BCE. In this historical context, the people of Jerusalem reflected on the problem of foreign influence on their identity in a new way – and the Chroniclers' historiography testifies to this.

5 Narrating Dependency

Dependencies, even strongly asymmetrical dependencies, can be reflected and addressed in narratives. Phoenician narratives of Israel's dependency on Phoenicia have not been transmitted. It is possible that one would have found in Phoenician historiography a narrative of strong dependency that portrayed, in a manner similar to the travel report of Wenamun, the extent to which the Phoenicians' near and distant neighbors depended on Phoenician resources. Countering such a Phoenician narrative, the Hebrew historiographies create a counter-narrative that modifies and deconstructs the narrative of Phoenician supremacy and predominance.

²⁹ Following Xella, "La Bible": 68, it is necessary "[de] s'interroger sur la mesure dans laquelle les récits bibliques à ce sujet ne sont que la projection partielle (due comme toujours aux rédacteurs) d'une réalité postérieure de quelques siècles."

³⁰ Na'aman, "Hiram of Tyre": 79 suggests that "the 'Acts of Solomon', the main pre-exilic source available to the Deuteronomists, was written at the time of the Sargonids" – which would take us back to the late eighth or early seventh centuries BCE.

It is of particular interest to trace the internal Hebrew development of this counter-narrative, which can be analyzed by comparing the Deuteronomistic and Chronistic depictions: What was acceptable and portrayable for one group becomes for the other group an incentive to turn the circumstances upside down. Strong asymmetrical dependencies obviously intensify and accelerate literary processes and release a narrative dynamic that at the same time reveals the power of narration. It is precisely in historiographic works, which ultimately represent nothing more than a sort of ‘grand récit’,³¹ that the crucial questions of ‘Who are we?’ and ‘Where do we come from?’ are addressed. Because of these identity-defining processes, the analysis and deconstruction of such narratives is necessary in order to uncover the core of what might have been – even if this ‘What has been’ exists only in the form of the narrated text and thus always in the form of an interpretation.³² There is no historiography without interpretation – and there is no ongoing interpretation without retracing the narrative structure of what is told in the transmitted texts.³³

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³¹ Cf. Jean-François Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne. Rapport sur le savoir* (Paris: Les éditions de minuit, 1979): 7–9, 54–62.

³² Cf. Edward Lipiński, “Hiram of Tyre and Solomon,” in *The Book of Kings: Sources, Composition, Historiography and Reception*, ed. André Lemaire and Baruch Halpern, Vetus Testamentum, Supplements 129 (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 272: “[T]he biblical accounts of the relationship between Hiram of Tyre and Solomon result from a reinterpretation of older sources.”

³³ On the methodological debate, with special reference to Hebrew Bible texts, cf. Barbara Schmitz, *Prophetie und Königtum: Eine narratologisch-historische Methodologie entwickelt an den Königsbüchern*, Forschungen zum Alten Testament 60 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008): 5–108, and Uta Schmidt, “Narratologie und Altes Testament,” *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 143 (2018): 423–38.

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Hermut Löhr

Transforming Exodus – Second Temple Liberation Narratives from the Perspective of Historical Narratology

1 Introduction: ‘Exodus’ as Plot, Story, and Narrative from the Perspective of Historical Narratology

‘Next year in Jerusalem!’ This almost proverbial phrase was originally used in traditional Jewish celebrations of both Yom Kippur and Pesach (‘Passover’) evening. It expresses the hope for the gathering or restoration of the scattered people of Israel in Jerusalem, which is understood as the center of Jewish life and belief, and as the home of the unique temple for the one and only true God.

Within the family celebration of the Pesach, this expectation of political and cultic – and thus salvific – restoration (which is also of utmost importance for Yom Kippur) is linked to the remembrance of the original Passover night, as it is told for the first time in the Torah, Exod 12; and the explicit aim of the annual ceremony is to preserve and hand on the memory of these fundamental events from generation to generation. The same hopeful attitude is expressed more broadly at the beginning of the ‘Magid’ (i.e., ‘narration’) section of the traditional medieval¹ Pesach Haggadah, the sequence of texts which is recited during the celebration. In explaining the significance of the unleavened bread offered at Pesach, the leader of the festive assembly pronounces:

This is the bread of destitution that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Anyone who is famished should come and eat, anyone who is in need should come and partake of the Pesach sacrifice. Now we are here, next year we will be in the land of Israel; this year we are slaves [aram. *avdei*], next year we will be free people.²

The repeated reference to Jerusalem and the Temple, during and towards the end of the celebration,³ makes explicit an element of the Exodus narrative which is *not* mentioned in the original story (or stories) in the biblical book of Exodus (hebr.: *shemot/*

¹ On the medieval origin of the Pesach Haggadah (in its different versions) see Clemens Leonhard, *The Jewish Pesach and the Origins of the Christian Easter: Open Questions in Current Research*, Studia Judaica 35 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006): 73–118.

² S. Michael Shire et al., ed., *Die Pessach Haggada* (Berlin: Hentrich&Hentrich, 2013): 13. The English translation of the traditional Aramaic text is taken from https://www.sefaria.org/Pesach_Haggadah%2C_Magid%2C_Ha_Lachma_Anya?lang=bi [accessed 28.08.2021].

³ Other explicit references to the city and the Temple in the Haggadah can be found in the *dayenu* (Shire, *Die Pessach Haggada*: 28–29), the section on the *pesach* sacrifice (Shire, *Die Pessach Haggada*: 31), the quotation of Deut 6:23 (Shire, *Die Pessach Haggada*: 36), in the first part of the *hallel* (Shire, *Die*

שמות= ‘names’), but which may very well linger in the conceptual background and the perspective of the text(s). So, with the line ‘next year in Jerusalem’, quoted or sung at the end of the Pesach celebration, the assembled evoke and even embody⁴ both the diaspora existence lived by the majority of the Jewish nation throughout history, including the present day, and that of the Exodus from Egypt as the foundation myth of the ‘Hebrews’, the people of Israel who, guided by Moses, left an existence of oppression and servitude for the hope of a better future. The familiarity of this line and its ritual context are enough to evoke the story, or the plot, or the narrative, of Exodus, far beyond the annual celebration.

The following reflections and observations seek to contribute to a clearer view of the importance of a very prominent biblical story for the discourse on (both collective and individual) dependency, liberation and freedom in Mediterranean antiquity and beyond, a discourse which includes as essential the ideas of divine agency, revelation, guidance and election in human history, and which has reverberated until the present day. After some comments on terminology and the approach of historical narratology and its impact on textual analysis, I will turn to observations of some literary features specific to Jewish literature in antiquity. Then two prominent examples of the reception of the biblical Exodus account from different periods of Judaism in antiquity will come into focus: Artapanus’ *Peri Ioudaiôn* (“On the Jews”), which is only preserved in fragments, and Philo’s *Vita Mosis* (“Life of Moses”). In a third paragraph, the importance of the notions of freedom and liberation for Philo’s interpretation and their theological implications and explications will be depicted in more detail.

I start with a short remark on terminology: While the distinction between ‘plot’ and ‘story’ is common in narration studies, the (rather disputed) term ‘narrative’ (and its German equivalent ‘Narrativ’), which, I believe, has its original context and use not in literary but in social studies and philosophy, is less narrowly circumscribed in various disciplines of the humanities, and by the wider educated public. In this article I understand ‘narrative’ as a fixed narrative pattern which is used by different authors or narrators in order to present, to explain, and/or to justify a specific perspective on a historical, cultural or societal situation or development, and which is accepted, recognized, and evoked within a larger group or society of a given period.

As these short remarks on the Pesach Haggadah may already suggest, the question discussed in scholarship⁵ of whether the Exodus story is a charter myth or a story of liberation should be answered, all literary and historical differentiation put

Pessach Haggada: 37), the words on the second cup (Shire, *Die Pessach Haggada*: 38) and on the matza with bitter herbs (Shire, *Die Pessach Haggada*: 39), the *birkat ha-mazon* (Shire, *Die Pessach Haggada*: 40–43) and the concluding prayer (Shire, *Die Pessach Haggada*: 52).

⁴ This aspect is especially stressed by Jan Assmann, *Exodus: Die Revolution der Alten Welt*, 3rd ed. (Munich: Beck, 2015): 208–10.

⁵ See for example Rainer Albertz, “Exodus: Liberation History against Christian Myth,” in *Religious Identity and the Invention of Tradition, Papers Read at a Noster Conference in Soesterberg, January 4–6,*

aside, by – ‘both’. This answer does, of course, not do justice to the individual texts and their references to the Exodus. And in fact, the rich corpus of texts narrating, repeating or referring to the Exodus story in antiquity and beyond, predominantly Jewish and Christian, but also Greek, Roman, and Egyptian, is indicative of the fact that the story, or the plot, of the Exodus could and can be used within different genres and literary contexts, and for very different purposes. This affects, of course, also its various representations. Exodus stories occur in many different shapes and forms, and the same is true for their respective plots. This insight provokes another question: can we still treat the Exodus as the same *narrative* in antiquity and beyond, or can a single plot or story produce different narratives?

Let me add here another remark about method: in literary studies in general, which include the interpretation (‘exegesis’) of biblical and related texts, the method of narrative analysis is firmly established as one of the most important tools of synchronic textual analysis.⁶ It can be understood as a specific means of semiotic, or, more specifically, semantic textual analysis. As such, it can be applied not only to apparently narrative texts, but also to other genres (e.g. epistolary or poetic literature). However, to the best of my knowledge the designation of ‘historical narratology’ has not yet made its way into popular textbooks on exegetical methods.

There are various possible reasons for this lack: The distinction between narratology in general on the one hand, which has favoured the structural and synchronic approach to textual analysis (without being bound exclusively to this perspective), and historical narratology on the other is of comparatively recent origin.⁷ Secondly, it appears that historical narratology, as opposed to narratological analyses more generally, has not yet generated a distinct tool set of questions and methods (and one may very well wonder whether this is a realistic or even desirable option for the future). Thirdly, ‘historical narratology’ is to my understanding a rather broad term, which can comprise different, although adjacent and overlapping, interests and approaches.

Perhaps the most general understanding is that historical narratology is interested in texts (and their narrative making) of distinct (and distant) epochs (and cultures – so

1999, ed. Jan Willem van Henten and Anton Houtepen (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2001): 128–48; Karel van der Toorn, “The Exodus as Charter Myth,” in *Religious Identity and the Invention of Tradition, Papers Read at a Noster Conference in Soesterberg, January 4–6, 1999*, ed. Jan Willem van Henten and Anton Houtepen, *Studies in Theology and Religion* 3 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2001): 113–27.

⁶ See Martin Ebner and Bernhard Heinger, *Exegese des Neuen Testaments: Ein Arbeitsbuch für Lehre und Praxis*, 3rd ed. (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2015): 80–91; Wilhelm Egger and Peter Wick, *Methodenlehre zum Neuen Testament: Biblische Texte selbständig auslegen*, 6th ed. (Freiburg: Herder, 2011): 174–91; Sönke Finnern and Jan Rüggeheimer, *Methoden der neutestamentlichen Exegese: Ein Lehr- und Arbeitsbuch* (Tübingen: Francke, 2016): 173–94.

⁷ Martina King, “Historische Narratologie: Ein Weg zur Kontextualisierung von Textstrukturen,” *KulturPoetik* 29 (2019): 319–40, esp. 324–25. Relevant literature is also mentioned in the introduction in Eva von Contzen and Stefan Tilg, eds., *Handbuch Historische Narratologie* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2019): x.

historical narratology has to be complemented by, or even implies, culture-bound narratology), and/or in how they develop over time. Two different tasks can be derived from this: a) describing and critiquing different texts or theories of a given time or epoch in terms of their narrative dimension; b) delineating the development of different elements and characteristics of narration in literary history. It can also take up different constituent elements of narration, such as author, narrator, perspective, time, etc., and ask how they are treated in contemporary reflection, e.g. in handbooks of style or rhetoric, or in textbooks for educational purpose (the so-called *progymnas-mata*). In this perspective, the interests and aims of historical narratology meet those of rhetorical criticism, which is already a firmly established part of exegesis.

Going a step further, historical narratology can also take an interest in how narration, narrative genres and methods are made explicit in different texts, epochs, and cultures, in order to construct a history of narrative theory.⁸

Beyond these strictly text-based approaches, historical narratology can also take up the more traditional interests in texts in their respective settings, and ask about their explicit, implied or possible meaning(s) in a given societal, discursive, and historical context. From this we have learned that speculations about author and addressees, or about the historical context in which a text is to be situated, have no value if they are not closely linked to the analysis of the semantics etc. of the text itself. Or putting it differently and with specific regard to antiquity: it is a long and arduous journey from texts that are our main empirical data of the past to the reconstruction of historical agents, personalities, communities, or societies. Nevertheless, as we will see below, interest in the historical setting of texts has enormously advanced the interpretation and evaluation of these texts, and not only for the reconstruction of the historical world from which they emerged.

As a matter of fact, scholars have applied historical narratology *avant la lettre* to texts from antiquity, in detailed and comparative analyses of rhetorical and narrative techniques, of genre(s), performance, and publication. This is also true for Jewish texts in the Bible and beyond, although it must be said that in more general handbooks on narratology, the Jewish contribution to literary history (the impact of which cannot be overestimated, to my mind) is, as far as I can see, mostly relegated to the margins, or even virtually absent. This may have to do with the specialization of biblical exegesis, but also with the fact that its primary object of research, the biblical ‘canon’ broadly speaking, is a domain of its own which is rarely regarded as an integral part of a more general literary canon of cultural importance, scholarly interest and research.

And a further – and possibly the most important – reason for this lacuna may be that the history of Jewish literature in antiquity has been viewed primarily under the aspects of tradition, reception, impact, variation, *relecture*, rewriting, exegetical tech-

⁸ This aspect is discussed by Thomas A. Schmitz, “Theorien und Praktiken – Antike/Theories and Practices – Antiquity,” in *Handbuch Historische Narratologie*, ed. Eva von Contzen and Stefan Tilg (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2019): 3–10.

niques, etc. of biblical texts and traditions, in other words: primarily in the categories of intertextuality. In view of the corpus, this approach is certainly appropriate and has been richly fruitful. But it may not be enough: most, but not all, ancient Jewish stories are already in the Bible (which begs the further question, which can, however, not be discussed here, which Bible exactly is meant); and in any case the literary design and the meaning of the texts cannot be fully established by intertextuality alone. Analyzing intertextual relations and examining the literary design of the individual texts are not mutually exclusive.

While it is not possible to identify features that strictly separate Jewish literature from all other ancient literatures, there are literary phenomena which are prominent or even prevailing in the Jewish corpus, and for which we have to be prepared when we approach the texts with the tools of narrative analysis. I will discuss four which seem the most important to me:

- a) In Second Temple Jewish literature, a widely attested phenomenon is pseudepigraphy (which I understand as a sub-category of pseudonymity). Pseudepigrapha are explicitly not attributed to living or recently deceased authors, but to mythical or historical figures from the distant past who are attested in the biblical tradition. I will mention here only Enoch, a primordial figure and the eponym of an entire corpus of Second Temple Jewish literature; Abraham, the Patriarch, Jacob and his twelve sons, Moses, Daniel, and David. Pseudepigraphy is not only a means of giving authority to a text; it also has a great impact on the literary design of the texts in question, their narrative perspective, and consequently their reception, interpretation and understanding. We also need to be aware of the phenomenon of pseudepigraphy if we want to reflect on the relationship between authors and narrators in a nuanced way.
- b) In my view, Jewish literature of this epoch repeatedly blurs the boundaries between myth and history, fact and fiction, historiography and literary narration. While the narratological approach to historiography – which was not initiated, but made prominent especially by Hayden White⁹ – has helped us considerably to understand the narrative (and fictional) character of historiography, this should not distract us from the task of analyzing in detail the specific perspective adopted by the texts under scrutiny. Jewish literature has made important contributions to different narrative genres, among them both the romance and the historical account, and the treatment of the distant past (e.g. traditions from the time

⁹ Hayden White, *Metahistory. Die historische Einbildungskraft im 19. Jahrhundert in Europa*, trans. Peter Kohlhaas, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2008 [engl. original 1973]). For a helpful overview on the discussion see Axel Rüdth, “Narrativität in der wissenschaftlichen Geschichtsschreibung,” in *Narrativität als Begriff: Analysen und Anwendungsbeispiele zwischen philologischer und anthropologischer Orientierung*, ed. Matthias Aumüller, *Narratologia: Contributions to Narrative Theory* 31 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012): 21–46.

- of the patriarchs) can be both historical (transforming mythical time into historical time) and a-historical (e.g. by means of typology or allegory).
- c) The biblical texts and the literary works referring to and inspired by them repeatedly feature figures who are not so much persons with specific and individual traits, thoughts, and experiences, etc., but characters in the narration which can be understood as embodiments of a collective, and which enable group identification. This is very obvious with regard to Jacob = Israel: or to Abraham, ‘the wandering Aramean’ (Deut 26:5), but has to be reckoned also with regard to other names. This is not to deny that figures from biblical or related narratives are also endowed with individual features, but these are not the texts’ primary interest. In this perspective, the allegorizing and idealizing biographies of Abraham, Joseph, or Moses in the work of Philo of Alexandria may fundamentally be more in line with their precursors than one might initially think.
- d) From the third century CE onwards, Jewish tradition begins to differentiate between *Halakhah* (from the Hebrew verb *halach* = “to walk”, “to go”) and *Haggadah* (from the Hebrew *nagad* = “to tell”, “to narrate”), i.e., between legal texts (or the legal interpretation of texts), and narrative texts and traditions.¹⁰ And, whereas this distinction in terms of category is not made explicit in texts from Second Temple Judaism, it has nevertheless been successfully applied to them in critical analysis. While in the history of Jewish literature in antiquity there are clearly distinct examples of both halakhic and haggadic texts or meta-texts (esp. translations and commentaries), this does not apply to the majority of the corpus. So we do come across halakhic and haggadic portions and parts in texts (the most prominent example being, of course, the five books of the Torah); and texts are open to or even invite both halakhic and haggadic readings or interpretations. With regard to narrative texts, this means that they may have been intended for either a halakhic or a haggadic purpose, or for both at the same time.

2 Artapanus’ *Perí Ioudaíôn* and Philo’s *Vita Mosis* as Exodus Stories and as Second Temple Narratives

For a closer look at Second Temple Exodus stories, I choose from the rich corpus of relevant literature two narrative Jewish texts of different making and literary charac-

¹⁰ G. Stemberger, “Haggadah in Rabbinic Literature,” in *Haggadah in Early Judaism and the New Testament*, ed. Roger David Aus, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 467 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021): 7–26; on p. 25, Stemberger concludes: “The dichotomy of halakhah and aggadah is clearly a gaonic development.”

ter, from different epochs, but originating in roughly the same cultural milieu, i.e. the Egyptian or Alexandrian Jewish diaspora.

In the ninth book of his apologetic *Praeparatio Evangelica*,¹¹ Eusebius of Caesarea (260/64–339/340 CE) preserves three fragments of a work called ‘On the Jews’ (*Peri Ioudaiōn/Περὶ Ἰουδαίων*)¹² and attributed to a certain Artapanus,¹³ a (most probably)¹⁴ Jewish author otherwise known only from quotations preserved in the works of Clement of Alexandria.¹⁵ The fragments deal with Abraham, Joseph, and Moses, and their respective exploits in Egypt. Eusebius’ direct source is not Artapanus’ work itself, but excerpts contained in a compilation made by a certain Alexander Polyhistor, a Greek historian who flourished in the first century BCE.

These specific circumstances of transmission are not only of historical interest, they also pose a specific challenge to narrative analysis. And while the history of transmission provides a *terminus ante quem* for the work of Artapanus, the exact date of its composition is not easy to determine. Scholars have suggested dates between the third century and the years around 100 BCE.

While the fragments show a certain familiarity with the biblical stories in the books of Genesis and Exodus (most probably in the Greek version, the Septuagint), and while direct quotations from the Bible are part of the narrative, the accounts go far beyond their biblical precursors. Other literary influences are discernible, arguably including non-Jewish ones (esp. Diodorus Siculus, who composed a universal history in the first century BCE), and the precise character of how Artapanus employed his sources (imitation, subversion, travesty?) is much argued about by scholars.¹⁶ On

11 See Jörg Ulrich, “Eusebius von Cäsarea,” *Lexikon der antiken christlichen Literatur*, 2nd ed. (Freiburg: Herder, 1999): 210.

12 Artap. 2 (Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9:23):1, 3 (27):1, and more condensed Artap. 1 (Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9:18): 1.

13 It is not certain whether this name (probably of Persian origin, see Carl R. Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors*, vol. 1, *Historians*, Text and Translations Pseudepigrapha Series 10/20 [Chico, CA: Society of Biblical Literature, 1983]: 189) is a pseudonym or not.

14 For a discussion on the issue see Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors*: 189, with notes; Howard Jacobson, “Artapanus Judaeus,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 57 (2006): 210–21; John J. Collins, “Artapanus Revisited,” in *From Judaism to Christianity: Tradition and Transition. A Festschrift for Thomas H. Tobin, S.J., on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Patricia Walters, *Novum Testamentum, Supplements* 136 (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 59–62.

15 Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1,23,154,2–3.

16 Erich S. Gruen above all argued that Artapanus should be read as humorous, see his *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998): 158; and Erich S. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews among Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002): 201–12; 331–34. For a critique see Gideon Bohak, “Recent Trends in the Study of Greco-Roman Jews,” *The Classical Journal* 99 (2003): 195–202. I owe these indications to Holger M. Zellentin, “The End of Jewish Egypt: Artapanus and the Second Exodus,” in *Antiquity in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Pasts in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Gregg Gardner and Kevin L. Osterloh, *Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum* 123 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008): 31 n. 15.

the other hand, the work of Artapanus may have been used by later Jewish writers, of whom the Jewish-Roman historiographer Flavius Josephus is the most plausible and most prominent example. It has also been argued that Artapanus may have influenced the later development of non-Jewish Hellenistic romance, but this is far from certain. While Artapanus' historical context is generally assumed to have been Ptolemaic Egypt, a specifically Alexandrian origin is far less probable.¹⁷

The third fragment, which is about Moses in Egypt, is the longest extant one.¹⁸ Moses is introduced as a Jewish child adopted by an Egyptian princess. Grown up, he develops into an inventor of practical tools for building and water supply, a philosopher, an administrator and the founder of a city (Hermopolis), who is also involved in the reformation of Egyptian religion, and a successful military leader. The account identifies Moses with Musaeus, who according to Artapanus was the teacher of Orpheus, and, in the eyes of the Egyptian priests,¹⁹ with the god Hermes/Thoth. Political plots against Moses turn him away from supporting Pharaoh and make him the leader of the Jewish people. A comparably extensive account is given of the miracles and plagues that Moses works in order to convince Pharaoh to release the Jewish people, which he finally does. The tale ends with the crossing of the Red Sea, followed by a summary of the people's forty years in the wilderness, and a short description of Moses' outer appearance and age. Surprisingly, the extant passage does not mention the Passover night, and so it does not give an aetiology for the celebration.

The epitomizing character of the passages in Eusebius is evident, and so we cannot be sure how exactly the original Artapanus presented Moses and the Exodus event. However, the surviving fragments allow us to conclude that Artapanus was very interested in presenting Moses as a developer of crafts, culture, politics, philosophy, and even religion in Egypt, and also, in one specific situation, as a superior magician. The aetiological and even more so the apologetic (and in some instances polemical) tendency and intention of the work are palpable. Apart from circumcision, which the Ethiopians learned from Moses (Artap. 3 [27]:10), there is no reference whatsoever to one of the most important features of Moses in Jewish tradition, that of law giver or mediator of divine law. The Jewish people are mentioned, but no detailed account is given of their situation in Egypt.²⁰ The ultimate aim of the Exodus – to rescue the Jews and to bring them back to their ancient homeland – is mentioned in one phrase only (Artap. 3 [Eusebius, *Praep. ev.*

17 Rob Kugler, "Hearing the Story of Moses in Ptolemaic Egypt: Artapanus Accommodates the Tradition," in *The Wisdom of Egypt: Jewish, Early Christian, and Gnostic Essays in Honour of Gerard P. Luttikhuisen*, ed. Anthony Hillhorst and Geurt Henk van Kooten, *Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* 59 (Leiden: Brill, 2005): 69 n. 4 and *passim*.

18 Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9:27:1–37.

19 Artapanus himself meticulously avoids depicting Moses as a godlike figure.

20 But see Artap. 3 (Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9:27): 20, on the specific garments of the Jews. Cerfaux had seen this as an allusion to measures taken by Ptolemy IV Philopator against the Jews. Lucien Cerfaux, "L'influence des mystères sur le Judaïsme Alexandrin avant Philon," in *Recueil L. Cerfaux. Études d'égypte et d'histoire religieuse de Monseigneur Cerfaux, réunies à l'occasion de son soixante-dixième anni-*

9:27]:21). No importance seems to be attached to the hardships of life in a foreign country, forced labour, religious or political oppression, or the hope for liberation and redemption in the land of Israel, and the restitution of its capital and its cult.

All this might very well be a distortion of the original work, produced by the history of tradition.²¹ But it is also possible to explain this very specific presentation of the Exodus with reference to the historical and societal context in which the text can be situated. It is evident that Artapanus' work focused on the importance the forefathers of Jewish tradition had for the history and culture of *Egypt*. And this is not only true with regard to Moses: Abraham taught astrology to Pharaoh before returning to Syria. Joseph was a successful administrator, a ruler and 'master of Egypt' (*tēs Aigyp-tou despótēn/τῆς Αἰγύπτου δεσπότην*).

Holger Zellentin, in a 2008 article which combines historical considerations with synchronic textual analysis, argued that the fragments of Artapanus should be understood in terms of a Greco-Jewish reaction against the pro-Egyptian turn in politics during the reign of Ptolemy VIII (nicknamed 'Physcon'), especially an amnesty decree issued by that monarch in 118 BCE, in support of local farmers, priests, and the Apis cult. Artapanus' text has, in this view, a clearly defined intended readership (the Jewish military élite of the Egyptian army), and the advice it gives to them by means of the story of the past is to leave Egypt in a second Exodus for 'Syria' (which is only mentioned once in the fragments, as the homeland of Abraham).²² While I am not sure whether the text in fact gives this advice to his readers, Zellentin's article convincingly demonstrates that in Artapanus' work the stories of the patriarchs in general and the Moses-and-Exodus story specifically are transformed into a (quite entertaining) tale which reflects domestic Egyptian politics at the end of the second or the beginning of the first century BCE.²³ This is especially true for the tensions and struggles between the indigenous Egyptian population and its interests on the one hand, and an originally foreign Greek élite – which at that time included parts of the Jewish population – on the other. In sum, if we wish to address Artapanus' version of the Exodus story as a narrative, it would be not one of national liberation and gathering into the homeland, Israel, but one of the cultural superiority of the Jewish population in Egypt.

While this interpretation convincingly suggests a precise historical context for Artapanus' work,²⁴ a further aspect must be mentioned here: as has been recognized

versaire, vol. 1, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 6 (Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1954 [originally published in 1924]): 81–85.

²¹ Zellentin, "The End of Jewish Egypt": 30–31 argues against the assumption that Eusebius *intentionally* distorted his source.

²² Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9:18:1.

²³ For a short discussion of Zellentin's thesis, see Collins, "Artapanus Revisited": 62–64.

²⁴ A broader and different sketch of the historical context is proposed by Kugler, "Hearing the Story of Moses in Ptolemaic Egypt".

many times,²⁵ the text may not only interact with its biblical predecessor, but also with non-Jewish works (some of Egyptian or Alexandrian origin) which refer to Moses and the Exodus. In fact, tradition has preserved a considerable number of texts or fragments, beginning with the (rather pro-Jewish) *Aigyptiaka* by Hekataios of Abdera (ca. 300 BCE), via Manetho (an Egyptian author and priest in Heliopolis allegedly flourishing in the third century BCE) and others, and cumulating in Tacitus' notorious and influential excursus on the Jews in *hist.* 5:3–5.²⁶ Whether some or all of these learnt about the Exodus from Jewish sources and traditions, or whether we should (also) assume non-Jewish Egyptian narrative traditions of the Exodus, as Felix Jacoby²⁷ and others²⁸ suggest, is an open question. Let it suffice here to stress that Artapanus' work may also react to other Exodus stories told and read in contemporary Egypt. Whether these reactions should be described in terms of intertextual relations or, more broadly, as elements of a narrative web around Exodus, is a matter of definition. Such reactions have to be accounted for in detail. With regard to Artapanus, one may very well ask whether the statement that Moses introduced the veneration of cats and dogs and ibises as gods of the different districts (Artap. 3 [Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9:27]:4) may not be a (slightly polemical, I think) echo of a passage in Manetho's *Aigyptiaka* preserved in Flavius Josephus' *Contra Apionem* 1:239.²⁹ And when the text stresses that the Jews took with them goods acquired³⁰ from the Egyptians (Artap. 3 [Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9:27]:34–35), it may not only be an allusion to the (ambiguous) notice in Exod 12:35–36, but also a reaction to allegations of robbery and plunder voiced e.g. in Manetho's work (Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1:249)³¹ or in Lysimachos' (second or first century BCE?) *Aigyptiaka* – again preserved by Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1:309³² – and which made its way also into the *Historiae Philippicae* by Pompeius Trogus (first century BCE).³³

²⁵ Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors*: 190 with n. 10.

²⁶ An instructive survey is given by Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997): 15–33.

²⁷ Felix Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker (F Gr Hist). Dritter Teil: Geschichte von Staedten und Voelkern (Horographie und Ethnographie). a. Kommentar zu Nr. 262–296* (Leiden: Brill, 1954): 50.

²⁸ Schäfer, *Judeophobia*: 17 with notes; on Manetho see Erich S. Gruen, "The Use and Abuse of the Exodus Story," *Jewish History* 12 (1998): 105–6.

²⁹ Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, vol. 1, *From Herodotus to Plutarch* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974): 79, English translation: 82.

³⁰ The text here uses the verb *chráomai/χράομαι*; see further Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors*: 242 n. 113.

³¹ Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*: 78–83.

³² Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*: 383–84.

³³ Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*: 334–37. For the reception of the motif in Christian literature (Origen, Augustine) in antiquity see Joel S. Allen, "The Despoliation of Egypt: Origen and Augustine – From Stolen Treasures to Saved Texts," in *Israel's Exodus in Transdisciplinary*

However, a caveat should be added here: as (amongst others) Erich Gruen has argued,³⁴ it is not always easy to reconstruct individual non-Jewish texts such as Manetho's, which have only been preserved (and possibly redacted) by Jewish or Christian writers. This means that also the reconstruction of intertextual networks must be partly hypothetical. Secondly, again following Gruen, not all of the extant non-Jewish texts on the Exodus are in fact hostile to Jewish culture or outright anti-Semitic, as a more thorough discussion of them would show in detail. This means that not all of these texts can be called subversive or polemical counter-narrations to the biblical Exodus tradition. Direct knowledge of the biblical tradition (in the Greek translation, the Septuagint) is not always guaranteed, and in the case of Manetho may be considered improbable for simple chronological reasons.

Philo's *Life of Moses*, composed in Alexandria sometime in the first decades of the first century CE, can be classified as a biography, which can be compared to other, non-Jewish, specimens of the genre in late Republican and early Imperial literature.³⁵ The text, which has probably been preserved in its entirety, is composed of two books (= scrolls) of different character. The first book, although containing illustrative anecdotes, generally follows the chronological order from Moses' birth in Egypt to the eve of the conquest of the promised land forty years after the Exodus and can be understood as a political biography. The second book, however, abandons this sequence of events in order to depict further aspects of Moses' life and work in a more thematic structure.

While the text is not presented as a commentary on the biblical story,³⁶ and while additions to the biblical material abound, it is clearly based on the Moses story as told in four books of the Torah. Fused with the narration of events are philosophical and theological remarks and reflections, which are meant to explain the (sometimes hidden) sense of the story. Consequently, one cannot say that purely biographical or historical interests dominate the account. In fact, the narrator makes explicit the *ratio* of his account: he wishes to expose the qualities of Moses as ruler and king, but also as

Perspective: Text, Archaeology, Culture, and Geoscience, ed. Thomas E. Levy (Basel: Springer, 2015): 347–56.

34 Gruen, "The Use and Abuse of the Exodus Story": 93–122.

35 Philo himself classifies his work as a *bios/biōs*, a life or biography, see *Mos.* 1:1. See also Peder Borgen, "Philo of Alexandria," in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*, ed. Michael Edward Stone, *Compendium Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum* 2/2 (Assen/Philadelphia: Van Gorcum/Fortress Press, 1984): 235 n. 12.

36 It is a matter of scholarly discussion whether the *Vita Mosis* is a part of Philo's *expositio legis*, an exoteric explanation of Mosaic Law for a wider audience; see Maren Ruth Niehoff, *Philo of Alexandria: An Intellectual Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018): 110–11; Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. – A.D. 135)*, ed. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar and Martin Goodman, vol. 3, 2 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1987): 854–55. Borgen, "Philo of Alexandria": 233–36, does not commit himself.

lawgiver, high priest, and prophet.³⁷ While Philo does refer, in this context, to Plato's famous statement about philosophers and kings,³⁸ and while later, in book 2, the king (and thus, Moses) is designated as the 'living law',³⁹ the four functions mentioned can be interpreted at the same time as quite an adequate summary of the importance of the figure of Moses in the biblical tradition. These dimensions of his work make him an ideal figure from the past, and thus also a philosophical lesson for the present – but not an individual personality. While we cannot be certain that Philo directly reacted to Jewish messianic expectations of his time that were associated with the functions of king, priest, and prophet,⁴⁰ this parallel should not go unnoticed: those expectations and concepts can be interpreted as a parallel, albeit different, expression of ideals of religious and political rulership in Jewish thought of the period. The specific importance Philo gives to the aspect of lawgiving, i.e. the mediation of divine law, both in his *Vita Mosi* as well as in other works, can be situated in the cultural and political context of the time: the Jewish nation, it appears, was the only one based, both in the Land of Israel and its diaspora settlements, on an extensive, ancient, and universally acknowledged law book which could be traced back, either directly or indirectly, to God. At the same time, the treatise is eager to present Moses as a human being (an ideal, and so morally relevant, role model), but not as a godlike figure.⁴¹

As in the case of Artapanus' *Judaica*, an interpretation of the *Vita Mosi* within its historical and local context may add to our understanding. As it is not possible to ascertain the exact date of composition, and as there are no clear indications within the text, we cannot be sure whether the text already reflects the events of 38 CE in Alexandria, namely an attack by the Egyptian population against the Jews in the city, supported and fuelled by the Roman prefect Aulus Avilius Flaccus; and the subsequent embassy of the Jews to the Roman emperor Gaius Caligula, in 39/49 CE.⁴²

A long passage in book 1 is devoted to the fortune of the Jews in Egypt, describing their situation and equating it with that of slaves, prisoners of war, or children of a household sold to strangers,⁴³ while their original status in Egypt had been that of free persons, guests, suppliants, and settlers.⁴⁴ This cumulative description is open to

37 Philo, *Mos.* 2:2.

38 Plato, *Resp.* 473d.

39 Philo, *Mos.* 2:4.

40 1Macc 14:41.

41 This is made explicit in *Mos.* 2:6. The same is true for the allegorical interpretation of Moses in *confus.* 106. For a comprehensive discussion of the image of Moses in *Mos.* and other Philonic writings, see Louis Harry Feldman, *Philo's Portrayal of Moses in the Context of Ancient Judaism, Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity* 15 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008).

42 For a summary of the events see Andrew Harker, "The Jews in Roman Egypt. Trials and Rebellions," in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, ed. Christina Riggs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 279–84.

43 See below, p. 59.

44 Philo, *Mos.* 1:34–39.

a variety of understandings and experiences of bondage, suppression, and dependency. It focuses on the collective and political experience. While the treatise is not free of allegorical interpretations, it is not primarily interested in the individual's morality or psychology.

The account also includes the events of the Passover night. Closer comparison with the biblical text shows that Philo gives a somewhat abridged version. In *Mos.* 2:224–232, the link is made between the second Pesach in the wilderness (according to Num 9:6–14) and the way Philo's own contemporaries celebrated Pesach, the main importance being that, according to the law, 'the whole nation acts as priests'.⁴⁵ But we cannot say that the account of the Passover is reduced to that of a ritual aetiology.

3 Freedom and Liberation in Philo's *Vita Mosis*

The comprehensive character of the account implies a glimpse of the promised land, especially at 1:319, where it is mentioned as the place of settlement and as fertile ground for agriculture. Nevertheless, Moses' story as a whole is not focused on this aspect of the Exodus; in this way it resembles the Artapanus fragments. While Judea is referred to by name once, in the rendering of the Septuagint legend, *Mos.* 2:32 makes no mention of Jerusalem or the Temple.⁴⁶ Syria is referred to three times,⁴⁷ as the destination of the Exodus of the Hebrews,⁴⁸ but also as the region where the remnants of primordial events can still be seen.⁴⁹

I already mentioned the passage which describes the situation of the Hebrews in Egypt. *Mos.* 1:36 says:

The men, therefore, who had left their homes and come into Egypt, as if they were to dwell in that land as in a second country in perfect security, the king of the country reduced to slavery, and, as if he had taken them prisoners by the laws of war, or had bought them from masters in whose house they had been bred, he oppressed them and treated them as slaves, though they were not only free men, but also strangers, and suppliants, and sojourners, having no respect for nor any awe of God, who presides over the rights of free men, and of strangers, and of suppliants, and of hospitality, and who beholds all such actions as his.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ For the importance and interpretation of the Passover in Philo's thought see Jutta Leonhardt, *Jewish Worship in Philo of Alexandria*, Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 84 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001): 29–36.

⁴⁶ In fact, 2:31 speaks of the high priest and king of Judea.

⁴⁷ 1:163 refers to Coele Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine.

⁴⁸ 1:237; 2:246.

⁴⁹ 2:56, probably referring to Gen 19.

⁵⁰ The English translation has been taken from the Loeb edition, translated by Francis Henry Colson, p. 295.

In this way, the passage describes a change in the status of the Hebrews in Egypt. By the initiative of the ‘leader of the country’,⁵¹ their existence became that of slaves sold to other masters, prisoners of war, or slaves more generally.⁵² This was, in the narrator’s view, not only against God-given and common standards for strangers, guests, and sojourners, but also against their freedom. With the noun *eleuthería/ἐλευθερία* and the adjective *eleuthérios/ἐλευθέριος* applied here, and here alone in Philo’s works, to God, the text takes up a terminology which is rarely used in the Septuagint⁵³ or other Jewish literature of the time, with the exception of Flavius Josephus, in whose work ‘freedom’ becomes a central political term.⁵⁴

In fact, *eleuthería/ἐλευθερία*, which should be translated according to the specific context as ‘freedom’ or ‘liberation’, plays a significant role for the presentation of the Moses story.

Moses, it says in 1:71, was addressed by God, who urged him to ‘take charge of the people’, ‘not only as an author of its freedom, but also as a leader of its emigration.’ On their return to Egypt, Moses and his brother (Aaron) laid out to the ‘elders of the people’ (*tous dêmogérontas/τοὺς δημογέροντας*) that God had promised freedom (or liberation) and departure to a better country for the people. The situation in Egypt is labelled as ‘deprivation of freedom’ (*stérêsis eleutherías/στέρησις ἐλευθερίας*) in 1:141, and the objects taken from the Egyptians by the Hebrews on their flight from the country are interpreted as a modest compensation for their time in slavery. On their flight, and in a situation of military menace and crisis, the people accuse their leader – the narration here employs direct speech – of having lured the masses with the hope for freedom, and they ask him bitterly: ‘Is not any slavery a lighter evil than death?’ And the same idea, again expressed in direct speech by the people, is repeated in 1:193, during a famine in the wilderness. From these instances⁵⁵ it becomes clear that freedom and liberation are related to the situation of the entire nation. But a link is also made to a more individual understanding of freedom: while the existence of the Hebrews in Egypt is interpreted, as we saw, in the terminology of imprisonment and slavery, the importance of the Sabbath day is laid out in the following remarkable passage:

For what man is there who does not honour that sacred seventh day, granting in consequence a relief and relaxation from labour, for himself and for all those who are near to him, and that not to free men only, but also to slaves, and even to beasts of burden; for the holiday extends even to

⁵¹ The Greek phrase used here is ὁ τῆς χώρας ἡγεμῶν, not βασιλεύς (as in many other instances in *Mos.*, cf. also βασιλεύς τῆς χώρας in 1:73, and ὁ τῆς Αἰγύπτου βασιλεύς in 1:167). See also *Flacc.* 31.

⁵² See also 1:142.

⁵³ For ἐλευθερία see Lev 19:20; 1Esdr 4:49,53, 1Makk 4:53; 14:26; 3Makk 3:28; Sir 7:21.

⁵⁴ This fact alone should suffice, I think, to abandon the popular opinion that the idea of political freedom was virtually absent from ancient Jewish literature. The terminology of *parrhêsía/παρρησία* etc., otherwise important for Philo, is absent from *Vita Mosis*.

⁵⁵ See also 1:247.

every description of animal, and to every beast whatever which performs service to man, like slaves obeying their natural master, and it affects even every species of plant and tree; for there is no shoot, and no branch, and no leaf even which it is allowed to cut or to pluck on that day, nor any fruit which it is lawful to gather; but everything is at liberty and in safety on that day, and enjoys, as it were, perfect freedom, no one ever touching them, in obedience to a universal proclamation.⁵⁶

As this line of argument shows, the notion of freedom and liberation is understood both collectively and individually⁵⁷ in the *Vita Mosis*. It is linked to the idea of safety and bodily integrity, which can be understood as a direct contrast to the experience of individual slavery. The notion is linked to that of a unique and universal God, who has promulgated a universal and rational law.⁵⁸ That God is a ‘God of freedom’ (*eleuthérios theós/ἔλευθέριος θεός*) can be exemplified by his Sabbath law which, and this is in the background of Philo’s argument, is one of the few clearly identifiable attributes of Jewish existence even in the diaspora. A traditional religious ritual (as we would call it in our terminology) is thus interpreted in terms of social relations and political ideas.

4 Conclusion

The argument of this article started with a reflection on the importance of the traditional Jewish Pesach Haggadah, which can be understood as a ritual narrative of the gathering of the diaspora into the Land of Israel and Jerusalem.

The methodological approach roughly summarized more recently under the name of ‘historical narratology’ combines the well-established tools of (synchronic) narrative interpretation with an interest in the social and historical contexts of texts of different genres. It is thus especially appropriate for Jewish texts from antiquity, which are not easily categorized as *either* factional or fictional, mythical *or* historical.

The fragments of Artapanus and Philo’s *Vita Mosis* are two prominent examples of the reception of the biblical Exodus plot and story in the literature of the Egyptian diaspora in the Second Temple period. The interest of the narrated stories lies neither in ritual aetiology, nor, I think, in envisioning the end of the diaspora.

56 Philo, *Mos.* 2:22, translation by Colson, p. 461. The passage seems to refer (also) to the experience of the household from the master’s perspective. Most probably there were, in Alexandria, Egypt, Palestine, and beyond, Jewish slave-holders in the Second Temple period; see Catherine Hezser, “Slavery and the Jews,” in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, vol. 1, *The Ancient Mediterranean World*, ed. Keith R. Bradley and Paul Cartledge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011): 438–55.

57 Philo, *Mos.* 1:39 refers to the freedom of the soul. A broader analysis of the concept of freedom in Philo is beyond the scope of this article. Most interesting is the use of the terminology in the *Legatio ad Gaium*, with its reference to “Roman freedom” (*Legat.* 116).

58 For a comparison with other lawgivers which refers to the idea of freedom, see Philo, *Mos.* 2:50.

Artapanus' fragment 3 appears to be most interested in underlining the cultural importance (and superiority) of the Jewish population (or élite) in Egypt, and it thus provides a narrative of its integration into multi-ethnic Alexandria (and Egypt more broadly).

An important aspect of Philo's account is its description of the situation of the Jews in terms of imprisonment and slavery, and it is plausible to assume that it references not only the biblical past, but also contemporary conditions. Philo's text thus falls in with other political writings of his time: it somewhat indirectly, but nevertheless clearly, pronounces the idea of individual and political freedom.

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Andrea Binsfeld

Slavery and its Narratives in Ancient Novels – Stories of ‘Decline and Fall’?

1 Introduction

The late antique philosopher and grammarian Macrobius reflects in his *Commentary on Scipio’s Dream* on the reason for including fiction and dream in books dealing with governmental problems. In this context, he characterises novels – or fables – as follows:

[7] Fables – the very word acknowledges their falsity – serve two purposes: either merely to gratify the ear or to encourage the reader to good works. [8] They delight the ear as do the comedies of Menander and his imitators, or the narratives replete with imaginary doings of lovers in which Petronius Arbiter so freely indulged and with which Apuleius, astonishingly, sometimes amused himself. This whole category of fables that promise only to gratify the ear a philosophical treatise avoids and relegates to children’s nurseries.¹

According to Macrobius, novels are fictitious love stories, written to please the reader, and not more valuable than children’s tales. He compares them with the ancient comedies, and indeed there are many intertextual relations between novels and comedies. In the following, I will refer to four ancient novels which date from the first to the fourth centuries AD and analyse which kind of information about slavery and dependency we can draw from these fictional texts and which problems of interpretation we face. Furthermore, I would like to show which role asymmetrical dependency is playing for the narration of these texts. That means that I do not share Macrobius’ opinion that the ancient novels are simply entertaining, with no literary or historical value. On the one hand, Macrobius is right in stating that ancient novels are entertaining to read. The stories are tales of love and adventure, they take us to exotic countries, the main characters belong to the elite of society. These novels follow a recurrent pattern. They have in common the separation of the lovers, the mutual search and finally the reunification of the two protagonists. Certain motifs run through the plot of the novels: Both protagonists initially swear love and loyalty. This loyalty is then put to the test in the further course of action. A central theme of the ancient novels is the abduction, captivity and enslavement of free young men and women by pirates or robbers.² Asymmetrical dependency in the form of slavery and captivity is thus omnipresent in the novels. But

¹ Macrobius, *Commentary on Scipio’s Dream* 1,2,7–8 (*Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, trans. William Harris Stahl [New York: Columbia University Press, 1959, 1990]).

² Thomas Paulsen and Stefan Tilg, “Roman,” in *Handwörterbuch der antiken Sklaverei*, vol. 2, ed. Heinz Heinen (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2017): 2440–46; Niklas Holzberg, *Der antike Roman: Eine Einführung*, 2nd ed. (Düsseldorf: Artemis&Winkler, 2001).

slaves are not only used to create a realistic setting for the plot, they are also key actors. This distinguishes the ancient novel from other genres, such as epics, tragedy and comedy, where we also find enslaved noble characters, but these characters are not featured as protagonists.³ Keeping in mind that in Greek and Roman society it was not only shameful to be a slave, but also to have been a slave, the question of the significance of the degradation of the protagonists arises. We are dealing with fictional texts, but facts and realistic experiences of dependency often form the basis of these texts and are elaborately intertwined in them.⁴

Tomas Hägg was one of the first authors who dedicated a comprehensive study to the much neglected aspect of the novels' narrative technique.⁵ He is focussing on three novels: Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, Xenophon of Ephesos' *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes*, and Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon*. These three novels will also be discussed in the present article. Hägg investigates the time scheme of the romance, i.e., the fictional or narrated time in comparison to the narrating time, the different types of narrative, such as scene and summary, description and commentary, the perspective from which the reader follows the story, and the internal structure of the plot. The motif of slavery does not play a role in his study. William Owens, by contrast, gives in his book on the representation of slavery in the Greek novel many examples which show that slavery is an integral part of works of literature.⁶ He shows how authors use slavery motifs to structure the story, and he is revealing the public and hidden scripts of the relation between slave and master. This means that he does not only focus on the perspective of the master on the slaves, but he tries also to grasp the more hidden perspective of the slave. The sympathetic attitude towards the experiences of slaves on the one hand and the critique on the way masters think about their slaves on the other hand lead him to the assumption that

3 See, for example, Peter P. Spranger, *Historische Untersuchungen zu den Sklavenfiguren des Plautus und Terenz* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1984).

4 For the 'many shades of grey' between factual and fictional narrative see Monika Fludernik and Marie-Laure Ryan, "Factual Narrative: An Introduction," in *Narrative Factuality: A Handbook*, ed. Monika Fludernik and Marie-Laure Ryan (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020): 1–26. On the discussion about facts and fiction in ancient novels, see for example Keith Hopkins, "Novel Evidence for Roman Slavery," in *Studies in Ancient Greek and Roman Society*, ed. Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 206–25; John R. Morgan, "Make-Believe and Make Believe: The Fictionality of the Greek Novel," in *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World*, ed. Christopher Gill and Timothy Peter Wiseman (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1993): 175–229, esp. 193–215; Kurt Treu, "Der Realitätsgehalt des antiken Romans," in *Der antike Roman: Untersuchungen zur literarischen Kommunikation und Gattungsgeschichte*, ed. Heinrich Kuch (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1989): 107–25.

5 Tomas Hägg, *Narrative Technique in Ancient Greek Romances. Studies of Chariton, Xenophon Ephesus, and Achilles Tatius* (Stockholm: Svenska Institutet i Athen, 1971).

6 William M. Owens, *The Representation of Slavery in the Greek Novel: Resistance and Appropriation* (London: Routledge, 2020).

the novels, especially the works of Xenophon and Chariton, might have been produced by slaves.⁷

In the following, I will take up Owens’ ideas and elaborate them further. I will show that the authors refer to different forms of dependency not only to structure the text, but also to underline the ‘decline and fall’ of the protagonists. In this context, not only the question of what is told (the story) is relevant, but also how it is told (the discourse).⁸ Furthermore, I will refer to the experiences of slavery and dependency, for example to justifications and criticism of slavery and dependency. When I am referring to narratives of slavery, escape, and freedom in the following, I am well aware that this may be confusing, because slave narratives are usually understood as autobiographical narratives written by fugitives or former slaves, particularly in the Americas, in the eighteenth/nineteenth centuries.⁹ These texts were written for a special purpose: the abolition of slavery and the end of the slave trade.¹⁰ But even these narratives are not purely autobiographical. As an analysis of the famous book *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* shows, Equiano based his narrative only partially on facts as far as his personal experience is concerned.¹¹ Not all of the experiences he is describing, as for example the Middle Passage to the West Indies, were his own. He invented and constructed a story to give Africans who were forcibly brought to the Americas, and the abolitionist movement, a presumably authentic African voice. In the context of this article, it is interesting to note that the modern slave narratives share the mixture of facts and fiction with the ancient novel. Furthermore, even some motifs which we know from the ancient novels reappear, especially in the early slave narratives, such as tales of shipwreck and captivity, before they concentrate more on descriptions of the hardships of Southern plantation slavery. The mod-

7 William Fitzgerald, *Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) deals more generally with the master-slave relationship in Latin and Greek literature by adopting the perspective of the slave owners.

8 Marie-Laure Ryan, “Toward a Definition of Narrative,” in *Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 22–35; H. Porter Abott, “Story, Plot, and Narration,” in *Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 39–51; Matías Martínez and Michael Scheffel, *Einführung in die Erzähltheorie* (Munich: Beck, 2012): 22–28; Monika Fludernik and Marie-Laure Ryan, “Factual Narrative: An Introduction,” in *Narrative Factuality: A Handbook*, ed. Monika Fludernik and Marie-Laure Ryan (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020): 7–10.

9 See, for example, *The Cambridge Companion to the African American Slave Narrative*, ed. Audrey Fisch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), esp. Philip Gould, “The Rise, Development, and Circulation of the Slave Narrative,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the African American Slave Narrative*, ed. Audrey Fisch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 11–27.

10 Audrey A. Fisch, “Introduction,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the African American Slave Narrative*, ed. Audrey Fisch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 2.

11 Vincent Caretta, “Olaudah Equiano: African British Abolitionist and Founder of the African American Slave Narrative,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the African American Slave Narrative*, ed. Audrey Fisch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 44–60.

ern slave narratives are thus not only biographies, but also captivity narratives, travel books, adventure tales, economic treatises, testimonies and historical fiction – *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* is one of the best examples for the variety as well as the continuity of the genre.

2 Slavery and Dependency as Structuring Principles

In my introductory remarks, I already outlined the basic pattern of the stories and their recurrent motifs. Xenophon of Ephesos goes a step further and structures his story by the enslavement and liberation of the protagonists. The *Ephesian Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes* was written in the late first or early second century AD.¹² It is the love and adventure story of two young people of noble birth from the city of Ephesos. In book 1, young and beautiful Habrocomes desperately falls in love with the girl Anthia – he becomes a ‘slave of love’: “What catastrophe has befallen me, Habrocomes, till now a man, despising Eros and slandering the god? I have been captured and conquered and am forced to be the slave of a girl.”¹³ This metaphorical slavery is soon transformed into literal slavery. After the wedding, the two protagonists leave their hometown for Egypt. On their way, their ship is attacked by pirates, and the two young people are taken captive. Two of the pirates fall in love with Habrocomes and Anthia, but the two young people would rather die than betray each other and surrender to the pirates. They are saved by the arrival of the chief of the pirates, who takes the two captives to Tyre. In the second book, both protagonists experience the hardships of slavery and a deep fall before they are both freed, but also separated. When Habrocomes rejects the sexual advances of his master’s daughter, he is falsely accused of attempted rape and is tortured and incarcerated. Anthia, by contrast, is sold to Cilician merchants, shipwrecked, taken captive by bandits, and finally rescued. At the end of the book, both protagonists are freed. In the following book, Habrocomes and Anthia are again taken captive and enslaved. Anthia avoids marriage by means of pretending to be dead, she falls into the hands of tomb robbers and is sold into slavery, whereas Habrocomes is shipwrecked, taken captive and accused of murdering his master. Finally, in books 4 and 5, both protagonists are rescued and freed under dramatic circumstances before they are reunited – with the help of two of their former slaves. The whole story of Habrocomes and Anthia is driven forward by extreme ups and downs, by alternations of

¹² Stephen M. Trzaskoma, “Slavery and Structure in Xenophon of Ephesos,” in *Slaves and Masters in the Ancient Novel*, ed. Stelios Panayotakis and Michael Paschalis (Groningen: Barkhuis & Groningen University Library, 2019): 55–73.

¹³ Xenophon of Ephesos 1,4 (*An Ephesian Tale*, trans. Graham Anderson, in *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, ed. B.P. Reardon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989)); see William M. Owens, *The Representation of Slavery in the Greek Novel: Resistance and Appropriation* (London: Routledge, 2021): 28–30.

dependency – in the form of captivity and enslavement – and liberation. The motif of love is closely intertwined with the motif of dependency: The opposition of dependency and freedom corresponds with the juxtaposition of true love and devotion on the one hand and sexual desire on the other.¹⁴ Furthermore, the author plays with the juxtaposition of good and bad. He uses the moral attributes flexibly, however, and he does not necessarily stick to the dichotomy good master vs. bad slave: A good example are the slaves Leucon and Rhode, who accompany Habrocomes and Anthia. They exemplify the good and loyal slave characters, whereas many of the masters are cruel and unjust. Xenophon’s story is also structured by the repetition of motifs such as the “Potiphar’s Wife” tale in connection with Habrocomes, who, as a slave, rejects the advances of free women. A recurrent theme is also the “Escape from an Undesired Suitor”, when Anthia has to employ guile, craft, or violence to fend off her admirers.¹⁵ The repetitions illustrate the desperate situation of the protagonists, their increasing submission, powerlessness and vulnerability. When Habrocomes rejects Manto’s advances, he is falsely accused by her and tortured.¹⁶ When Kyno falls in love with him and promises to kill her husband, Habrocomes finally gives in to avoid being tortured.¹⁷ According to Owen, this episode illustrates on the one hand the effects of torture on slaves, but on a narrative level it shows how Habrocomes slides step by step into slavery and is finally forced to react like a typical slave. The last aspect illustrates that novelists use experiences of dependency and freedom not only to structure the story. They mix facts and fiction; they use metaphors of slavery as well as topoi and stereotypes to increase the story’s suspense and to underline the fall and the subsequent rise of the protagonists.

Xenophon of Ephesos’ *Tale of Anthia and Habrocomes* is especially rich in examples of dependency: Habrocomes’ partner Anthia must learn what it means to be a slave. In the course of the tale, Anthia repeatedly falls into the hands of robbers who sell her to slave traders. On one occasion, the beautiful slave not only arouses the love of her master, but also the jealousy of his wife, so that the latter sells her to a brothel keeper.¹⁸ To some extent, information on social, societal and cultural issues can indeed be derived from the novels, e.g., on the slave trade and on activities of slaves. In the present case study, a mixture of fictional and historically credible elements can be traced in the descriptions of prostitution. It is historically correct that many prostitutes were slaves who were abandoned or sold when they were children, or who ended up in prostitution through kidnapping and captivity. The brothel keeper provides accommodation and clothing for the prostitutes. This is reflected when Anthia is dressed up with gold and splendid robes by her pimp and has to offer herself to the

¹⁴ Chaste and unchaste love are also central subjects in Heliodorus’ *Aethiopica*; see Owens, *The Representation of Slavery in the Greek Novel*: 185–213.

¹⁵ Owens, *The Representation of Slavery in the Greek Novel*: 29–40.

¹⁶ Xenophon of Ephesos 2,3–6.

¹⁷ Xenophon of Ephesos 3,12; see also Owens, *The Representation of Slavery in the Greek Novel*: 30–35.

¹⁸ Xenophon of Ephesos 5,7,1–3.

suitors on the street in front of the brothel. This is where the fictional part of the novel begins. Undoubtedly, the horrendous sum paid for the beautiful slave and the price asked from the clients is fictional. The sums correspond to the beauty of the woman and not to the real prices for prostitutes and their services we know from other sources.¹⁹ With their descent into slavery and prostitution, women reached the sediment of Roman society – a deeper descent is hardly imaginable. The protagonists undergo these experiences before they can regain their freedom. The suspense in the novels is based precisely on the sharp contrast between freedom and slavery. This contrast is also intertwined with aspects of gender and sexuality. The female slave is made a prostitute who is available to everyone for money – in contrast to the free woman, whose sexual integrity and honour must be upheld under any circumstances. The discrepancy between the free woman and the female slave is not only underlined by the fact that the slave is sexually available; the discrepancy is also visualised by their different appearance.

The tale of Leucippe and Clitophon, written by Achilleus Tatios in the early second century AD, provides a good example. The plot is as follows: An unnamed narrator is approached by Clitophon, who is talking about his love for his cousin Leucippe and his adventures. Clitophon is promised in marriage to another woman when he falls in love with Leucippe. They both elope from Tyre. In the following, the lovers experience shipwreck, captivity, two faked deaths of Leucippe (sacrifice, decapitation), being charged with murder and finally being rescued and married. When the protagonist Leucippe is kidnapped by robbers, she is sold to a merchant who sells her as a slave to an estate manager in Ephesus. There, she has to work in the fields. Since she rejects the man's advances, she is mistreated and put in chains. On this estate, she meets her lover Clitophon again, who, accompanied by her mistress, is visiting the estates:

When we got there, we were strolling through the orchards, and suddenly a woman threw herself at our feet! She had heavy irons around her ankles, a workman's hoe in her hands, her head was shaved, her body was all grimy, her miserable clothing was hitched up for work, and she cried out: 'have mercy on me, m'lady, as one woman to another. I am free by birth, though now a slave, as Fortune chooses.'²⁰

Using female slaves to do hard work in agriculture, chained, shaved and clad in rags – what is described here in the novel in all probability does not reflect the real

¹⁹ Andrea Binsfeld, "Menschenhandel – Frauenhandel," in *Menschenhandel, Menschenraub und Sklaverei in antiker und moderner Perspektive*, ed. Heinz Heinen (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2008): 94–95; Bettina Eva Stumpp, *Prostitution in der römischen Antike* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1998): 214–29; Thomas McGinn, *The Economy of Prostitution in the Roman World: A Study of Social History & the Brothel* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004): 40–55; Carola Reinsberg, *Ehe, Hetärenum und Knabenliebe im antiken Griechenland* (Munich: Beck, 1989): 144–45.

²⁰ Achilleus Tatios 5,17,3. Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon*, trans. John J. Winkler, in *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, ed. B.P. Reardon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

living conditions of female slaves on farms.²¹ Women and slaves did indeed work in the house as well as in the fields, but the humiliating way Leucippe is presented in this excerpt and especially the combination of her slave status with every form of humiliation (hard work, shaved head, rags, chains) serves to illustrate the social decline of the formerly free protagonist. Like in the case of prostitution discussed above, the novel does not give us merely a description of the reality of a slave’s life. Slavery and the description of the hardships of slave activities are part of the narrative strategy of the novels, serving to dramatise the social decline and the subsequent liberation of the main characters and to underline the contrast between mistress and slave. In the excerpt above, the mistress is not only confronted with the physically hard-working slave, this slave is also deprived of all attributes of femininity: She is not only dirty and dressed in rags, she has also been shaved bald.²²

Furthermore, novelists do not only exaggerate conventional ideas of slavery and freedom, they at times also overturn these ideas. Heliodorus was a Phoenician from Emesus, today’s Homs, who presumably wrote the novel *Aethiopica* in the second half of the fourth century. It is the story of Chariclea, a priestess of the goddess Artemis in Delphi, and Theagenes, a noble young man from Thessaly. After many dangers and adventures, Chariclea discovers that she is the daughter of the king of Aethiopia. Her mother gave her away as a baby because she had white skin and her mother feared being accused of adultery. When the two protagonists are taken captive by brigands, Heliodorus describes that the chief of the bandits dismounts from his horse and puts the prisoners on a horse while he himself is running on foot beside them. The author comments on this extraordinary behaviour as follows: “There was something remarkable in the sight: the master appeared as a servant; the captor chose to minister to his captives. Thus may nobility of appearance and beauty of countenance vanquish even a brigand heart and triumph over the harshest of natures.”²³ The idea behind this description is that real nobility and beauty triumph over captivity and enslavement. The

21 Walter Scheidel, “Feldarbeit von Frauen in der antiken Landwirtschaft,” *Gymnasium* 97 (1990): 405–31; Walter Scheidel, “Frau und Landarbeit in der Alten Geschichte,” in *Nachrichten aus der Zeit: Ein Streifzug durch die Frauengeschichte des Altertums*, ed. Edith Specht, Reihe Frauenforschung 18 (Vienna: Wiener Frauenverlag, 1992): 195–235; for *vilica* see Ulrike Roth, “Inscribed Meaning: The *vilica* and the Villa Economy,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* 72 (2004): 101–24; see also Marcel Simonis, *Cum servis nullum est conubium: Untersuchungen zu den eheähnlichen Verbindungen von Sklaven im westlichen Mittelmeerraum des Römischen Reiches* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2017): 129–39, who critically analyses Roth’s theses.

22 This is also visualised by archaeological material: Andrea Binsfeld, “Lebenswirklichkeiten’ von Sklaven – Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von Gender, Macht und Status,” in *Sklaverei und Identitäten. Von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Andrea Binsfeld and Marcello Ghetta (Hildesheim: Olms, 2021): 31–35.

23 Heliodorus, *Aethiopica* 1.4. Heliodorus, *An Ethiopian Story*, trans. J.R. Morgan, in *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, ed. B.P. Reardon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

brigand may be free, but he is nevertheless acting like a slave. I will come back to the idea of the slave by nature in the next chapter.

The situation of a slave and a mother is described with much empathy in the novel *Chaereas and Callirhoe* by Chariton of Aphrodisias. This novel is the oldest surviving complete novel, dating from the first century BC or first century AD. The story is set in Syracuse. A special feature of this story is Chariton's use of historical figures from the late fifth century BC to give his story more credibility. The protagonist Callirhoe, a woman of outstanding nobility and beauty, is the daughter of Hermocrates, a hero of the Peloponnesian War and an important political figure in Syracuse. Callirhoe is married to Chaereas. Due to a tragic misunderstanding, Chaereas attacks Callirhoe out of jealousy and believes she is dead. After the burial, Callirhoe awakes in her tomb and is kidnapped by tomb robbers. They sell her to a man called Dionysios, who falls in love with her and wants to marry her, but she is afraid of confessing that she is already married to Chaereas – and also pregnant by him. The following excerpt illustrates the constraints a slave mother experiences. When Callirhoe learns that she is pregnant she cries out:

'Fortune, you have added this as well to my misfortunes, that I should become a mother too – mother of a slave!' She struck her belly. 'Poor creature!' she cried. 'Even before birth you have been buried and handed over to pirates! What sort of life are you coming to? With what hopes shall I give birth to you – without father or country, a slave! Taste death – before you are born. [. . .] It is enough for me alone to suffer misfortune. It is not in your interest to come into a life of misery, my child – a life you should escape from even if you are born. Depart in freedom, while no hard has befallen you, without hearing what they say about your mother.'²⁴

Callirhoe is well aware that, as a slave, she risks being separated from her child at any time. She is torn between the love for her child and the loyalty towards her husband Chaereas. If she agrees to marry Dionysios, she may keep the child but betrays her husband. If she stays loyal, she may lose her child. In her despair, she even considers an abortion. Finally, with the help of a clever slave (an example of a stereotypical slave character), she develops a plan to betray Dionysios and to make it look as if the child was his child. Thus, the text does not only illustrate the constraints under which slaves, especially female ones, were living and the power the master had, but also the agency of slaves. To kill the child, to deprive the master of his property (given

24 Chariton, *Callirhoe*, 2,8,6–2,9,3. Chariton, *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, trans. B.P. Reardon, in *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, ed. B.P. Reardon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). See John Hilton, "The Role of Gender and Sexuality in the Enslavement and Liberation of Female Slaves in the Ancient Greek Romances," in *Slaves and Masters in the Ancient Novel*, ed. Stelios Panayotakis and Michael Paschalis (Groningen: Barkhuis & Groningen University Library, 2019): 7–8; Ingomar Weiler, "Die Sklavin und ihre Kinder. Überlegungen zur Mutter-Kind-Beziehung im Altertum," in *Kindersklaven – Sklavenkinder – Schicksale zwischen Zuneigung und Ausbeutung in der Antike und im interkulturellen Vergleich: Beiträge zur Tagung des Akademievorhabens Forschungen zur antiken Sklaverei (Mainz, 14. Oktober 2008)*, ed. Heinz Heinen (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2012): 141–70.

that the child of a slave belongs to the master) is also an act of – albeit desperate – resistance against a destiny worse than death. In betraying her master she fulfils the stereotype of the cunning slave. For a short time, she acts like a slave.²⁵

3 Experiences of Slavery and Dependency: Justifications and Criticism

Some common justifications of the institution of slavery are also present in the novels, for example the idea that some people are slaves ‘by nature’ – a concept developed by Aristotle. In Heliodorus’ novel, for example, the brigands’ leader Thyamis explains his treatment of the captives as follows:

As for prisoners, I have enrolled into our number those men whose physical strength was likely to be of use to us, and sold the weaker ones; I have never misused a woman, but I have set free the well-born, either for ransom or from simple pity at their misfortune, while those of humble extraction, for whom slavery was a normal way of life rather than a condition imposed on them by their capture, I have distributed among you all as servants.²⁶

When the Ethiopian king Hydaspes in Heliodorus’ *Aethiopica* returns from a military campaign against the Persians, he decides the fates of his prisoners as follows: “Those whom Fortune had marked as born to be slaves he gave away, while those who were well-born he allowed to go free.”²⁷

Another common feature is the convention that captives of war are slaves. Heliodorus refers to this justification, but simultaneously lets slip in some criticism: In a discussion between the bandit-priest Thyamis and the sister of the Persian king Arsake on the fate of Charikleia and Theagenes, Thyamis asks the queen how she owns these people. Arsake answers: “By the rules of war, [. . .], according to which captives taken in war become slaves.”²⁸ And Thyamis answers: “But Arsake, [. . .], this is a time not of war but of peace. And while it is in the nature of war to make slaves, it is in the nature of peace to set them free; the former act is a tyrant’s whim; the latter shows the judgement of a true king.”²⁹ This excerpt reflects not only the need to justify the enslavement of free persons; it is also exemplifies the popular opposition of Greeks

25 Owens, *The Representation of Slavery in the Greek Novel*: 67–70.

26 Heliodorus, *Aethiopica* 1,19,5 (translation J.R. Morgan). See Koen de Temmerman, “Noble Slaves: The Rhetoric of Social Status Reversal in the Ancient Greek Novel,” in *Slaves and Masters in the Ancient Novel*, ed. Stelios Panayotakis and Michael Paschalis (Groningen: Barkhuis & Groningen University Library, 2019): 22–24.

27 Heliodorus, *Aethiopica* 9,26,1.

28 Heliodorus, *Aethiopica* 8,3,8.

29 Heliodorus, *Aethiopica* 8,4,1.

and Barbarians, especially Persians. By her treatment of the captives of war, the Persian Arsake is characterised negatively as a tyrant and a barbarian – a stereotype often used in novels.

The ancient novels were written at a time when slavery had already attracted philosophical criticism. Some passages from Xenophon of Ephesos reflect the philosophical discussions of slavery and freedom.³⁰ When one of the pirates falls in love with Habrocomes, another pirate gives him the following advice:

My boy, you must expect to come off badly in this catastrophe, now that you are a slave instead of a free man, and a poor man instead of a rich one. But you must put everything down to fortune, accept the fate that rules over you, and be friends with those who have become your masters. You must know that it is in your power to recover your happiness and freedom if you are willing to obey your master, Corymbus, for he is madly in love with you and is prepared to make you master of all he possesses.³¹

Habrocomes' reaction is desperate: "And what are my prospects in the future, reduced from a man to a prostitute [. . .]?"³² Habrocomes manages to get out of this situation, but, instead, Manto, the daughter of the pirates' leader, falls in love with him. Habrocomes rejects Manto with the following words:

I am a slave, but I know how to keep my vows! They have powers over my body, but my soul is still free. Now let Manto threaten me if she pleases – with swords, the noose, fire, and everything that the body of a slave can be made to bear, for she could never persuade me to do wrong against Anthia of my own free will.³³

As already mentioned, Manto takes revenge and accuses Habrocomes of attempted rape. Her father then has Habrocomes whipped, chained and thrown into a dungeon.

The two excerpts from the *Ephesiaka* of Xenophon of Ephesus show that male slaves could be the object of the desire of their male as well as their female owners. This puts the slave in a 'quasi-feminine' position: as a man, he is superior to the woman, but as a slave he shares the subordination and social inferiority of the female slave and is just as sexually available as she is.³⁴ Differences of gender no longer play

³⁰ John Hilton, "The Role of Gender and Sexuality in the Enslavement and Liberation of Female Slaves in the Ancient Greek Romances," in *Slaves and Masters in the Ancient Novel*, ed. Stelios Panayotakis and Michael Paschalia (Groningen: Barkhuis & Groningen University Library, 2019): 6.

³¹ Xenophon of Ephesos 1,16,3–5.

³² Xenophon of Ephesos 2,1,3.

³³ Xenophon of Ephesos 2,4,4; see for example William Fitzgerald, *Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 89–92; Peter Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 105–52.

³⁴ Sandra Rae Joshel and Sheila Murnaghan, "Introduction: Differential Equations," in *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture*, ed. Sandra Rae Joshel and Sheila Murnaghan, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge 2001): 9; Kelly L. Wrenhaven, *Reconstructing the Slave: The Image of the Slave in Ancient Greece* (London: Bristol Classical Press 2012): 71–74; Binsfeld, "Lebenswirklichkeiten' von Sklaven": 36–41.

a role for the slaves. The author plays with the tension between slavery and freedom. Habrokomes has lost his physical freedom, and he also risks losing his physical / sexual integrity, but he retains the freedom of his soul – in contrast to the pirate Corymbos or the robber’s daughter Manto, who are physically free but slaves to their lusts. The motif of the *servitium amoris* – as we have already seen – is a theme that pervades ancient literature and serves to reverse the power relations between masters and slaves – in this specific case in two ways, since the object of desire is a male slave.³⁵

4 Conclusion

Forms of asymmetrical dependency form an integral part of ancient novels. Slave characters are not only important for establishing the realistic background of the story; slaves and formerly free enslaved people are also the protagonists. Furthermore, the story itself is structured by the experiences of captivity and enslavement. With some caution, we can draw information on the situation of slaves in Roman imperial times from the novels. But facts and fiction are always intertwined for the purpose of the narration. The events described in the books can refer to real slave experiences (kidnapping, enslavement, being sold by slave traders, prostitution, captivity of war, sexual exploitation, philosophical criticism of slavery, justifications of slavery, etc.), but these experiences tend to be exaggerated and transformed into a narration of decline and fall, of rescue and liberation. The authors make use of sharp contrasts between slavery and freedom to create a suspense that leads finally to a happy ending.

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³⁵ See Kathleen McCarthy, “*Servitium amoris*: Amor servitii,” in *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture*, ed. Sandra Rae Joshel and Sheila Murnaghan, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2001): 174–92.

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Clara Hedtrich

The Dark Side of Proximity: Advice and Betrayal in the Middle High German *Rolandslied*

1 Introduction

There is an old saying that everybody loves treason, but nobody loves a traitor.¹ This may be true, but the tale of a betrayal and a sinister traitor can surely arouse the interests of the addressees. One of these interesting figures is Genelun in the Middle High German *Rolandslied*² by Priest Konrad. In this text the treachery has its origin in the community depicted. As stepfather of the eponymous hero of the story, Roland, and as an advisor to Emperor Karl, Genelun is a member of the courtly elite. But despite his genealogical background, his kinship relations and his functional proximity to the ruler, his existence is threatened when his opinion deviates from the consensus. This is an expression of the dependency structures that are presented as a given in the *Rolandslied*³ and which, in Genelun's case, result in treason. Through this character we can see that dependency can also affect persons of the aristocratic elite in a way that jeopardizes their lives. In my understanding, advisor figures are characters who are portrayed in a close relationship to rulers and who are therefore able to influence political decisions. But despite this special proximity, these relationships are also characterized by a permanent distance. So tensions and conflicts are constant themes, and the betrayal of the ruler can be understood as the greatest possible conflict and a rupture of established structures. In the *Rolandslied* Genelun is chosen for a very dangerous task which, because of his courtly position, he cannot reject. The consequence of this dilemma is treachery.

1 The origin of the saying is not certain, but it is particularly associated with Caesar, who according to Plutarch is said to have claimed “that he loved treachery but hated a traitor”, Plutarch, *Life of Romulus*: 17.3.

2 The text edition I used is *Das Rolandslied des Pfaffen Konrad: Mittelhochdeutsch/Neuhochdeutsch: Durchgesehene und bibliographisch aktualisierte Auflage*, ed. and trans. Dieter Kartschoke (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2011). For the English translation I used: *Priest Konrad's Song of Roland*, trans. J.W. Thomas, Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1994). The abbreviation for *Rolandslied* is RL. Hereafter, quotations from this text are referred to in parentheses. In these, the English translation is given first, with the abbreviation followed by the line numbers of the Middle High German version, followed by the page number of the English translation.

3 This title goes back to Wilhelm Grimm, whereas Konrad himself describes his work simply as “liet” (“tale”, RL 9077; 107). See Eberhard Nellmann, “Pfaffe Konrad,” in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, ed. Kurt Ruh et al., vol. 5 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1985): 121.

This article asks to which degree the narration about betrayal in the *Rolandslied* is also the narrating of concealed dependency structures in the overall structure of the text. I understand ‘concealed dependencies’ as deliberately obscured or even covered (up) dependency relations. ‘Concealed dependencies’ are thus dependency structures that are narratively concealed because of an agenda, which involves intention. The narrator of the *Rolandslied* repeatedly emphasizes that the decisions presented are based on willingness. However, since it is also stated that every decision has the purpose to increase the glory of God, the choices are more limited than the focus on voluntariness initially suggests. The narrator presents the right decisions as the inevitable ones. By contrast, deliberative or differential expressions indicate a morally wrong stance. Deviations are thus judged, and this moral condemnation conceals the dependency structures. Treason in the *Rolandslied* is only possible because the traitor is part of a hierarchically organized community. Dependency is narratively represented by arbitrary rule, but is referred to as problematic only by the traitor figure, who has negative connotations. Escaping these dependency structures is therefore only possible temporarily, and the end of the story is also the end of the traitor.

The *Rolandslied* has a special status in German medieval literature, because it is the first tale in a vernacular German language which focuses on Christian knighthood. It can be dated to around 1170⁴ and draws on the historical Battle of Roncevalle in 778, in which the rearguard of Charlemagne’s army was attacked and routed. The campaign against the Emir of Cordoba, justified by Charlemagne as a Christianizing measure, ended with heavy losses for the Frankish army and was not mentioned in the Imperial Annals. However, it found its way into narratives and was significantly associated with the theme of betrayal. One of the most famous narrative adaptations is the Old French *Chanson de Roland*,⁵ which can be dated to around the year 1000. Despite the connections between the Old French and Middle High German texts, the *Rolandslied* differs from all known surviving versions of the *Chanson de Roland*,⁶ al-

4 The dating of the *Rolandslied* has been controversially discussed by scholars. Of decisive importance is the epilogue, in which a Duke Henry is named as the poet’s patron. Three possible Henrys were considered and discussed as possible patrons. Due to their respective life dates, datings varied between 1130 and 1170. Since it is most likely that the duke mentioned is Henry the Lion, there is now broad agreement on dating the poem to around 1170. See Nellmann, “Pfaffe Konrad”: 119–20; Joachim Bumke, *Mäzene im Mittelalter: Die Gönner und Auftraggeber der höfischen Literatur in Deutschland 1150–1300* (Munich: Beck, 1979): 86–91; Dieter Kartschoke, *Die Datierung des deutschen Rolandsliedes* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1965).

5 The text edition of the *Chanson de Roland* I used is: *Das altfranzösische Rolandslied: Zweisprachig. Durchgesehene und bibliographisch aktualisierte Auflage*, ed. and trans. Wolf Steinsieck (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2015). The abbreviation is CdR, English translations are my own.

6 Seven manuscripts and three fragments of the *Chanson de Roland* have survived, showing significant variations. The German *Rolandslied* differs noticeably from all these versions. For example, it is longer and more focused on the crusade ideology. The great crisis of the text, the betrayal, is also

though Konrad in fact mentions a French source his patron gave to him, claiming that he had not changed its content:

alsô ez an dem buoche gescriben stât
 in franzischer zungen,
 sô hân ich ez in die latîne betwungen,
 danne in die tiutische gekêret.
 ich nehân der nicht an gemêret,
 ich nehân der nicht überhaben.

(RL 9080–9085; 107)

Taking it just as it appears in the book – written in French – I put it first into Latin and from there into German, adding nothing and leaving nothing out.

The *Rolandslied* has stronger spiritual connotations than the French text and can be understood as a German crusade epic with a highly idealized, almost religiously enhanced, ruler figure. So, although it is in the tradition of the *chanson de geste* epic, it does not belong to only one literary genre, as it combines legends and epic-heroic motifs.⁷

As so often in medieval literature, we do not know much about the author. In the epilogue⁸ he mentions his name as “phaffe Chunrât” (“priest Konrad”, RL 9079; 107). Since he describes himself as a “priest,” we can assume that Konrad was a secular cleric who may have been attached to a ducal chancery, or a canon of a monastery.⁹ What we know for sure is that Konrad was well educated, which shows in the numerous biblical allusions and quotations in the text.¹⁰ The epilogue is of specific importance, because it is the only time Konrad mentions a “herzogen Hainrîche” (“Duke

more strongly connected with the crusade theme and the will to martyrdom. See Nellmann, “Pfaffe Konrad”: 122–25.

⁷ Nellmann has already noted that there is no clear answer to the question of genre, see Nellmann, “Pfaffe Konrad”: 126–27. Kartschoke also pointed out that the text type is impossible to classify, but as Konrad probably followed his source, this is not due to the author but to the material. Dieter Kartschoke, “Anhang,” in *Das Rolandslied des Pfaffen Konrad: 781–90*. Spreckelmeier explicitly emphasized the connection between the crusade theme and Christian knighthood. Susanne Spreckelmeier, “Geronenes Erzählen: Autotelische Gewalt und Entscheiden im ‘Rolandslied’ des Pfaffen Konrad,” *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 138 (2019): 46.

⁸ Only one surviving manuscript contains the epilogue, the *Codex Palatinus germanicus* 112 from the end of the twelfth century, which is an almost complete version of the *Rolandslied*. Except for one double page, the manuscript is completely intact. In addition to this copy there is one more incomplete manuscript, which was destroyed in a fire in 1870 but whose text has been preserved in a print. In addition, there are four extant fragments. See Nellmann, “Pfaffe Konrad”: 118.

⁹ See Kartschoke, “Anhang”: 784.

¹⁰ Kartschoke, “Anhang”: 784.

Henry”, RL 9018; 107)¹¹ as his patron: “diu matteria, diu ist scœne, / die sūeze wir von im haben” (“it was he who supplied this pleasing and seemly subject matter”, RL 9020–21; 107). The duke’s wife is also mentioned: she is described as being very interested in a translation of the French text:

daz buoch hiez er vor tragen,
 gescriben ze den Karlingen.
 des gerte diu edele herzoginne,
 aines rîchen küniges barn.
 (RL 9022–25; 107).

At the request of the noble duchess, the daughter of a mighty king, he had the book brought from France, where it was written.

This duke was probably Henry the Lion, who was married to Matilda, a daughter of Henry II of England and Eleanor of Aquitaine.¹² Henry the Lion’s identity with the patron is supported not only by his connection with Matilda but also by the fact that Henry is known to have promoted the arts to increase his prestige. The frequent references to Charlemagne are another indicator, as Henry attempted to establish a genealogical link in order to bolster his standing. He was also active in the canonization of Charlemagne in 1165.¹³

A few years after this canonization and 400 years after the historical battle, the *Rolandslied* narrates the military expedition to Spain as a fair and divinely ordained mission against the “heideniske” (“heathen” RL 14; 17)¹⁴ Saracens. This mission is depicted as more successful than it was in historical reality. At the behest of heaven, Karl¹⁵ decides to go on a crusade against the Saracens. The battle is almost completely successful, only the city of Zaragoza has not yet been invaded due to its geographically fortunate location. In order to convince the Frankish army to retreat, the Saracens pretend that they are ready to be baptized. Karl’s advisors disagree among each other as to whether the offer is trustworthy. Karl’s nephew Roland advises that the battle should continue, while Karl’s brother-in-law Genelun argues that they should end the campaign. The council decides to send out a messenger to find out more about the Saracens’ intentions. At the suggestion of Roland, his stepfather Genelun is chosen for

¹¹ This is the first time the name of a patron has been mentioned in a vernacular tale. See Bumke, *Mäzene im Mittelalter*: 85.

¹² See Kartschoke, “Anhang”: 782–84.

¹³ Kartschoke, “Anhang”: 783.

¹⁴ The depiction of the Islamic faith practiced by the Saracens in the *Rolandslied* does not have much in common with historical reality and serves rather to denote “infidelity,” as is also shown by the repeated reference to praying to “apgot” (“idols” RL 34, 205, 3467, 3492, 8154; 17, 18, 51, 52, 99). This is also suggested by the multiple designation of the Saracens as “heathens” in contrast to the Christian heroes.

¹⁵ In order to distinguish the historical figure of Charlemagne from the emperor in the *Rolandslied*, I will use the German versions of names when referring to characters in the text.

this task. He fears that this mission will mean his death, but he cannot refuse the emperor's wish. He directs his hatred against Roland. Eventually he has to go, but craves revenge. Genelun conspires with the Saracens and suggests an attack on the rearguard of the Frankish army, which is led by Roland. The betrayal succeeds. Roland and other heroes are killed. The emperor is shaken by their deaths, but with God's help he is able to defeat the enemy army. Genelun's fate is decided in a trial, which is settled by an ordeal and ends with the death penalty for the traitor.

2 In Focus: Three Scenes of Giving Advice

To answer the question in how far betrayal in the *Rolandslied* is a direct consequence of dependencies, we need to look at the depicted social orders and to which extent they are relevant to narrating and evaluating a betrayal originating from the center of the depicted community. My focus here is on three situations of advice-giving in the epic and on the decisions that result from them. I understand the depiction of advice-giving here as expressing principles of order, because they signify opportunities as well as inevitabilities. Within these situations, it becomes apparent how different figurations are portrayed and personal relationships developed.

2.1 A Divine Mission: A Portrayal of Unity

That the emperor is depicted in a positive light can be seen from the very beginning. The narrator asks God to help him, “daz ich die lüge vermîde, / die wârheit scrîbe” (“that I may be free from error and write only the truth”, RL 7–8; 17) about Emperor Karl and how he “gotes rîche gewan” (“won the kingdom of heaven”, RL 10; 17). Karl's positive characteristics are directly connected to his campaigns, which brought the “wâre liecht” (“true Light”, RL 21; 17) to “vil manige heideniske lant” (“many heathens”, RL 14; 17). This is also the motivation for conquering Spain.

Dô der gotes dienstman
von Yspaniâ vernam,
wie unkiusclîchen si lebeten,
die apgot an beteten,
daz si got niene vorchten,
harte sich verworchten,
daz clagete der keiser hère.

(RL 31–37; 17)

This servant of God was sorely grieved when he heard about Spain and how sinfully they lived who did not fear God but worshipped idols and rushed to their own perdition.

The emperor's desire to save these people from their "tœtlichen scate" (RL 45; 17, "deadly shadow") is so strong that he prays every night to free them from the "tiuvel" ("devil", RL 46; 17). Finally, an angel appears, not only telling him to "[. . .] île in Yspaniam [. . .]" ("[. . .] hasten to Spain [. . .]"), RL 56; 17) to convert the Saracens, but also that "[. . .] die dir aber wider sint, / die heizent des tiuvels kint / unt sint allesamt verlorn. [. . .]" ("[. . .] all those who oppose you are children of the devil and are lost. [. . .]"), RL 59–61; 17). The decision to go to war is entirely tied to the emperor and his particular qualities:¹⁶ It is Karl's declared wish and a divine mandate, and therefore within the narrative the absolutely right thing to do.

Although the crusade has entirely positive connotations, a council is convened in which the twelve men closest to the emperor participate and debate this decision.¹⁷ Genelun, who will later turn traitor, is not among these men, although he is related to the emperor through his marriage to Karl's sister. The characteristics of Karl's closest confidants clearly show their ideality: They are brave, they have been successful in battle, and they are loyal to the emperor, and above all they are ready to die a martyrs' death, even consider it desirable. Both the emperor and his confidants share the same understanding of heroism and martyrdom, believing that it would be an honor if they should lose their lives. So when Karl asks, "[. . .] iuweren willen west ich gerne" ("Now I would like to know your will", RL 106; 18), it is an invitation to verbalize consent.¹⁸ This is also the case when the lords speak separately with their vassals. Although speaking one's mind appears to be an option, there is little room for dissent, since lack of support is sanctioned:

Alsô diu rede was getân,
 die hêrren sprâchen ir man.
 si berieten sich besunder,
 ob ieman wære dar under,
 der in nicht helfen wolde.
 si sprâchen, daz er scolte
 in ze stete widersagen.
 welhen trôst si zuo im mâchten haben?
 (RL 133–140; 18)

¹⁶ Cf. Stefan Tomasek, "Ambivalenz eines Kaisers: Die Figur Karls des Großen im 'Rolandslied' des Pfaffen Konrad," in *Karlsbilder in Kunst, Literatur und Wissenschaft: Akten eines interdisziplinären Symposions anlässlich des 1200. Todestages Kaiser Karls des Großen*, ed. Franz Fuchs and Dorothea Klein, *Rezeptionskulturen in Literatur und Mediengeschichte 1* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2015): 139–48.

¹⁷ That the necessity of consent corresponded to the legal reality has been explained by Canisius-Loppnow, among others. Petra Canisius-Loppnow, *Recht und Religion im Rolandslied des Pfaffen Konrad*, *Germanistische Arbeiten zu Sprache und Kulturgeschichte 22* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1992): 172–75.

¹⁸ Spreckelmeier, who also underlines the rhetorical character of the question, understands this staging of voluntary action as a contrast to the figure of the traitor, who boycotts collective action. See Spreckelmeier, "Geronnenes Erzählen": 52.

When he finished speaking, the lords took counsel with their vassals to learn whether there was anyone among them who did not want to help. If so, he should renounce them at once or say what they could expect from him.

This suggests that there is a choice, but in fact the decision has already been made – especially since it is divinely ordained. So the collective oath as a commitment to the war is unavoidable. We might ask to what extent this representation of unity is necessary in order to highlight later deviations even more strongly. This question can probably be answered by looking at how agreement is verbally expressed: Although the heroes are each mentioned by name, there are no singular voices apart from two exceptions: Karl and his nephew Roland. While Karl has called for the war, Roland speaks after the campaign has been sealed by an oath:

wie sælec der geborn wart,
 der nû diese hervart
 gevrumet willicliche!
 dem lônnet got mit sîneme rîche,
 des mag er grôzen trôst hân.
 ist ave hie dehein man,
 der guot nemen wil,
 man gît im sîn vil.
 er hât iemer des kaiserres willen. [. . .]
 (RL 147–55; 18)

‘How fortunate is he who willingly takes part in this campaign,’ said Roland, ‘for he will be certain that God will reward him with heaven. But anyone here who wants earthly goods shall be well paid, because he will always have the emperor’s favor. [. . .]’

So voluntary participation in the mission is beneficial in every regard, while a refusal to join would severely upset hierarchical ties. That participation should arise of one’s own free will is also important because the mission is not without danger. When it is announced, the people ask God to protect the heroes from the “michelen heiden craft” (“the might of the pagan host”, RL 173; 18), a sign that there is an imminent risk in the undertaking.

From a purely rational point of view this military campaign is a political act. It cannot be decided by the emperor alone, which is why the tale contains two decision-making processes. The outcome, however, is already morally anticipated: those who do not accept martyrdom do not belong to the community.

But the justification for the crusade is more complex and cannot be explained by ideals of faith alone. While the desire to save the “infidels” and the sacrifice of one’s own life are suitable indicators for the superiority of the heroes, more rational and mundane arguments are also used to justify this campaign. The Saracens are not only accused of faithlessness, but there is also mention of injustices and calls for revenge:

Nû wil ich iu clagen,
 die heiden tuont uns grôzen scaden.
 si rîtent in diu lant.
 si stiftent roub unde brant.
 diu gotes hûs si stœrent.
 daz liut si hin fûerent
 unt ophèrent si den apgoten.
 daz ist des tiuveles spot.
 ir martir der ist vil.
 si sezzen si ze ir zil
 unt schiezent dar zuo.
 möchte wir dâ widere ich getuo,
 des wære uns nôt.
 icht bit iuch alle durch got,
 daz irz williclichen tuot . [. .]

(RL 199–213; 18)

I must now lament to you the grave injury we suffer from the heathens. Riding to our lands, they rob and burn, destroy the houses of God, and carry people off to sacrifice them to idols. That is the devil's sport. Many have suffered martyrdom as targets of their lances and arrows. I ask you all for God's sake and willingly to take action, for it will be truly distressing if we do nothing about it. [. .]

So while the campaign was initially justified by the saving of “infidel” souls, now the desire for vengeance is added. The reference to violence suffered to legitimate war is a topical depiction,¹⁹ while the text strongly emphasizes the emperor's wish to Christianize the “infidels”. The narrative strategy throughout the *Rolandslied* to justify the war against the “heathens” is to call for the restoration of an order that is not described in detail. However, arguments in favor of the campaign are so wide-ranging that opposition is impossible from the outset. Not only is it morally right to participate in this campaign, there is also a reward in the form of “guot” (“earthly goods”, RL 153; 18). The repeated appeals to the men's voluntary participation reinforce the impression that there is no alternative. Because this campaign is justifiable, there is no need for discussion. It is not a contradiction that the decisions made here are supposed to be based on willingness and that this willingness precludes other options. The paths shown are linear, marked by what could probably be described as a compulsion to willingness. Whoever deviates must be a traitor.

19 Cf. Spreckelmeier, “Geronnes Erzählen”: 53–54.

2.2 Consultation and Deviation: How Does Betrayal Arise?

Although the decision to go to war was initiated by Karl and his closest confidants, the imperial circle is larger. When it comes to discussing and voting²⁰ on the peace offer made by the Saracen Marsilie, many more nobles are involved, who represent all the important positions in the realm (“der keiser vorderôte dar zuo / biscove unde herzogen. / vil manic vürste ze hove kom”, “the emperor summoned the bishops and dukes to his court – many other highborn noblemen also came”, RL 892–94; 25). The emperor is very clear about what he expects of these men: they are to form an opinion (“er sprach: ‘ôwole ir fürsten alle, / nû vernemet, wie iu dise rede gevalle. [. . .]””, “‘Well now, you princes,’ he began, ‘See how you like this proposal. [. . .]’”, RL 897–98; 25), but should always remember to act in accordance with God’s will (“[. . .] der heilige geist gebe iu den muot, / daz ir daz beste dar ane getuot. [. . .]””, “[. . .] may the Holy Spirit so guide your reason that you do what is best. [. . .]”, RL 899–900; 25). One reason for this adjuration is probably the fact that the council has a lot of power: This is where decisions are made on how to proceed, so the focus is on a joint decision.

[. . .] nû rätet, waz wir dar umbe tun.
 nû rätet gotes êre.
 jâ ne suoche ich nicht mêre,
 wan daz wir sô gedingen,
 daz wir gotes hulde gewinnen.

(RL 906–10; 25)

[. . .] Consider how we should respond so that God may be honored, for I want us to do only what will gain us His favor.

Roland is the first to answer, confirming that he wants to continue the battle and is ready to die (RL 930–36; 25). Other heroes join in, affirming their willingness to die for their faith (RL 1024; 26). These vividly narrated exchanges stand in stark contrast to the emperor’s reaction. While the noblemen are talking, Karl is silent (“Der keiser gewîgete vile stille. / er marcte ir iegelîhes willen”, “The emperor was silent as he listened to each man’s opinion”, RL 1047–48; 26), perturbed (“getruobet was sîn gemüete”, “his spirit was troubled”, RL 1049; 26) and hides his feelings (“daz houbet er nider neigete, / daz sîn nieman innen wart”, “bowing his head so that no one would notice”, RL 1052–53; 26). Only the recipients know about the emperor’s troubled emotions, while

²⁰ Collective forms of counseling are frequently found in German medieval literature, and this form of advice-giving also often occurs in historical sources. On the *Rolandslied* cf. Spreckelmeier, “Geronenes Erzählen”: 47. For collective forms of consultation in general from a historical perspective, cf. Gerd Althoff, *Kontrolle der Macht: Formen und Regeln politischer Beratung im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2016).

they remain hidden from the characters in the text.²¹ This inside view is of particular relevance; it is used only once in the text, and it develops a special force because it leads to the question of why Karl is upset.²² The narrator does not give us an answer, but it is noticeable that not only the emperor's feelings are troubled: the whole counsel scene has characteristics of disorder.²³ And so the intervention of the future traitor is not only a call to retreat, but a criticism of the structure of the council as a whole – and of the emperor.

Genelûn ûf spranc.
 er sprach: 'die fürsten haben alle undanc,
 daz si edele unde wîse sint.
 wie man die tumbesten vernimt!
 die sint nû ze hove râtgeben.
 die wîsen læt man alle underwegen.
 die in wole töchten
 ze râte unde ze vechten
 die sint nû gare verkoren.
 war ist nû komen
 diu manecvaltiu wîsheit?
 dînen fürsten ist ez allen leit,
 daz dû in dînen grôzen wîzzen
 uns alle læst sizzen.
 ez gêt uns an die ère.
 nu ne zimt nicht, lieber hêrre,
 dîn neve Ruolant
 überruofet uns alle samt. [. . .]'
 (RL 1093–1110; 27)

'The princes get little respect for being noble and wise,' cried Genelun, springing to his feet; 'see how the most foolish are heard! They are now the advisers at court, and the prudent, who would be the most useful in counsel or battle, are passed over and scorned. What has happened to the manifold wisdom? Your princes are all distressed that you with your great learning should not

21 Evamaria Freienhofer, *Verkörperungen von Herrschaft: Zorn und Macht in Texten des 12. Jahrhunderts*, Trends in Medieval Philology 32 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016): 110.

22 The text does not specify the reason for the emperor's emotional state. Possible interpretations range from displeasure with the various opinions, cf. Tomasek, "Ambivalenz eines Kaisers": 162; 168–70, to displeasure with the proceedings of the consultation, cf. Jasmin Leuchtenberg, "Der keiser zurte harte. / mit gestreichem barte.: Die Fürstenratsszene im 'Rolandslied' des Pfaffen Konrad," in *Macht bei Hofe: Narrative Darstellungen in ausgewählten Quellen. Ein interdisziplinärer Reader*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Anna Kollatz, Narratio Aliena? Studien des Bonner Zentrums für Transkulturelle Narratologie (BZTN) 11 (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2020): 118. The fact that the emperor regards the council's decision as an instrument for winning God's grace at least suggests that the extended exchange of arguments is not to his liking.

23 Karl neither grants nor withdraws the right to speak, and the order of speaking is not determined by rank.

seek our opinion; this is an offense to our esteem. It is not fitting that your nephew Roland should outweigh all of us. [. . .]’

In such confidential consultations, the expression of divergent opinions is possible, sometimes even desired,²⁴ whereas public controversies are almost impossible.²⁵ The purpose of these deliberations is to establish unity. But Genelun’s accusations conflict with this ambition. His fundamental criticism of the counseling situation bears the characteristics of resistance rather than of a debate. Power is negotiated through interaction and through dialogue. The accusation of favouritism towards particular advisors is at the same time the accusation that the resource of proximity to the emperor, and thus the resource of power, is unequally divided. This alleged imbalance of proximity is symbolized in Karl’s closest confidants. Although Genelun’s reproach is directed specifically against Roland, he criticizes the other men as well. Since they all seem to be in agreement, possible arguments in favor of accepting the Saracen king’s peace offer are disregarded. And so Genelun continues his speech by saying that he sees no reason that would justify refusing the offer and concludes with the words: “[. . .] die zwelwe râtent dir vil übele, hêrre.” (“[. . .] the twelve give you very poor advice.”, RL 1139; 27). In contrast to the *Chanson de Roland*, in which several nobles speak out in favor of stopping the battle,²⁶ Genelun here stands alone with his opinion, even though he apparently claims to speak for the silent majority.²⁷ His outburst marks a turning point and the beginning of the later act of betrayal. The fact that he criticises

24 Cf. Gerd Althoff, “Colloquium familiare – Colloquium secretum – Colloquium publicum: Beratung im politischen Leben des frühen Mittelalters,” *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 24 (1990): 145–67; Steffen Patzold, “Konsens und Konkurrenz: Überlegungen zu einem aktuellen Forschungskonzept der Mediävistik,” *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 41 (2007): 93.

25 Cf. Jan-Dirk Müller, “Ratgeber und Wissende in der heroischen Epik,” *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 27 (1993): 124–46; Sarah Thieme, “So möge alles Volk wissen’: Funktionen öffentlicher Beratung im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert,” *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 46 (2012): 157–89.

26 In the *Chanson de Roland*, Naimés not only shares the demand for retreat, but explicitly evaluates it as wise and worth considering. The other Franks agree with this assumption: “Après ço i est Neimes venud; / Meillor vassal n’aveit en la curt nul, / E dist al rei ‘Ben l’avez entendud, / Guenes li quens ço vus ad responded; / Saveir i ad, mais qu’il seit entendud. / Li reis Marsilie est de guere vencud: / Vos li avez tuz ses castels toluz, / Od voz caable avez fruiset ses murs, / Ses citez arses e ses himes vencuz; / Quant il vos mandet qu’aeiez mercit de lui, / Pecchet fereit ki dunc li fesist plus. / U par ostage vos (en) voelt faire soürs, / Ceste grant guerre ne deit munter a plus.’ Dient Franceis: ‘Ben ad parlet li dux.” (CdR 16, 230–43). [After that Naimés came forward, there was no better vassal in the court, and he said to the king: ‘You have heard it: Count Ganelon has answered you; there is wisdom in it, supposing one understands him. King Marsilie is beaten in war, you took all his castles from him, you broke down his walls with your throwing machines, you burned his cities and defeated his people. If he asks you to show him mercy, the one who harmed him even more would commit a sin. Since he wants to offer you security through hostages, this great war should not be continued.’ Then the Franks said: ‘The duke has spoken well.’]

27 See Karl Stackmann, “Karl und Genelun: Das Thema des Verrats im Rolandslied des Pfaffen Konrad und seinen Bearbeitungen,” *Poetica* 8 (1976): 260–63.

the ruler serves to distinguish between the future traitor and the heroes of the tale. Genelun's failure to mention martyrdom as a desired outcome of the war can probably be understood as an indication that the character is destined to be a traitor. This marker of betrayal is only apparent to the addressees, and it only stands out because Genelun's behavior stands in such stark contrast to the other men's. He doubts the qualities of the emperor's confidants, emphasizes the qualities of other advisors, and thus shows disagreement. He is alone in this, but his accusations are enough to disrupt order and to taint with traces of uncertainty a decision that initially demanded unambiguity. Although elements of his criticism are not unfounded, this text marks it as illegitimate. Criticism alone is not betrayal, but criticizing an ideal emperor marks deviance, and deviance can lead to disorder. So, when Karl calls for unity,²⁸ it is an appeal to become one social body and to talk with one voice, as was the case in the first advice situation.²⁹ In order to reach a common result, Karl interrupts the consultation and arranges a sub-consultation without him. At least part of his wish is fulfilled when the other men react to this order with a unanimous "âmen" (RL 1165).³⁰

But apart from this moment of unity, at first nothing changes in this second consultation. Genelun stands amid the others ("Genelûn gestuont in almitten", RL 1194) and continues to defend an ending of the war. This time he does not verbally attack anyone, and he accepts that the honor of God must be considered in the deliberation. He repeats his arguments for leaving Spain, but adds to them the desire to return home to their families. Altogether, Genelun's arguments give the appearance of political foresight and are designed to be emotionally comprehensible.

‘wole ir edele hêrren,
ir tuot ez gote zêren.
ûebet iuwer wîsheit.
gedenket an die langen arbeit.
râtet alle dâ zuo,
daz mîn hêrre einweder tuo,
neme dere heiden gedinge,
vrûme die boten hinnen,
sô ez der cristenheit gezeme,
versmâhe nicht ir gebe,

²⁸ The aim of all consultations that take place in the court is to reach a consensus. This consensus is achieved through *consilium et auxilium*. This is defined by feudal law, so the frequent literary depictions of *concilia* can also be explained by the fact that the courtiers were likely to be familiar with these processes. See Althoff, *Kontrolle der Macht*: 12.

²⁹ Cf. Helmut Brall, "Genelun und Willehalm: Aspekte einer Funktionsgeschichte der mittelhochdeutschen chanson de geste-Dichtung," in *Literatur und Sprache im historischen Prozess: Vorträge des Deutschen Germanistentages*, vol. 1, ed. Thomas Cramer (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1983): 404–8.

³⁰ See Evamaria Heisler, "Christusähnlicher Karl: Die Darstellung von Zorn und Trauer des Herrschers in Chanson de Roland und Rolandslied," *Das Mittelalter* 14, no. 1 (2009) [special issue: *Furor, zorn, irance: Interdisziplinäre Sichtweisen auf mittelalterliche Emotionen*, ed. Bele Freudenberg]: 78.

neme die gîsel ze hant
 unde besezze daz lant,
 behüete sîne bürge,
 habe neheine sorge,
 daz er si gewerliche vinde.
 Nables und Morinde,
 Valterne unde Pîne,
 dâ beiten die sîne.
 lâze uns ze disen zîten
 zuo unseren kinden rîten.
 versûme sich Marsilie,
 so heven wir uns here widere,
 zerstœren al ir krapht.
 sô ne müet uns diu heidenscapht
 hinnen vûre nicht mêre.
 daz râte ich mînem hêrren.'

(RL 1196–1221; 28)

'Now you highborn lords,' he said, 'use your wisdom to honor God. Remember how long we have endured hardships and advise my lord to this end: he should accept the proposal of the heathens, send the messenger off in a manner befitting Christians, take their gifts and hostages, occupy the land, and garrison his strongholds. He need not be concerned as to whether the heathens are sincere, for his troops will remain in Nables, Morinde, Valetterne and Pine. But let us now ride back to our children. If Marsilie fails to appear, we'll come back here and fully destroy the power of heathendom so that it never troubles us again. I so advise my lord.'

Although his request is rejected, the possibilities that are opened up in this consultation are recognizably broader than in the first council scenes. So they agree on a compromise: Instead of continuing to fight, they decide to send a messenger to check the sincerity of the offer. While they agree that this is "daz aller beste" ("the best plan", RL 1240; 28), the narrator reveals: "si geleiten nidere / den rât Genelûnes. / dannen bekorten si sît alle des tôdes" ("They put aside Genelun's proposal, which later was to cause their death", RL 1243–45; 28).

The emperor agrees to send a messenger, but rejects the heroes who volunteer to go.³¹ Finally, Roland suggests his stepfather, Genelun:

[. . .] sô ist Genelûn, mîn stiefvater,
 der aller tiueresten boten einer,
 den ich in deme rîche kan gezeigen.
 er ist wîse unde küene,

³¹ Kragl considers this compromise to be the result of a court intrigue designed to eliminate Genelun. Although the emperor's confidants had previously spoken out against any kind of dialogue with the Saracens, they had nothing to counter Genelun's balancing words, so that his designation as a messenger served as a way to exclude him. See Florian Kragl, "Die Uneigentlichkeit der Heldendichtung und ihre modernen Leser: Ein Versuch über Imagination als narratologische Kategorie," *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 133, no. 3 (2017): 634.

redehaft genuoge.
 er ist ein helt lussam.
 wâ vûnde man nû deheinen man,
 der deme rîche baz gezæme?
 er ist ein fürste alsô mære,
 man en scol ins nicht erlâzen.
 (RL 1367–76; 30)

[. . .] my stepfather Genelun is one of the finest messengers I can think of in the Empire. He is wise, bold, charming and a good speaker – where could one find a man who is better suited to serve the emperor. He is such a famous prince that one should not let him decline.

The listed qualities make an ideal messenger and are also appealing because Genelun has placed himself among the “wîsen” (“prudent”, RL 1098; 27) men whose opinion would remain unheard. Although tensions have already arisen between Roland and Genelun, it appears that Genelun does indeed possess the qualities mentioned, and it seems irrelevant that he was the only one who did not agree with continuing the war. The result of the consultation is thus considered so binding that the previous opposition no longer matters. Apparently the collective considers Genelun’s former resistance to be irrelevant after consensus has been reached. Following this ideal of consultation, the choosing of Genelun as messenger is not a wrong decision. But the narrator tells us what the heroes do not know: Genelun is different from them, and he will become a traitor.

Genelun does not agree with his appointment as messenger and makes this as clear as possible without expressing a direct rejection. Thus he reacts to the proposal with blanching, twice referring to the death which he believes this task will mean, and making clear that he does not want to die, especially not in a foreign country (RL 1382–1403).

According to courtly norms this request is a great honor and Genelun’s reaction is not appropriate. Although he eventually complies with the order, it is with so much resistance that the limits of what is adequate are overstepped. But even though Karl tries to calm the situation, he cannot hide the fact that Genelun’s fear is not unfounded:³² Nobody can guarantee that the messenger will return alive. The compromise that Genelun himself has initiated results in a request that is absolutely binding for him and may even risk his life. The demands for the ideal characters are high, even when courtly norms are taken into account. It is a lot to ask to “vare vrœlichen hinnen” (“go forth in good spirits”, RL 1412; 31) when this can mean death, and Genelun is unable to fulfill that requirement. This distinguishes him from those who volunteered for the mission without hesitation. The willingness to sacrifice one’s own life is

³² See Klaus Ridder, “Emotion und Reflexion in erzählender Literatur des Mittelalters,” in *Codierungen von Emotionen im Mittelalter*, ed. C. S. Jaeger and Ingrid Kasten, Trends in Medieval Philology 1 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003): 213–14.

thus once again established here as justified, while the fear for one's personal life and the longing for family and home are seen as a sign of weakness. Of course, chivalric courage is one of the courtly demands. Nevertheless, the bravery of these potential martyrs is described as exceptional. Even at their introduction, it is stated that Karl's closest confidants have the greatest desire to die for God (RL 80–83). Since this description belongs to the explicit attributions of virtue of the closest circle around the ruler, it can be evaluated as remarkable. Genelun, by contrast, shares a lot of qualities with the others: He is prudent, his lineage is noble enough to be married to the emperor's sister, he is experienced in war and knows enough about representation to be chosen as messenger. But when it comes to potential martyrdom, he differs from the elite circle. So, when the emperor hands Genelun his glove as a sign that Genelun has been selected as his messenger, Genelun drops it, and shows off "wülvîne blicke" ("like a trapped wolf", RL 1418; 31). Finally, he makes a statement that comes quite close to a threat:

'[. . .] ez komt noch diu stunde,
unde læt mich got gesunden,
si geriuwet der rât,
den si über mich gevrumt hânt.'
(RL 1464–67; 31)

'[. . .] Should God spare my life, the time will come when the princes will regret the counsel they have given concerning me.'

What is shown here has features of an affront, but also of a family drama.³³ Genelun refers to the familial relations between himself, Karl and Roland: He claims that Roland only suggested his stepfather because he wants him dead to inherit Genelun's assets. Karl, by contrast, is brother to Genelun's wife; as emperor, he has the power to choose his messenger. Familial and hierarchical relations are entangled, and although the structure of mutual reproaches and requests seems complicated, the emperor's solution appears almost simple: Karl puts an end to the disagreement and enforces his decision. It becomes clear that every member of this community is responsible by his position to uphold the honor of the empire. Disagreement must be eliminated, because unity is needed to enforce power. This unity is an artificial construct, even within the logic of the ideal narrated world. In it, dispute can only delay unity, but not endanger it. Karl explicitly addresses Genelun and makes clear what he expects. Emotions such as anger and fear have no place; Genelun must instead exercise restraint so that he can fulfill the task that lies ahead: "[. . .] nim widere mannes muot. / habe nehein angst, / die wîle dû mich lebende weist. [. . .]" ("[. . .] Show a manly spirit and have no fear as long as I am alive [. . .]"), RL 1499–1501; 32). The trust required of him assumes that he has no fear of death. Karl cannot guarantee that Gene-

33 Werner Hoffmann, "Genelun, der verrâtaere," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 120 (2001): 349–50.

lun will return unharmed, all the more so because imperial messengers have already been killed by the Saracens before. So there is real danger; feeling safe while carrying out this mission is only possible if both its completion and death are considered equally desirable outcomes.

Genelun's dilemma is that he has previously argued that there is no reason to refuse the Saracens' offer. If he follows this logic, there should be no reason for him to be afraid of this mission. However, Genelun himself no longer holds to this argument, and the emperor does not refer to it either. This is probably also due to the fact that Genelun was never primarily concerned with the credibility of the Saracens, but rather with ending the fighting. In this respect, Genelun's argumentation is not consistent, but his motivation is; he is tired of fighting and fears for his life. In this, he has common, but also divergent aspects with Karl: The latter, too, initially showed little enthusiasm for continuing the fighting, and Karl's words to Genelun also express the hope that the Saracens' offer might be serious. The readers know that this is not the case,³⁴ and they also already know that Genelun will defect. All his mentioned qualities and his position justify his proximity to power – and yet he is neither one of the emperor's closest confidants nor one of a cast of characters that at least represent ideological bonds. Even his proximity to the emperor is based on marriage and not on blood ties. Factors of proximity correspond here with a degree of distance that makes betrayal possible without casting doubt on the ideality of the courtly order. The narrator employs emotional markers to increasingly distance Genelun from the other characters and thus to establish criteria of order. There is no narrative return from the foreshadowing that Genelun will be guilty of the others' deaths. So what starts out as an almost reasonable argument for ending the war is, in a brief narrative section, judged to be completely negative. This is also a guide for the reader: the positively connoted collective on one side, the negative, dehumanized individual on the other. The narrator leaves us no room for interpretation as to who we should sympathize with.

Initially Genelun is integrated into a hierarchical structure that enables him to speak freely and even to criticize the emperor. Although this criticism is formally allowed, it is a disturbing factor. His voice is the one that dissents from the consensus. In the *Rolandslied*, ideality means synchronicity. Although the text gives individual traits to its characters, they fit seamlessly into the collective attitude. Genelun's voice, on the other hand, is the disturbance in the collective, and where inner tensions show, problems show. Genelun may be right in pointing out the emperor's favoritism towards the closest confidants, but these privileged relationships are the narrative ideal. In this text, a perfect decision-making process does not involve discussion. This ideal is disrupted by Genelun. Initially, the handling of the deviation follows formali-

³⁴ Hanuschkin pointed out that this superior knowledge of the audience serves to positively characterize Roland. Katharina Hanuschkin, *Intrigen: Die Macht der Möglichkeiten in der mittelhochdeutschen Epik*, Trierer Beiträge zu den historischen Kulturwissenschaften 16 (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2015): 61.

ties. Genelun can express his opinion, as is officially customary in council meetings. Although Genelun's opinion is not followed, his argumentation nevertheless changes something. The result of his criticism is a compromise with Genelun as the main actor. This means that the one whose opinion is not shared becomes the center and the representative of the majority opinion. Even if there is an attempt to reintegrate Genelun when Karl asks him: “[. . .] alsô wis mîn zunge unde mîn munt [. . .]” (“[. . .] be my tongue and lips [. . .]”), RL 1512; 31), Genelun's voice is the one that deviated from unanimity, and there is no way back from this point.

The determining element of the collective is proximity, and that means similarity. The outburst of an individual holds potential for conflict. And so the only time a voice stands out and proposes an alternative, that deviation leads directly to betrayal. The asymmetry of dependency, based on the necessity for willing, collective unanimity, cannot be resolved without affecting the entire structure. So how can one get away from these structures if one does not agree? In this text the answer is probably: Not at all, or only by flight.

2.3 Death of a Traitor

After it has become clear that Genelun is a traitor, one of the imperial confidants calls for his immediate death. But Karl decides that a trial should be held at Aachen:

er sprach: ‘wir sculen in anders züchtigen.
ich wil hernâch über in richten.
alsô über in ertaillet wirdet,
ich wæn, er wirs erstirbet.’

(RL 6110–6113; 77)

‘We shall punish him in another way,’ said Karl. ‘I’ll judge him later. And I think he will be sentenced to a worse death.’

So even before the trial is held, the outcome is clear. The setting of the trial is conventional, though there are unusual aspects in how it is described.

Der kaiser an daz gerichte gesaz.
ôwî, waz fürsten vor im was!
er hiez Genelûnen bringen.
dô wolten im die Karlinge
den lîp gerne fristen.
si sprâchen, daz sie in niene wisten
an nichte überwunden,
doch er wære gebunden.
sîn recht wære vil grôz,
er wære aller fürsten genôz.
Genelûn bat einer stille.

er sprach: 'hêrre, ez was mîn wille,
 ich nelougen dir sîn niet.
 der zwelve tôt ist mir liep,
 ez ist gewisse der mîn rât.
 ich hête in ê widersaget
 ze dîner antwürte offenliche.
 daz erziuge ich mit dem rîche.'

(RL 8729–46; 104)

Sitting in judgment with a great number of princes before him, the emperor ordered Genelun brought to the court. The French wanted to save his life. They declared that, as a nobleman and the peer of the prince, he had a right to be well treated, and they protested because he was in bonds when, to their knowledge, he had not been convicted of anything. Genelun asked for quiet and said: 'Lord, I'll not lie about my intentions. I am pleased at the death of the twelve comrades, and it was my counsel that brought it about. But I had already declared a feud against them, openly and in your presence, and I'll prove it by the assembled princes.'

Formally, the accusation of unjustified bondage made by Genelun's relatives is correct,³⁵ as is the statement that there is no proof of his guilt – until he mentions the advice he gave and his joy about the heroes' death. But while the defense may be legally true, it has no foundation within the narrative, because the audience knows about Genelun's betrayal. An action that can be justified perfectly logically is thus turned into a negative one, while the emperor's arbitrariness can be seen as the only morally correct action. This is also the case with the alleged feud. If Genelun had indeed officially declared a feud with the ruler's twelve confidants, this would change the situation. But although Genelun's former statement that the twelve will come to regret his appointment as messenger implies a threat, there is no evidence of a declaration of feud in the legal sense. So his claim may not be true, but is his statement an admittance of guilt, making further words obsolete? Looking at Karl's reaction, that seems indeed to be the case. "waz bedürfen wir nu rêde mêre?" asks the emperor ("What more do we need to hear?" RL 8747; 104) and points out that since Genelun's crime is evident ("want er sîn offenliche hât verjehen, / daz er die cristen hât gegeben / in die gewalt der haiden. [. . .]"), "He has admitted that he delivered Christians into the hands of the heathens. [. . .]", RL 8749–51; 104), it is time for a verdict ("[. . .] ich frâge urtaile. / alsô die phachte tichten, / sô wil ich über in richten.", "[. . .] I ask for a verdict and shall sentence him according to the wording of the law.", RL 8752–54; 104). So, although the case is as yet not settled, these words of the emperor's apparently have the power to be accepted as facts and to change the strategy of Gene-

³⁵ The fact that Genelun is already tied up during the trial shows that the verdict is being anticipated. His shackles signal Genelun's guilt. Brigitte Janz, "Genelun: 'den armen Iudas er gebildet' Verrat und Verräter im deutschsprachigen *Rolandslied*," in *Verführer, Schurken, Magier*, ed. Ulrich Müller and Werner Wunderlich, *Mittelalter-Mythen* 3 (St. Gallen: UVK Verlag, 2001): 325–26.

lun's defenders. They partially acknowledge Genelun's guilt, remind Karl of his close relationship to Genelun, and call upon the emperor's mercy:

dô was Genelûnes geslächte
 creftic unt mächtig,
 ain vil vorderlichez künne.
 si hêten im gerne gewonnen
 des kaisers hulde.
 si sprâchen: 'vil grôz sint sîne sculde.
 uns ist harte misseschehen.
 diu tiuresten sint alle gelegen.
 nune mac sie niemen wider gewinnen.
 gêre dîne künlinge.
 gestille, hêrre, dînen zorn.
 lâz in ze dînen hulden kom
 durh dîner swester êre.
 des bite wir dich, hêrre.
 Genelûn dienet dem rîche
 iemer mêre vorchtliche.'

(RL 8755–70; 104–05)

Genelun's family was very famous and powerful and its members were eager to gain him the emperor's pardon: 'His offense is great,' they said; 'we have suffered a dreadful misfortune and lost all our best warriors. But since no one can bring them back, show regard for you kinsmen and still your wrath. We beg you, for your sister's sake, to restore him to your favor. Genelun will always serve the Empire with fear and devotion.'

Karl's reaction to this request clearly shows that he has already decided not to forgive Genelun. They are in the middle of a trial, but he has already made his decision.

Der kaiser erzurnte harte
 mit ûf gevangem barte.
 er sprach: 'diu rede ist mir swære.
 der mir al daz golt wæge
 ûz arabîschen rîchen,
 ez ne sî, daz mir die fûrsten geswîchen,
 daz ich sîn niene næme
 wider diesem verrâtære.
 man scol ez iemer ze mære sagen,
 daz wîrs an im gerochen haben,
 unz an der werlte ende.
 diu crîstehait ist harte geschendet,
 des gât uns michel nôt.
 jâne geschach nie sus getân mort.'

(RL 8771–84; 105)

Karl was furious. 'Your words are offensive', he said, gripping his beard. 'If the princes don't forsake me, I wouldn't release this traitor for all the gold in Arabia. Christianity has been dishon-

ored, and till the end of the world it shall be told of us that he was punished for it. We are forced to do it: such a murderous deed has never been committed before.’

It is interesting that Karl points out the special nature of the punishment. It is supposed to be remembered and told about in history. If Genelun’s betrayal is necessary for the story to justify (historically and literarily) at least part of the loss, then the revenge on the traitor must also become part of the story. Therefore, the betrayal cannot be justified, not even with regard to the hierarchical relations that are narrated here and that can only be broken by the betrayal. As a consequence, elements of the betrayal must remain unexplainable. We do not get an inside view of the traitor, and although his motivation does have complex aspects, it is repeatedly simplified. While the story of the betrayal starts with criticism and complicated familial relationships, this strand of motivation is not pursued as the plot progresses. Narratively, Genelun’s betrayal is eventually explained only by his “nature” (RL 1961);³⁶ the motive³⁷ for his deception thus remains incomprehensible and also unforgivable. While Genelun’s motivation remains opaque, proof of his crime intensifies when his nephew demands a duel. This is the call for a divine judgment³⁸ – and for definitive evidence. Considering how convinced everyone except Genelun’s relatives is of his guilt, the reaction to the ordeal is surprising. “Die fürsten geswîcten lange. / von manne ze manne/sach der kaiser hin unt her” (“The princes were silent for a long time as Karl looked back and forth, from one to the other”, RL 8807–09; 105). Only when the emperor threatens that he will no longer wear his crown should no one stand against Genelun’s supporters does a relative of Roland declare himself willing to fight. The fact that he is much weaker than the experienced warrior who fights for Genelun echoes a biblical motif, and underlines Genelun’s guilt even more. But it is not only his life that is at risk here, but the survival of his entire family. This explains their vehement support for him, as well as their unwavering loyalty. So, when Genelun’s nephew is asked during the duel whether he wishes to turn his back on Genelun, he replies that he would rather die (RL 8960–64). Deciding to fight for the traitor is a commitment, and when the duel ends, this is not only the end of Genelun but of all who stood by him. What happens now is an extinction that is legitimized by the fact that the traitor’s defenders have also become traitors.

Der kaiser gesaz an daz gerichte.
dô ertailten im die sentphlichte,
daz rîche scolte werden gerainet.
si hêten sich selben vertailet,
alle die der untriuwen geselle wâren
unt sich für Genelûnen gâben.

³⁶ Stackmann, “Karl und Genelun”: 267.

³⁷ Hoffmann, “Genelun, der *verràtaere*”: 348.

³⁸ Elisabeth Lienert, “Das Rolandslied des Pfaffen Konrad,” *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 84 (2005): 86–87.

die fürsten sprächen alle bî ainem munde,
 alte unt junge:
 'ôwol du heilliger kaiser,
 richte den armen waisen.
 zuo dir ruofent diu kint,
 der vetere verrâten sint.
 sînes künnes scol nicht mère
 wachsen an der erde.'
 die gîsel hiez er ûz fûeren.
 die houbet si in abe sluogen
 Genelûnen si bunden
 mit fûezen unt mit handen
 wilden rossen zuo den zagelen.
 durh dorne unt durh hagene,
 an dem bûche unt an dem rûcke
 brâchen si in ze stûcke.
 sô wart diu untriuwe geschendet.
 dâ mit sî daz liet verendet.

(RL 8993–9016; 107)

The emperor now held court. The imperial council advised him that the Empire should be cleansed and that all those who had become fellow traitors by turning themselves over as hostages for Genelun had convicted themselves. The princes, old and young, spoke with one voice: 'Come on now, holy emperor, let the poor orphans have justice! The children whose fathers were betrayed call to you. Genelun's family should vanish from the earth.' Karl ordered the hostages taken away and beheaded. Genelun's hands and feet were bound to the tails of wild horses that, dragging him through thorn and thicket on his back and belly, tore him to pieces. Treachery was thereby brought to shame. Thus the story ends.

In this story, the ruler is guided by God whenever his actions seem arbitrary. The narrator clearly shows that Karl's words and decisions are not to be doubted; when doubts arise, as is the case with Genelun's kinship, they are erased by the highest possible authority, God himself. What is shown here is narrative rightfulness, legitimized by divine will and with the consent of the collective. The violence thus serves to re-establish the collective order. The disruption that has taken place in the collective can only be reversed through physical destruction.³⁹ This violence, which seems almost

³⁹ Urban has pointed out that intermediate figures or borderline characters ("Zwischenfiguren") in the *Rolandslied* carry negative connotations. The fact that on the outside Genelun looks like the hero of the story even though his inner self is clearly corrupt becomes a problem, which is eliminated by violence at the end of the story. Cf. Felix Urban, *Gleiches zu Gleichem: Figurenähnlichkeit in der späthöfischen Epik: "Flore und Blanschefur", "Engelhard", "Barlaam und Josaphat", "Wilhelm von Wenden", Quellen und Forschungen zur Literatur- und Kulturgeschichte* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020): 321.

excessive,⁴⁰ is incorporated into legal structures. When problematic and debatable aspects are added, they are justified as legitimate by reference to divine will. In this context, violence is not only considered as acceptable but as valid and unavoidable. Although other ways are discernible that might lead to doubt, the text forbids any questioning of the emperor's decisions. What happens here is willed by God; this story includes betrayal, but also punishment as its inevitable consequence. The narrator states at the very beginning that those who oppose Karl "die slehet der gotes zorn / an libe unt an sêle" ("God's wrath will strike them, body and soul", RL 62–63; 17). This prophecy is also fulfilled in the trial against the traitor who came from Karl's own circle. Victory is predetermined and can be jeopardized only by betrayal. Therefore, even the loss of the greatest warriors shows that the power structures depicted are the ideal ones. For this reason, the story of betrayal must remain, even if the traitor himself must disappear.

3 Conclusion

In the *Rolandslied* the connection between dependency and hierarchical positions is shown in the depiction of a close relationship that leads to betrayal and finally to death. The break with this exclusively positively connoted collective begins with opposition. Criticism is possible because of proximity, but is not appropriate and leads directly to betrayal.

The story of this betrayal is told consistently. The moment Genelun is introduced he stands in contrast to the demonstrative unanimity of the other heroes. While motives such as fear for survival or the desire to return home may be common, they appear trivial, profane, and tainted compared to martyrdom. The situation is similar with Genelun's criticism of the advisory practice. While it is true that the counseling process is chaotic, there is no evidence that Genelun is chosen as messenger because the others want his death. This insinuation is unjustified and discredits his previous and further statements. He thus becomes an antithesis of the ideal Christian heroes.

When it comes to the description of the courtly environment and its social structure, ambivalences are inadmissible. The narrator situates the emperor and his confidants as representatives of a world of justice. The result is that even arbitrary and excessive violence, as used in Genelun's punishment, is narrated as the result of negotiation. This ignores the fact that the punishment is legally problematic. There is no doubt about Genelun's guilt and therefore there is no doubt about the legitimacy of the punishment. The emperor is allowed to act arbitrarily, because this arbitrariness

⁴⁰ Janz pointed out that compared to the *Chanson de Roland*, the violence in the *Rolandslied* is less vividly depicted and therefore is almost toned down. Brigitte Janz, "Genelun: 'den armen Iudas er gebildet' Verrat und Verräter im deutschsprachigen Rolandslied": 320.

is concealed by legal formalities. Even more, we are dealing with the divinely chosen ruler whose decisions are not only supported by the collective but by God. Karl's control over Genelun's life is therefore legitimized and structurally inherent in the text. Even the moments that can actually provide dynamism, such as discussions and decision-making, are narrated here in such a way that ambivalences are negatively portrayed. Decision-making processes here serve to narrate the justice of the collective, and to mark this unity as ideal. If we look at how breaking out of power structures is portrayed in this text, we see that the seemingly voluntary surrender into hierarchical relationships is not resolvable here and power is narrated as a linear construct.⁴¹ From the very beginning, we are confronted with a concept of voluntariness which is, however, presented rather as a compulsion to voluntariness.

The fact that these static relationships do not carry negative connotations at all, while breaking out of them does, so much so that it is penalized with a punishment that is not only extremely brutal but that is also apt to be remembered as an example of righteous revenge, is probably one of the contradictions that we have to live with in a text in which the dependency structures are concealed. Moreover, dependency is not seen as problematic but taken for granted. Escape from these structures is only possible through betrayal: an inexcusable act, as is shown in its punishment. When dependency is made visible primarily by means of resistance, it also reveals the fragile proximity without which dependency would not be possible. The opposite of proximity may be distance, but the dark side of proximity is destruction. In this text, this is true for both sides.

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⁴¹ The power structures in the Middle Ages are often described as both undercomplex and characterized by high instability. For example, Norbert Elias attributes a high degree of dynamism to medieval society, cf. Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation. Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen*. Zweiter Band: Wandlungen der Gesellschaft. Entwurf zu einer Theorie der Zivilisation (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2013), from which the much more stable social form of absolutism eventually resulted, cf. Norbert Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft: Untersuchungen zur Soziologie des Königtums und der höfischen Aristokratie. Mit einer Einleitung: Soziologie und Geschichtswissenschaft, Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989): 95. In the *Rolandslied*, however, it can be seen that despite dynamic elements, power is depicted as characterized by linearity, and this linearity can be used to conceal asymmetrical dependency.

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Anna Kollatz

Dependency Narrated in a Biographic Manual from the Mamluk Sultanate: The *al-Ḍawʿ al-lāmiʿ fī aʿyān al-qarn al-tāsiʿ* by al-Sakhāwī (1427–1497)

1 Introduction

ʿAlī b. Muflīḥ, Nūr al-Dīn al-Kāfūrī al-Ḥanafī was of dark brown colour and he was known as Ibn Muflīḥ. Al-Maqrīzī says: His father was a black slave (*abd aswad*) of the eunuch Kāfūr al-Hindī, who had manumitted him. His son studied the Qurʾān until he became a scholar and a teacher of the *mamlūks* [. . .]¹

Even though the word ‘slave’ appears only once in these opening lines of the short biography of Ibn Muflīḥ, an utterly insignificant scholar in fifteenth-century Cairo,² whose biography devotes its main part to describing a tooth extraction the poor man had to endure, the quoted lines are full of direct and indirect references to varieties of strong asymmetrical dependency. Ibn Muflīḥ is the son of a “black slave” – together with the reference to his own skin colour, this is evidence of the intersection of race, colour and states of dependency. The father, in his turn, was the slave of a eunuch of Indian origin, as the latter’s name “al-Hindī” tells. Again, an intersection of slavery, gender and its forced violent alteration, and race becomes apparent.³ Finally, we learn that this eunuch manumitted his black slave, whose son, in turn, became a teacher of young military slaves, the *mamlūks*.⁴

1 Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī. *Al-Ḍawʿ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsiʿ*, 12 vols. (Bayrūt: Dār Maktaba al-Ḥayāt [1966]): vol. 4, 39–40: no. 115. The text will henceforth be cited as *Ḍawʿ*.

2 In this article, I have decided to give dates only in the AD era. Wherever quotations from source texts contain *hijrī* dates, AD equivalents will be given in parallel.

3 al-Sakhāwī notes about him: “Kāfūr al-Hindī al-Ṭawāshī served in the function of *raʿs nauba al-jāmdāriyya* (“chief of the masters of the robe”) and was a *sāqī* (“cupbearer”). He died in the month Muḥarram of the year [8]54/1450–1451 and was buried in the mausoleum of his manumitter (*muʿatti-qatīhi*), Khwānd Ḥājar bint al-Atābik Mönkelībughā al-Shamsī, the wife of [Sultan] al-Ẓāhir Barqūq.” See *Ḍawʿ* VI, 226: no. 677. As we can see here, “al-Ṭawāshī” fulfills the double function of being a part of the eunuch’s name and describing his gender. Moreover, as the manumitter of ʿAlī b. Muflīḥ’s father had served the wife of Sultan Barqūq and was even buried in her mausoleum, we may assume that ʿAlī still could have profited from the connection to her family.

4 Following Donald S. Richards, I use the term ‘Mamluk’ with a capitalized ‘M’ when referring to the dominion of the Mamluk Sultanate in Egypt and Syria, the related Mamluk rule and the specific society that developed in close entanglement with the ruling system. The transliteration of the Arabic term *mamlūk* will be used when referring to the (temporary) status of enslavement military slaves had to pass through before becoming full members of the Mamluk society, after having finished their

Ibn Muflīḥ's biography is certainly not an isolated case. Leafing through any one of the many biographical anthologies that have come down to us from the Mamluk period, we find countless other life stories in which strong asymmetrical dependency plays a role in one way or another: we find slaves, freedmen, descendants of formerly enslaved people, eunuchs, or even slave owners training together with their human property to both become scholars.⁵ Far more interesting than these individual stories, however, are the multifarious references to and connotations of different states of strong asymmetrical dependencies that are woven into these texts and that speak of countless intersections like those sketched above. These references and connotations and their often conscious use as narrative strategies allow us to get a glimpse of notions of slavery and dependency that formed part of a common archive of socially available knowledge shared by authors and recipients of the time. Studying narratives on dependency from the Mamluk sultanate, and especially their microscopic parts, may be a first step in the endeavour of reconstructing emic notions of enslaved people in fifteenth-century Cairo.

A clarification seems to be called for: This article can only provide preliminary results. It will test narratological approaches to notions of dependency in Mamluk-period sources, namely biographical dictionaries,⁶ for, though research on the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt and Syria is extensive and differentiated, the field has not yet been exhaustively explored from the vantage point of slavery and dependency stud-

training and converted to Islam, who, however, still referred to themselves as *mamlūk* (pl. *mamālik*). See Donald S. Richards, "Mamluk Amirs and their Families and Households," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 32–54, especially 40. See also Jo van Steenberg, Patrick Wing and Kristof D'Hulster, "The Mamlukization of the Mamluk Sultanate? State Formation and the History of Fifteenth Century Egypt and Syria: Part I – Old Problems and New Trends," *History Compass* 14, no. 11 (2016): 549–59, especially 550.

5 I would like to mention only a few of the most striking cases that could not be included in this article: Bahādur b. 'Abdullāh al-Armanī al-Dimashqī al-Sanadī, of Armenian origin, was a manumitted slave (*'atīq*) of Ibn Sanad and studied together with his former enslaver with several renowned scholars in Damascus (*Daw'* III, 19: no. 92). Another *'atīq*, Ṭaybughā aka 'Abdullāh al-Sharīfī, became a renowned calligrapher and, among others, a teacher of Ibn Ḥajar (*Daw'* IV, 12: no. 52). The biograms of both manumitted persons are very short and are therefore less suitable as case studies in this context. The eunuch 'Abd al-Laṭīf, Zayn al-Dīn al-Ṭawāshī al-Rūmī al-Manjakī al-'Uthmānī Alṭunbughā had a considerable career and may be regarded as an example of a eunuch's integration into the highest political functions and circles (*Daw'* IV, 340: no. 950). A similar case is Khushqadam al-Zāhirī Barqūq al-Ḥaṣīy (*Daw'* III, 175: no. 680). The biogram of a further eunuch, a certain Īnāl-Shaykh al-Ishāqī al-Zāhirī Jaqmaq, may serve as a further example of negative characteristics ascribed to eunuchs (*Daw'* II, 1069: no. 326), while the eunuch Jawhar al-Qunuqbā'ī al-Jarkasī al-Ṭawāshī did not only serve a sultan, but also a religious scholar and studied Islamic tradition and Qur'ān himself (*Daw'* III, 82–84: no. 326).

6 Only recently, a collective volume has introduced narratology as a method to Mamlukologists: Stephan Conermann, ed., *Mamluk Historiography Revisited: Narratological Perspectives*, Mamluk Studies 15 (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2018).

ies. While Huda Lutfi, in reference to Franz Rosenthal, rightly stated that biographical dictionaries from Mamluk times are characterised by certain “limitations of the historical information available in this literary genre”,⁷ studying their narrative strategies will allow us to delve into the cultural-historical contexts of the time. These contexts include notions and evaluations connected to strong forms of asymmetrical dependency both from the author’s individual view and in the common archive of knowledge and normative or evaluative attitudes of this society.

By means of a narratological analysis of biographical sketches, I will examine the diversity of the ways in which these sketches deal with – or make use of – mentions of strong asymmetrical dependencies. The variety of narrative engagements suggests that dependencies and their consequences had an impact on society as a whole and were not only described by means of certain narrative devices. References to dependency and slavery were also actively used as narrative strategies, as will be shown below. In addition, the article examines which characteristics and stereotypes were assigned to (formerly) enslaved persons in the biographical narratives, and whether these stereotypes were linked to their past as slaves or to further intersectional criteria.

Given that this study is a first attempt to apply narratological categories, it will use selected cases from a pivotal text of the period, namely the biographical dictionary *al-Daw’ al-lāmi’ fi a’yān al-qarn al-tāsi’* (“The shining light illuminating the notables of the ninth [fifteenth] century”) by al-Sakhāwī. After an overview of the historical context in the second section, the source text and its author as well as their specific historical and generic contexts will be discussed in the third section. Narrative authority and the use of other focalisers (e.g. sources cited by the author) do not vary throughout the biographical sketches examined here, nor in the work as a whole. This can at least partly be explained by the fact that the structural composition of the biographical sketches is also relatively consistent, yet filled with individual content to suit the person portrayed in each case. Both overarching characteristics of the text as well as overarching stereotyping in the portrayal of people who were in contact with strong asymmetrical forms of dependency will be introduced in the second part of the third section.

The fourth and main part of the article analyses the representation of the characters. It includes the narrative and – as far as possible – semantic levels as well as the content: What characteristics are attributed to the people presented in the biography? Can we discern stereotypes of certain groups (e.g. free vs. enslaved)? In which ways do the characterisations of enslaved, freedmen, or enslavers⁸ differ? Do the texts evaluate the persons portrayed, their behaviour, etc., and how are these implemented

7 Huda Lutfi, “Al-Sakhāwī’s Kitāb an-Nisā’ as a Source for the Social and Economic History of Muslim Women during the Fifteenth Century A.D.,” *Muslim World* 71 (1981): 104–24, referring to Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1968): 101.

8 The term ‘enslavers’ here encompasses slave traders as well as people owning or re-selling enslaved persons.

narratively? After these questions biographical notes on three exemplary groups of dependents will be analysed, namely a *mamlūk* emir, two biograms that suggest pretending a (former) status of enslavement for the sake of ‘career’ benefits of the portrayed persons, and two biograms of eunuchs.

2 The Mamluk Sultanate of Cairo: A Slave Society?

History and society of the Mamluk Sultanate are well researched, even though there are still many research gaps and, most importantly, countless unedited texts and archive material awaiting attention.⁹ Besides the political-military elite, many other

⁹ Numerous studies on a wide range of topics shed light on all possible aspects of the Mamluk period. General introductions to the field include Stephan Conermann, “Das Mamlukensultanat,” in *Islam: Von der Entstehung bis ins 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Georges Tamer (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2021); Julien Loiseau, *Les Mamlouks XIIIe–XVIIe siècle. Une expérience du pouvoir dans l’Islam médiéval* (Paris: Seuil, 2014); Amalia Levanoni, “The Mamlūks in Egypt and Syria: The Turkish Mamlūk Sultanate (648–784/1250–1382) and the Circassian Mamlūk Sultanate (784–923/1382–1517),” in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 2, *The Western Islamic World. Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Maribel Fierro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 237–84, 743–48; Ulrich Haarmann, “Der arabische Osten im späten Mittelalter (1250–1517),” in *Geschichte der arabischen Welt*, ed. Ulrich Haarmann and Heinz Halm, 5th ed. (Munich: Beck, 2004): 217–63; Carl F. Petry, ed., *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 2, *Islamic Egypt, 640–1517* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate, 1250–1382* (Carbondale: South Illinois University Press, 1986). Overviews of the state of the art and research trends are provided by Ulrich Haarmann, “Mamluk Studies: A Western Perspective,” *Arab Journal for the Humanities* 51 (1995): 328–47; Robert Irwin, “Under Western Eyes: A History of Mamluk Studies,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 4 (2000): 27–51. Stephan Conermann has published several state-of-the-art reviews: Stephan Conermann, “Es boomt! Die Mamlūkenforschung (1992–2002),” in *Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur der Mamlūkenzeit. Zum Gedenken an Ulrich Haarmann (1942–1999)*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Anja Pistor-Hatam (Schnefeld: EB-Verlag, 2003): 1–70; Stephan Conermann, ed., *Mamlukica: Studies on History and Society during the Mamluk Era/Studien zu Geschichte und Gesellschaft der Mamlukenzeit* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2013); Stephan Conermann, ed., *Ubi sumus? Quo vademus?: Mamluk Studies – State of the Art* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2013); Stephan Conermann, “Mamluk Studies 2010–2020: An Overview plus Research Gaps,” in *Studies on the Mamluk Sultanate (1250–1517). Proceedings of a German-Japanese Workshop Held in Tokyo, November 5–6, 2016*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Toru Miura (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2021): 7–56. Furthermore, the first volume of the *Mamlūk Studies Review* (Bruce D. Craig, ed., *Mamlūk Studies Review* 1 [1997], <https://doi.org/10.6082/M1KH0KDP>) gives an excellent and in many points still valid overview of the state of research. More recent discussions of the state of the art are to be found in five forums published online in the review journal *sehепunkte* (April 2013, September 2014, July/August 2015, July/August 2016, February 2021). Jürgen Dendorfer et al., eds., “Forum,” *sehепunkte* 13, no. 4 (2013); idem, “Forum,” *sehепunkte* 14, no. 9 (2014) www.sehепunkte.de/2014/09/#forum; idem, “Forum,” *sehепunkte* 15, no. 7/8 (2015) www.sehепunkte.de/2015/07/#forum; idem, “Forum,” *sehепunkte* 16, no. 7/8 (2016) www.sehепunkte.de/2016/07/#forum; idem, “Forum,” *sehепunkte* 21, no. 2 (2021) www.sehепunkte.de/2021/02/#forum [all accessed 07.09.2023].

groups and society strata have attracted scholarly interest so far.¹⁰ It is now considered an established fact that apart from male military slaves, the *mamlūks*, female slaves of Turkish or Caucasian origin, as well as male and female slaves from numerous other regions were sold and used as domestic servants or concubines in the Mamluk Sultanate. Nevertheless, the Mamluk period has so far rarely been considered from the point of view of a *slave society* or a *society with slaves*.¹¹

However, Mamluk sources do suggest that people in this period were often in contact with several forms of strong asymmetrical dependency. The spectrum includes

10 See, for example, for non-*mamlūk* urban elites Ira M. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Carl F. Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Jonathan Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge: A Social History of Islamic Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992) especially for scholarly circles; for Sufis: Nathan Hofer, *The Popularisation of Sufism in Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt, 1173–1325* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2017), and, more recently, Or Amir, “Mamluk Emirs and Sufi Shaykh: A Study in the Relations between Rulers and Holy Men” (PhD diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2020); for Copts: Tamer el- Leithy, “Coptic Culture and Conversion in Medieval Cairo, 1293–1524 A.D.” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2005); for Jews: Stephan Conermann, ed., *Muslim-Jewish Relations in the Middle Islamic Period: Jews in the Ayyubid and Mamluk Sultantes (1171–1517)* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2017); and for domestic relations: Yossef Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce in Medieval Islamic Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

11 This draws upon Noel Lenski’s conceptualisation of the idea; see Noel Lenski, “Framing the Question: What Is a Slave Society?” in *What Is a Slave Society?: The Practice of Slavery in Global Perspective*, ed. Noel Lenski and Catherine M. Cameron (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018): 15–58. Concerning slavery in the Mamluk sultanate, see the recently published overview by Stephan Conermann, “Slavery in the Mamluk Empire,” in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, vol. 2, *AD 500–AD 1420*, ed. David Richardson, Stanley L. Engerman, David Eltis and Craig Perry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021): 383–405; and the long-awaited monograph by Jan Hinrich Hagedorn, *Domestic Slavery in Syria and Egypt, 1200–1500* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2019). In particular female domestic slavery has already received attention from various angles. See e.g. Carl F. Petry, “Female Slaves and Transgression in Medieval Cairo and Damascus: Gendered Aspects of Bondage and Criminality in the Mamluk Period (648/1250–922/1517),” in *Women and Family in Mamluk and Early-Ottoman Egypt, Syria, and Hijaz*, ed. Daisuke Igarashi and Takao Ito, *Orient: Journal of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan* 54 (Tokyo: The Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan, 2019): 75–84; Yossef Rapoport, “Ibn Ḥaḡar al-ʿAsqālānī, His Wife, Her Slave-Girl: Romantic Triangles and Polygamy in 15th Century Cairo,” *Annales Islamologiques* 47 (2013): 327–51; Yehoshua Frenkel, “Slave Girls and Learned Teachers: Women in Mamluk Sources,” in *Developing Perspectives in Mamluk History: Essays in Honor of Amalia Levanoni*, ed. Yuval Ben-Bassat (Leiden: Brill, 2017): 158–76. Furthermore, Boaz Shoshan’s works on marriage and divorce in fifteenth-century Damascus also contain information on female domestic slavery and *umm walads*, see Boaz Shoshan, “On the Marital Regime in Damascus, 1480–1500 CE,” *ASK Working Paper* 15 (2014); Boaz Shoshan, “On Divorce in Damascus, 1480–1500 CE,” in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras VIII, Proceedings of the 19th, 20th, 21st, and 22nd International Colloquium at Ghent University in May 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013*, ed. Urbain Vermeulen, Kristof d’Hulster and Jo van Steenbergen (Leuven: Peters, 2016): 533–42; Boaz Shoshan, “On Marriage in Damascus, 1480–1500,” in *Developing Perspectives in Mamluk History: Essays in Honor of Amalia Levanoni*, ed. Yuval Ben-Bassat (Leiden: Brill, 2017): 177–86.

the careers of eunuchs as well as the temporary enslavement of young Caucasian, later adult Circassian men, who, as *mamlūks*, were not only trained in administration and military skills before their manumission, but also instructed in the religion of Islam to become part of the political-military elite of the country afterwards.¹² The lives of these people were just as directly marked by strong asymmetrical forms of dependency as those of Caucasian or Turkish enslaved women, who often became the mothers of the descendants of *mamlūks* or married freeborn Arab men.¹³ But the impact of strong asymmetrical dependency on society is not limited to the interaction of primarily dependent persons with their environment. In addition, there are the numerous freed *mamlūks*, as well as eunuchs, who, after their manumission, enjoyed the formal legal status of free men; nevertheless, their lives and their social standing continued to be shaped by their past enslavement.¹⁴ Such an influence only applied to a limited extent to the descendants of Mamluk fathers; for example, the sons of freed *mamlūks* (sometimes called *awlād al-nās*),¹⁵ who often also had mothers of Turkish

12 See the overview of David Ayalon's theory of the Mamluk institution in Reuven Amitai, "The Rise and Fall of the Mamluk Institution: A Summary of David Ayalon's Works," in *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization in Honour of Professor David Ayalon*, ed. Moshe Sharon (Leiden: Brill, 1986): 19–30.

13 In particular, little is known about the impact of female slaves on the development of the population or social groups. See above n. 11.

14 The ongoing dependence between manumitted slaves and their former enslavers in Islamic societies has been studied, among others, by Kurt Franz, "Slavery in Islam: Legal Norm and Social Practice," in *Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean (c. 1000–1500 CE)*, ed. Reuven Amitai and Christoph Cluse (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017): 51–141; Rainer Oßwald, *Das Islamische Sklavenrecht* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2017), with special regard to Malekite law. For a preliminary study of the semantics of post-manumission dependency in Ḥanafī law, see also Anna Kollatz, "How to Approach Emic Semantics of Dependency in Islamic Legal Texts: Reflections on the Ḥanafī Legal Commentary *al-Hidāya fī sharḥ bidāya al-mubtadī* and its British-Colonial Translation," in *Semantics and Lexical Fields of Strong Asymmetric Dependencies*, ed. Jeannine Bischoff and Stephan Conermann (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022): 179–203. A general introduction to the Arabic term *mawlā* is given by Arent Jan Wensinck and Patricia Crone, "Mawlā," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0714. For the roots of this phenomenon in early Islam, see also Daniel Pipes, "Mawlas: Freed Slaves and Converts in Early Islam," *Slavery & Abolition* 1 (1980): 132–77; Irene Schneider, "Freedom and Slavery in Early Islamic Time (1st/7th and 2nd/8th Centuries)," *Al-Qanṭara* 28 (2007): 353–82; Ulrike Mitter, *Das frühislamische Patronat: Eine Studie zu den Anfängen des islamischen Rechts* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2006).

15 Both the emic semantics of the term *awlād al-nās* and the social history of the descendants of the *mamlūks* are awaiting scholarly attention. Taking up the leads laid by Ulrich Haarmann (see e.g. Ulrich Haarmann, "The Sons of Mamluks as Fief-Holders in Late Medieval Egypt," in *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East*, ed. Tarif Khalidi [Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1984]: 141–68; Ulrich Haarmann, "Arabic in Speech, Turkish in Lineage: Mamluks and Their Sons in the Intellectual Life of Fourteenth-Century Egypt and Syria," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 33, no. 1 [1988]: 81–114; Ulrich Haarmann, "Väter und Söhne im Herrschaftssystem der Mamluken (Vortrag vom 16. November 1995)," *Berliner Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft e.V., Jahrbuch* [1995]: 211–27; Ulrich Haarmann, "Joseph's Law: The Careers and Activities of Mamluk Descendants before the Ottoman Conquest of Egypt," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich

origin or (formerly) enslaved mothers, were born as free Muslims and thus never experienced the status of enslavement themselves. Nevertheless, their lives were indirectly shaped by the slave system that provided the backbone of the Mamluk sultanate: because of their descent, they were formally denied access to certain offices and career paths. In addition, they may have encountered similar ethnic or linguistic prejudices as their fathers: although they were no longer imported Turks or Circassians, they were not necessarily regarded as natives either.¹⁶

Temporary slavery and the political-military elite that emerged from it must be considered a formative factor in Mamluk social order. This is also what the few surviving emic social models from this period represent. In the fifth chapter of his treatise on the increasing prices in Egypt (*Ighāthat al-umma bi-kashf al-ghumma*),¹⁷ for example, the Mamluk historian al-Maqrīzī (d. 1441) categorises Egyptian society as consisting of seven classes, with the foreign *mamlūk* elite occupying the highest rank. Next in line are six groups without any shared ethnic features, namely merchants, small traders, peasants, recipients of state benefits, craftsmen and the poor, which could include both the ‘actual’ poor and religious scholars or Sufis who were not financed by state benefits. Members of all these groups could become slave owners themselves if their financial means permitted this. Although owning military slaves was reserved for the respective elite, everyone else could acquire slaves of either sex as personal or domestic servants, etc. Apart from this penetration of society by forms of strong asymmetrical dependency, the underlying slaving system also rubs off on social discourses and, thus, on historiographic narratives. In this respect, Mamluk society can be described not only as a *society with slaves*, but as a *slave society*.

Enslavement thus must be understood as a vital part of society that affects not only slavers and enslaved, but permeates into and thereby influences all aspects of societal life, including discourses in literature and historiography. The presence of a slaving system also shows in individual biographies of people who were *not* in direct contact (as slavers or enslaved) with slavery, but who were either affected in a sec-

Haarmann [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998]: 55–84). This group has recently been in the focus of a conference held in Bonn in 2020, see the proceedings: Anna Kollatz, ed., *Mamluk Descendants: In Search for the awlād al-nās* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2022).

¹⁶ Thus, the historiographer Ibn Iyās describes anti-Circassian violence that hit both *mamlūks* and their descendants in the context of the Ottoman conquest of Cairo. According to him, descendants of *mamlūks* were chased in the streets because of their attire and complexion, which were similar to those of the *mamlūks*. See Ibn Iyās, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad, *Badā’i’ al-zuhūr fī l-waqā’i’ wa-l-duhūr* = Die Chronik des Ibn Ijās, ed. Paul Kahle and Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1960–1992): vol. 5, 150–51. See also Anna Kollatz, *A Window to the Past? Tracing Ibn Iyās’s Narrative Ways of Worldmaking* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2022): 268–69.

¹⁷ Taqī al-Dīn Abū l-Abbās Aḥmad b. al-Maqrīzī. *Ighāthat al-umma bi-kashf al-ghumma*, ed. Karam Ḥilmī Faraḥāt (Al-Haram [Giza]: ‘Ayn li-l-dirāsāt, 2007); see also the translation by Adel Allouche, published as *Mamluk Economics: A Study and Translation of al-Maqrizi’s Ighathah* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994).

ondary range, as for instance the descendants of *mamlūks*, or who deliberately linked their own biographies to the status of enslavement – for example to ease themselves into the Mamluk elite – or who were accused of having done so by their contemporaries. Slavery thus permeates into narratives, into street gossip, and references to it can become a narrative strategy in the positive or negative remembrance of people.

Speaking or writing about different forms of strong asymmetrical dependencies, including actual slavery, post-manumission loyalty bonds between former owner and manumitted slaves, and, finally, secondary influences, e.g. concerning the social standing of the *mamlūks*' descendants, are a perfectly ordinary topic in this society and can be found in every genre. As it is such a perfectly normal part of society and individuals' lives, references to enslavement, slave training, careers, manumission, etc. form part of a common archive of socially available knowledge shared by authors and recipients of the time. This means that such references usually come without an explanation, or with only sketched background information. Narrative sources like the biographical dictionaries I focus on therefore are very well suited for gaining information on how people talked and wrote about slavery, on how this topic and issues related to it formed part of the discursive landscape at a certain time. They also allow glimpses into practices of slavers and (formerly) enslaved people's lives, but they decidedly need to be read and understood as what they are: as *narratives* about people, and *not* as purely factual information about a certain societal subsystem and its functioning.

3 The *Ḍaw'*, its Author and the Generic Context of Biographical Sketches

Similar to his ancestors, who had migrated from the town of Sakhā (hence al-Sakhāwī, “the one from Sakhā”) in the Nile Delta to Cairo some two generations before his birth, Shams al-Dīn Abu 'l-Khayr Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Shāfi'ī al-Sakhāwī (1427–1497),¹⁸ offspring of a renowned scholarly family, followed the career of an *'ālim* of Is-

¹⁸ Al-Sakhāwī is among the better studied scholars of the Mamluk period, although a monographic study on his life and work is still a desideratum. For an introduction to his life and works, see for example Carl F. Petry, “al-Sakhāwī,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6503; Clifford Edmund Bosworth, “al-Sakhāwī (830–902/1427–97),” in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, ed. Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey (London: Routledge, 1998): 678–79; Fāṭimah Zubār 'Unayzān, *al-Sakhāwī wa-kitābuhu al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi' mawāriduhu wa-manhajuhu* (Ammān: Dār Ṣafā' lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 2011); Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn, “al-Sakhāwī wa-mu'arrikhū al-qarn al-tāsi' al-hijrī ma' nashr wa-Dirāsāt maqāmat 'al-kāwī fi tārikh al-Sakhāwī' lil-Suyūṭī,” in *Sa'īd 'Ashūr ilayh fi 'Īd Milādih al-Sab'in: Buḥūth wa-Dirāsāt fi Tārikh al-Uṣūr al-Wustā bi-Aqlām Nukhbah min Ta-lāmīdih wa-Murīdih* (Cairo: Markaz al-Nashr li-Jāmi'at al-Qāhirah, 1992): 47–90; Abū 'Ubaydah Mash-

lamic sciences and related disciplines, such as historiography. He studied the prophetic tradition (*ḥadīth*) with Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (1372–1449), a famous institution not only in his time, but up to the present day. As foreshadowed by his formal education, al-Sakhāwī held several teaching positions for prophetic tradition in different distinguished madrasas in Cairo; moreover, he travelled to several cities in Syria to deepen his studies with shaykhs in the scholarly centres there, and he performed the pilgrimage twice. In his Cairene hometown, al-Sakhāwī was immersed in a yearlong scholarly fight with learned rivals, the most notable among them being the polymath al-Suyūṭī, whose writings al-Sakhāwī had criticised severely.¹⁹ In his treatise on historical methods, *al-ʿIlān bi ʿl-tawbīkh li-man dhamma ahl al-taʾrīkh* (“Condemnation of those who admonish historians”),²⁰ al-Sakhāwī summarises his criticism, bemoaning a decline in scholarly methods of his time. The *ʿIlān*, more importantly, provides details on the author’s concept of writing history, scholarly methods and theory, and has therefore been rated as “al-Sakhāwī’s outstanding theoretical achievement”.²¹

In his writings, al-Sakhāwī often expresses his reverence for his teacher Ibn Ḥajar and his willingness to continue the latter’s work and thus keep it alive. Like Ibn Ḥajar, he immersed himself in writing a massive biographical dictionary, which might today be his best-known work. The *al-Ḍawʿ al-lāmiʿ fī aʿyān al-qarn al-tāsiʿ* (“The shining light illuminating the notables of the ninth [fifteenth] century”) is among the most used and esteemed sources of information on *ʿulamāʾ*²² in the respective time period both for contemporary readers – al-Sakhāwī is often quoted e.g. by historiographers of his time – and for modern scholarship. It comprises twelve volumes of biographical sketches on notable men, and a separate volume on notable women who all died during the ninth century of the hijra, which is roughly the fifteenth century AD.²³ Although the work concentrates, in theory, on notables related to Islamic sciences, it contains references to an astonishingly broad range of individuals from different social backgrounds: we find the descendants of old Arabic scholarly families next to learned *mamlūks* of Turkish origin and their descendants, former slaves of Abyssinian origin, or eunuchs. Al-Sakhāwī obviously also included persons who had gained recognition as members of

hūr ibn Ḥasan Āl Salmān and Abū Ḥudhayfah Aḥmad al-Shuqayrāt, *Muʿallafāt al-Sakhāwī: al-ʿAllāmah al-Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī (831–902H)* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1998).

19 On al-Sakhāwī’s position towards Ibn Taghrībirdī, see also William Popper, “Sakhāwī’s Criticism of Ibn Taghrī Birdī,” in *Studi orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi della Vida*, ed. Istituto per l’Oriente, Pubblicazioni dell’Istituto per l’Oriente 52 (Rome: Istituto per l’Oriente, 1956): 371–89.

20 Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī. *Al-ʿIlān bi ʿl-tawbīkh li-man dhamma ahl al-taʾrīkh*, translation: Rosenthal, *A History*.

21 Petry, “al-Sakhāwī.”

22 In its broader sense, the term denotes scholars of “almost all disciplines”, while in a more specific, yet widespread meaning, it refers to scholars in Islamic religious learning. See Claude Gilliot et al., “Ulamāʾ,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1278.

23 For this article, I used the 1966 Beirut edition in 12 volumes; each volume of the text contains more than 1,000 biographical sketches.

the ruling elites, and especially as administrative leaders; individuals that often doubled as patrons of scholarly institutions, for example by founding madrasas, libraries, schools, Sufi khanqahs or mosques.

If we turn to the generic contexts of Arabic biographical dictionaries, we should first note that the Islamic (Arabic as well as Persian) tradition of historiography was strongly linked to the collection of biographical data from the very beginning. As Franz Rosenthal notes, for Islamic scholars the two genres of historiography and the biographical dictionary go hand in hand, indeed seem to be virtually inseparable for long periods.²⁴ Also al-Sakhāwī – in line with the constitutive ideas of Islamic historiography – draws a close connection between the art or science of writing history and the collection of biographical data about the transmitters of historiographical information.²⁵ More than that, he even declares the collection of data about “the birth of transmitters and *imāms*, and of their death, health, intelligence, bodily state, journeys, pilgrimages, powers of memory, accuracy, and reputation for trustworthiness or otherwise” to be the first and most important function of writing history, while he rates the “record of contingent events” as only “subsidiary” to the collection of biographical data.²⁶

The reason for this lies in the historical genesis of both genres. In close coexistence with *ḥadīth* scholarship, i.e. the collection and tradition of deeds and sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad and his companions, Islamic historiography essentially emerges from two basic tasks. First, it is about collecting deeds and sayings of predecessors in order to gain instruction and guidance from them. Secondly, it is a matter of studying the education and lifestyle of the traditionalists in order to be able to draw conclusions about the quality and credibility of their records. Against this background, various genres developed that can be described in the broadest sense as nar-

24 Rosenthal, *A History*: 101. See also Petry, *Civilian Elite*: 7–8 and Sir Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen Gibb, “Islamic Biographical Literature,” in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis and Peter M. Holt (London: Oxford University Press, 1962): 54–58. On the convergence of the generic terms *taʾrīkh* (“history”) and *tarjama* (“biography”), which become almost synonymous, see Peter Auchterlonie, “Historians and Arabic Biographical Dictionaries: Some New Approaches,” in *Islamic Reflections, Arabic Musings: Studies in Honour of Professor Alan Jones*, ed. Robert G. Holyland and Phillip F. Kennedy (Cambridge: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2004): 186–200, esp. 186; and idem, *Arabic Biographical Dictionaries: A Summary Guide and Bibliography* (Durham: Middle East Libraries Committee, 1987); Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 206–08 and idem, “Islamic Biographical Dictionaries: A Preliminary Assessment,” *The Muslim World* 63 (1973): 53–65.

25 On the intersections of biography and historiography in Arabic sources, see Donald Presgrave Little, *An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography: An Analysis of Arabic Annalistic and Biographical Sources for the Reign of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāʾūn* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1970): 100–136, esp. 100–101 and 135. For a discussion of the genre of biographical literature, see Gibb, “Islamic Biographical Literature” as well as Lutfi, *Al-Sakhāwī’s Kitāb an-Nisāʾ*.

26 Al-Sakhāwī, *Iʿlān* following the translation by Rosenthal, cited from Gibb, *Islamic Biographical Literature*: 55.

rative representations of history, combining annalistic, chronical, biographical, and later anecdotal-interpretative and, often through the use of verse, evaluative interjections in different compositions. A generic study and typology of genres as diverse as *ta'rikh*, *sīra*, *tabaqāt* based on their emic development and definition is still a desideratum; at least, there is still no comprehensive study that would not merely translate the emic genres with European genre designations such as annals, chronicle, biography, which do not necessarily match the abovementioned Arabic genres.²⁷

In the days of the Mamluk Sultanate of Cairo, historiographical works in the broadest sense, ranging from city or regional histories to universal chronicles or even personal *sīras*, which tell the history of events along the biography of a notable person, e.g. a sultan,²⁸ combine biographical and historiographical parts in different degrees and ways. Short biographies in the sense of the biographical sketches discussed here are found as an integral part of historiographies. They are placed, for example, as obituaries in annalistic works at the beginning or end of a year or woven into the text in the context of descriptions of rulers. They also appear in collections specialising in biographical sketches, in the biographical encyclopaedias. Such reference works have been preserved in great abundance, especially from the Mamluk period.²⁹

27 There are, however, studies on individual regional or temporally limited developments. See e.g. the discussion in Thomas Bauer's revision in Thomas Bauer, "Mamluk Literature: Misunderstandings and New Approaches," *Mamluk Studies Review* 9, no. 2 (2005): 105–32. See also Stefan Leder, "Postklassisch und prä-modern: Beobachtungen zum Kulturwandel in der Mamlükzeit," in *Die Mamlüken: Studien zu ihrer Geschichte und Kultur. Zum Gedenken an Ulrich Haarmann (1942–1999)*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Anja Pistor-Hatam (Schenefeld: EB-Verlag, 2003): 289–312; Donald Presgrave Little, ed., *History and Historiography of the Mamlüks* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1986). On the narrative character of Mamluk historiography, see also Conermann, ed., *Mamluk Historiography Revisited*.

28 This genre, too, has its origins in early Islamic writing, the earliest surviving evidence being biographies of the Prophet Muḥammad (*sīra al-nabī*). From the Mamluk period, we also know popular narratives, such as the *Sira al-Malik Baybars*, which combines partly adventurous and fictionalised popular heroic narratives about the fourth Sultan al-Malik al-Zāhir Baybars (r. 1260–1277). See Thomas Herzog, *Geschichte und Imaginaire: Entstehung, Überlieferung und Bedeutung der Sīrat Baibars in ihrem sozio-politischen Kontext* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006).

29 To name just a few: Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, ed. Shaykh Sha'ib al-Arna'ūt et al. (Beirut: Mu'assasa al-risāla, 1985); Ibn al-Dawādārī, Abū Bakr b. 'Abdullāh, *Kanz al-durar wa-jāmi' al-ghurar*, ed. Bernard Radtke et al. (S.l.: 1982); Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Al-Durar al-kāmīna fī a'yān al-mī'a al-thāmina*, ed. F. Krenkow (Hyderabad: Dā'ira al-ma'ārif al-'uthmāniyya, 1929–1932); Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Inbā' al-ghumr bi-anbā' al-'umr*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabash (Cairo: Kitāb al-sādis 'ashara, 1969); Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās (Beirut: Dār al-ṣādir, 1972); Ibn Taghribirdī, *Al-Nujum al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa-l-Qāhira*, ed. William Popper (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1909–1936); idem, *Al-Manhal al-ṣāfi wa-l-mustawfi ba'd al-wāfi*, ed. M. Muḥammad Amin (Cairo: Al-hai'a al-miṣriyya, 1984); Taqī al-Dīn Abū l-'Abbās Aḥmad b. al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-ma'rīfat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir 'Aṭā (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'ilmiyya, 1997); idem, *Durar al-uqūd al-farīda fī tarājim al-a'yān al-muftīda*, ed. Maḥmūd al-Jalīlī (Beirut: Dār al-ghurab al-islāmiyya, 2002); Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafādī, *Al-Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*, ed. Aḥmad al-Arna'ūt (Beirut: Iḥyā' al-

Al-Sakhāwī's *Daw'* is special among these because it was the last major collection of biographies written in Cairo during Mamluk rule.³⁰ It includes both contemporaries of the author and people whom al-Sakhāwī could not have met. In the introduction to the *Daw'*, al-Sakhāwī himself describes his working process – another typical feature of biographical encyclopaedias as well as historiographies of his time – as meticulous research: he obtains information from earlier biographical encyclopaedias as well as from historiographies and oral sources, e.g. from 'trustworthy' informants. In addition, al-Sakhāwī claims to have occasionally used documents, such as inheritance or foundation (*waqf*) deeds, for gathering information. Al-Sakhāwī mostly names his sources, for example referring back to the biographical dictionary by his teacher Ibn Ḥajar or to standard historiographical works of his time, like the one by al-Maqrīzī. Like other authors of historiographical and/or biographical texts, al-Sakhāwī bases his collection on a factual claim. Nevertheless, he clearly wrote the biographical sketches using different narrative strategies, including fictional dialogues, implicitly or explicitly judgmental comments from the narrator's perspective, and many more. The author is characterised by an individual and always recognisable narrative voice. This applies in particular to his sometimes harsh criticism of contemporaries and his often ungracious description of their errors, which are dripping with sarcasm and which Carl Petry has described as follows, regarding them as a weakness of the text:

Al-Sakhāwī disguised a propensity for personal vindictiveness against his adversaries and those of his associates under the guise of a pious wish to evaluate his contemporaries' moral probity in order to assess the validity of their opinions, both for interpretation of the sharī'a and the giving of historical details.³¹

3.1 Biographical Sketches: The Micro-Structure

In terms of content and structure, the individual biographical sketches share similarities and may thus be described as a 'mini-genre' on their own account. The entries, i.e., the single biographical sketches, which range in length from a few lines to several pages, always begin with the name of the person being described, mentioning honorific names and titles that may have been acquired as well as the person's lineage (*nasab*), which is an integral part of Arab naming. Here, we encounter a first feature that distinguishes *mamlūks*, (manumitted) slaves and descendants of *mamlūks* from

turāth al-'arabī, 2000); idem, *A'yān al-aṣr wa-a'wān al-naṣr*, ed. 'Alī Abū Zaid et al. (Damascus: Dār al-fikr, 1998).

³⁰ Only the collection by Ibn al-'Imād is younger; it dates from the seventeenth century and was thus written more than a century after the end of Mamluk rule in Egypt and Syria.

³¹ Petry, "al-Sakhāwī."

freeborn people.³² An enslavement background can be recognised by the fact that the person in question does not have a *nasab* – simply because the ancestry of the *mamlūks*, who were brought to Egypt as young children, or other slaves was usually unknown. Instead of an Arabic *nasab*, their names either feature *Ibn ‘Abdullāh* (lit. “son of a servant of God”)³³ or special components related to their *mamlūk* status or other forms of enslavement. Instead of being identified by the descent from father and forefathers associated with the word *ibn* or *bin* (“son of”), *mamlūks* often bear a sort of pseudo-*nasab* that features the names of the slave traders and owners through whose hands and training the person has passed. This pseudo-kinship relationship created by enslavement and sale is expressed with the binding word *min* (“[owned] by”).³⁴ Other markers in the name are, for the Circassian period, the name component *al-Jarkasī* (“the Circassian”) or components of the name in the form of a *nisba*, which indicate the affiliation to a certain Mamluk household (e.g. *al-Nāširī* “the one who belongs to sultan al-Nāšir”). Further components indicate membership of a group defined in ethnic terms or by their gender group often affected by slavery are, for example, *al-Ḥabashī* (“the Abyssinian”), *al-Hindī* (“the Indian”), *al-Rūmī* (“the Greek”), or *al-Ṭawāshī* and more rarely *al-Ḥaṣī* (both “the eunuch”). Similarly, the title *al-Khādīm* (literally “the servant”) as a part of the name or a description in the biography allows, especially for Mamluk times, to identify the person as a eunuch. Besides, a rather restricted number of first names can be regarded as typical of eunuchs in the Mamluk period.³⁵ Likewise, names can already contain indications of a person’s manumitted status, for example when they are referred to as *‘atīq* or *mu’attaq* (both ‘manumitted one’). Finally, the titles of administrative or military positions usually held by *mamlūks*, such as *al-dawādār* (lit. ‘the inkwell-holder’) can help identifying persons with an enslavement background. All designations, both those for eunuchs and *mamlūks*, also occur throughout the text. Finally, descendants of formerly enslaved *mam-*

32 See David Ayalon, “Names, Titles, and ‘Nisbas’ of the Mamluks,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 5 (1975): 189–232.

33 The *nasab* “Ibn ‘Abdullāh” is a common marker for enslaved or formerly enslaved persons not only in Arabic, but also in the Ottoman and Persian languages. It refers to the fact that they have been removed from their kinship and often do not know about their genealogy, “Ibn ‘Abdullāh” standing in for the unknown name of their fathers. Al-Sakhāwī explains this for example in the biography of Sayf al-Dīn Jaqmaq (see below): “Some called his father ‘Abdullāh, which is a name mostly used for those who do not know their father’s name.” *Ḍaw’* III, 74–75: no. 288.

34 See for example *Ḍaw’* II, 320, no. 1029: Alṭunbughā *min* ‘Abd al-Wahīd al-Ṣaghīr, a *mamlūk* with scholarly interest.

35 See David Ayalon, “The Eunuchs in the Mamluk Sultanate,” in *The Mamlūk Military Society: Collected Studies*, ed. David Ayalon (London: Variorum Reprints, 1979): 267–95, esp. 274 for distinctive marks in eunuch names, 275–77 for first names. See also Ayalon’s monograph on eunuchs in Islamic societies, David Ayalon, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans: A Study in Power Relationships* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1999).

lūks can be identified when typical *mamlūk* name components appear in their *nasab*, that is, among the names of their fathers or grandfathers.³⁶

In the second part of the introduction, there are sometimes further explanations about the enslavement history and the region of origin of the person, possibly also about the way they came to Egypt. Details of their education, teachers they have listened to and the like may follow. In the case of enslaved persons, this part can be limited to a list of the owners and places of residence, possibly also the tasks and functions that the enslaved person fulfilled for the respective owners or at court – for we are usually dealing with military and administrative slaves here, i.e., a form of elite slavery. Insofar as an enslaved or manumitted *mamlūk* or eunuch was active as a scholar, however, their scholarly activities are described, just as in the case of free-born people. Since biographical dictionaries by definition focus on the ‘important people’ of a certain time, we find an above-average number of *mamlūks* and eunuchs who held prestigious posts before their release and afterwards. However, their biographies also show that dependency and, where applicable, the experience of violence and oppression resulting from it, do not necessarily have to be linked to slave status. We find biographies that report on the mistreatment of enslaved people as well as those that address violence against freedmen or freedwomen.³⁷

The third part of the biographies contains information on the character of the person described; this is sometimes a very brief passage, but in some cases it is also embellished with anecdotes as well as, where appropriate, information on written works, endowments, special achievements and the like. The main focus of this article is on these narrative details. The biographical notes often conclude with an indication of the year of death or even an exact date as well as remarks on the person’s funeral, which can also be telling with regard to the description of emotional reactions from the public, provisions for the burial the person themselves has made, among others.

3.2 Stereotypical Characterisation in Biographical Sketches

Irrespective of whether they are presented in the context of historiographical works or in separate collections, biographical accounts in the Arabic-Islamic tradition share a number of features, which also provide the formal and contextual framework for the examples examined in this article. Arab authors basically followed a kind of com-

³⁶ For example in the case of Aḥmad b. al-Yazīd min Ṭurbāy (d. 1491–2), who was a student of al-Sakhāwī and, as his name tells, the son of the *mamlūk* al-Yazīd, who had been owned by a certain Ṭurbāy. See *Ḍaw’* II, 244: no. 680.

³⁷ This article is a first approach to the genre considering the form in which slavery is thematised in biographical sketches. Therefore, only a few selected case studies can be discussed in the following; a quantitative study of larger numbers of biographical sketches and a comparison between different authors is still pending.

mon code, consisting of common rules for writing biographies. These rules first concern the content and function of biographical accounts, which for short biographical sketches, i.e., the subject matter of this article, translates into a distinct generic format. The critical evaluation of a person's life is the guiding interest behind the 'mini-genre' of biographical sketches.³⁸ As Lutfi pointed out, referring to al-Sakhāwī's theories on biographical literature, "the question of critical assessment became an essential factor in personality evaluation, following very strict rules. The risk of being accused of slander may have acted as a strong deterrent against excessive negative criticism."³⁹ Following a didactic impetus, which can be noted in particular in historiography, biographies were also conceived as representations of role models; in other words, the authors sought to highlight positive features rather than criticising negative characteristics of the persons described. Of course, this does not apply when authors write from a particular perspective, for example, when certain people are used as negative examples for the consequences of wrong behaviour. However, as already mentioned, our author al-Sakhāwī stands out in that he does not hold back with critical remarks, at times even offering biting ridicule. On the contrary, his biographical sketches often seem to take pleasure in ironic and negative portrayals. Lutfi thus characterises him as a scholar who "was notorious for being critical [. . .] on those scholars for whom he felt little respect".⁴⁰ Apart from this peculiarity, which al-Sakhāwī may have adopted to some extent from his teacher Ibn Ḥajar, we must of course bear in mind that biographical sketches always reflect the author's individual point of view, which includes personal beliefs and emotions as well as attitudes and stereotypes that are generally accepted in the author's historical and social context. It is important to note and accept that the characterisation of persons partly depends on stereotypical, intersectional features, which often bear witness to structural prejudices or negative stereotypes that cannot be attributed to the individual author.⁴¹ Such

38 This is an etic genre attribution that I propose here in order to distinguish the mini-genre of the individual short biography from biographical collections and other genres, such as the *sīra*. Biographical sketches appear in different genres, among them *ta'riḫ*, *sīra*, even *adab* literature and many others.

39 Lutfi, Al-Sakhāwī's Kitāb an-Nisā': 107, referring to Sakhāwī *al-Ilān* as translated by Rosenthal, *A History*: 366. She also notes that the question how to evaluate a person (*al-jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*) was a controversial issue discussed for instance by al-Sakhāwī and al-Suyūṭī.

40 Lutfi, Al-Sakhāwī's Kitāb an-Nisā': 107.

41 A more detailed investigation of such stereotypes in Mamluk texts remains a desideratum and cannot be undertaken in this article. Ulrich Haarmann's research still is the state of the art and provides starting points for further studies, e.g. with regard to the negative evaluation of people of Turkish origin (for literature see n. 14); Christian Mauder has tackled the prejudice of the 'uneducated Mamluk', see Christian Mauder, "Education and Learning among Members of the Mamluk Army: Results of a Quantitative Analysis of Mamluk Biographies," in *History and Society during the Mamluk Period (1250–1517)*. *Studies of the Annemarie Schimmel Institute for Advanced Study III*, ed. Bethany J. Walker and Abdelkader Al Ghouz (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2021): 61–88. See also his monograph: Christian

stereotypes arise at the intersection of categories such as race or ethnic origin, language and appearance, but also gender. In this context, a distinction between male and female stereotypical characteristics is not the only factor, but specific stereotypical characteristics are also attributed to eunuchs, qualities that appear repeatedly in the biographical sketches. In addition, there are also beliefs originating in the field of physiognomy,⁴² which link certain external features, such as facial traits, with character qualities. Preconceived, stereotypical ideas therefore do not exclusively concern people who have been in contact with slavery or have themselves experienced one or more forms of strong asymmetrical dependency, but are applied to all sections of society. However, it should be noted that, for example, people of Turkish origin, i.e. those who entered the Mamluk sultanate as slaves as well as their descendants, are associated with a relatively large number of negative characteristics (e.g. being uneducated, having rough manners, not speaking good Arabic, being inclined to violence).⁴³ Thus, for example, good command of Arabic would be represented as untypical for a *mamlūk*,⁴⁴ and positive characteristics regarded as typical of a *mamlūk*, as for example very good equestrian skills including mounted combat (*furūsiyya*), would often be mentioned together with less flattering ‘typical’ traits.⁴⁵ In contrast, members of the Arabic-speaking society, distinguished by traditional education, ancestry and possibly an inherited (or self-earned) reputation in scholarship, claim positive characteristics (erudition, well-formed Arabic language and education) for themselves.⁴⁶

Mauder, *Gelehrte Krieger: Die Mamluken als Träger arabischsprachiger Bildung nach al-Şafadī, al-Maqrīzī und weiteren Quellen*, Arabistische Texte und Studien 18 (Hildesheim: Olms, 2012).

42 See for example the *Kitāb al-siyāsa fī ‘ilm al-firāsa* (“The practical book on the knowledge on physiognomy”) of Shams al-Dīn al-Dimashqī and the analysis of stereotypes related to female slaves by Antonella Ghersetti, “The Representation of Slave Girls in a Physiognomic Text of the Fourteenth Century,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 21 (2018): 21–45; on the text and its history see Johannes Thomann, “A Lost Greek Text on Physiognomy by Archelaos of Alexandria in Arabic Translation Transmitted by Ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Dimashqī: An Edition and Translation of the Fragments with Glossaries of the Greek, Syriac, and Arabic Traditions,” in *Visualizing the Invisible with the Human Body: Physiognomy and Ekphrasis in the Ancient World*, ed. J. Cale Johnson and Alessandro Stavru (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019): 443–84.

43 The same applies to people of colour, such as slaves (*ḥabashī*) from present-day Ethiopia or other groups classified according to origin and/or appearance, to whom specific good and bad qualities are attributed across the board. See e.g. Hans Müller, *Die Kunst des Sklavenkaufs nach arabischen, persischen und türkischen Ratgebern vom 10. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, Islamkundliche Untersuchungen 57 (Freiburg: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1980).

44 As in the case of Sayf al-Dīn Jaqmaq, see below.

45 As in the case of a certain ‘Alībāy b. Ṭarabāy al-‘Ajāmī al-Jarkasī al-Mu’ayyadī Shaykh, whom al-Sakhāwī describes as “a sympathetic emir and a master of *furūsiyya*, even if he lied a lot.” See *Ḍaw’ V*, 151: no. 526.

46 See e.g. Haarmann, *Arabic in Speech*.

4 The Narrative Faces of Dependency: The Analysis of Characters

The following exemplary cases have been selected in order to represent as wide a variety of references to strong asymmetrical dependencies as possible. However, they do not aspire to drawing a complete picture, neither of such references in the *Ḍaw'*, nor in biographical dictionaries as a whole. This being said, the following analysis also cannot and does not intend to make any statements as to the frequency of certain constellations. Regarding the narrative strategies as well as the diffusion of strong asymmetrical dependencies in Mamluk society, the individual cases are to be seen as representatives of further, similar biographies and references.

4.1 A 'Learned *Mamlūk*': Uzbek min *Ṭuṭukh al-Ashrafī thumma al-Zāhirī Jaqmaq*

Let us first look at an example of the biography of a 'learned *mamlūk*'.⁴⁷ Uzbek's biography is among the longer ones, covering almost three printed pages in the edition of the *Ḍaw'*.⁴⁸ At this point, only a summary of the content will be given, illustrating the typical structure of biographies, but also showing references to forms of strong asymmetrical dependency.⁴⁹

The first three lines of the biogram give the name, the origin and the enslavement history of Uzbek. We learn that the slave trader (*khwājā*) *Ṭuṭukh* bought him in the Circassian lands and that he subsequently had two owners before coming into the possession of Sultan al-Zāhir Jaqmaq (r. 1438–1453). The name of the *mamlūk* indicates the three most important 'stations' of his enslavement biography: his proper name Uzbek is followed by the indication of his origin *min Ṭuṭukh*, which translates as 'bought by *Ṭuṭukh*'. The *nisba* al-Ashrafī initially indicates his belonging to the household of Sultan al-Ashraf Bārsbāy (r. 1422–1438), but when the latter passes the slave on to his son, the *nisba* does not seem to change. This only happens when the *mamlūk* changes households once more by sale; henceforth, the *nisba al-Zāhirī Jaqmaq* indicates his affiliation to his third owner and later manumitter.

In the case of this 'learned Mamluk', a relatively detailed account of his training in the *ḥadīth* follows, mentioning the names of teachers and his supervising emir as well as the works he studied. All information is presented in a matter-of-fact, clipped tone without any embellishments, due to the factual character of the genre. Formally, the biography hardly differs from that of a freeborn scholar, but we may state that

47 I use this term in accordance with Mauder, *Education*, and idem, *Gelehrte Krieger*.

48 *Ḍaw'* II, 270–72: no. 844.

49 On Uzbek, see Berkey, *Transmission of Knowledge*: 152–53 and 159.

the text mentions a less comprehensive curriculum compared to freeborn scholars trained for example in a madrasa. In the second part of the passage, this impression strengthens. To illustrate and at the same time implicitly devalue Uzbek's education, al-Sakhāwī uses an additional speaker, in this case an Arab scholar and teacher in the Mamluk barracks, who is presented as an eyewitness to Uzbek's studies. His statement, which reads like 'school-gossip', is reproduced in direct speech and brings up one of the stereotypical criticisms of 'learned Mamluks' already described by Haarmann – namely their lack of Arabic language skills.⁵⁰

Taqī [al-Dīn] al-Qalqashandī,⁵¹ who at that time was a lecturer (*qārī*) in the [Mamluk] barracks, describes him as follows: 'He did not understand a single word of Arabic. This is why he learned from our teacher, until the end [of his studies], using the translation of the *musnad* [of Ibn Ḥanbal] made by 'Abd al-Raḥman b. Azhar and by [listening] to the recitation also.'⁵²

The next, much longer section of the biogram reports on Uzbek's career after his manumission by his *ustādh*⁵³ al-Zāhir Jaqmaq. The latter first promoted him to various elevated posts (such as *sāqī* [cupbearer], *amīr 'ashara* [commander of ten], *ra's nauba* [commander of the Mamluks]) and even married him to one of his daughters, whose mother was either a manumitted concubine or a divorced wife⁵⁴ of al-Zāhir Jaqmaq. The description of his career encompasses the period after the death of his *ustādh*, in which he initially continues to rise (e.g. becoming head of finances, *khāzindār*), but is then imprisoned and exiled after a conflict with the next sultan, al-Malik al-Ashraf Sayf al-Dīn Īnāl (r. 1453–1461). Here we see an influence of the post-manumission loyalty system on Mamluk society, for the lifelong loyalty of the *mamlūk* to his *ustādh*,

50 On the Arabic image of the Turk, see e.g. Ulrich Haarmann, "Ideology and History, Identity and Alterity: The Arab Image of the Turk from the Abbasids to Modern Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 20 (1988): 175–96; idem, "Rather the Injustice of the Turks than the Righteousness of the Arabs: Changing 'Ulamā' Attitudes towards Mamluk Rule in the Late Fifteenth Century," *Studia Islamica* 68 (1988): 61–77, and idem, *Arabic in Speech*.

51 Taqī al-Dīn al-Qalqashandī (d. 1467). A frequently cited authority in the *Ḍaw'*. In vol. IX, 165 al-Sakhāwī calls him his own teacher (*shaykhunā*). The information that Taqī al-Dīn al-Qalqashandī was a lecturer in the *ṭabaqa* at that time is also confirmed by Ibn Taghribirdī. See Berkey, *Transmission of Knowledge*: 152, who cites from an account in Ibn Taghribirdī, *al-Manhal al-ṣāfi*, vol. 4, 72–73: "[al-Qalqashandī] was the official reader (*qārī*) at these sessions." On his scholarly and teaching career, see Berkey, *Transmission of Knowledge*: 195–97.

52 *Ḍaw'* II, 270.

53 The emir or sultan who owned *mamlūks* was referred to as their *ustādh*, even after their manumission. Likewise, bonds of loyalty between both the still enslaved and manumitted *mamlūks* belonging to an *ustādh*'s household usually persisted even after the latter's decease.

54 A certain Khwānd Mughālī ibna al-Nāṣir b. al-Bārīzī. The Arabic texts call her *muṭallaqa*, which can both refer to a divorced wife (the first meaning in Modern Standard Arabic) and to a female person freed from bondage or slavery. See e.g. Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1863–1893): s.r. *ṭ-l-q*. Her Turkish first name may indicate her being of Circassian origin.

forged through enslavement, education and manumission, persists after the latter's death. Uzbek, however, manages a comeback; in the further course of his life, he spends some "pleasant years" in Jerusalem (*fa aqāma bihā 'alā tariqa jamīla*) and is eventually able to rise again to elevated posts and marry a second time. He becomes governor (*nā'ib*) of Damascus, completes the pilgrimage and then returns to Cairo. The central part of the biography thus reports on a successful life as an influential man belonging to the ruling elite, who eventually even reached the high position of a princely educator (*atabak*).

The final section is a long and detailed enumeration of endowments he made, such as mosques, baths, and a librarianship in the Friday Mosque he endowed. The description is embellished with words of praise about the beauty of the buildings ("became a place of recreation for the people"), and there are references to poems of praise written in Uzbek's honour. The biography ends with high praise for his person, describing him as "one of the best among the emirs".⁵⁵

Both in terms of content and structure, his biography can serve as a starting point for a comparison: the division into thematic sections, as described above, for one thing is typical of the genre. For the contemporary reader, moreover, Uzbek's biography is a storybook example of a successful *mamlūk* career, in which enslavement appears like a ticket to influence and wealth. Al-Sakhāwī's initial disparagement on account of Uzbek's lack of language skills is more than outweighed by this career in his case. His biography can thus also be read as representative of many other, similar ones that have earned the temporary enslavement of the *mamlūks* the reputation of not having been 'real' slavery. This meta-narrative persists, also in research, mainly because we have comparatively detailed information about successful *mamlūks* like Uzbek, but hardly any knowledge about the biographies of the ordinary *mamlūks*, who also experienced temporary enslavement but were never able to reach higher positions. Yet, careers like Uzbek's presumably also encouraged people to try and enter the *mamlūk* circles, possibly without ever having been enslaved themselves. Conversely, especially in the Circassian Period, there are more and more cases in which already adult and fully educated enslaved people were brought to Egypt and entered into the social group of *mamlūks* without the 'typical' or traditionally 'proper' education. The discourse on 'fake *mamlūks*' can also be seen in this context. However, doubts about the 'authenticity' of a *mamlūk*, which is to say his having experienced temporary enslavement and the related training, are a recurring theme in the biographies, as the next two cases will show.

55 *Ḍaw'* II, 272.

4.2 Two Fake *Mamlūks*? Sayf al-Dīn Jaqmaq and Qānībāy al-Yūsufī al-Mihmandār

Whereas in Uzbek's biogram a kind of school gossip appears, the following two cases confirm the impression that not only 'hard' biographical data and facts, but also anecdotes and street-gossip went into the biographical characterisations. In both examples, al-Sakhāwī expresses doubts about the authenticity of the portrayed *mamlūks*, and in both cases he refers to subjective impressions and perceptions of amorphous and thus anonymous groups of observers.

In the first case, these are people who knew the portrayed ("everybody who sat with him"), in the second case, there is a simple reference to "rumours", which are then seemingly substantiated by an anecdotal narrative. But let us first look at the emir Sayf al-Dīn Jaqmaq.⁵⁶ In his case, too, command of the Arabic language plays a prominent role in his characterisation. Here, however, the portrayed does not match the stereotype of the foreign enslaved who speaks at most broken Arabic. It is telling, not only for the present case, but for the collective perception of freeborn vs. (formerly) enslaved characteristics that elaborate Arabic skills are directly linked to the status of freeborn Muslims: "[Sayf al-Dīn] had a very high command of Arabic, so high that everybody who sat with him thought he was a free man (*min banī al-aḥrār*)."⁵⁷ Besides this form of positive discrimination – again not expressed directly by the author but by the amorphous observers as additional focalisers – another rumour is the main reason for al-Sakhāwī's doubts about Jaqmaq's authentic *mamlūk* status. In the first sentence of his biogram, Sayf al-Dīn Jaqmaq is presented as being of Turkmen origin, which is a typical regional or ethnic origin of *mamlūks* in his time. The formulation *min abnā' al-turkumān* ("from among the children of the Turkmen"), however, can be read in two ways: first, it could relate to Jaqmaq being of Turkmen ethnic origin – possibly an imported *mamlūk*. However, the following sentence, introduced with the adversative conjunction *wa lakinnahu* (lit. "but he") suggests a different reading. Together with his fluency in Arabic, it suggests that in this case, *min abnā' al-turkumān* might also refer to him having been a freeborn son of an imported Turkmen *mamlūk*, and maybe even an Arabic-speaking mother.

Be that as it may, al-Sakhāwī mentions a deal between an unspecified slave trader and Jaqmaq, who is said to have actively interfered in the process of being sold or, following the second interpretation, might even have actively initiated his selling. In any case, this trade would have brought a financial advantage to the (possibly fake) enslaved. It was apparently a well-known method of fraud, not only in the Mamluk period, that freeborn Muslims had themselves sold as slaves and shared the purchase

⁵⁶ *Ḍaw' III*, 74–75: no. 288; he is not to be confused with his namesake, the Mamluk Sultan Sayf al-Dīn Jaqmaq (r. 1438–1453).

⁵⁷ *Ḍaw' III*, 74.

price with the traders before reclaiming their legal status as freemen in court. In such cases, the duped buyer could not reclaim the purchase price. It is quite possible that al-Sakhāwī is alluding to such a process or a similar one.⁵⁸ If Jaqmaq was, following the second possible reading, a freeborn *mamlūk* descendant, his case also suggests that consciously and actively entering the state of a *mamlūk* slave, or pretending to have been enslaved before, could help an individual career and was therefore sought by him. Al-Sakhāwī does not judge this practice, but refers to Jaqmaq's remarkable career in a very neutral way, thus leaving the interpretation to his readers. The characterisation is even very positive: besides his perfect command of Arabic, which is strongly associated with freeborn status, al-Sakhāwī also mentions Jaqmaq's abilities as a *dawādār* and his composed attitude in the face of death.

We find a similar, but more elaborately narrated hint at pretended enslavement being consciously used as a career booster or for personal profit in the sixth volume of *Ḍaw'*. Here, al-Sakhāwī portrays a certain Qānībāy al-Yūsufī al-Mihmandār,⁵⁹ whom he presents as a *mamlūk* of Circassian origin, but simultaneously mentions an Arabic name, al-Hajj Khalīl ("Khalīl the pilgrim"), as the original name of the person. This may be understood as a first hint towards what follows in the second part of the biogram. There, al-Sakhāwī raises doubt on Qānībāy's enslaved status by citing a rumour, or a piece of information he was not able to confirm: "It is said he was one of those who were never touched by slavery (*riqq*)."⁶⁰ He elaborates on that in a small anecdote set in the days of sultan Barsbāy (r. 1422–1438), at the beginning of the fifteenth century, when al-Sakhāwī was only a boy. A fictional dialogue between the sultan of the day and the subject of the biography, Qānībāy, seems to document the latter's decision to gain a position at court by pretending to be a *mamlūk*, and thereby being eligible for prestigious positions at court. Qānībāy – first calling himself Khalīl – presents himself as a *mamlūk* of Qarā Yūsuf, the governor of Baghdad, and moreover claims to be of Circassian origin. Here, al-Sakhāwī's narrative voice interjects an implicitly judgmental commentary: "He answered, because he had already learned about the Circassian dynasty".⁶¹ By claiming to know the reasons behind Qānībāy's statement concerning his Circassian origin, al-Sakhāwī not only implies that this is wrong, but also suggests that the statement was made out of connivance and to gain personal advantage. Without explicit allegation, al-Sakhāwī fosters his implicit statement further – and in a very subtle way – when summarising the rest of the conversation between the sultan and the biographed: while the latter, in the first place, had presented himself as Khalīl, he later claims to bear the Turkish name Qānībāy, which

⁵⁸ See Oßwald, *Das Islamische Sklavenrecht*: 41–42.

⁵⁹ *Ḍaw'* VI, 197: no. 669.

⁶⁰ Interestingly, al-Sakhāwī employs the term *riqq*, used in Arabic as a generic term for all forms of slavery. The text does not distinguish between the dependency of the Mamluks, which research classifies as elite slavery, and other forms of dependency, such as that of domestic slaves or concubines.

⁶¹ *Ḍaw'* VI, 197.

he seems to have kept in the future. Only after citing this statement – again in direct speech to enhance credibility – al-Sakhāwī turns to the third part of the biogram, where he sums up Qānībāy’s career which, despite some setbacks after the death of his patron Barsbāy, turned out very well.

While we cannot decide whether Qānībāy lied about his origin or not, this biogram leads to two preliminary conclusions which need to be verified by future research: first, pretending to have been enslaved and trained as a *mamlūk* to promote one’s career obviously was discussed and probably also practiced during Circassian times. Slavery or former slavery, as well as certain ethnic origins thus were recognised as possible career boosters. At the same time, al-Sakhāwī’s implicit judgment of Qānībāy also suggests that challenging a person’s (formerly) enslaved status and ethnic belonging could work as a narrative strategy or an argument to doubt or even devalue a person. Arguments revolving around the status of *mamlūk*, a form of dependency that could open the path to the highest positions, formed part of the discourses in society. It seems not to be the status of enslavement or dependency that decides over the value of an individual. Rather, both the ascription of such a status or a related ethnic origin, and raising doubts concerning such a status can serve to valorise or devalue a person, depending on the narrative context.

Strikingly, neither of the examples mentions the manumission of the biographed persons; it seems to be taken for granted that they were released at some point before the actual start of their careers, i.e., before they were given higher positions, such as *dawādār*. The formal release, the transition from temporary enslavement (self-chosen or not) to legal equality with freeborn Muslims, seems to be of far less importance in both cases than, for example, origin in the sense of a sales history, ethnic belonging or later career.⁶² Another explanation would be that the manumission needed no emphasis, because it formed a natural part of a *mamlūk*’s biography; however, as we have seen before, manumission is mentioned in other cases.⁶³ The change of legal status could not protect either Jaqmaq, who according to al-Sakhāwī was executed for political reasons, or Qānībāy, who suffered a career setback with imprisonment, torture and exile, from the experience of violence. In contrast, the affiliation with an *us-*

⁶² There are also biographies that mention the manumission in passing, for example when shortly enumerating the enslavement history before elaborating on the further career, as in the case of Uzbek al-Ashrafī al-Zāhirī (see above). A further example among many others is a certain Bardbak al-Ashrafī Īnāl, as indicated by his name a *mamlūk* of the Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf Sayf al-Dīn Īnāl (r. 1453–1461). In his rather long biography, al-Sakhāwī summarises Bardbak’s enslavement history in the first sentence “Al-Ashraf Īnāl bought him (*malakahu*) in the year of the Cyprus campaign, which is the year [8]29 [1426]. He trained him (*rabbāhu*), manumitted him (*i’taqahu*), styled him his *khāzindār* and married him to his eldest daughter” (*Ḍaw’* III, 4–6: no. 19). The following biography focuses on the close relationship and patronage that connected the sultan and Bardbak, who rose to the highest posts, was able to build mosques in several cities and to buy a considerable number of *mamlūks* of his own, before he lost his position and wealth after al-Ashraf Īnāl’s death.

⁶³ See above, Shāhin al-Rūmī al-Zāhirī Jaqmaq.

tādh, whether arising from slave status or as a freed *mamlūk*, appears to be the key to security, prestige and prosperity as long as the patron is able to protect and foster his dependents. This use of a claimed *mamlūk* status, as well as the immersion in narrative strategies of the time, could be interpreted as a further expression or as an element of processes that have been called ‘Mamlukization’. Ulrich Haarmann, who first introduced this term, defined ‘Mamlukization’ as a “long process of the erosion of the non-Mamluk elites’ power to the benefit of the sultan and the royal Mamluks who underpinned the system”.⁶⁴ Jo van Steenbergen and others have pointed to the fact that identification and social integration into Mamluk society were by no means shaped only by the factor of military slavery:

The ‘Mamluk period’ refers to the age between 1250 and 1517, when multiple ethnic groups (especially Turks and Circassians), dynastic dispensations (especially, in the 13th and 14th centuries, members of successively Šāliḥid, Qalāwūnid, and Barqūqid royal households), and political communities or networks (especially, in the 15th century, factions of amirs and mamlūks identified as Zāhirīs and Ashrafīs) were dominant in Egypt and Syria. The elision of these three concepts under a single term has tended to suggest the precedence of military slavery as the defining aspect of the political order throughout the entire period.⁶⁵

While they conceptualize ‘Mamlukization’ from the perspective of state formation, the term can also comprise a social component. That pretending to belong to one or several of these identity groups is present in the narrative as a possible career strategy supports the thesis that the system of temporary enslavement shaped not only the *mamlūk* elite, but helped to develop further identification markers and affected the rest of the society. After all, each of the identity groups named in the quotation depend on or derive from the institution of military slavery as the foundation of Mamluk social order in one form or another. And in the end, ‘Mamlukization’ could also comprise strategies of non-*mamlūk* or not-in-the-strict-sense-*mamlūk* persons of *mamlūkizing* themselves for the sake of personal benefit.

4.3 Beautiful and of Questionable Character: The Eunuchs Shāhīn al-Rūmī and Fayrūz al-Rūmī

Research on eunuchs in the Mamluk era still rests mostly with the much esteemed and discussed works of David Ayalon, who opened the field during the 1970s and 80s.⁶⁶ More recently, two publications have considered the integration and agency of

⁶⁴ Ulrich Haarmann, “The Mamluk System of Rule in the Eyes of Western Travelers,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 1–24, 22.

⁶⁵ Van Steenbergen, Wing and d’Hulster, “Mamlukization”: 550.

⁶⁶ Ayalon, *Eunuchs in the Mamluk Sultanate*; idem, “On the Eunuchs in Islam,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 1 (1979): 67–124; idem, *Outsiders in the Lands of Islam: Mamluks, Mongols, and Eu-*

eunuchs in fourteenth-century endowments⁶⁷ and the practices of the ‘manufacture’ of eunuchs, to borrow the euphemistic terminology from the article’s title.⁶⁸ However, role modelling or stereotypes in the context of eunuch characterisations do not seem to have been in the centre of scholarly interest yet.⁶⁹ The two following examples cannot provide more than a small glimpse of eunuch characterisation, but they will serve to give a first impression. Moreover, the second case, Fayrüz al-Rūmī’s biography,⁷⁰ lends itself to looking at the use of verbs in the context of enslaved people’s biograms.

Both examples presented here illustrate the fact that eunuchs, just like *mamlūks*, were attributed certain qualities that were not necessarily positive. In the case of eunuchs, these include emotional behaviour such as fear, arrogance, and especially a preference for pomp and pageantry, which can sometimes be regarded as being at the expense of suitable conduct.⁷¹

First, I will have a look at Shāhīn al-Rūmī al-Zāhirī Jaqmaq al-Ṭawāshī,⁷² whose *nisba* “al-Rūmī” indicates his origin from the *bilād al-Rūm*, Greece or Asia Minor, while “al-Zāhirī Jaqmaq al-Ṭawāshī” identifies him as a eunuch who was owned and later manumitted by the sultan al-Zāhir Jaqmaq. That Shāhīn must have been a eunuch is supported by further evidence: al-Sakhāwī describes him as a *khādim* of the governor of Damascus.⁷³ Furthermore, the listed functions Shāhīn held have also

nuchs (London: Variorum Reprints, 1988); idem, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans: A Study in Power Relationships* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1999). Besides Ayalon, Shaun Marmon has also touched upon the topic of eunuchs in the Mamluk time in his general study of eunuchs in Islamic societies, see Shaun Elizabeth Marmon, *Eunuchs and Sacred Boundaries in Islamic Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

67 Jo Van Steenberghe, “Mamluk Eunuchs, Ḥabašīs and Waqf in the 1340s,” in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras V, Proceedings of the 11th, 12th and 13th International Colloquium at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in May 2002, 2003 and 2004*, ed. Urbain Vermeulen and Kristof D’Hulster (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2007): 539–52.

68 Jan S. Hogendorn, “The Location of the ‘Manufacture’ of Eunuchs,” in *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa: A Comparative Study*, ed. Toru Miura and John Edward Philips (London: Kegan Paul International, 2000): 41–68.

69 Using the example of the Fatimid period, Serena Tolino has pointed out this desideratum, also taking into account the question of gender definition and stereotypes in relation to eunuchs. See e.g. Serena Tolino, “Eunuchs in the Fatimid Empire: Ambiguities, Gender and Sacredness,” in *Celibate and Childless Men in Power: Ruling Eunuchs and Bishops in the Pre-Modern World*, ed. Almut Höfert et al. (London: Routledge, 2018): 246–66.

70 *Daw’* VI, 176–177: no. 600.

71 Serena Tolino presented similar examples from the Fatimid period in her lecture “Eunuchs at the Fatimid Court: Dependency, Gender and Sacredness” held online in the BCDSS Fellow Seminars in Bonn. Serena Tolino, “Eunuchs at the Fatimid Court: Dependency, Gender and Sacredness,” lecture presented at the BCDSS Fellow Seminar, Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies, 23.04.2020.

72 *Daw’* III, 294: no. 1128.

73 See above; on the synonymy of *khādim* and *khaṣī*, see especially Ayalon, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans*: 207–84.

been identified as posts typically occupied by eunuchs.⁷⁴ Apart from the details of Shāhīn's career, al-Sakhāwī highlights only three further characteristics, all of which are connected either to Shāhīn's body or his emotional conduct. The first is his appearance, which is depicted as being of outstanding beauty. Moreover, it is Shāhīn's only qualification mentioned that would have propelled him into the sultan's service. According to al-Sakhāwī's narrative, it was solely on the basis of a report on the young eunuch's beauty that al-Zāhir Jaqmaq had summoned him to his court, thereby acquiring him from his previous owner, the governor of Damascus, and immediately releasing him to appoint him to appropriate functions. Even in the final summary of the characterisation, Shāhīn's beauty is mentioned first: "He was among the best and most beautiful of his kind, he spoke well and eloquently, was among the most amiable and best educated and was therefore a rare breed among his peers. May Allah have mercy on him."⁷⁵ While al-Sakhāwī commends other qualities, such as an eloquent language and a good education, he does not provide information on how and where Shāhīn acquired these skills, as he did in the case of the *mamlūk* Uzbek. Shāhīn is thus defined much more by appearance than by the knowledge and skills he must have had to perform his responsibilities. In addition, al-Sakhāwī finds one further quality of Shāhīn worth reporting, which makes him appear to be emotionally rather fragile. He relates how a "silent fear" is said to have befallen and eventually even killed the eunuch – an unreasonable fear, because the sultan, whose disfavour Shāhīn is said to have dreaded, paid him every tribute on the occasion of his funeral.⁷⁶ Again, we see a very subtle representation of a person, implicitly characterising him through the selection of information, which refrains from any clear assessment, but nevertheless associates the portrayed person with characteristics stereotypically assumed for his group. Finally, this also applies to a form of positive discrimination when Shāhīn is described as "a rare breed among his peers",⁷⁷ which implicitly depreciates the group of eunuchs as a whole.

Compared to other biographies of eunuchs, Fayrūz's biography is very detailed, which can be accounted for by his spectacular career in the second half of his life. The text follows the usual structure of biographies, but in this case the enslavement biography in the first section is exceptionally detailed. While apart from Fayrūz's *nisba* "al-Rūmī" no details are given about his origins, this section gives us some details about the boy's castration, which was carried out on behalf of his sellers in Syria. This is followed by a long enumeration of changes of ownership, only a fraction of which occurred through sale: the narrative is very careful to specify the manner of change of ownership and location. For example, Fayrūz was sold (*bā'ahu*), given away (*an'ama bihi 'alā*), passed on (*fa-qaddamahu*), or taken into possession (*malakahu*),

⁷⁴ See Ayalon, *Eunuchs in the Mamluk Sultanate*: esp. 271–72.

⁷⁵ *Daw* III, 294.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

among other things. It is interesting to note that all these changes of ownership are rendered in the passive verb mode or with Fayrūz being the object in the respective sentence – indeed, this continues after the manumission. After the death of the sixth owner, a certain Nawrūz al-Ḥāfiẓī, who had manumitted him, al-Sakhāwī reports that Fayrūz was “seized” (*amsakahu*) by the sultan al-Mu’ayyad (r. 1412–1421) in an unspecified manner. The choice of verb is of crucial importance here. While the Arabic root *m- l- k* represents the semantic field “possession”, from which the word *mamlūk* (w. “owned” or “possessed one”) derives,⁷⁸ the root *m- s- k* suggests that this was a kind of arrest. The choice of words does not allow us to exclude without doubt that the eunuch, who had already been liberated, suffered a kind of re-enslavement or non-recognition of his manumission. The sentence, however, rather suggests that after the death of his *ustādh*, the manumitted eunuch remained virtually without belonging to a household and thus without protection by a social group, or suffered the consequences of a conflict with al-Mu’ayyad. It is also possible that al-Sakhāwī refers to the transition of the eunuch into post-manumission loyalty, i.e., the household, and thus to the no longer total but still very far-reaching power of disposal of a new *ustādh*. Yet this would at least suggest that this form of post-manumission allegiance to a household should be regarded as a form of strong asymmetrical dependency. In any case, the eunuch’s arrest by the sultan results in a form of re-enslavement, or at least a continued strong asymmetrical dependency, as Fayrūz subsequently passes into the control of one of the sultan’s “comrades” (*khūshdāsh*),⁷⁹ who continues to treat him badly for a while. In this part of the biography, the verb mode gradually changes from passive to active. Because of the gradual shift, we cannot determine at what point al-Sakhāwī considers the eunuch to have been an active agent governing his life. The first clue is the following passage, which presents Fayrūz as an agent, at least from a grammatical perspective:

[. . .] then he turned (*rasama bi-tawajjuhihi*)⁸⁰ to Mecca and later to Damascus, where he served (*khadama ʿinda*) the governor Jaqmaq al-Arghūn Shāwī. After (the governor) had been killed, [Fayrūz] returned (*āda*) [. . .].⁸¹

78 See for a discussion of related semantic fields Kollatz, “How to Approach Emic Semantics”: esp. 186–90.

79 The fact that this sultan, like many others, is himself part of a network of *khūshdāshs*, i.e., a group loyal to each other, whose connection stems from the common experience of enslavement and training, is an indication of how much the Mamluk social order was marked by concepts and consequences of strong asymmetrical dependency, precisely because the formerly enslaved *mamlūks* were able to ascend to the sultan’s throne.

80 It is not clear in this case whether the verb is to be vocalised as active or passive. On the basis of the context in the following sentence, where the verb is clearly active (*fa-lama qutila* [Arghūn] *āda*), an active vocalisation seems more likely to me.

81 *Ḍawʿ* VI, 177.

Certain asymmetrical dependencies continue to shape his life thereafter, but these can be attributed to the relationship of loyalty between ruler and servant, which is comparable to the dependency between a manumitted *mamlūk* and his emir or sultan. Moreover, gradually, the account of Fayrūz's eventually successful career ("since then, he was counted among (*'udda*) the leading eunuchs (*khuddām*)")⁸² transitions into a character description. Here, al-Sakhāwī finally confronts the reader directly with his own interpretation of the eunuch's personality, without using any additional focalisers to communicate his assessment.

The last part of the biography reads like a pandemonium of the bad character traits with which eunuchs were stereotypically associated. First and foremost is the growing wealth of Fayrūz, which is, however, coupled with avarice. Al-Sakhāwī illustrates this still in the form of a narrator's speech in a matter-of-fact, straightforward style that guides the reader's interpretation only by the choice of presented facts: although the eunuch is granted the high honour of being allowed to lead the pilgrimage caravan to Mecca, according to al-Sakhāwī he does not donate anything for this enterprise.⁸³ It must be remembered that donations of various kinds are, on the one hand, part of the ritual duties in Islam, and on the other hand, voluntary donations for pious undertakings are also regarded as particularly good deeds. By mentioning here that the rich eunuch did not donate anything, al-Sakhāwī not only characterises him as stingy, but also suggests a certain distance from religion. In the following, the negative characterisation on both points becomes much clearer, even overly explicit:

His wealth grew along with his age, and still his greed and iniquity became stronger. He was so impious that he ended up not praying for two whole years. His excuse was the weakness of his body and his lack of strength, although he strutted every day from the *mamlūk* barracks (*ṭabaqa*)⁸⁴ he resided in to the Duhaysha⁸⁵ in pomp and glory.⁸⁶

Creating a similar effect, al-Sakhāwī's detailed account of the provisions Fayrūz made for his funeral and posthumous commemoration, which closes the biography, is once again rather implicitly evaluative. While in the case of a Mamluk emir such as Uzbek, the endowment of buildings, schools or the creation of posts is seen positively, in

⁸² *Ḍaw'* VI, 177.

⁸³ *Ḍaw'* VI, 177.

⁸⁴ Ibn Shāhin al-Zāhirī (b. 1410), a son of a *mamlūk* of sultan Sayf al-Dīn Ṭaṭar, describes the *mamlūk* barracks as follows: "every barrack has the size of a whole neighbourhood (*hāra*) with a number of dwellings, so that it is possible to house a thousand Mamluks in every barrack." See Khalīl Ibn Shāhin al-Zāhirī, *Kitāb Zubda kashf al-mamālik wa bayān al-ṭuruq wa-l-masālik*, ed. Paul Ravaisse (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1894): 26. Further important descriptions are to be found in al-Maqrīzī's *Khīṭaṭ*, cf. Ayalon, *Eunuchs in the Mamluk Sultanate*: esp. 269.

⁸⁵ The Duhaysha is a part of the Cairene citadel erected for representation purposes and audiences (*majālis*). Ibn Shāhin describes it as "an outstanding example among the beautiful court buildings" (*Kitāb Zubda kashf al-mamālik*: 27).

⁸⁶ *Ḍaw'* VI, 177.

Fayrūz's case there is no praise for the establishment of regular Quranic readings at his tomb, for example.

5 Conclusion

The few case studies from a single source presented in this article alone have shown that narratives of dependency are inscribed in the biographical literature of the Mamluk period in many different ways and fulfilling various functions. As a first result, we may conclude that forms of strong asymmetrical dependency, some of which must be considered specific to the society and go far beyond the idea of a uniform form of slavery, were deeply interwoven in the collective archive of knowledge of the society, but also in its societal structures.

Given that biographical literature pursues a factual claim, and hence was written with the aim of conveying accurate and reliable information despite certain narrative stylistic elements such as the use of fictitiously recreated dialogues, we can also draw some careful conclusions about collective perceptions and assessments of dependency and dependents from this information. There are three aspects I would like to address more closely here.

The character analysis in the sample has shown that dependent or formerly dependent persons tended to be associated with various negative characteristics. Some of these correlate with groups of people defined by various intersectional criteria such as gender, race, origin and language. Both the direct attribution of for instance pride or impiety as well as indirectly presented characterisations through anecdotes do occur. In addition, positively discriminating evaluative remarks by the narrator's voice appear again and again, which describe the characterised person positively in comparison to other representatives of their group and thus indirectly refer to negative stereotypes in relation to the respective group. Such evaluative remarks are therefore not only interesting for the analysis of the individual case, but also connect the particular case portrayed with the emic overall perception of dependent or formerly dependent persons. Of course, no overarching statements on a society's common archive of knowledge can be derived from the examples presented here from a single source text, but they can at least point out tendencies and, against the background of existing research, serve as a starting point for further research in this direction.

The enslavement biography of the eunuch Fayrūz al-Rūmī has revealed that the narrative interpretation of strong forms of asymmetrical dependency is also affected by semantic issues. The analysis of the verbs within the enslavement biography indicated that frequent changes of ownership or functions of the enslaved person were precisely defined, which suggests that there was an awareness of the subtle differences between the sale, donation or transfer of an enslaved person. As a further pivotal

point from the semantic consideration of the narratives of dependency, it should be mentioned that dependency in one form or another can be seen in the texts as a formative element of personal and social relationships. Dependencies do not end with the (frequently mentioned) manumission of, for example, a *mamlūk* or a eunuch; instead, strong asymmetrical dependencies are also reported for the time after the manumission; in any case one can assume a post-manumission loyalty that ties the former enslaved to their last enslavers. In individual cases (e.g. Fayrūz al-Rūmī), a kind of re-enslavement also seems to have occurred.

Finally, the two examples in which the biographer implies or insinuates a deliberate pretence of slavery by the persons portrayed demonstrate that narratives of dependency are by no means limited to the level of information transmission through texts. Rather, the author al-Sakhāwī uses these references to strong asymmetrical dependencies as stylistic devices, as narrative strategies. Moreover, the two cases show that in al-Sakhāwī's time, and presumably also in the time when his sources were written, apparently the (former) enslavement of a *mamlūk* could be seen as a 'career boost'. This form of slavery was thus obviously so strongly associated with advancement into the ruling elite of the sultanate that trickery in this regard became a conceivable strategy for personal gain. At the same time, considered in the opposite way, justified or unjustified allegations of such fraud could contribute to discrediting a person even posthumously or at least to sowing doubts about their integrity. Here, too, we see how narratives of dependencies operate on different levels, both within the text and in the exchange between text, recipients and society.

The biographies have proven to be promising sources from which the emic narrative approach to dependencies, but also the ideas behind the narratives, can be examined. Considering the sheer quantity of biographies, and further taking into account the fact that references to strong asymmetrical dependencies can occur not only in the biographies of (formerly) enslaved persons but also in those of enslavers, much remains to be done before these initial observations can be substantiated or refuted. The narrative and semantic analysis in this article, as well as the research conducted prior to it, lead me to believe that digitally supported methods such as keyword searches in text corpora (which are not yet fully developed for Arabic texts anyway) can only be helpful to a small extent in this undertaking at this point in time. This is because the narratives of dependencies and the semantic forms they use are so varied and diverse that they cannot be captured by automated searches for the few keywords we know so far. Rather, the analysis of narrative sources on strong asymmetrical dependencies requires us to perceive and treat these sources in their overall form as texts. Read as such, however, they are an excellent starting point for exploring how a society was permeated by forms of strong asymmetrical dependency, and moreover, the emic explicit as well as implicit engagement with these institutions. The Mamluk institution, for sure, was an important factor in the emergence and development of Mamluk society, but the forms of dependency directly involved with this institution were certainly not the only ones that had an impact on Mamluk society. Studying bio-

graphical narratives with a focus on strong asymmetrical dependencies and their representation may thus add a new perspective to the research on Mamluk society.

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Veruschka Wagner

Slave Voices in Ottoman Court Records – A Narrative Analysis of the Istanbul Registers from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

1 Introduction

In the Ottoman Empire slavery was a widespread phenomenon which continued up into the twentieth century.¹ There were different forms of slavery, such as elite, agricultural and domestic slavery. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in Istanbul mainly domestic slavery existed, and slaves were attached to the household of their owners. Slaves were brought from different regions all around the borders of the Ottoman Empire with a special focus on the Balkans in the sixteenth century and on the Black Sea Region in the seventeenth century. But there were also slaves from other places in Europe, including the Caucasus, as well as from Africa, Persia, and India.² Slaves were differentiated by sex, age, origin, and the tasks they had to perform. The variety of terms used with different connotations convey an idea of the complexity and diversity of the system.³ Legally, slaves were considered the property of their owner, but they nevertheless did possess certain rights. They could, for example, obtain a power of attorney to trade or to assign property,⁴ appear in court as the legal agent of their master or claim wrongful behavior on the part of their owners.⁵ Slaves were called “speaking property” (*mal-ı nâṭıḳ*),⁶ an aspect of Ottoman slavery that is

1 I will only give brief information about the structures and specifics of Ottoman slavery here, because I will go into more detail about further aspects in the analysis.

2 For general information on slave trade in the Ottoman Empire, see Hayri Gökşin Özkoray, “La géographie du commerce des esclaves dans l’Empire ottoman et l’implication des marchands d’Europe occidentale,” *Rives méditerranéennes* 53 (2017): 103–21.

3 Madeline C. Zilfi, “Ottoman Slavery and Female Slaves in the Early Modern Era,” in *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilisation 2. Economy and Society*, ed. Kemal Çiçek et al. (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2000): 716.

4 Bülent Tahiroğlu, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Kölelik,” *İstanbul Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Memuası* 45 (2011): 657.

5 Timur Kuran, ed., *Mahkeme Kayıtları Işığında 17. Yüzyıl İstanbul’unda Sosyo-Ekonomik Yaşam*, vol. 1, *Social and Economic Life in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul: Glimpses from Court Records* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2010): 65.

6 Yvonne J. Seng, “A Liminal State: Slavery in Sixteenth-Century Istanbul,” in *Slavery in the Islamic Middle East*, ed. Shaun Elizabeth Marmon (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1998): 25. For Ottoman-Turkish terms I follow the transliteration system of IJMES. Personal names are written in modern Turkish writing.

interesting in that it is precisely this attribution of speaking attached to slaves that I will discuss here.

A distinctive feature of the institution of slavery in the Ottoman Empire was its comparative openness, which was characterized by the possibility of legal and social advancement of slaves. This could be achieved because it was a common practice to manumit slaves after a certain time. There were different ways of manumitting slaves, such as manumission for pious reasons, which the owner could perform at any time, or manumission after having fulfilled the conditions agreed upon in a contract between slave and slave owner.⁷ In court records, we therefore also come across entries that document manumission, in addition to numerous other entries concerning slaves.

This paper examines the narrativity of normative texts with a focus on the Istanbul court records from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and their representation of slave voices. The paper aims at analyzing the ways in which slaves' statements are narratively represented and whether a relationship between the type of entries and the status of the slaves can be identified. It needs to be considered that the court records were supposed to conform to certain formal standards in terms of content and language, which is why we are not concerned here with the *truth* of representing the slaves' statements, but with examining the ways they were represented. We can find different types of statements by slaves, including approval or direct speech and dialogues.

I assume that representations of the slaves' voices varied depending on the case that was dealt with and indicate different legal statuses slaves could obtain. Furthermore, I assume that the more independent slaves were, the more rights to speak they were granted in court.⁸ This leads to the assumption that there were not only different degrees of asymmetrical dependencies of slaves in general in the Ottoman Empire, but that one and the same slave might experience different degrees of dependency during his or her time of enslavement.

As far as narrative strategies are concerned, there are claims that normative texts lack narrativity and therefore cannot be examined with a focus on narrative elements. However, there are a few studies that show that legal texts can in fact be ana-

⁷ For the different forms of manumission see Nur Sobers Khan, *Slaves Without Shackles: Forced Labour and Manumission in the Galata Court Registers, 1560–1572* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014): 70–79.

⁸ The agency of the slaves can be considered as a measure of the degree of dependency. However, agency will not be addressed in this paper for the time being. For the topic of agency of slaves in the Ottoman Empire, see the collected volume by Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen, eds., *Slaves and Slave Agency in the Ottoman Empire*, Ottoman Studies 7 (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2020) and for a study based on the Istanbul court records, see Veruschka Wagner, "'Speaking Property' with the Capacity to Act. Slave Interagency in the 16th- and 17th-Century Court Register," in *Slaves and Slave Agency in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2020): 213–336.

lyzed in terms of their narrativity.⁹ So far, no one has looked at Ottoman court texts with regard to these questions. I argue that every single court entry in the Istanbul registers constitutes a little story in its own right, which can be analyzed through the lens of narrativity.¹⁰ Furthermore, every genre has its own distinctive narrative elements, which fulfil specific functions. This aspect will also be taken into consideration in the following.

This paper will first give some background information about the sources used here, also concerning the narrativity of this particular genre. This is followed by some examples to analyze the statements of slaves and to identify narrative patterns and strategies that provide insights into forms of asymmetrical dependencies from a legal perspective.

2 The Court Records

Court records (*kāzī sicilleri* or *şer'iyye siciller*) are an important source for research on the history of the Ottoman Empire. Legal matters of everyday life, both urban and rural, are documented in resolutions and court notices issued by a judge (*kāzī*).¹¹ Frequently, these were contracts, or they document conflicts between two parties (Muslims as well non-Muslims) who could belong to any stratum of society.¹² The early modern registers also provide unique insights into the institution of slavery.¹³ We find references to slaves in different entries, appearing as plaintiff, defendant, or sub-

9 Cf., for instance, Peter Brooks and Paul D. Gewirtz, eds. *Law's Stories: Narrative and Rhetoric in the Law* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996) and Ruth Blufarb, *Geschichten im Recht. Übertragbarkeit von 'Law as Narrative' auf die deutsche Rechtsordnung*, *Recht und Literatur* 3 (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2017).

10 On the significance of storytelling in legal contexts, see Peter Brooks, "The Law as Narrative Rhetoric," Introduction, in *Law's Stories: Narrative and Rhetoric in the Law*, ed. Peter Brooks and Paul Gewirtz (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996): 14–23, esp. 16.

11 On average, a register is one hundred pages long and contains between 400 and 500 records. A single record can be as short as two lines and as long as several pages.

12 For an overview of the existing *sicils* in the archives, see Ahmet Akgündüz, *Şer'iye Sicilleri. 1. Mahiyeti, toplu kataloğu ve seçme hükümler* (Istanbul: TDAV Yay, 1988). For an introduction to the topic, see Yunus Uğur, "Şer'iyye Sicilleri," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* 39 (2010): 8–11; Halil İnalcık, "Osmanlı Tarihi Hakkında Mühim Bir Kaynak," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi* 1/68 (1943): 89–96; Dror Ze'evi, "The Use of Ottoman Shari'a Court Records as a Source for Middle Eastern Social History: A Reappraisal," *Islamic Law and Society* 5, no. 1 (1998): 35–56. For studies drawing on the Istanbul court registers, see Yvonne J. Seng, "The Şer'iye Sicilleri of Istanbul Müftülüğü as a Source for the Study of Everyday Life," *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 15, no. 2 (1991): 307–25; Eunjeong Yi, *Guild Dynamics in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul: Fluidity and Leverage* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Nur Sobers-Khan, *Slaves Without Shackles: Forced Labour and Manumission in the Galata Court Registers, 1560–1572* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014).

13 Seng already emphasizes this in her paper from 1998. Seng, "A Liminal State": 27.

ject of dispute. Next to manumission documents, there are also donations, estate inventories, proof of non-slave status, purchase contracts, etc.¹⁴

Most of the entries in the Istanbul court records from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are written in Ottoman Turkish, although there are also individual entries entirely in Arabic, as was common with texts from the fifteenth century. However, the later Ottoman texts also contain numerous Arabic expressions. The language in the entries is standardized, which means that the same expressions and phrases recur in the same types of documents. This is not surprising insofar as the texts were written down by the judge (*kāzī*) or his deputy (*nā'ib*) in the aftermath of the oral proceedings and thereby transferred into what Ergene calls a “unitary language”.¹⁵ Ergene illustrates by means of various examples that the texts are “translations” of thoughts, feelings, and words “into a legal statement that was acceptable according to existing legal and religious norms.”¹⁶

Not much is known about the process of writing down the entries. They were collected by the judge or his deputy after the oral hearings, presumably on separate papers, and only later put down in writing. How much time elapsed between the hearing and writing the record cannot be ascertained from the documents. It is assumed that notes were taken during the trials, which could be used later for drafting the entries. Omissions, especially those of names of persons involved, suggest that it was no longer possible to ask questions at the time of writing.¹⁷ The parties involved received one version, and the judge made a copy for himself. These were intended to enable him to check in case there were later objections, or to issue lost documents again. The individual entries were then bound together in a more or less chronological sequence in registers.¹⁸ Since the copies were considered proof for the parties and the judge, it can be assumed that there were no other intended addressees at the time.

¹⁴ The Istanbul court records from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are accessible online; keyword searches allow thematic sifting through the data set. In 2019, in addition to the entries from the Istanbul court registers from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries already digitized by the Centre for Islamic Studies (İSAM, İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi) between 2008 and 2012 and made available online in 40 volumes, another 60 volumes of the Istanbul court registers from 1557 to 1911 were digitized and made available online in their original form, as well as texts transcribed into Latin script; <http://www.kadiscilleri.org> [accessed 07.09.2023].

¹⁵ Boğaç Ergene, *Local Court, Provincial Society and Justice in the Ottoman Empire: Legal Practice and Dispute Resolutions in Çankırı and Kastamonu (1652–1744)*, Studies in Islamic Law and Society 17 (Leiden: Brill, 2003): 134. He also uses the term “unifying language of the legal”, cf. Ergene, *Local Court*: 136.

¹⁶ Ergene, *Local Court*: 134.

¹⁷ Ergene, *Local Court*: 127.

¹⁸ Referring to the Kastamonu and Çankırı court records Ergene examined, he interpreted the fact that these entries were not documented in strict chronological order as an indication that the documentation did not take place immediately at or shortly after the trials. Another indication of this, according to Ergene, was the fact that different reports on a particular hearing did not follow one another either. In addition, some of them were stylistically different, so that it could be assumed that

The structure of all documents is more or less the same. First, the persons involved are introduced, then the subject matter is discussed, followed by a presentation of the decision taken and, finally, the resulting legal outcome is stated. The documents are usually completed by mentioning the date and the names of the witnesses. If there is no date, however, the approximate time of issuing the document can usually be deduced from the preceding and subsequent entries, since they were registered, if not strictly chronologically, then at least in the same time period.

We are examining normative texts, whose narrativity has at times been questioned. Blufarb explains the different interpretations that exist regarding the relationship between narrativity and the law. She notes that some consider only certain areas or structures of law to be narrative, while others consider law as a whole as a narrative, and still others speak only of a possible comparability of the disciplines; some critics even deny any connection or similarity between narrativity and law, arguing that the fields are separate.¹⁹ According to the “Law as Literature” approach, however, the narratological dimension of the law can be considered from a literary point of view. The focus here is on the narrativity of law. As part of the “Law as Literature” movement, the “Law as Narrative” approach considers stories a rhetorical medium because they are said to have persuasive abilities, having a potential impact on the emotional and not only on the rational level. Therefore, they represent a valuable tool of persuasion for the court or jury in a trial.²⁰ With respect to German law, Blufarb explains that it contains narrative structures that can produce typical narrative effects, in many cases without German jurisprudence being even aware of this. Thus, it seems necessary to her to direct attention to this narrativity.²¹

Gewirtz explains what can be meant by examining law as narrative and rhetoric: According to him, this approach can, for instance, refer to the relation between stories and legal arguments and theories or to the different ways judges, lawyers, and litigants construct, shape, and use stories. Examining law as narrative and rhetoric could also mean evaluating why certain stories are problematic in trials or analyzing the rhetoric of judicial opinions. In general, for him, treating law as narrative and rhetoric means looking not only at the rules and the ideas expressed, but also at the forms and the language used.²² According to von Arnould, a number of objects within the German legal field can be analyzed from a narratological perspective: legal texts in the broader sense, statements before authorities and courts, but also jurisprudential texts and the legal education literature can be examined for their narrative

there had been an intermediate step. This is also indicated by the absence of names, for which a gap was left blank. Ergene, *Local Court*: 126.

¹⁹ Blufarb, *Geschichten im Recht*: 213.

²⁰ Blufarb, *Geschichten im Recht*: 209.

²¹ Blufarb, *Geschichten im Recht*: 31.

²² Paul Gewirtz, “Narrative and Rhetoric in the Law,” Introduction, in *Law’s Stories: Narrative and Rhetoric in the Law*, ed. Peter Brooks and Paul Gewirtz (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996): 3.

content.²³ For Meuter, “all laws can be understood as abstractions of individual cases”, which in turn enter the legal system “by ways of narrations”.²⁴ The participants tell the court their version of the events relevant to the case, whereupon the judge and jury select or adequately transform the version that, in their judgment, corresponds to what really happened. For this process, they require a high degree of “narrative competence”, as Meuter points out.²⁵ Hannken-Illjes supports this view. In her opinion, the defendants’ (or plaintiffs’) statements are often narratives of what happened. In the reasons for the decision, too, the court narrates what it is convinced happened in order to then evaluate it.²⁶ Apart from that in the verdicts it is told who was involved and where the incident took place. Hannken-Illjes therefore speaks of the “omnipresence of narrative” (“Allgegenwärtigkeit des Erzählens”) in German criminal proceedings. However, in my view, her observation that “narrative is vital” (“Erzählen ist zentral”) also applies to other areas of law, wherever individuals present their perspectives of events and talk about them.²⁷

3 The ‘Narrative Translation’ of Trials and the Representation of Slave Voices

Each case we can find in the Istanbul court records in itself is only one version of the stories that were presented to the judge. The judge (or his deputy) then decided, summarized, and translated it into the appropriate legal language. We thus have written products presumably based on conflicting narratives, one of which convinced the judge, who then took it as the version according to which he made his decision. From possibly fragmentary and multiple narratives a legally effective narrative has been created. We must take into account that the entries are only from a few lines to a few pages long. Within this limited space, events that are relevant to the judge’s decision are presented in a specific sequence. We can see a uniform structure, which consists of an introductory part describing the situation, the people involved, and the facts of

23 Andreas von Arnould, “Was war, was ist – und was sein soll. Erzählen im juristischen Diskurs,” in *Wirklichkeitserzählungen. Felder, Formen und Funktionen nicht-literarischen Erzählens*, ed. Christian Klein and Matías Martínez (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2009): 14. On narratives in German law, see also Andreas von Arnould, “Recht,” in *Erzählen. Ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch*, ed. Matías Martínez (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2017): 173–87.

24 Norbert Meuter, “Narration in Various Disciplines,” in *Handbook of Narratology*, ed. Jan Christoph Meister et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014): 253.

25 Meuter, “Narration in Various Disciplines”: 253–54.

26 Kati Hannken-Illjes, “Geschichten und Gegengeschichten – Erzählen im Strafrecht,” in *Narrativität als Begriff: Analysen und Anwendungsbeispiele zwischen philologischer und anthropologischer Orientierung*, ed. Matthias Aumüller (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012): 283.

27 Hannken-Illjes, “Geschichten und Gegengeschichten”: 281.

the case, followed by the discussion of the problem, and, finally, as a result, the decision is presented. Thus, we have a chain of events with a beginning, a main part, and an end, albeit typically in a very condensed version.

Ergene emphasizes that “[t]he language of the court incorporates the voices of the participants in such a way that they contribute to the feeling of ‘smooth flow’ that we get from the *sicils*.”²⁸ Still, the voices that contribute to the “polyglossal character” of the court records should not be taken as the actual words of the litigants, since “there are indications in the court records that what is reported in the *sicils* as the speech of the litigants is in fact the translation of their voices into the official language of the legal system.”²⁹ Through adding explanations that clarify the situation and the outcome of the trial “[t]he translation of the litigants’ speech into the legal statement is an aspect of the creation of the ‘unitary language’ observed in the court records.”³⁰ Thus, here we have an embedding of the story in a new narrative context, a re-employment, to use a concept coined by Hayden White.³¹

It is not the authenticity and veracity of the statements made that is at stake. It is impossible to decide whether a statement is what a person really said. What deserves attention is the ‘narrative translation’ or ‘transmission’ of trials and, within that framework, the representation of slave voices. For this purpose, I will take a closer look at three types of judgments (*hüküm*): 1) manumission contracts and related deeds (*mükâtebe* / *kitâbe(t)* and *‘itknâme*); 2) different kinds of proofs: proofs of a) non-slave status (*isbât-ı ‘itk*), b) *ümm-i velediyyet*³² (*isbât-ı ümm-i velediyyet*), and c) freedom (*isbât-i hürriyyet*); and 3) amicable agreements (*şulh*).

4 Analysis of Slave Voices

We can find various entries in which slaves are mentioned as objects, for instance in documents that deal with sales, donations, or payments. In these examples, the slaves are identified by their value and regarded as commodity. In those entries, there is no representation of the voice of the enslaved. The cases I will look at, by contrast, show slaves as contract partners or plaintiffs, whose statements are recorded in the docu-

²⁸ Ergene, *Local Court*: 135.

²⁹ Ergene, *Local Court*: 134.

³⁰ Ergene, *Local Court*: 134.

³¹ Hayden White, “Der historische Text als literarisches Kunstwerk,” in *Geschichte Schreiben in der Postmoderne: Beiträge zur aktuellen Diskussion*, ed. Christoph Conrad and Martina Kessel (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1994): 134.

³² *Ümm-i velediyyet* is a term used for female slaves who gave birth to a child that was recognized by their owner as his own child. With this recognition the female slave was granted freedom after the death of her owner.

ments. Some entries describe the approval of slaves of certain issues. For example, we have slaves admitting that they are a slave or slaves agreeing to a slave contract.

4.1 Admitting Slave Status

What we can consider a first sign of slave voices represented in court records is a slave acknowledging his or her slave status. The term we find at the beginning of a manumission document concerning the slave is that he or she has admitted to being a slave (*rıkkını mu'terif/e*). *Rıkk* may refer to a male or female slave, and as such can denote a person as well as a state. In this case, the possessive suffix is added, which means that 'he' or 'she' is a slave. If *mu'terif* for male and *mu'terife* for female is added, we know that the slave in question has acknowledged his or her slave status. This was important, since admitting to being a slave was a precondition for manumission.³³ Another version with the same meaning that can be found in the court records is “kendi kölesi olduğunu itiraf eden” (“s/he admitted³⁴ that s/he was her/his slave³⁵”).³⁶ If slaves did not claim to be slaves in the first place, they could not be manumitted.³⁷ We can thus consider the acknowledgement of slave status by the slave as the first step in a sequence of necessary steps in the process of manumission. This acknowledgement can be identified to some extent as the voice of the slaves, even though we do not know if a particular slave was actually in court and made a statement or not. But the text at least says that he or she recognized his or her status as a slave, which implies a participation of the slave in the proceedings.

Another indication of the presence of persons in the documents are the expressions *ma'hzarında* or *muvācehesinde*, both of which mean ‘in the presence of’ and indicate that statements and decisions were executed in the presence of specific persons. We find one of these terms in each manumission document, in which the slaves acknowledge their social status. According to the narrative in the document, this is a further indication that the slaves were present.

The transmitted active admission of being a slave, which is a clear indication of an existing dependency relationship, may seem confusing at first, but it can be accounted for by the fact that the slaves could not obtain their freedom without this

³³ See for example *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri, Ahi Çelebi Mahkemesi 1 Numaralı Sicil* (H. 1063–1064 / M. 1652–1653), ed. Coşkun Yılmaz (Istanbul: İSAM, 2019): 49 [8b-2].

³⁴ *Mu'terif/e* and *i'tiraf* are derived from the same Arabic root and therefore have the same basic meaning ('to agree' or 'admit').

³⁵ Both *rıkk* and *köle* are terms that were used for male and female slaves alike during the period examined here.

³⁶ See for example *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri, İstanbul Mahkemesi 3 Numaralı Sicil* (H. 1027 / M. 1618), ed. Coşkun Yılmaz (Istanbul: İSAM, 2010): [6b-1].

³⁷ For this, one can look at the proofs of freedom [*işbât-ı hürriyyet*], where enslaved people claim to actually be freeborn.

admission. Thus, in order to leave their strongly asymmetrical dependency relationship, the slaves first had to acknowledge it.

4.2 Approval of a Contract

Prior to manumission, some slaves entered into contracts with their slave owners in which the slaves were promised freedom under certain conditions. These contracts between the slaveholder and the slave stated that they agreed on an amount of money, time, or work a slave had to provide in order to gain his or her freedom. Once the condition had been agreed upon, the slave was released from slave status through the act of manumission. This was one of the forms of release that we frequently come across for domestic slaves.³⁸ It consisted of two related documents, namely the contract, called *mükātebe* or *kitābe(t)*, and the manumission deed itself. Since these documents are contracts, both parties had to agree.

An example is the contract from 1577 between a certain Mihri Hatun bint El-Hac Hızır, who, according to the document, had agreed with her slave Nikola veled Yani of Cypriot origin that the latter had to pay her 100 *ağçe* monthly and 3,000 *ağçe* in total. Mihri Hatun was represented by Mustafa Reis bin Abdullah. The document names all parties involved (the slave owner, the legal representative of the slave owner and the witnesses, whose attendance was necessary), which is followed by the name of the slave and a description (“blond, with blue eyes, open browed, of medium height, of Cypriote origin, with a birthmark on his right eyebrow”). This description was followed by the terms of the contract, which stated the total amount to be paid and the monthly installments. Mihri Hatun, the female slave owner, had her representative declare that she had entered into a *kitābet* contract to release her slave Nikola veled Yani once he fulfilled the terms of the contract. The last sentence in the entry reads: “The aforementioned slave has agreed (*kaḅūl etti*) to the said contract.”³⁹

Although Tahiroğlu argues that the *mükātebe* should be seen more as a command than as an agreement – since slaves were commodities, who were not supposed to have any will, – he still notes that, despite these implications, the slave’s approval was obtained and his or her acceptance of the terms is mentioned in the contract.⁴⁰ In the example above, we do not learn in what way the slave agreed, but it is confirmed that the slave acknowledged the contract, which probably entailed legal necessity. There are numerous further, similar examples showing that slaves agreed to these contracts, in the first part of the manumission documents – the contract itself – as well as in the

³⁸ Joshua White, “Ottoman Slave Manumission Documents,” *Christian-Muslim Relations 1500–1900*, 17.08.2021, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2451-9537_cmrii_COM_31256.

³⁹ *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri, Galata Mahkemesi 7 Numaralı Sicil* (H. 985–986 / M. 1577–1578), ed. Coşkun Yılmaz (Istanbul: İSAM, 2011): [46–3].

⁴⁰ Tahiroğlu, “Kölelik”: 667.

manumission deed.⁴¹ *Rāzı oldu*, a synonymous alternative to the term *kabül etti*, can be found in other entries.⁴² These expressions do not give us much information about what the consent might have looked like or in what form it took place. Were the slaves present? Did they have to say a certain phrase? At any rate, representing the slave's approval of the contract is significant for us here.

An extended formulation of this approval, which we can also find in the court records, may help concerning the question of personal presence at the court. We are informed that the agreement was “confirmed face to face and verbally” (*vicāhen ve şifāhen taşdik*).⁴³ Alternative formulations are *vicāhen taşdik ve şifāhen taḥkik*⁴⁴ or *vicāhen ve şifāhen taşdik ve taḥkik*.⁴⁵ (*Taşdik* and *taḥkik* both have the meaning ‘affirmation’ and ‘confirmation’.)

So why do some scribes decide to mention that the slaves were present and agreed verbally, and why is this information missing in other entries? We can either assume that the slaves all agreed to the contracts “face to face and verbally”, but it was not explicitly stated in all entries.⁴⁶ Or the slaves were only present at the court in those cases where this was explicitly mentioned, and in all other cases they were not. Their affirmation was maybe accepted in other ways, without being present and giving a verbal statement. Or it was just simply taken for granted that they had accepted. From the legal perspective, at any rate, both sides had to agree; otherwise, the contract was invalid. This also applied to other contracts, such as purchase agreements, rental agreements, debt matters, foundation agreements, and so on. In those agreements we can find the same formulations for the approval. From this point of view, concerning asymmetrical dependency, slaves seem to have the same status as freeborn people with respect to the legal question of being a contract partner.

Concerning the fulfilment of the contract, we can see that in this kind of enslavements based on a contract, a compensation had to be paid for the release. This bilateral agreement ensured that the slave obtained his or her release and the slave

41 Even though in most cases we cannot find the two related parts of a manumission contract we can see a summary of the contract in the manumission deed.

42 *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri, Üsküdar Mahkemesi 2 Numaralı Sicil* (H. 924–927 / M. 1518–1521), ed. Coşkun Yılmaz (Istanbul: İSAM, 2011): [12a-4].

43 *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri, Eyüb Mahkemesi (Havass-ı Refia) 3 Numaralı Sicil* (H. 993–995 / M. 1585–1587), ed. Coşkun Yılmaz (Istanbul: İSAM, 2011): [10a-2] or *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri, Balat Mahkemesi 1 Numaralı Sicil* (H. 964–965 / M. 1557–1558), ed. Coşkun Yılmaz (Istanbul: İSAM, 2019): [12b-2].

44 *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri, Eyüb Mahkemesi (Havass-ı Refia) 37 Numaralı Sicil* (H. 1047 / M. 1637–1638), ed. Coşkun Yılmaz (Istanbul: İSAM, 2011): [28a-3].

45 For instance: *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri, Galata Mahkemesi 15 Numaralı Sicil* (H. 981–1000 / M. 1573–1591), ed. Coşkun Yılmaz (Istanbul: İSAM, 2012): [84b-4].

46 The description of the features of the slaves in records of this kind could also indicate that the slaves did attend the legal proceedings.

owner received something in return.⁴⁷ All other forms of manumission were unilateral and depended solely on the slave owner's decision. Furthermore, with the settlement of the *mükâtebe* contract, slaves received rights and privileges that other slaves did not have.⁴⁸

By their consent in the contract it is made clear that they had a different status and a different scope of action than other slaves. At least this was the situation in the legal sense; the practice could be different. What I want to point out here is that there were different forms of representation of slave voices in the court records, and thus different forms of dependency in the legal sense become visible – especially when compared to other forms of enslavement, in which slaves are sold or passed on and appear in the entries in question merely as mute objects without a voice.

The slaves who agreed to such a contract were still in asymmetrical dependency with respect to other persons, especially their owners, with whom they entered into this agreement. Nevertheless, the strength of the asymmetrical dependency differs with regard to the slaves who were not granted the said rights and privileges that came as a result of such a contract and whose scope of action and decision-making possibilities were thus further limited.

It is possible to derive some information regarding the slaves' status and dependency relationships from these short narrative accounts. Depending on the position and dependency relationship of the slave, the narrative representation of his or her statements changed. While in the previous examples the voice of the slaves was expressed through a consent that was reported, there are some entries in which the voices of the slaves are expressed in other ways.

4.3 Proof of Manumission

Another way of expressing the voice of slaves is direct speech. We find representations of spoken utterances in the first person singular and in some cases also in the first person plural. In this case, the speakers give information about their own situation or events from their perspective – or at least this is what it looks like according to the text. We find this direct speech of slaves or supposed slaves in various types of proofs: proofs of freedom (*isbât-ı hürriyyet*), proofs of manumission (*isbât-ı itk*) and proofs of *ümm-i velediyyet* (*isbât-ı ümm-i velediyyet*).

As an example for the proof of manumission (*isbât-ı itk*) we can take a case concerning a female slave of Hungarian origin named Badiseher bint Abdullah, who was brought to court when her owner died and his heirs wanted to claim their inheri-

⁴⁷ See Molla Husrev, *Gurer ve Dürer Tercümesi*, vol. 2, trans. Arif Erkan (Istanbul: Eser Neşriyat, 1980): 331.

⁴⁸ These included, for example, the freedom to travel or to obtain property. Fahrettin Atar, "Mükâtebe," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* 31 (2006): 533.

tance. Her owner, a certain Mehmed Çelebi bin Hızır Ağa, left behind his wife, his daughter and his father as heirs. What happened becomes clear when we read the female slave's statement. She claims the following: "I was once the slave of this deceased Mehmed Çelebi, and although the said released me from his possession during his lifetime and I became a free woman, Hızır Ağa [the father of her owner] seized me as principal and as representative [of Mehmed Çelebi] as part of the estate of the deceased."⁴⁹ When Hızır Ağa was thereupon questioned, he confirmed that Badiseher had been Mehmed Çelebi's slave, but that Mehmed Çelebi had not manumitted her during his lifetime. When Badiseher was consequently asked to prove her claim, she brought three witnesses to court who confirmed that she had been freed by her owner during his lifetime. The manumission of the female slave was confirmed, and Hızır Ağa was prompted not to seize her again.⁵⁰

The direct speech here – like in all other examples – is embedded in an impersonal style that further highlights the change in the narrative. The rest of the text is written in the passive voice, which makes the court appear as the spokesperson of an objective legal system. The judge present here, even though he is the person to whom the direct speech is addressed at that moment, does not appear as narrator nor as author.⁵¹ However, it is reasonable to assume that he did get involved in the actual process through prompts or questions even though he does not appear in the written text as a voice.

We can see a similar case where two female slaves' voices are represented. Canan and Gülistan, both of Ukrainian origin, found their way to the court because their former owner died, or was killed to be more precise, and his wife Hadice tried to keep the two as her slaves. The two former female slaves though accuse Hadice by using almost the same phrase as in the example before: "Once we were the slaves of this deceased Mehmed Ağa, and although he manumitted us during his lifetime for the sake of Allah, said Hadice keeps us as her slaves. We request an investigation and our release." In this case, two witnesses confirmed the following: "Canan and Gülistan were manumitted by their owner in our presence. We can witness this matter in this way." Finally, the two were released and their claim was granted.⁵²

These entries show first of all that slaves not only had access to courts, but that some authority was granted to their voice. Whether there were one or more people, their statements were apparently transmitted orally. Ergene describes an effect of the

⁴⁹ *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri, İstanbul Mahkemesi 12 Numaralı Sicil* (H.1073–1074 / M.1663–1664), ed. Coşkun Yılmaz (Istanbul, İSAM 2011): [37b-1].

⁵⁰ *İstanbul Mahkemesi 12*: [37b-1].

⁵¹ For corresponding information concerning German legal texts, see von Arnould, "Was war, was ist": esp. 17. Von Arnould also explains that judges can also act as authors of the so-called "master narrative" (32).

⁵² *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri, İstanbul Mahkemesi 10 Numaralı Sicil* (H. 1072–1073 / M. 1661–1663), ed. Coşkun Yılmaz (Istanbul: İSAM, 2019): [108a-3].

method of recording the statements. He rightly notes that this transition from the passive voice to the first-person narrative, which is not indicated by quotations marks but by a grammatical change, “is definite and generates an interesting effect in the account by augmenting the feeling of proximity between the litigants and the readers”⁵³ of the documents. Ergene explains that this direct speech conveys the impression that the participants in the court case are speaking directly to us, without an intermediary. He also emphasizes that we cannot be sure whether this effect was intentional or not. However, “[d]irect quotations from the litigants and their witnesses indicate that these people were present during the trial – as they were legally supposed to be – and they were allowed to contribute their sides of the story through appropriate means.”⁵⁴ This is at least the impression that the document conveys. In the narrative portrayed, the slaves were present and spoke for themselves. Ergene, furthermore, draws a connection between the textual design of the court entries and the demonstration of the legitimacy of the process.⁵⁵

This is interesting in that Ergene raises several relevant points. First, he also refers to stories being told. Second, he talks about the effect of the first-person narrative, which gives the reader the impression that the parties were present. And third, he derives from this the function of this first-person narrative and the associated alleged presence of the persons, that is, to legitimize the process.

Focusing on the slaves, we can conclude from these two entries and numerous others like them that in the narrative of the documents direct speech was used when the slaves themselves claimed their freedom. In contrast to treaties or other cases where the consent of the respective slave was required, in these entries the slaves are given their voice, along with other participants whose voice carried weight and determined the outcome of the process.⁵⁶

Regarding the dependency relationship of the slaves, these documents suggest that they are at least allowed to go to court and challenge their situation. In the transmitted legal narrative, the case is presented from the point of view of the slaves in direct speech. Their statements are endowed with a certain authority because, with the help of evidence, they manage to succeed against the slave owner and gain their freedom. In this respect, the narrative devices used in these proofs illustrate the legal dissolution of strong asymmetrical dependency relationships.

53 Ergene, *Local Court*: 133.

54 Ergene, *Local Court*: 133.

55 Ergene, *Local Court*: 133–34.

56 In these cases, the verb used to introduce the direct speech is “to claim” (*da’vā edüp*). Sometimes one of the terms meaning “to say” or “to express” (for example “*takrîr-i kelâm*”) is added for reinforcement. This is for example the case in the last example I have shown.

4.4 Proof of *ümm-i velediyet*

In a proof of *ümm-i velediyet*⁵⁷ from the year 1663, everything revolves around the female slave Mülayim bint Abdullah. It is an entangled case, with many people involved: Mülayim bint Abdullah, the female slave; Mehmed, her son; Mehmed bin Abdullah, her third owner and the father of her son; Selim Beşe, who bought her from Ali Beşe, the legal representative of Hasan's son; Hasan, her first owner; Hasan's son, who became her second owner after his father's death. Mehmed bin Abdullah bought Mülayim from Hasan's son and became her owner and later freed her by recognizing the son Mehmed as his own.

The entry shows that Mülayim bt. Abdullah was the mother of Mehmed who was Mehmed b. Abdullah's son and Mehmed b. Abdullah's *ümm-i veled*. Mülayim sued a certain Selim Beşe who had seized her and her son. Her explanation in court reads as follows:

In former times, I was the slave of the deceased Hasan and after his death when I was given to his son and his heritage was sold, the said Mehmed bought me for eight thousand *ağçe* with the consent of the judge. After we shared the bed and this child came into being, he accepted him [the child] as his own, so that he became Mehmed's child and I his *ümm-i veled*. Although this made me free after his death and I became a free woman, the candle maker Ali Beşe, the child's [her former owner Hasan's son] legal representative, declared that it was not right for the unmarried Mehmed to have bought me for eight thousand *ağçe*. He said, 'You and the son of Mehmed are still owned by the son of the said [Hasan]' and illegally sold and handed us over to Selim Beşe. I demand that Selim be asked to keep his hands off us.⁵⁸

Selim Beşe confessed that the case was as described. Finally, the freedom of the two, Mülayim and her son, was recorded and Selim was accordingly asked to stay away.

In this example, we have a first-person narrative of the female slave who claims to have been freed and then resold illegally. The first-person narration gives the reader the impression that the female narrator is giving an account of an event she personally was involved in. While explaining her concerns she includes direct speech of another person into her own statement – or at least this is how it is represented in the entry. In contrast to the other entries, where different involved participants gave their own statements, here we have direct speech embedded into another direct speech.

Narratology distinguishes between different points of views (or narrative perspectives). “[N]arratives may be told from the perspective of a narrator, from that of a character and, last but not least, from a neutral, impersonal perspective. [. . .] A distinction can be made, then, between embodied and impersonal points of view, and

⁵⁷ For *ümm-i velediyet* see n. 32.

⁵⁸ *İstanbul Mahkemesi 12*: [2a-7] and [2b].

between external and internal ones.”⁵⁹ In the examples from the court records, the perspective changes during the texts. The dialogues are embedded in a larger narrative and a narrative situation is created that resembles the impersonality of the figural narrative situation. Here, reflector figures play a major part in representing events.⁶⁰ Some characters speak for themselves, others have a statement attributed to them. The first-person narrative though conveys the impression that the persons who speak were present at court. We can consequently conclude from this that the statements of those whose presence was obligatory or whose statements were more than an approval were reproduced in the entries through direct speech.

In the example above, the female slave’s statement was reproduced in direct speech, whereas the statement of the child’s representative was included in her speech. The confession of the man who claimed her as his property last was mentioned, but not reproduced verbatim. Here, in fact, as in the approvals of the slaves mentioned above, affirmation sufficed.

By inserting the statement of the opposing side into the verbal speech of the plaintiff, the narrative already seems to suggest in whose favor the case is decided. It could be deduced from this that the presentation of the statements is designed in such a way that it justifies the decision. As with the previous example, this entry thus represents the resolution of the asymmetrical dependency relationship in the legal sense. The woman leaves her slave status and attains freedom.

In proofs of freedom (*isbāt-ı hürriyyet*), originally free persons who were illegally enslaved try to prove their freedom. This is particularly significant in the context of descriptions of asymmetrical dependencies because it shows that the boundaries between free and unfree could easily become blurred, as even originally free people could end up in slave status. The widow Meryem bint Abdullah went to court to sue Hüseyin Bey bin Ebibekir for unlawfully seizing her as his slave. Meryem gave the names of her father and mother and stated that both were freeborn and had never been enslaved. The female slave’s statement was reproduced in direct speech, as in the case mentioned before. The statement by Hüseyin, who countered that he had acquired Meryem four months ago from a slave trader as a slave of Ukrainian origin, and who also claimed not to know that Meryem was allegedly a freeborn, was also reproduced in direct speech. Meryem was then asked to prove her claim. She succeeded in producing witnesses who confirmed that she was the daughter of freeborn parents and her freedom was thus considered proven. In these cases, the same narrative devices as in the cases mentioned above are used to demonstrate the proof.⁶¹

So, transitions were not always clear-cut; enslaved people could be set free, but free people could also be enslaved. In most cases in the court records, people were

⁵⁹ Monika Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology* (London: Routledge, 2009): 36.

⁶⁰ See Fludernik, *An Introduction*: 36.

⁶¹ *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri, İstanbul Mahkemesi 10 Numaralı Sicil* (H. 1072–1073 / M. 1661–1663), ed. Coşkun Yılmaz (Istanbul, İSAM 2019), [57b-1].

able to prove that they were originally free, but we can assume that not all of them succeeded in this endeavor. There are hardly any entries in which the proofs were not accepted, however. This does not mean that the (alleged or former) slaves only received a right to speak when freedom was considered confirmed and they thus left the status of slave and obtained that of a free person. The few rejections speak against this. It rather seems to have been due to the fact that presumably only those went to court whose application promised success, since it required money and effort.

4.5 Amicable Agreement

In the last example – just like in the one above concerning Mülayim bint Abdullah – direct speech is incorporated into direct speech. Here, both speeches are about statements by allegedly freed slaves, while one is supposed to be the slave of the other freed slave. In this case, which is a settled dispute, a certain Rıdvan bin Abdullah is presented as the former slave, who was freed by *itk*, of a certain Mahmud Ağa. From the entry we learn that Rıdvan was among other slaves who were manumitted in the same manner of manumission and there was at least one more slave with the name Kazım. In the presence of Kazım bin Abdullah, Rıdvan states the following:

When said Kazım was still my slave, he refused to serve me and when I objected to this in court, said Kazım stated ‘When I was the slave of the aforementioned Mahmud Ağa [the former owner of Rıdvan], he set me free during his lifetime’ and refused to be my slave. A great dispute arose between us.⁶²

The document states that the dispute was settled by the two agreeing in an amicable agreement (*şulh*)⁶³ which specified that Kazım would pay a sum of 3,000 *ağçe* to Rıdvan, who then would withdraw his claim.

According to the outcome, both former slaves, Rıdvan and Kazım, were manumitted slaves of the same owner, Mahmud Ağa. Rıdvan claimed that Kazım was his slave without mentioning how he came into his possession. Kazım refused to serve Rıdvan and claimed to have been manumitted by Mahmud Ağa as well. So, in this case, it does not become apparent whether one was indeed the slave of the other freed slave since the dispute ends with a settlement. Nevertheless, there are cases from which it is evident that former slaves could become slave owners themselves.

The statements of the persons involved are represented as a dialogue, but within the statement of the person making the request. Thus, direct speech here again con-

⁶² *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri, Rumeli Sadâreti Mahkemesi 40 Numaralı Sicil*, ed. Coşkun Yılmaz (Istanbul, İSAM 2019), [63b-3].

⁶³ Işık Tamdoğan, “‘Sulh’ and the 18th Century Ottoman Courts of Üsküdar and Adana,” *Islamic Law and Society* 15, no. 1 (2008): 5–83. We can also find the term “amicable settlement” as Ergene translates it, *Local Court*: 62.

tains direct speech. However, there is evidence to support the assumption that these are not in fact the actual statements of the persons involved. Maybe this can be called a kind of “fake orality,”⁶⁴ which is created by the fact that the persons involved refer to already mentioned persons. This is made clear by expressions like “the person mentioned above” or “the person already mentioned.” These references are typical of written texts and not of oral statements.

This emphasizes that there is no *true* presentation of the statements, but rather a strategy, presumably supposed to meet the requirements of legal texts. As Ergene already claimed, this could be associated with the legitimacy of the process. However, it helps us derive statements about the status and dependency relationships of slaves. In comparison with other cases where the slave voice is represented, we can see a remarkably complex structure.

Another feature that we can see here, and that can also be seen in other cases, is the reference to the fact that the statements were made in the presence (*maḥzar* or *muvācehe*) of certain people. In the last example, for instance, it is mentioned that Ridvan makes the statement in the presence of Kazım. However, Kazım’s statement is not rendered as direct speech, although, according to the text, he was present.

In the cases mentioned at the beginning of this paper, where the approval of the slaves was assured, we also find the note that the slaves were present. Both in the entries in which it is confirmed that the slaves gave their approval “face to face and verbally” and in those in which this is not explicitly stated, it has been noted that the statement of the owners was made in the presence of the slaves. This further supports the idea that the narrative strategies used to convey the slaves’ statements served to emphasize their presence in court – with the aim of satisfying legal requirements.

5 Conclusion

Ottoman court records are an interesting genre because they are based on multiple translation processes. These translation processes concern the transformation of the trials from orality to writing and from informal into formal language. The entries are short narratives in which the judge writes a version that is convincing to himself on the basis of the statements presented to him. It serves as an aid to his memory, summarizing the most important key data in case he needs to look it up again. Since the entries have to be adapted to a certain legal structure and language, the entries belonging to one specific category are quite similar. Although having been ‘edited’ by the judge and adapted to the legal conventions, the entries give us insights into the

64 An adequate German term could be “Fingierte Mündlichkeit” as used by Paul Goetsch in his paper “Fingierte Mündlichkeit in der Erzählkunst entwickelter Schriftkulturen,” *Poetica: Zeitschrift für Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft* 17 (1985): 202–18.

concerns of the people involved and provide us with ‘snapshots of their lives.’ In certain entries that involve slaves, we notice that the slaves express themselves in specific ways about the circumstances. Their utterances range from expressing agreement to uttering claims. The slaves’ statements are either mentioned or described, or they are reproduced verbatim, as direct speech.

In the case of agreements, we know that *both* parties had to agree in order for them to come into being. Therefore, we find the approval of the slaves in the *mükâtebe* contracts. The verbatim reproduction of the slaves’ statements in the proofs suggests that this provided evidence of the slaves’ presence in court, which was legally required. Thus, the narrative elements in the court records seem to fulfil legal requirements that had to be met for validity.

In this respect, the narrative devices used in the entries in the Istanbul court records did not serve to convince the jury or the judge of one version of the events. One can assume that they were rather used to meet legal requirements. It is also possible that the narrative techniques serve to support the decisions of the *ķāzīs* by presenting the case in such a way that the judge’s decision seems justified. After all, the verdicts should appear plausible and credible. It can also be argued that the content is reduced to the essentials to make the outcome of the decision comprehensible.

Concerning the slaves’ status and strong asymmetrical dependency relations, the entries show that slaves could obtain different legal statuses depending on the case dealt with. From this, in turn, different degrees of dependency can be deduced – in a legal sense at least. In the legal sense, slaves occupy an intermediate position: As ‘speaking property’, they gained the right to speak out in certain situations, that is, to make claims and stand up for their rights. The narrative analysis of the court records has shown in which cases this was possible. It is precisely this intermediate position, or the different positions that slaves could take depending on the situation, that points to different asymmetrical dependency relationships. They take different positions in court, with a different type of participation represented through their voice: A confirmed agreement or a statement in direct speech. From this it can be seen that slaves could attain different degrees of dependency within their lifetime. In conclusion, the basic argument is that the more voice was attributed to a slave, the more independently he or she was represented in the legal narrative.

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Gül Şen

Narrativity and Dependency: The Captivity of an Ottoman Official in Saint Petersburg (1771–1775)

1 Introduction

War captivity is a very special form of asymmetrical dependency. However, if we define the concept of asymmetrical dependency in a broader sense, we have to include structures and phenomena related to this type of social relationship, and to analyze them beyond the simple dichotomy of *slavery* and *freedom*.¹ Based on this assumption, we must understand the phenomenon of war captivity first of all as a shared practice in warfare among early-modern political powers.

In what follows, my analysis is based upon an Ottoman captivity account and its narrative peculiarities.² The source I discuss here to demonstrate this relation is a unique captivity narrative written by Meḫmed Necâti Efendi, an Ottoman official, after his release from captivity in 1775 in Saint Petersburg. Of his memoirs, at present seven manuscripts are extant, which form the basis of a complete edition which is currently under preparation.³ This account is of particular interest as its narrative can provide us with first-hand information on the experience of captivity in the second half of the eighteenth century in Russia. While there are some extant studies on the phenomenon of war captivity during this period,⁴ these works do not tell us much on officials as captives.

1 For a theoretical discussion of this issue, see Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen, “Slavery is Not Slavery: On Slaves and Slave Agency in the Ottoman Empire: Introduction,” in *Slaves and Slave Agency in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2020): 11–27.

2 This article has been written within the framework of the project “Transottoman Semiospheres: Pavel Levašov’s and Necâti Efendi’s Imaginations of the Other,” which in turn is part of “Transottomanica,” a Priority Program of the German Research Foundation. Compare the chapter by Alexander Bauer in this volume. Some results have been published here: Gül Şen, “Between Istanbul and Saint Petersburg: War Captivity as a Part of Diplomacy in the Eighteenth Century,” in *Proceedings of the III International Symposium on Turkey-Russia Relations*, ed. Vefa Kurban, Hamit Özman, and Recep Efe Çoban (Ankara: Gece Kitap, 2023): 338–353.

3 The comprehensive edition with annotations is prepared by Sevgi Ağcagül, Henning Sievert, Caspar Hillebrand, and myself. For the present contribution, I have used the manuscript in Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi-Collection, no. 2278 [hereafter: EEC 2278].

4 For the Ottoman captives and their return, see Fatma Sel Turhan, “Captives of the Ottoman-Russian War: 1768–1774,” *International Journal of Turcologica* 13, no. 25 (2018): 5–36; for the Russian captives’ conversion and regulations of exchange, see Will Smiley, “The Meaning of Conversion: Treaty Law, State Knowledge, and Religious Identity among Russian Captives in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire,” *The International History Review* 34, no. 3 (2012): 559–80.

Taking a narratological point of view as a vantage point, I consider this text as a literary one, i.e., I am interested in questions such as: has the author assembled his material in a specific way, and why did he make deliberate choices in selecting historical facts (*res gestae*) in order to create a particular narrative (*narration*) and emplotment of his memoirs?⁵ Furthermore, I would like to discuss some of the determinant factors in writing these memoirs, such as the author's personal experience of war captivity, his imagination of *self* and *other*, genre-related patterns and conventions, and his perception of *space*.

2 An Ottoman Official and the Setting of his Narration: War and Captivity

The historical background of Necāti's account is dominated by the Ottoman-Russian War (1768–1774). A conflict between the Russian Empire and the Ottoman state over the control of Eastern Poland escalated into a full-fledged war, in which the Russian army soon launched a number of offensives towards the Caucasus, the Balkan, and into the Mediterranean. A Russian naval squadron under the grand admiral Alexei Grigoryevich Orlov entered the Mediterranean Sea and established Russian naval hegemony by defeating the Ottoman navy at Chesme in 1770.⁶

A peace treaty, the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji (*Küçük Kaynarca*, *Kjučuk-Kajnardžijskij* *Кючук-Кайнарджийский*), was only signed in July 1774, due to joint mediation efforts by Prussia, Austria, and Great Britain, who aimed to prevent a further expansion of Russia. The most important result of the war was the Ottoman loss of the Crimea (along with the two important ports of Azov and Kerch), a territory which had been under Ottoman suzerainty since 1475; it was also the first loss of a territory with a predominantly Muslim population. Furthermore, the Ottoman state had to cede the authority over its orthodox subjects on the Balkan to Russia. As stipulated by the treaty, the Russian state had the right to maintain a permanent embassy in Istanbul, consulates in all major ports, a merchant fleet in the Black Sea, and access to the Mediterranean through the Marmara Sea. During the following five years, there were frequent encounters between the Russian and Ottoman navies in the Mediterranean.⁷ Only nine years after the signing of the

5 On emplotment and arrangement of facts in historiography, see Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973): 7–29.

6 Among the numerous studies on the reasons for and the course of this conflict, see Brian L. Davies, *The Russo-Turkish War, 1768–1774: Catherine II and the Ottoman Empire* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016) and Virginia H. Aksan, “Whatever Happened to the Janissaries? Mobilization for the 1768–1774 Russo-Ottoman War,” *War in History* 5, no. 1 (1998): 23–36.

7 Marcin Marcinkowski, *Die Entwicklung des Osmanischen Reiches zwischen 1839 und 1908: Reformbestrebungen und Modernisierungsversuche im Spiegel der deutschsprachigen Literatur* (Berlin: Schwarz, 2007): 13–15.

treaty, military conflict was reignited by Catherine II's annexation of the Crimean Khanate in 1783.

Necâti Efendi was an Ottoman official and served as the registrar of cadastral survey (*deFTER emîni*) to Silâhdâr İbrâhîm Pasha, the Ottoman commander in chief of the Crimea during the war. Together with a group of Ottoman officials he was held as a war captive for almost four years (1771–1775), until the amnesty brought by the peace treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji.⁸ Back in Istanbul in 1775, Necâti continued in his profession as a member of the Ottoman bureaucracy at the imperial record office of land property (*deFTER-i hâkânî*) and wrote his memoirs, which was an act of remembering dependency.⁹ The historian Erhan Afyoncu corrected the assumed date of Necâti's death (variously "after 1776" or "1785") in the literature to 1793, following the appointment records.¹⁰ Based on a newly discovered document I can confirm that Necâti spent an active professional life until his death in 1793.¹¹ According to this document, a petition was submitted by the registrar of land property, 'Alî Râif, on March 27, 1792. The document states that Necâti Efendi had served for forty years as administrator of documents (*kîsedâr*) of the imperial record office of land property, and that he had also served as deputy registrar of cadastral survey at the imperial court. After his captivity, which had lasted four and a half years, he was reappointed as administrator of documents. During his absence due to his duty in the military campaign in Vidin (in today's Bulgaria), a certain Meĥmed Yesârî Efendi replaced him as administrator of documents. Obviously, he obtained the position through intrigues and annoyed his colleagues with permanent grievances. Mentioning complaints by the scribes and their assistants 'Alî Râif submitted his petition at the court asking for Yesârî's dismissal and Necâti's reappointment. The petition not only reveals that Necâti was still acting as a state servant in 1792, but also indicates that he was a well-known and highly-regarded official who enjoyed the patronage of a number of influential court officials.

Before I turn to the phenomenon of war captivity, let me make some general reflections. War captivity has several dimensions, from a legal, i.e., normative discussion to actual practices. Although it was, normatively, forbidden to take co-religionists as war

⁸ At an earlier time than Necâti's group, the Ottoman court chronicler Aĥmed Vâsif Efendi was also captured during this war while on duty at the Crimea. Having been taken to Saint Petersburg, Vâsif was released by Catherine II after a few months to submit her peace proposals to the Ottomans. See Ethan L. Menchinger, *The First of the Modern Ottomans: The Intellectual History of Ahmed Vasif* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017): 27–42.

⁹ During the same time a Russian group was held as war captives in Istanbul, and one of their members, Pavel Levašov, also wrote memoirs. See the chapter by Alexander Bauer in this volume.

¹⁰ For the five documents on Necâti's appointments, death, and the appointments of his son and grandson, see Erhan Afyoncu, "Osmanlı Müverrihlerine Dair Tevcihat Kayıtları II," *Belgeler* 30 (2005): 173–76.

¹¹ Presidency of State Archives of the Republic of Turkey, Ottoman Archives (BOA), C.DH. no. 54 - 2698 - 0; 23-07-1206 [Marc 27, 1792].

captives and/or slaves, the Ottoman sources, such as court registers, tell a different story.¹² To understand these practices, we have to let go of the modern differentiation between the terms *prisoner of war* (POW) and *war captive*: The former is defined a legal person subjected to international law, with a clearly defined status. The latter term comprises two rather different groups: those captives who were held for ransom and enjoyed a remarkable degree of agency at their place of detention, and those who were put to work as unfree labor along with convicts. However, this distinction does not necessarily apply to the early modern period; bilateral peace treaties, such as the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji, comprise articles dedicated to the exchange of war captives. The Ottoman-Turkish term *esîr* (pl. *üserâ*) does not differentiate between enslaved individuals and war captives. Whenever the term is used in the sources, we must infer from the context which form of dependence is actually meant. In most passages related to warfare, *esîr* indicates the initial legal status as war captive, i.e. when the person in question was recorded in the registers for the specific tax for war captives (the so-called *pençik* or *pençik resmî*). After registration, some groups were sent to the imperial naval arsenal (*tersâne-i amîre*) to work on the galleys in the service of the state (called *mîrî esîr*), where they continued to keep their status as war captives.¹³ Other captives were distributed among the military and officials, thus entering a different status as enslaved people, for example as household slaves. Their new masters, however, were compelled to pay taxes for each captive they received according to the register mentioned above.

3 The Captivity Narrative and the Question of Genre

Since the narrativity of a text is very much dependent on its genre, I would like to discuss the issue of literary genre at this point, in order to situate Necâti's memoirs in the broader context of Ottoman historiography: Unlike in the case of modern literary writings, we cannot speak with certainty of absolute genre categories with premodern Ottoman texts.¹⁴ Instead, many interwoven types can be found in a single work, as is the case with the text under study. Moreover, a closer approach to the issue of genre might contribute to a better understanding of premodern texts and their purpose in a wider sense – provided that the analysis takes into consideration the intellectual and literary concepts and conventions of the period in which the text was produced,

¹² For legal discussions, see Will Smiley, *From Slaves to Prisoners of War: The Ottoman Empire, Russia, and the International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018): 24–30.

¹³ Gül Şen, “Between Two Spaces: Enslavement and Labor in the Early Modern Ottoman Navy,” in *Comparative and Global Framing of Enslavement*, ed. Stephan Conermann, Youval Rotman, Ehud Toledano and Rachel Zelnick-Abramo (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2023): 144–45.

¹⁴ For a comprehensive discussion of genre for Ottoman historiography see Gül Şen, *Making Sense of History: Narrativity and Literariness in the Ottoman Chronicle of Na'îmâ* (Leiden: Brill, 2022): 68–81.

rather than anachronistic expectations from a modern perspective. Based on Helmut Utzschneider's and Stefan Ark Nitsche's definition of literary genres, a genre is characterized by a certain range of topics and the presence of certain formal elements within a text (these features are called a "genre framework").¹⁵ Such topics and elements can be detected in Necâti's memoirs as interwoven into his narration, from which we may conclude that the text in fact reflects the conventions of various genres. First of all, its author has titled the text as the *History of Crimea (Tārîḫ-i Kırm)*. Necâti Efendi preferred to describe his text as a historical work, as this was the most common and most respected category of genre within the Ottoman knowledge system, although the term "history" was in fact an ambiguous one in that context. In one way, the text is indeed a history, in that it contains chapters on the Crimea and its history as well as on the events of the Ottoman-Russian War of 1768–1774, which, as we have seen, was ended by the Peace Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774. To that extent, I argue that Necâti Efendi, as a learned man and bureaucrat, was aware of the literary conventions and genre categories of his own time. However, the work also contains sections which are written as ego documents, in a first-person narrative. At the very beginning, Necâti refers to his situation as a captive, his profession as an official at the imperial record office, and his appointment as registrar of the cadastral survey for the Crimea. These are typical features both of an ego document in general and of a captivity narrative in particular. The work can also be analyzed in accordance with the parameters of another genre, the Ottoman embassy reports (*sefâretnâme*), as the text contains a number of topical similarities, such as route itineraries, diplomatic encounters, observations about state-run institutions, and eating habits. Though the author did not actually act as an official envoy, he still wrote down his observations as if he had acted in this function.¹⁶ At present, we know of four extant reports on embassies to Russia from the eighteenth century. The envoys were Nişli Meḥmed Agha (who went to Russia in 1722), Meḥmed Emnî Pasha (1740), Derviş Meḥmed Efendi (1754 and 1763), and Şehdî 'Osman Efendi (1740 and 1757).¹⁷ While Necâti's captivity narrative shows some similarities to these earlier reports, his memoirs cannot be assigned fully

15 Helmut Utzschneider and Stefan Ark Nitsche, *Arbeitsbuch literaturwissenschaftliche Bibelauslegung: Eine Methodenlehre zur Exegese des Alten Testaments*, 2nd ed. (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2005): 118.

16 For similarities of Necâti's memoirs to the embassy reports, see Christoph Neumann, "The Russian Experience: Necati Efendi in Captivity," *Südost-Forschungen* 71 (2012): 23–24.

17 For the embassy reports to Russia see Denise Klein, "The Sultan's Envoys Speak: The Ego in 18th-Century Ottoman *sefâretnâmes* on Russia," in *Many Ways of Speaking about the Self: Middle Eastern Ego-Documents in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish (14th–20th Century)*, ed. Ralf Elger and Yavuz Köse (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010): 89–102; for a list, see Caspar Hillebrand, "Ottoman Travel Accounts to Europe: An Overview of their Historical Development and a Commented Researchers' List," in *Venturing Beyond Borders: Reflections on Genre, Function and Boundaries in Middle Eastern Travel Writing*, ed. Bekim Agai, Olcay Akyıldız and Caspar Hillebrand (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2013): 61–62.

to this genre. Just like the authors of the above-mentioned *sefāretnāmes*, Necāti, a learned official – though of a lower rank – must have made conscious use of genre-related patterns and conventions of his time. However, unlike his fellow writers, he did not travel to the Russian Empire voluntarily, but experienced forced mobility under completely different circumstances. Although his writing contains embassy report-like elements, his memoirs reflect his experience of war captivity; I therefore prefer to define this text as a captivity narrative (*esāretnāme*), a common term for first-person narratives written by former captives. Such ego documents of captivity are, however, rare in Ottoman literature, while narratives of captivity in the Ottoman realm written by (Christian) European authors are abundant. Aside from the Ottoman captives Hindi Maḥmūd and Macūncuzāde Muştafā, who had been in captivity in Rome in the 1570s and in Malta in 1599 respectively,¹⁸ the most celebrated captivity narrative comes a century later with ‘Osman Agha’s memoirs, written in 1725, on his time as a war captive in the Habsburg domain from 1688 to 1700.¹⁹ A less-known account is the narrative of Köle (“Slave”) Süleymān, a former Janissary, on his eight years of captivity in France from 1785 to 1793.²⁰ Necāti’s account remains the only known example of this genre from the last decades of the eighteenth century on Russia, and is quite unique in its description of that country under the rule of Catherine II. By contrast, the genre had become popular in early-modern Europe, where a considerable number of such accounts was published to fulfill the demand of a large audience with political and commercial interests.²¹

In terms of its content, Necāti’s work is rich on historical events, descriptions of spaces/places and institutions, and on the names of individuals and geographical-administrative units. In terms of the organization of contents, I consider the overall arrangement as an emplotment, since it explains the issue of genre(s), the way the author writes, and the process of the narration. Hayden White defines emplotment as

18 For captivity narratives, see Cemal Kafadar, “Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth Century Istanbul and First-Person Narratives in Ottoman Literature,” *Studia Islamica* 69 (1989): 131–34; Erhan Afyoncu, “Esaretnameler ve Mehmet Necati’nin Esaretnamesi,” in *Uluslararası Türk Savaş Esirleri Sempozyumu Bildiri Kitabı*, ed. Okan Yesilot et al. (Istanbul: Sultanbeyli Belediyesi, 2018): 13–28; Gül Şen, “Galley Slaves and Agency: The Driving Force of the Ottoman Fleet,” in *Slaves and Slave Agency in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2020): 148; Selim Karahasanoğlu, “Ottoman Ego-Documents: State of the Art,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 53 (2021): 305–6.

19 *Der Gefangene der Giauren: Die abenteuerlichen Schicksale des Dolmetschers Osman Ağa aus Temeschwar, von ihm selbst erzählt*, trans. Richard Franz Kreutel and Otto Spies (Graz: Styria, 1962).

20 For Süleymān’s narrative, see Belkıs Altunış Gürsoy, “Siyasetname Hüviyetinde Bir Esaretname,” *Erdem: İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi* 60 (2011): 77–142.

21 See Joshua M. White, *Piracy and Law in the Ottoman Mediterranean* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017): 72.

“the way by which a sequence of events fashioned into a story is gradually revealed to be a story of a particular kind.”²² In this sense, the text segments can be understood as independent genres if we analyze them individually. However, as a whole, they display a particular emplotment, “a story of a particular kind.” Obviously, the author did not arrange his narration in a well-conceived structure, but with the intention to give it a particular significance as a whole. Accordingly, we find various elements and narrations assembled in the text:

- praise of God and the Prophet; his appointment as registrar of cadastral survey to *Silāhdār* (arms bearer) İbrāhīm Pasha, the Ottoman commander-in-chief of the Crimea
- sojourn in Caffa (today Feodosia) in the Crimea; conflicts with the Crimean Nogais, who had failed to deliver the requested four thousand carts for the Ottoman army; food shortage due to the lack of carts
- defeat of the Ottoman army in the Crimea by Russian troops
- beginning of captivity; six-month journey to Saint Petersburg
- captivity in Saint Petersburg; banquets and receptions attended by Necāti; opera; masked ball; eating habits
- an account of Pugachev’s Rebellion of 1773–1775, a general uprising of serfs and religious minorities
- imperial gardens in Saint Petersburg; palaces outside the city; jewelry production; the palace of Catherine II; the naval arsenal in Saint Petersburg; the Russian systems of customs and taxation; Russian villages; orphanage; fires in Petersburg and Moscow; the Russian army
- return from Saint Petersburg to Istanbul; itinerary of the route
- Necāti Efendi made head of department of the imperial chancery; his appointment to the imperial record office; his following appointment to Chotin (today in Ukraine)
- reasons for the defeat of the Ottoman army by the Russians: defection of Tatar units to the enemy, secret negotiations of Giray Khan with the Russians, which results in his handing over the Crimea to them for material gain; shortcomings of the Ottoman military, poor administration of the navy; desertion of soldiers.

Thus, Necāti Efendi presented to his Ottoman contemporaries a historical account, a diplomatic report, and a captivity narrative in one and the same text. Observations on Russian courtly society and politics are embedded into reports of his personal experiences of war captivity.

22 White, *Metahistory*: 7.

4 Narrating Asymmetrical Dependency

Narratology insists on distinguishing between the author and the narrator of a text in order to understand the narratological peculiarities of a text.²³ In the present case, this distinction provides us with some interesting insights: The latter makes an appearance only on the textual level, in order to create a mode of narrativity. Thus, while speaking of textual-narratological analyses, when I refer to Necâti I mean the narrator in the text and not the historical author. Necâti mentions his captivity at the very beginning, so that the reader is made aware that the account will report this circumstance. From a transcultural perspective, he makes a number of remarkable and insightful observations. The details of these observations reveal that he had the opportunity to visit many places and collect information, although he could not speak Russian – at least at the beginning of his captivity. After all, as a war captive, he still enjoyed a privileged status as member of the Ottoman elite.

4.1 The Narrative Mode of Representing Space

In a narrative text, space can be represented or imagined by different techniques. In Necâti's text, the overall space is that of his war captivity, i.e., the territory of the Russian Empire. In his narrative, Necâti attempts to paint a full picture of this overall space by highlighting a number of particular aspects, e.g. the detailed description of places or activities related to the imperial sphere of power. This selective description, which entirely ignores rural Russia, for example, is determined by the author's intent; he has selected those aspects which would be of greatest interest for his readership of Ottoman officials.

An illustrative example for this narrative technique is his description of the ballroom in the hall of the Winter Palace at Saint Petersburg. The description is focused only on the furnishings which are relevant for the interaction of the protagonists. The function of the ballroom is that of a *space of action*, not only for musical and artistic performances, but also for important diplomatic negotiations. Therefore the description devotes less room to the interior, and much more to the activities going on there.²⁴ As spaces are also defined by their boundaries, the doors of the ballroom play an important role in the narration: they not only separate the ballroom from the

²³ For an analysis of different types of narrator, see Sven Strasen. "Zur Analyse der Erzählsituation und der Fokalisierung," in *Einführung in die Erzähltextanalyse: Kategorien, Modelle, Probleme*, ed. Peter Wenzel (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2004): 111–40; for a discussion concerning Ottoman historiographic texts, see Şen, *Making Sense of History*: 192–93.

²⁴ For an introductory discussion on and an analysis of space see Birgit Haupt, "Analyse des Raums," in *Einführung in die Erzähltextanalyse: Kategorien, Modelle, Probleme*, ed. Peter Wenzel (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2004): 69–87.

other chambers, but the guards posted there also separate those who are permitted to enter (the sphere of power) from those who are not. Thus, these boundaries are defined not only by space, but also by rules and conventions. This is exemplified in Necāti's description of the imperial court theater:

The audience is permitted to access only upon invitation, and the [written] invitations, which are marked with a stamp, are issued to groups of three to five individuals. When they arrive at the Palace, they produce the stamped invitation to the guards at the entrance, submit them, and only then are they allowed to enter. These rules apply for all who attend regardless of rank. For each event a separate stamp is issued.²⁵

Here, Necāti's text reveals another relevant dimension of spatial boundaries: they are defined not only by rules, but also by the persons (i.e. protagonists) who are permitted to cross them: within the sphere of the court, only courtiers, dignitaries, and foreign envoys are present at the empress's palace while common people are excluded (Fig. 1). In addition to its factual aspect, this description is also a conventionalized *topos* by which the imperial palaces in and around Saint Petersburg are presented as symbolic spaces of power, whose meaning can be understood across cultural and political boundaries.²⁶ Catherine II's palace serves as a symbol of Russian imperial rule, just as the Sultan's palace in Istanbul does for the Ottoman world. Ultimately, both spaces are narrated as spheres of protocolary matters, diplomatic encounters, artistic performances, as representations of glory and wealth.

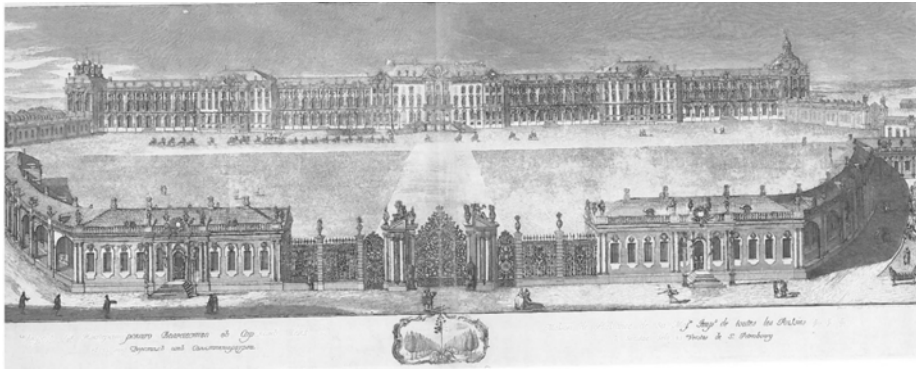


Fig. 1: View of Her Imperial Majesty's Palace at Tsarskoye Selo, 25 versts from Saint Petersburg (1761). Source: *Sankt Petersburg und Umgebung in Russischen Veduten 1753–1761: Zwei Kupferstichfolgen nach Michail Ivanovic Mechaev*, hrsg. von der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Sankt Petersburg. Exhibition Catalogue of Staatliche Graphische Sammlung Munich, 1992, No. 16. Reproduction courtesy of Staatliche Graphische Sammlung Munich.

²⁵ EEC 2278, 24r.

²⁶ For the conventionalizing of a narrative space, see Haupt, "Analyse des Raums": 82–83.

Thus, the narrative space created by the author performs an important function in the emplotment of the text, as the structures of space correspond with the structures of emplotment. Necâti must have remembered the Bosphorus when he first saw the river Neva in Saint Petersburg. This may explain the explicit comparison of the Russian capital to Istanbul: “Its width is comparable to that between Eminönü and Üsküdar; on the other side of the river, a city is located, just like Galata. It is named Peterhof (*Petrehof*). In the summertime, it is crossed by boats and there is a big bridge from one side to the other. They cross it by carriages.”²⁷ In this description, Saint Petersburg does not appear as a place that is *other*; here, it is in fact a real place, the author Necâti is in fact there. However, his perception of the Russian capital is defined by his cultural background and the imaginations presumably formed by it. Thus, the river Neva becomes the Bosphorus, its banks the neighborhoods of Istanbul (Fig. 2).

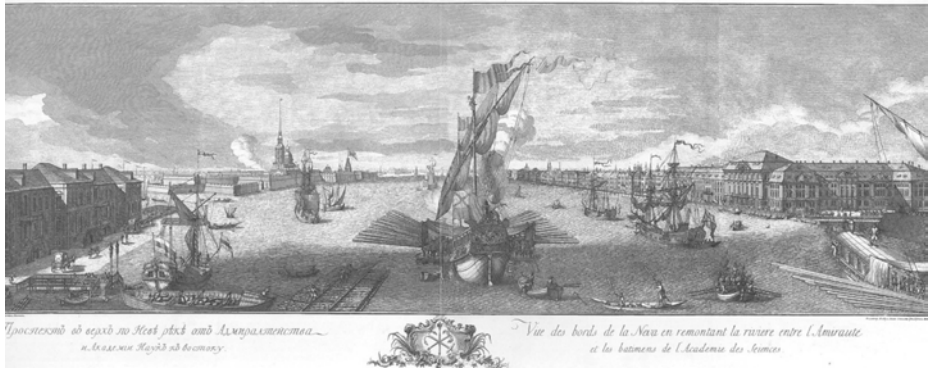


Fig. 2: View of the River Neva Between the Admiralty and the Building of the Academy of Sciences (1753). Source: *Sankt Petersburg und Umgebung in Russischen Veduten 1753–1761: Zwei Kupferstichfolgen nach Michail Ivanovic Mechaev, hrsg. von der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Sankt Petersburg*. Exhibition Catalogue of Staatliche Graphische Sammlung Munich, 1992, No. 3. Reproduction courtesy of Staatliche Graphische Sammlung Munich.

After pointing out the similarities between the two places, Necâti turns to a place which is obviously alien to him and which he calls the “anatomy hall” (*teşrikkhâne*). Exhaustively, he describes the glass vessels in which human and animal organs and body parts are preserved.²⁸ He is astonished by the variety of objects, among which are embryos in various stages of development. Even more astonishing to him than this exhibition hall was the practice of applause during courtly events. Narrating a

²⁷ EEC 2278, 32v–32r.

²⁸ EEC 2278, 32r. Şehdî Osman Efendi mentions this exhibition only in a sentence. Faik Reşit Unat, “Şehdî Osman Efendi Sefaretnamesi,” *Osmanlı Tarih Vesikaları* (1942): 310, 303–20.

night at the opera, Necāti describes his amazement as Catherine II clapped her hands after each performance:

It is remarkable that the queen, when she likes the performances and dances, gave them a strong applause as a gratuity (*baḥşîş*). Both men and women [were so pleased] as if they were receiving gold. Gratuities and presents are unknown to them. What an inexhaustible treasure are these [shouts of] ‘bravo’! To put it differently: Were the queen to offer *aḳçe* (silver coins) instead of her applause, not just the 400 *aḳçe* she provides to his excellency İbrâhîm Pasha, as his daily allowance, but even four thousand *aḳçe* would not equal it. As for this humble [person], 25 *aḳçe* were stipulated. And they boast that such allowances would be paid in any other kingdom. No one can evade the aforesaid generosity [the applause] by any means, so we all applauded. When we asked the interpreter assigned to us, he told us that this was allowed.²⁹

Obviously, Necāti is completely unfamiliar with the whole practice, and he can only compare it to a phenomenon familiar in his own cultural space, i.e. the offering of tips, which was an immensely important practice in Ottoman society, in particular at the imperial court. Moreover, it is striking that he tells that the actors received their gratuities in *akce* (instead, as we must assume, in rubles), a fact of which he must have been aware. Obviously, what counts most to him is to underline his observation that at the Russian court, just as in the Ottoman State, imperial favor was expressed by silver coins. Comparing two imperial spaces, i.e., court cultures, he also gives a hint to his own, and his fellow captives’ status of asymmetrical dependency by using the phrase “by any means” (*çare yok*), i.e. the fact that they could not evade the practice of clapping hands. Eventually, he had to submit to the customs of his courtly environment, even though he could not find any meaning in the act of applauding the artists. From a narratological point of view, the narrator demonstrates here his own and his fellow captives’ status as esteemed war captives: They could attend a courtly performance like the opera together with the empress and all other high-ranking officials. He further makes use of *comparatio* as a textual strategy in order to explain unknown practices.³⁰ We can observe a similar approach in the author’s description of the Russian system of serfdom, something that did not exist within the Ottoman system of enslavement. The author compares this phenomenon with tax farming, thus making an alien and incomprehensible phenomenon understandable for himself and his readers by relating it to a familiar practice from the Ottoman context. While keeping an objective distance to serfdom, Necāti employs the neutral term *re’âyâ* [“tax-paying subject”], which did refer to the taxable population of the Ottoman state regardless of religion and ethnicity:

²⁹ EEC 2278, 24r–25v.

³⁰ For an example of extensive use of this ancient rhetorical device of *comparatio* in a historiographic text see Şen, *Making Sense of History*: 110–14.

In order to make clear to which tax farmer they belong, these *re'âyâ* [subjects], no matter how many there are, wear a horseshoe-like, perforated iron on which the name of the tax farmer, the subject's name and their home village has been stamped. This iron is attached to the subject's lapel.³¹

He displays mild surprise when explaining that the tax farmers sold their serfs among themselves, how they supplied two or three hundred of their serfs as soldiers in times of war, and would supply other serfs in times of peace to replace fallen soldiers: “However, these subjects will not see their place of birth ever again. If they get injured and unfit for service during that time, they will be left to beg without pay or pension. This is the mercy they show towards their soldiers.”³²

Another description of a place which Necâti regards to be of interest for his intended readers is a state-run institution whose name may not be rendered correctly:

Praise for the Institution for illegitimate Children

This brothel (*kârhâne*) is [administrated by] appointed officials and custodians. Nursing prostitutes [sic; i.e. wet nurses] live there. When street prostitutes bear children, these children are brought to this institution and [the person who brings them] receives 200 *ağçe* from the officials. Wenn these children are five or six years old, priests are appointed to teach them to read, write and dance. When they attain [their] majority, the Empress visits them one or two times per year. Since [this institution] is her invention; the boys are brought to the military barracks and the girls to her palace. In this way, many children enter [the palace] every five or ten years.³³

Although Necâti misinterprets this institution, which is an orphanage and not a brothel, and mistakes wet nurses for prostitutes, it is striking that he does not criticize this “brothel” on moral grounds. Obviously he is interested in the new practice implemented by Catherine II. Within the framework of her reform attempts in the field of popular and elite education,³⁴ a recruitment mechanism for military personnel and court servants reminds the author of the Ottoman mechanism of *devşirme*, the “child

31 EEC 2278, 35r: *bu re'âyâlar her kimiñ muķâta'asında olduđın beyân için kaç nefer ise birer bâğtr na'li mişillü ve eđrâftı delikliü temür üzerine muķâta'a şâhibi ve re'âyânüñ ismi ve kıryesi ismi sikkeye urulmuşdur ol temür ol re'âyânüñ yaķasına dikilüdir.*

32 EEC 2278, 35r–36v: *lakin bu re'âyâlar bir dađı vilâyetlerin görmezler 'askerlikde yâ mecrüh olur bi-lâ yevmiye ve-lâ ta'yinât taķâ'ud olur ki encâmı sâ'il olurlar 'askerine merķameti bu günedir.*

33 EEC 2278, 37v.

34 This orphanage was founded in Saint Petersburg in 1770 and was – along with the orphanage in Moscow, founded 1763 – the first institution of this sort in Russia. At the time of Necâti's visit, the orphanage suffered from poor management and a high mortality rate, also caused by false scientific ideas on infant nutrition. The situation was only improved by reforms during the 1780s. See Jan Kusber, *Katharina die Große: Legitimation durch Reform und Expansion* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2022): 152; Isabel de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981): 491–93; Jan Kusber, *Eliten- und Volksbildung im Zarenreich während des 18. und in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts: Studien zu Diskurs, Gesetzgebung und Umsetzung* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2004).

levy”, a source of personnel both for the Ottoman army and the sultan’s court.³⁵ Therefore, our author does not criticize or condemn the existence of what he perceives as a state-run brothel, but simply describes it as an effective recruitment method.³⁶

4.2 Further Stylistic Devices

By using a range of stylistic devices, the narrator communicates with the text’s intended recipients. The mode of the text includes distance and focalization. The aspect of distance indicates whether the presentation of the narrative is direct or indirect, i.e., whether it evokes a narrative or a dramatic mode.³⁷ By employing direct speech, the narrator creates a dramatic mode, since there is then no or only little distance to the story. The narrative function of the dialogues embedded in the text is not only to add vividness; they are also crucial parts of the plot, since they provide a structure to the text, as is revealed by many dialogue passages. In the following short section on the masked ball, the narrator ends his story with a dialogue that serves both to conclude the narration and to adapt it to a dramatic mode, i.e. giving a more thrilling touch to his account for the reader:

This they call ‘playing a comedy.’ In their opinion, the masked ball is a great art. It takes place a few times a year, though not every year, because of the high costs. It is a staged event for which they meet at the empress’ palace, where three large halls are brightly lit with candles. Dancers give a lot of performances until the early morning while wearing masks. Men and women walk hand in hand from one hall to the next and hide their faces behind masks. A man is dressed like a woman, a woman dressed like a man, with a brightly painted piece of wood before their faces and looking at each other. Once, the commander in chief [pasha] was invited, and while he was sitting on a chair, the empress approached him disguised as a man. She had on one side the commander of the Mediterranean Fleet, Çalık (sic) Orlov,³⁸ and on the other the aforesaid Panin;³⁹ both men were wearing Algerian costume. In this way [the empress] approached the pasha and asked the interpreter: ‘Has the pasha recognized us?’ The Pasha replied: ‘I have not recognized [you].’ The Empress laughed, took off her mask and said: ‘It is called a masked ball.’ When the

35 On the system of child levy, see Gülay Yılmaz, “Body Politics and the Devşirmes in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire: The Conscripted Children of Herzegovina,” in *Children and Childhood in the Ottoman Empire from the 15th to the 20th Century*, ed. Gülay Yılmaz and Fruma Zachs (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021): 239–63.

36 As emphasized also by Neuman, see Neumann, “The Russian Experience”: 30.

37 Other terms employed to explain the “dramatic mode” in a narration are “showing” or “mimesis”, see Matias Martinez and Michael Scheffel, *Einführung in die Erzähltheorie*, 7th ed. (Munich: Beck, 2007): 47–49.

38 The grand admiral Alexei Grigoryevich Orlov.

39 Nikita Ivanovic Panin was a statesman and political mentor to Catherine II.

Pasha said: 'I have never seen anything like it,' the Empress replied: 'This is a spectacle which you are going to remember once you all will have returned to your native country.'⁴⁰

Furthermore, since this dialogue is held between subalterns, i.e., the Ottomans, and masters, in this case the Empress and her courtiers, i.e. in a situation of asymmetrical dependency, the function of the dialogue becomes more revealing. When the Empress says in the concluding sentence: "This is a spectacle which you are going to remember once you all will have returned to your native country," it is obvious that it is she – as their current master – who decides on the forced stay of the Ottoman war captives but also holds out the hope that they will be able to return home some day. Here, again, we see that the author tends to describe unknown practices as precisely as possible, such as explaining a mask as "a brightly painted piece of wood before their faces." He must be aware that all these practices were solely practices of the court and did not reflect the culture of ordinary Russian society. Thus, the mask appears as a symbol for Russian court culture.

Use of the dramatic mode, which reduces distance, can also be seen in the following dialogue between the Ottoman commander in chief, İbrāhīm Pasha, and the Russian lieutenant colonel (*podpolkovnik, подполковник*) – whose name is not mentioned – after thirty-eight days of custody at the fortress of Crimean Tula:

A dispute broke out. The commander of [the unit of] 700 men said: 'Do you want to stay in this fortress with all your remaining men? Or do you want to leave with 21 men, as ordained in the letter which has arrived? Give me an answer, so that I can inform my authorities accordingly.'

His excellence [İbrāhīm] Pasha gave a firm answer by saying: 'Write down [what I am saying]. I am a captive anywhere, no matter where I am being held. But I cannot leave any of my men behind, because I do not need your authorities and king, nor do I need to meet [them]. Whatever fate decides will happen.' The aforesaid [colonel] was not able to make any objections to that.

Thereupon, the commander of the fortress and other officers understood the situation, and they all went to the commander-in-chief [İbrāhīm Pasha], took off their hats, bowed their heads, asked about his well-being and said: 'If you do not accompany this [Russian] lieutenant colonel [to Saint Petersburg] but stay here instead, it would be very unfair [towards him]. He has been appointed for your service [for this task] and if he can proceed to the local commandant [in Saint Petersburg] without any dispute, the state will bestow on him the rank of a general. Thus, if you honor him and take [only] twenty-one men with you, everything you desire will be granted as soon as we meet the Empress. [In this case] it will be possible for the remaining men [of your retinue] to join you later.' [İbrāhīm Pasha] reluctantly agreed.⁴¹

⁴⁰ EEC 2278, 26r–27v. *cevāb eder ki bir gün ola ki bu oyunlar ki hatıra gelür deyüb gitdi*. A decade earlier, in 1763, Ahmed Resmi Efendi, the envoy to Berlin, described a masked ball in his report. This is obviously the first narration of a masked ball in Ottoman literature according to Abdullah Güllüoğlu. See his "Die Wahrnehmung des Anderen in den Berichten des osmanischen Gesandten Ahmed Resmi Efendi (1694/95–1783)," in *Orientalische Reisende in Europa: Europäische Reisende im Nahen Osten: Bilder vom Selbst und Imaginationen des Anderen*, ed. Bekim Agai and Zita Ágota Pataki (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2010): 84.

⁴¹ EEC 2278, 21r–22v.

First of all, it is striking that Necâti emphasizes the respectful way in which the Russian officers, i.e. the enemy, approach the Ottoman commander-in-chief, displaying forms of courtesy that were common in their own as well as in Ottoman culture, such as taking off their hats, bowing their heads and asking about the pasha's well-being. Regardless of cultural differences, we can observe here a conversation of men regarding each other as socially equal. In telling this story, the narrator's position can adopt two forms: *heterodiegetic* and *homodiegetic*. In the first case, the narrator is exclusively tangible on the level of narrative transmission and does not participate in the events described, i.e. on the story level. The narration is in the third person. This heterodiegetic narration dominates throughout the text since it tends to be associated with a higher degree of authority. A homodiegetic narrator is present and participates directly in the events as a protagonist, and the narration is thus in the first person.⁴² Necâti employs a first-person perspective, when he refers to himself in the third person as "this humble [person]" (*bu fakîr*). At the end, when Necâti mentions that he was sent to Istanbul to deliver the commander in chief's letter to the grand vizier, he refers to himself as *bu 'abd-i 'âciz*, "this incapable slave." It is remarkable that he defines himself as "this humble [person]" not only in a scene related to the Ottoman world, but also when referring to his Russian superiors during his captivity. For example, when he mentions the daily allowance which he and his companions received from the empress, he writes, "[The Empress] provided twenty-five *akçe* to this humble [person]." This expression is a topos of modesty, a literary convention of Ottoman literature in which the third person is employed instead of the first.

5 Conclusions

Necâti Efendi, an Ottoman official, experienced four years of captivity in Saint Petersburg during the Ottoman-Russian War of 1768–1772, and wrote his memoirs after his return to Istanbul. While I regard this factual text as an ego document, I place his narration in the genre of captivity narratives. In his text, the author provides a relatively neutral view of his experiences and observations during his Russian captivity. Abstaining from creating an alterity/otherness discourse, he does not use asymmetrical binary pairs of *self* and *other* relating to his own cultural space and the space of his captivity.

Necâti and his fellow captives were certainly privileged prisoners of war, in the way that they were middle- or high-ranking officials who could expect to be treated according to the rules of diplomacy. Although the war was still going on and no one knew for how long it would continue, the captives' holders had to adhere to diplomatic regulations relating to war captives, who would be exchanged immediately

⁴² Martinez and Scheffel, *Erzähltheorie*: 81.

once hostilities had ended. Thus, regardless of what was happening on the battle ground, Necâti and his fellow captives in Saint Petersburg found themselves deeply involved into diplomatic practices: They received a daily allowance; they were invited by Catherine II several times to court events such as balls, operas, and banquets. As we have seen in the content of his work, his detailed descriptions of many places in Saint Petersburg and insightful explanations of a variety of institutions and practices reveal that the group of Ottoman officials was given purposefully access to all these institutions by the Russians: It was obvious that these war captives were kept only temporarily in Saint Petersburg. Upon their return home they would be able to pass on the knowledge on the Russian empire which they had obtained during their long captivity.

This background may explain Necâti's narrative, i.e., what he wrote, how he wrote (and also why he omitted some information) and why he selected this particular style and structure. All in all, it is a narrative of self-justification, although he did not serve as a diplomat or envoy to Russia and was not obliged to submit a report on a foreign country. He had done his job; he was neither a traitor nor a deserter. He adds also a *lessons learnt* to his narrative, in order to explain what had gone wrong in the war theatre to prevent the same mistake to be made again (the next war with Russia was to begin only 15 years later). With Russia as the biggest military threat to the Ottoman state, court circles in Istanbul must have been most interested in his unofficial report. Finally, he had been in the core area of the enemy's power, which enabled him to provide information on how the Russian state was functioning and especially how Catherine the Great could finance the war (Necâti's answer: the tax system was well-organized). The description of the naval arsenal in Saint Petersburg was of crucial importance, giving a hint at the technological resources Russia had at hand and in which way they could be turned into military prowess.

Focusing on the question of *how* the narrative is told, Necâti's narrative strategies in the text reveal his dependent situation as a war captive in the Russian capital, and how he attempted to deal with his experiences by drawing upon his own cultural background and perceiving the surrounding foreign space. Maintaining a distanced and neutral point of view in most cases, Necâti does not use the *other* as projection surface for his own desires and imaginations. Rather, he presents pictures both of his own culture and the culture of others in an interwoven context, thus initiating a dynamic process of knowledge production. Addressing asymmetrical dependency, Necâti's captivity narrative depicts a structure of dependency on an elite level which is, however, significantly different from the experience of war captivity suffered by ordinary soldiers or civilians.

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Alexander Bauer

‘The Suffering of the Russians’: The Narration of Captivity and Suffering in the Imaginations about the Ottoman Stranger in Pavel Levašov’s Writings

The text knows more than its author
(Jurij Lotman¹)

1 Introduction

This article was written as part of the project “Transottoman Semiospheres. Pavel Levašov’s and Necâti Efendi’s Imaginations of the Other” (SPP Transottomanica).² The author took this contribution as an opportunity to present his preliminary observations and reflections, which he could make on the basis, first and foremost, of a work by Pavel Levašov with the meaningful title *Captivity and the Sufferings of the Russians among the Turks* (published in book form in St. Petersburg in 1790).³ It is already clear that the keyword ‘dependency’ is the vital cue for further work on this project. In the current, initial phase, it can already be said with certainty that captivity, suffering and violence are the fundamental themes in Levašov’s representations of Ottoman foreigners. Captivity and violence create conditions of dependency.

The historical and literary examination of the situation of imprisonment is thus at the same time an examination of the situation of dependency. Authors who want to talk about the imprisonment they have themselves experienced inevitably also tell a story about their own dependence, even if they do not intend to do so. We are dealing here with the polysemantic nature of the text, in the sense of Lotman’s statement (see above) about the self-increasing logos.⁴ This inner indeterminacy of the structure of an emerging text creates a tension: on the one hand, it is largely up to the authors how they negotiate this theme. Authors choose their strategy for dealing with this

1 Tat’jana Černigovskaja, *Ulybka češirskogo kota Šredingera: mozg, jazyk i osoznanie* (Moscow: Jazyki Slavjanskoj Kul’tury, 2021), http://loveread.ec/view_global.php?id=94810 [accessed 14.11.2021].

2 See also the article by Gül Şen in this volume.

3 The present article is based on an abridged version of this work, which was published as part of a collected edition by the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAN). All relevant page references refer to this publication: Aleksej Vigašin and Sergej Karpjuk, eds., *Putešestvija po Vostoku v Èpochu Ekateriny II* (Moscow: Vostočnaja literatura RAN, 1995).

4 Russ. *samovozrastajuščij logos*, Černigovskaja, *Ulybka češirskogo kota Šredingera*.

topic on the basis of their motives and interests, which are located both within and outside the text. But as soon as the authors begin to narrate their experience in the text, they become prisoners of the self-increasing logos. With the help of narrative strategies, the authors can try to gain control of this dynamic inherent in the text, and steer it in the desired direction. The need to control the text is all the more urgent for authors when the text is their memories, that is, when the narrative has an inherent claim to truth. In this case the authors must try to link their text to reality. This is the reality of personal experience, as well as the reality of the world surrounding them, which needs to be captured through the chronological framework of the narrated time or at the moment of the event, whether in the form of a society or as a historical context. The challenges that arise for an author from this linkage will be discussed in this paper. It will discuss the questions of which narrative strategies and which text-internal and text-external goals Levašov pursued when creating the portrayal of the Ottoman foreigner. The results presented here are, however, preliminary.

2 Contexts

2.1 Pavel Levašov and his Historical Background

Pavel Levašov is arguably one of the most important authors in the narrative community of the discourse about diplomacy and Turkey in eighteenth-century Russia. The narratives about Turkey by Russian authors and diplomats, which among other things involved a critical examination of Ottoman diplomatic practices, shaped imperial narratives and imperial self-confidence in Russia, as well as the self-definition of Russia as a European power.⁵ Levašov's experiences while serving as *chargé d'affaires* in the Russian diplomatic mission at the Sublime Porte under the leadership of Aleksej Obreskov seem to have stood in sharp contrast to this acclaimed European character of the Russian ruling elite in Saint Petersburg and of Russian diplomats abroad. Russian diplomats abroad represented a dominion whose sovereign claimed imperial status as emperor or empress (in Russian *imperator* or *imperatrix*), and for itself the status of an empire, which moreover identified itself as a "European power", as Catherine the Great did in her "Nakaz"⁶ in 1767. In her further remarks on what a European power was, the Empress noted that although Russia was a European country by nature and

⁵ For a detailed discussion of this topic see Viktor Taki, *Tsar and Sultan: Russian Encounters with the Ottoman Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016).

⁶ This is how Catherine II put it in the first chapter of her Great Instruction: *Rossija est' Evropejskaja deržava* (Russia is a European power). Catherine II, "Nakaz Komissii o sostavlenii proekta novogo Uložnija," in *Ekaterina II Velikaja, O veličii Rossii. Iz "Osoboj tetradi" imperatricy*, ed. V. Jas'kov and A. Choroševskij (Moscow: Èksmo, 2012): 73.

by its origin, the mixing of different peoples (here she may also have meant the subjugation of Russian principalities by Tatar-Mongolian tribes in the thirteenth century) had blocked the country's further development along the path of European civilisation and had put an "Asian stamp" on it.⁷ Catherine firmly invokes European traditions and distinguishes Russia and the Tsarist Empire from the category of powers which Montesquieu defined as oriental despotic regimes.⁸ Among the most famous works of the time which addressed political forms of government and the problem of despotic rule were Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des Lois*, *Observations sur l'histoire de la Grèce* by Gabriel Bonnot de Mably,⁹ and *Histoire des deux Indes* by Guillaume Thomas François Raynal.¹⁰ These texts were available in Russia and were read and actively acknowledged by Catherine II and the educated public. The republican virtues of the Ancient Greek democracies could be seen in a positive light by both the Tsarina and the nobility, as long as the "despotically" ruled tsardom was not compared to oriental despotism, something such works often did. In Mably's text, this criticism was general but extremely sharp, and one could detect an allusion to Russia between the lines. We know that Catherine II was familiar with this work,¹¹ and it is highly probable that Levašov was, too. While authors such as Montesquieu and Raynal saw the Tsarist Empire as a despotic form of government, Catherine and some Russian authors did not accept this view and instead placed despotism further to the east or south, in Persia, India or the Ottoman Empire, as Montesquieu's statements contrasted sharply with Catherine's assertion that Russia was a European power. In order to deal with this topic in a literary or journalistic manner, authors had to employ attributes for these countries that allowed them to create Orientalist portrayals. The experiences of Russian diplomats in the Ottoman Empire of the eighteenth century, starting with the first permanent Tsarist representative at the Sublime Porte, Petr Tolstoy,¹² offered a reservoir of reports that could establish this Orientalist narrative as a historical trope and, ultimately, as a historical experience. The works of Pavel Levašov can also be placed in this larger narrative framework.

7 Ibid.

8 Charles-Louis de Secondat Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, *Vom Geist der Gesetze* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2011): 127–31.

9 Gabriel Bonnot de Mably, *Observations sur l'histoire de la Grèce ou des causes de la prospérité et des malheurs des Grecs* (Zurich: Compagnie des Libraires, 1767).

10 Guillaume Thomas François Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des européens dans les deux Indes* (The Hague: Gosse, 1774).

11 Isabel de Madariaga, *Katharina die Große: Ein Zeitgemälde* (Berlin: Volk&Welt, 1993): 333.

12 For information on Tolstoy as the first permanent Russian representative in Istanbul, see the impressive chapter I in Taki, *Tsar and Sultan*.

2.2 Pavel Levašov and his Biographical Background

Coming from an old Russian noble family, Levašov followed a typical career for a nobleman in Russia at that time, in which personal talents played just as important a role as the favour and support of the powerful. We have no information about his education, but we can be reasonably certain that the Russo-Turkish War of 1735–1739 was his first encounter with the subject of Russian-Ottoman relations and the Turkish question in general. His military service ended when the Vice-Chancellor Aleksej Bestužev-Rjumin (the de facto Foreign Minister of Tsarina Elizabeth, 1741–1761) ordered him into service at the College of Foreign Affairs. This is unlikely to have happened without Levašov's own intervention, in that he would have expressed an interest in the diplomatic service and offered himself to the Vice-Chancellor for this purpose. His foreign service began in 1753, when, probably at his own instigation, he was accepted into the entourage of the Tsarist envoy to Vienna, Herrmann Karl von Keyserling, who was later to play a devastating role in Poland's fate. Eight years later he went to Regensburg as minister plenipotentiary (here to be understood as a diplomatic rank) to the Reichstag. He remained there until the spring of 1762. In late summer 1763, Catherine II appointed him as *chargé d'affaires* to the Russian diplomatic mission at the Sublime Porte. The government in Istanbul, however, angered by Russia's activities in Poland and at the instigation of Charles Vergennes, the ambassador of France, which was allied with Poland, refused to recognise his rank and status. Russian-Ottoman relations became so strained as a result of the Russian government's policy towards Poland that in 1768 the Tsarist resident Aleksej Obreskov and his court were arrested and imprisoned in Yedikule Fortress (also known as the Fortress of the Seven Towers), which was in effect a declaration of war. Levašov consequently entered a painful and dangerous period, at least if his works are to be believed.¹³ He barely managed to inform the Russian ambassador in Warsaw of the plans of the Sultan's government, which could have cost him his head under the circumstances, and went to Istanbul to be arrested and taken to his superior Obreskov in Yedikule Fortress. Later, the Russian prisoners with Obreskov at their head served the Turks as pawns in the war: they were taken along with the Sultan's army as hostages in the campaign.¹⁴ Levašov's education and career served him as a reservoir of experience for his works on the Ottoman Empire and on Ottoman-Russian relations.

¹³ Taki, *Tsar and Sultan*: 42–50.

¹⁴ Pavel Levašov, *Plen i stradanie rossijan u turkov, ili Obstoitel'noe opisanie bedstvennykh priklyučenij, priterpennykh imi v Car'-grade po ob'javlenii vojny i pri vojske, za kotorym vlačili ich v svoich pochodach; s priobščeniem dnevných zapisok o voïnskikh ich dejstvijach v prošedšuju vojnu i mnogich stranmych, redkich i ljubopytnych proiššestvij. V Sankt-Peterburge 1790 g.* (Saint Petersburg: Tipografija Bogdanoviča, 1790): 15 (emphases in original). The title can be translated as follows: The Captivity and Suffering of the Russians by the Turks. Or, detailed description of the distressful adventures which they underwent in Tsargrad after the declaration of war and with the army which they followed in

3 Texts

This paper examines Levašov's work *Captivity and the Sufferings of the Russians at the Hands of the Turks*. It was begun by Levašov during the war, in Ottoman captivity, in the form of short diary notes. After his return to Saint Petersburg he completed his notes, apparently before peace in 1774, and shaped them into a memoir-like text which exists today as a manuscript.¹⁵ Thirteen years later, when the second war broke out between Russia and the Ottomans during Catherine's reign, Levašov's texts obviously gained currency. It is very likely that his handwritten work, whether as fragments or in its entirety, had already been circulating in manuscript form for years in court and diplomatic circles, and especially in the foreign college and the cadet corps. Against the background of current events, it now seemed an obvious step to make this work accessible to a wider public. In 1790, his manuscript appeared in a somewhat revised version, edited by Petr Bogdanovič. It cannot be ruled out that Bogdanovič had become aware of this text during his service at the library of the Academy of Sciences in Saint Petersburg. This cannot be clearly proven within the present paper, but it would be an important clue regarding the circulation and dissemination of this and similar texts among the reading public of Saint Petersburg. The text was published under the title *Diary Notes on Some Incidents during the Previous War with the Turks*.¹⁶ In the same year, this text also appeared under the title *Captivity and the Sufferings of the Russians among the Turks*, which was likewise published by Bogdanovič.

The text is not divided into chapters, and the account is told in the first person. For the publication in print, the title was changed: while the adventures described in the text are advertised as *znatnye* – remarkable – in the title, the wording in the title of the first publication (*Diary Notes on Some Incidents . . .*) is neutral. In the title of the second publication, however, attributes appear that clearly indicate a narrative strategy: *plen* – captivity, *stradanija* – suffering, *bedstvennye priklučenija* – miserable adventures, *preterpennye* – endured/suffered, *vlačit'* – to drag. While the author and his publisher believed that they could make do without these attributes in the handwritten version and in the first publication, they included attributes in the title of the second version that implied a specific interpretation of the narrative. The key-

their campaigns; with daily records of their military actions in the past war and army; strange, rare and curious occurrences.

15 Pavel Levašov, *Kratkoe istoričeskoe opisanie nekotorych znatnych priklučenij, slučivšichsja v Turcii ot načala sej vojny 1768 goda sentjabrja s 25-go 1771 goda oktjabrja po 1-e*, Manuscript, Russian National Library, Saint Petersburg, Fond 609, ed. chr. 4337.

16 Pavel Levašov, *Podennye zapiski nekotorych proisšestvij vo vremja prošedšej s turkami vojny ot dnja ob'javlenija onoj po 1773 byvšego v Konstantinopole, a potom v pochodach s tureckoj armiej poverennogo v delach P L* [Diary Notes of Some of the Great Adventures that Happened in Turkey from the Beginning of this War from September 25, 1768, to October 1, 1771] (Saint Petersburg: Tipografija Bogdanoviča, 1790).

words in the title established a “paradigmatic axis”¹⁷ which revolves around the motifs of (mortal) danger, violence and involuntary mobility (being dragged along). Levašov appears in this text as a remembering subject. His aim is to report his own experience of imprisonment and forced travel or forced mobility. The fact that he actually stayed in the country he describes and himself experienced the involuntary journey with the Ottoman vizier’s army suggests a privileged experience of having gained an insider, or even intimate, insight into the everyday life and culture of a foreign society. This gives him the right, at least in his own eyes and those of his readers, to present the experience described in the text as authentic, because it is an account of (allegedly) observed situations.¹⁸

Already in the first sentence of the book version of *Captivity and the Suffering*, the author recalls to his readers something that is already known, the knowledge that the readers could have gained from his manuscript as well as from newspapers:

How the Ottoman Porte declared war on Russia and how it treated Resident Obreskov, *Chargé d’Affaires* Levašov and all the members of the legation’s entourage who were in Constantinople at the time has been sufficiently described and is known to almost everyone. I shall therefore touch little on these details, and offer instead a minute account of remarkable cases and incidents from the time of this war, with which I was privileged to become acquainted during my time in Constantinople and in the field, following the Vizier as a prisoner in almost all his campaigns. I flatter myself with the hope of providing my countrymen, through my account, with the best and most all-encompassing information on all the events of that time.¹⁹

In Levašov’s case, it is also important to note that some of the events actually took place and were known to the court and diplomatic circles, or were reported in the press, i.e. became widely known among the European and Russian reading public. These included, for example, our key event – the arrest of the Tsarist Resident Obreskov – as well as the assault on the family of the Habsburg ambassador in Istanbul on 15 March 1768, which will also be discussed below. These two events had a common historical background or cause – the beginning of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1768 – and were committed by an enemy in a foreign land. Levašov was able to write about these two events as a direct witness, or at least as the recipient of (supposedly) reliable first-hand witness accounts.

17 Ansgar Nünning, “Zur mehrfachen Präfiguration/Prämediation der Wirklichkeitsdarstellung im Reisebericht: Grundzüge einer narratologischen Theorie, Typologie und Poetik der Reiseliteratur,” in *Points of Arrival: Travels in Time, Space, and Self / Zielpunkte: Unterwegs in Zeit, Raum und Selbst*, ed. Marion Gymnich, Ansgar Nünning, Vera Nünning and Elisabeth Wåghäll Nivre (Tübingen: Francke, 2008): 21.

18 Thomas Strack, *Exotische Erfahrung und Intersubjektivität. Reiseberichte im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert. Genrespezifische Untersuchung zu Adam Olearius – Hans Egede – Georg Forster* (Paderborn: Igel, 1994): 19–21.

19 Levašov, *Plen i stradanie*: 11. All quotes have been translated from the Russian by myself.

By referring to his status as a diplomat and his involuntary situation as a prisoner, Levašov places himself in the position of an internal observer of what the readers have so far only been able to learn from reports in the press or from letters, i.e. from outside reports. He recodes his disadvantaged position as a prisoner into the privileged role of an internal observer. Here he also defines the spatial framework of the narrative: his spaces are Constantinople (the Russian mission, Yedikule), the sea, and the field (the Ottoman army). Captivity also allows him to gather knowledge and information. From this position, he hopes to inform his readers comprehensively; the statement also refers back to the account's claim to truth. In the first sentence, he already exaggerates his experiences as a *historical experience*, pointing out to the reader that what he will report constitutes *historical knowledge*.

The situation of captivity condemns the persons affected to passivity, turns them from subject into object. As a narrator, however, the author is still a subject, namely an observing subject who takes notes, i.e. actively observes and perceives what happens. In the manuscript version, he describes his situation under the conditions of captivity:

During my time in Turkish captivity, involuntary leisure and oppressive torment gave me the opportunity to describe the present condition and origin of this people from its beginnings to the present day. I wish to show by what means this people attained such power and greatness, and for what reasons it has been in excessive weakening and decline for some years now. By this exercise I sought, first, to relieve to some extent the heaviness of the idleness and boredom of captivity; secondly, to lead the world away from the erroneous assumption of the inexhaustible powers of the Turks and immeasurable riches of their sultans. Fearing that my papers would fall into their barbarous hands, for which I would have paid with my head, I had to confine myself to keeping a simple journal: I merely wrote down remarkable incidents which occurred both during my time in Yedikule and in the first campaign with that army.

After my return, some of my benefactors were curious to see this journal. However, it was kept extremely brief, so that one must guess the true meaning of the notes. I wrote it in such a way that no one could understand it, especially the Turks, should it fall into their hands.²⁰

Imprisonment not only provided the temporal and spatial framework for the writing of these notes; it was also the reason for the creation of this text in the first place. The stimulus for writing down what was observed and experienced was the narrator's state of mind, which was caused by external circumstances: Captivity = leisure and boredom. He emphasises that it was an involuntary leisure. The author candidly admits that he relied on terse, sometimes coded notes and on his memory in writing his report. This honesty might make the readers doubt the veracity of his report. But there are reasons for this apparent honesty. The situation of the narrator (who is also the protagonist here) as a prisoner with the Turks creates a tension: just as the readers might doubt the reliability of the author's memory, they might also question whether Levašov would have been able to take any notes at all as a prisoner in the

²⁰ Levašov, *Plen i stradanie*, manuscript: 31 (emphases in original).

legendary Yedikule Fortress, or as a hostage in the campaign. Levašov finds the solution to the problem of his credibility in captivity precisely in the situation of captivity, or to be more precise in the conditions of his captivity. Concealing the situation in which he was writing, or staging it as a normal writing process at a desk with paper and ink, would perhaps have made his memories and thus the narrative appear more credible, but not the situation of captivity and the writing process itself. The cruelty of the Turks could have turned out to be a fiction in such a narrative, and in fact would have moved the writing process in his readers' eyes from Yedikule Fortress and a military camp to a writing desk in Saint Petersburg. But such a complete abstraction of the writing process from the author's actual stay in Istanbul and the Ottoman camp would not have been in Levašov's interest, because this would have separated the narrator/protagonist from the author, which could have given the text a semblance of fiction. The making of notes in captivity is precisely the link that connects the narrator/protagonist to the author Levašov. This makes it all the more important for the author to address his writing situation at this point. The motif of mortal danger justifies his making concise, partly coded, notes and legitimises his memory or recollection for the narrative. The narrator/protagonist was in a situation of complete dependence, under incessant observation by his guards. He had no choice but to keep concise notes and encode the information. The author explicitly addresses the process of selection and locates it in the narrated world: what was not allowed to be written down had to be left to memory. The problem of the unreliability of memory and the credibility of narratives is transformed here into an exclusivity of memory, a memory that is fed by the insights of an insider gained under adverse circumstances and by the notes that only the narrator can decipher. The situation of captivity and absolute dependence thus legitimise memory.

The motif of violence and mortal danger already mentioned in the introductory passage remains the key narrative element throughout the text. The dangerous, life-threatening situations include angry crowds on the streets of Istanbul, the natural force of the stormy sea in the bay, and the dungeon of Yedikule Fortress. Levašov's journey to Yedikule to meet his superior (who is also in captivity) turns into a hellish trip:

On 25 September 1768, the Russian resident, Mr Obreskov, was summoned to the Vizier Hamza Pasha. The Vizier declared war on Russia to Obreskov in the usual manner. He ordered that Mr Obreskov, together with all the secretaries and interpreters accompanying him, be taken to the fortress of the Seven Towers, where they were immediately imprisoned in a dreadful dark dungeon, where one is imprisoned only for the most serious crimes of state and from which hardly anyone comes out alive. The next day they were taken out of this dark dungeon to be imprisoned in two adjoining chambers of hell. Only a single window high up provided light. [. . .] This news [of the declaration of war, AB] also sent the mob into wild frenzy and joy, in Car'grad and all its suburbs they committed robberies and acts of violence against Christians and even against numerous Mohammedans. [. . .] Fearing to fall into the hands of rampant Janissaries and cruel mobs, I decided to surrender myself to the Porte, despite the objections of my friends and the advice to leave Car'grad secretly on a European ship. From the Prussian envoy, I did not go to my

house but took a diversion to a landing place called Kasım Pasha Iskelesi.²¹ On the way there, I met many armed Turks who asked me what nation I belonged to. I answered that I was a good Venetian, i.e. a citizen of Ragusa. The Turks count them among their friends because they pay tribute diligently; to the other Turks I met, I introduced myself as an Englishman. But nevertheless I always had to give a *bağış*. [. . .] As I lingered in [the dragoman's] house, all sorts of thoughts passed through my mind of all the misfortune that might befall me under those circumstances. Thus I feared that I would be put in chains and imprisoned in a place where multitudes of unfortunates were dying of hunger and pestilence. I feared a quick and early death because the Porte already knew that I had sent two couriers to Russia. One of them had a passport from the English envoy and the other from the Prussian one. And I knew that the Turks forbid, under penalty of death, sending couriers and writing letters to anyone during the war. The Turks observe this rule so strictly that even the slightest deviation from it brings inevitable ruin. It was my duty, however, to let my Court know of the declaration of war in good time, and I would have paid for it with my life if it had not occurred to me to resort to the extreme means described above in order to mitigate the cruelty of the Porte to some extent and to save myself from inevitable death, which I accomplished not without success. So I could not wait for the dragoman and decided to go straight to Yedikule to seek salvation in the very place whose name had terrified me at other times. At that time a terrible storm happened in the bay, which made the journey so dangerous that from the large ships we met, people called out to my oarsmen that surely they were out of their minds to go by boat in such cruel weather, and whether they did intend to drown the *Giaur*, i.e. the unbeliever. I then felt myself in extreme danger, but as a greater calamity threatened me, I decided to continue the journey to Yedikule. I only asked the rowers to stay as far as possible from the shore, where foaming waves were crashing with tremendous noise and could have easily sunk us by dashing us onto the rocks, especially as the water was already lapping incessantly into the boat. Eventually I reached a jetty not far from Yedikule. After disembarking on the shore, I came to the great gate of this fortress, the entrance to which seemed no less fearsome than the fortress on the Acheron.²²

As soon as the narrator/protagonist leaves the summer retreat of the European diplomats, he enters a space in which dangers threaten him from all sides. He has to make a choice between at least two dangers: execution on the one hand, life-threatening imprisonment in Yedikule Fortress on the other. The second option renews the tension for the narrator/protagonist, but also for the author: he is free to decide. The decision to voluntarily place himself in the hands of the Ottomans contained a moral ambivalence. On the one hand, the author could justify his decision with the loyalty he felt for his superior and with the attempt to save his own life. On the other hand, he voluntarily decided to surrender himself to the wrath or grace of the Sublime Porte. But someone who had gone to the enemy of his own free will took the risk of being accused of treason in his home society.²³ Against the background of Obreskov's actual arrest, this ambivalence of Levašov's decision was all the more striking. Probably the only possible and narratively convincing solution to extricate himself from

²¹ Kasım Pasha, a district of Istanbul.

²² Levašov, *Plen i stradanie*: 13–16 (emphases in original).

²³ For a comprehensive study on the subject of Russian narratives of Ottoman captivity, see Taki, *Tsar and Sultan*: chapter II.

this moral quandary was to present the narrator/protagonist as completely dependent on external circumstances. If he had already decided to hand himself over into the enemy's power, he had to depict this power in as cruel a way as possible, and his journey there as a voyage to a possible death. Again, this is not to say that Levašov's journey to Istanbul into captivity was actually harmless. The leitmotif in his tale of waiting for his fate to be decided and of being held hostage is the experience of complete uncertainty and dependence on external circumstances, which are accompanied by the constant threat of death:

[. . .] in the middle of a conversation so burdensome to my heart, I noticed signs of plague in a Turk sitting next to me, but did not catch it; when I was called to the commander, I presented the guards with a few *červonnye* and directed my feet towards the Beelzebub²⁴ of Yedikule, to whom I was introduced by his guards. [. . .] There I saw him [i.e. Obreskov] together with his companions in a most miserable and destitute condition. This caused me inexpressible sadness and dismay, all the more so because I had expected the same fate myself. They told me what had happened to them and what fears they had to endure. Afterwards I told them about my strange and dangerous adventures and announced that I had come to them to find salvation. [. . .] The next day, that is, Wednesday October 1, the dragoman went to the Porte early in the morning. I repeatedly asked him to report to the Vizier that I had come to him [i.e. the dragoman, AB] to entrust myself to the care of the Sublime Porte; and, as I am extremely ill, to comply with my wish and send me at once to Yedikule without taking me before the Divan unless I am urgently needed. [. . .] So now I remained in the dragoman's house to await my fate; three decisions were possible: either they would lock me up in Yedikule, or they would take me to a penitentiary, or they would drag me before the Divan to decide my execution. The third could very well come true, since the Sultan and the Vizier had never heard of philanthropy and virtue.²⁵

The motif of being at the mercy of such a situation certainly has a kernel of truth, namely the experience of captivity. However, if one considers that the imprisonment raised questions in the prisoner's home society, even more so if he had been a prisoner in a society of a different faith, such a description of dependency takes on a completely different, explosive power, and may even be used against the former prisoner. Could his captivity have been the result of cowardice or an unwillingness to fight – was this desertion or even treason? Had the prisoner failed to resist the temptation of conversion to a foreign faith in order to lighten his lot or even to save his life? When a former captive, whether hostage or slave, returned from a foreign land, the foreign land clung to him. What had he done in a strange land? Had he himself become a stranger? Did he remain an Orthodox Christian? In Levašov's case, these questions certainly did not arise as sharply, for he was a nobleman and a diplomat,

²⁴ Beelzebub: in ancient mythology a demonic being; in the New Testament a prince of demons; also mentioned in the Septuagint. Cf. Leander Petzoldt, *Kleines Lexikon der Dämonen und Elementargeister*, 4th ed. (Munich: Beck, 2013): 33.

²⁵ Levašov, *Plen i stradanie*: 16–18 (emphases in the original).

but questions of this kind would have occurred to the readers and could thus undermine the moral integrity of the author, i.e. the credibility of the narrative.²⁶

As mentioned above, Levašov was helped by the fact that these events – the imprisonment of the Russian mission and the attack on the Internuncio – happened in the place where he himself was present at that time, the Ottoman capital. For this reason alone, they were predestined to be prominently described in order to create a certain image of the Ottoman (or Turkish, to use the language of the source) stranger:

While this standard was being carried out, quite a few Christians were beaten and mutilated in Davutpaşa, and even the imperial envoy with his family and entourage did not escape it, as can be seen from the following:

On the afternoon of March 15, with the permission of the Porte, he travelled from the suburbs to Constantinople to see the procession of the Vizier and the carrying of Muhammad's banner. For this purpose, he rented a house in advance on the street along which the said military procession was to pass. No sooner had he arrived there and sat down to dinner with his wife and three daughters, two of them of marriageable age, as well as his interpreters and their wives, the secretary Kavalerica and the confessor, than the neighbours, incited by an imam or popen, ran and chased everyone out of the house, inflicting violent blows on them, some even beating them with sabres, in order to testify in this way to their zeal for the law. After such a nasty and unexpected encounter, he wished to return to his house as soon as possible; but it was already night and the way to Pera is long, so he decided to spend two or three hours in a coffee house where some Christian families had gathered to watch the same spectacle. They assured him that he would be safe in this place and persuaded him to stay with them until morning. In the morning, when the banner of Muhammad was carried out, the emirs began to shout loudly that no one was allowed to look at the holy banner of the great Prophet Muhammad except the true Muslims, and if any Christian or Jew or any other infidel dared to do so, he would be handed over to death on the spot. These words instantly aroused fury in rabid hearts, and many rushed like wild tigers to seek out and slaughter those of other faiths. They spared neither the female sex nor the smallest children, and while they were thus dyeing their hands red in the blood of the innocent, a Turkish woman let it be known that there were many Christians in the said coffee house. They then stormed the shop and began to beat and slaughter anyone they could get hold of; they first tortured the wife and daughters of the envoy in the shop, then dragged them outside and dragged them by their hair through the street, tearing earrings out of their ears. Then they dragged each of them to a different farm and left them half dead, so that after a whole day in such a miserable state neither the mother knew where her daughters were, nor the daughters were aware of where their mother was: the mother found herself in the court of an Armenian, the daughters with another Armenian, and the maids with a third; these barbarians threw to the ground the pregnant wife of an interpreter and beat her mercilessly, and an emir sprang upon her and pressed with his feet upon her belly to force the child out of her womb, but miraculously this poor and extremely weak woman remained alive, and after some time she gave birth happily: Altogether, on the day of the procession with Muhammad's banner, more than two hundred Christians were killed and about five hundred wounded and crippled.²⁷

²⁶ For nobles' narratives of captivity see Taki, *Tsar and Sultan*: 75–90.

²⁷ Levašov, *Plen i stradanie*: 29–30.

On the one hand, the incident with the Austrian representative had no direct relation to Levašov's lot, on the other hand, it did. The attack on the ambassador was a blatant breach of international law, even at the time. Levašov's fate also depended on the observance of international law. The imprisonment of the Russian mission and the violence against the Austrian envoy were indications that the Ottomans did not feel bound by international law. For this reason, the incident is described in detail in the narrative, although Levašov did not know it from his own experience. At the time he was already in the Seven Towers. In the attack on the family of the Internuncio and especially in the violent scene with the pregnant woman, the experience of the encounter with the Ottoman stranger reaches its narrative climax. It is virtually impossible to tell what sources the author might have used in writing this episode. The fact that he was not a direct observer is explicitly stated in the text. But because these events were public knowledge,²⁸ Levašov was able to justify the validity of his "inter-cultural judgements",²⁹ even if in his judgement he resorted to exaggerations and subjective evaluations in order to endow the foreign with certain attributes in which political interests and subjective expectations of the author or/and his addressees played a role – factors that are outside the real travel experience. His imprisonment possibly saved him from an attack similar to that on the Internuncio. Moreover, he was a diplomatic prisoner and hostage, and as such he was safer than Russian prisoners of war who were driven from the field to Istanbul by the Ottomans. They were at the mercy of humiliation and assaults by the inhabitants on the way. Those officers and soldiers who fell ill along the way and could not keep up were summarily killed by the Ottoman soldiers.³⁰ Levašov does not mention the privileged position that Obreskov and he himself held among the Russian prisoners.

At the interface of real historical events, the author's real (travel) experiences, public knowledge and interests against the concrete historical background (the conflict between Russia and the Ottoman Empire), and his own political and subjective interests, Levašov narrated his experience of travelling and spending time in the Ottoman Empire. In this case, the logic of the portrayal of the Ottoman foreigner was not determined by common sense, which defines the limits of the plausible, but by the context of the war and the situation of non-Christian dissent in the foreign country. This is where a tension arises that is probably inherent in most travelogues: the effort to make the portrayed plausible, i.e. a reconstruction of the observed, on the one hand; and on the other a renunciation of the reconstruction of events or their observation in line with certain interests and expectations or under the influence of certain preconceptions. From this tension only a fictitious reconstruction can emerge, which turns out to be a construction of the observed and its plausibility. Even if actual

²⁸ A description of this incident can also be found in: Elias Habesci, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (London: Thomson Gale, 1784): 298–301.

²⁹ Strack, *Exotische Erfahrung und Intersubjektivität*: 20.

³⁰ Taki, *Tsar and Sultan*: 79.

events are described, which may even have been observed and lived through by the author himself, the author is not a reporter and his description is not a mere account of facts. Thus, as noted above, the incident with the Internuncio has no direct relation to the narrator's experiences, who was in relative safety at the time. The incident is combined by Levašov like a set piece with his supposed or actual experiences. The episode with the Internuncio is also part of the story of the imprisonment since Levašov writes down his actual and fictitious experiences in order to communicate to his Russian reading public information about the Ottoman foreigners and the dangers supposedly associated with them. This means that the perception of the Other is refracted in at least two respects: first, the fragmentary perception is anthropologically conditioned, in addition to the fact that the narrator as protagonist is physically limited, i.e. cannot be in all the places relevant to the story at the same time (Levašov is not present in the fateful coffee house where the Internuncio thought he would find shelter); second, perception takes place through cultural, political and other subjective filters. In the process of such multiple refractions, a highly selective image emerges which then, as soon as the (supposedly) lived experience is being written down, undergoes further refractions and selections and is assembled from several set pieces. In the course of processing the experience into a narrative, anthropological, cultural and textual factors interact: These are, firstly, the author's memory; secondly, narrative strategies inherent in the process of (written) narration; and finally semiotic attributions determined by the author's homeland culture – it is only in the process of semiotisation that an experience lived through is processed into an experience of foreignness and as such made comprehensible to the author and his readers. The guidelines and norms of the home culture have either a subordinate validity or none.³¹

4 Conclusion

Levašov's oeuvre represents a mental map of the Ottoman Empire traced by a Russian diplomat, with a European, Enlightenment background. His diplomatic experience and his experience as a prisoner and hostage, which in turn resulted from his diplomatic status, played a role in his narration. His position as a diplomat determined what material and information he was able to acquire and, perhaps more importantly, would discard. That is, his diplomatic service directly influenced his narration, his experiences filtered his perception of the Ottoman Empire and the information and images he deemed worthy of communication and interest, and ultimately determined his portrayal of Ottoman life. This trivial observation leads to an important research question already hinted at above: What is the relationship between diplomatic (travel) practices and the instruments of cognition and narrative modes of presenta-

31 Strack, *Exotische Erfahrung und Intersubjektivität*: 20.

tion? Here, the very circumstances of a journey or (diplomatic) sojourn play an important role in writing practices, that is, the impact of circumstances and imponderables on the writing process or on its narrative realization. Levašov had to create a text as a narrative unit in which he had to reconcile variously situated factors, such as travel and experiences on this journey, experience and memory – including memory in the shape of “notes taken on an itinerant basis.”³² For example, Levašov makes it clear to his readers that he made his preliminary notes under the most difficult conditions of his imprisonment in the Seven Towers. It is therefore reasonable to assume, if his assertion is true, that they were probably very brief, cursory notes. The medium influences the information and, more importantly, the memory. But this claim by Levašov is likely to have been a literary artifice, a self-dramatisation of the author and his writing process. Regardless of which of Levašov’s two statements is true, they prefigure the information he reveals or supposedly remembers. Despite all the adversities and dangers to life and limb described by Levašov in retrospect, he nevertheless found the opportunity to make notes in captivity, which he claims he used or actually did use later as a basis and memory aid for his works. Here, in a sense, the author exposes himself, he falls into the trap of his own narrative: The prisoners of war are unlikely to have had an opportunity to take any kind of notes, provided they were literate at all. The fact that Levašov, unlike the captured Russian soldiers, can make such notes results from his special situation as a diplomat and hostage. Perhaps for this reason, the relevant passage in the manuscript was not included in the book *Captivity and the Suffering* but was substituted with a general historicisation of his experiences to conceal precisely this privileged position, or at least to make it less obvious. But we can only assume that here.

As a fellow prisoner and hostage alongside his superior at Yedikule Fortress and then in the enemy army in the midst of a military conflict between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, Levašov undoubtedly found himself in a predicament that oscillated between the virulent dangers of war and the unpredictability of the enemy. This experience must have been all the more striking for Levašov, as the outcome of the war remained uncertain for a long time. In this situation, which Levašov actually lived through or describes in his texts as his experience, every outcome was conceivable, from a ransom by the Russian government to liberation as a result of acts of war to execution by the enemy. The latter, incidentally, was the least likely. This was due to political considerations alone. Sooner or later, the Ottomans would have to enter into negotiations with the Russians, and, in addition, there were also high-ranking Ottoman officers in Russian captivity, such as Necati Efendi.³³ Whether Levašov and his

32 Stephan Conermann, “Reiseberichte als Erzähltexte,” in “Wenn einer Reise tut, hat er was zu erzählen”: Präfiguration – Konfiguration – Refiguration in muslimischen Reiseberichten, ed. Bekim Agai and Stephan Conermann, *Narratio aliena?* 5 (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2013): 9; Strack, *Exotische Erfahrung und Intersubjektivität*: 21–22.

33 See the article by Gül Şen in this volume.

fellow prisoners actually lived through this experience in its severity must remain an open question, at least in this paper. What is certain, however, is that the experience of being held hostage provided material from which the author wove his narrative. With respect to narrative strategies the question arises of how free Levašov was in his choice. Quite apart from his personal preferences and political interests, there is also the question about the literary means available to him in his time.

Levašov's experience of the Other as well as the way he was seen and treated by the Ottomans were shaped by the context of war, danger, and captivity. He was a prisoner because he was a stranger, even an enemy, in the Ottoman Empire. In my view, the motif of the reciprocal foreign experience culminates in Levašov's representation of the Ottomans in the scene of the attack on the Habsburg envoy and his family. The awareness that one is a stranger in a society and is regarded as such cannot be completely left out, even in such a text. Here, however, it is not used for self-reflection but to portray the Ottoman foreigner in a negative way. As a foreigner in the Ottoman Empire, one encounters violence instead of curious glances. However, this scene, as well as the captivity itself, provided ample material for Levašov to reflect on the normativity of his own culture and the legitimacy of its diplomatic practices, the latter even vis-à-vis the practices of Western diplomats. In this narrative, the "logic of foreign culture"³⁴ proves to be nothing other than an antithesis to the culture and diplomacy of the tsarist empire: ruthless violence against foreigners. Levašov constructs this "logic" of the Ottoman foreigner against the background of Muslim religious customs in the Ottoman Empire, based on religious otherness. The attack on the Habsburg ambassador took place during the religious celebration at the beginning of the campaign against Russia. In this scene, whether intended or not, a reversal of observational perspective takes place, in that it results in a fatal reciprocal experience of foreignness. The members of the Habsburg mission came as spectators, as observers of a foreign society and its 'wild' Muslim customs; but they are attacked by this very society, as strangers, as enemies, as persons who violate local customs – they knew that they must not behold the banner of the Prophet. Levašov could hardly have come across a more effective narrative device than the depiction of this incident to represent the Ottoman foreigner. This scene once again showed to the readers the dangerous jailers the narrator/protagonist had to deal with, and thus intensified the consternation of the reading public – in a way creating an "unsettling experience with the ethnic other."³⁵ The author himself takes on the perspective of his reader at this point, because he is neither an actor nor directly affected: he is also practically a spectator. This finger-pointing may have reinforced readers' solidarity with the narrator/protagonist at the same time that it created an effect of objectivity. Its impetus may be paraphrased as follows: Look how cruel the Turks are!

34 Conermann, "Reiseberichte als Erzähltexte": 9; Strack, *Exotische Erfahrung und Intersubjektivität*: 23.

35 Conermann, "Reiseberichte als Erzähltexte": 8.

At this point in his narrative, Levašov links his privileged experience as a traveler or prisoner and eyewitness to his home society's common knowledge of Ottoman foreignness.³⁶ The description of the events, especially the arrest of the Russian mission and the attack on the Habsburg envoy, reiterates to the readers the fact that this is a predominantly Muslim society and an enemy empire – this is the shared knowledge between author, narrator/protagonist and readers. These descriptions gain their significance for the readers from the implication that such scenes of violence would not be possible in Russia or any other Christian country. They function as arguments for Levašov's intercultural judgements about the Ottoman foreigner.³⁷ They contribute to the consolidation of stereotypes by supplementing them with the author's own experiences. They could achieve all the greater argumentative effect insofar as these were events that had actually taken place. Assuming that readers were familiar with reports by Levašov's predecessors in the Russian mission of Istanbul, they would not have been surprised by Obreskov's arrest or by Levašov's drastic descriptions.³⁸

One may therefore assume that the historical events of this period, in which the specifics of Russia's encounter with the Ottomans were rooted, produced these images, if not their details. These historical events go back to much deeper processes that were set in motion at the end of the seventeenth century in the Tsarist Empire by Peter the Great, which today are referred to by key terms such as Europeanisation and Westernisation.³⁹ The origin of these images can be found in the time of the Petrine Turn, which evoked a deep strategic antagonism between the Tsarist Empire and the Ottomans. Religious components deepened this antagonism: Different faiths allowed for the strategic struggle to be underpinned by religious and cultural arguments. It was no coincidence that the twenty-year-long Nordic War did not produce any representations of Christian Protestant Sweden – Russia's other strategic opponent – comparable to those of the Ottoman Empire.

Since this encounter between Russia and the Ottomans took place primarily as a military conflict, imprisonment could not be left out as a motif in the literary representation of this theme, and some diplomatic practices of the Sublime Porte played into the hands of the Russian authors. The imprisonment in Yedikule Fortress was an act of violence, but its ancient, symbolic significance was all but ignored in the narrative of the Ottoman stranger to highlight the violence even more. How difficult the living conditions of the Russian diplomats in the Seven Towers actually were is something we can only guess or try to read between the lines. It was not at all Levašov's intention to portray his imprisonment in Yedikule Fortress truthfully. Instead, his nar-

36 Conermann, "Reiseberichte als Erzähltexte": 8; Strack, *Exotische Erfahrung und Intersubjektivität*: 30.

37 Strack, *Exotische Erfahrung und Intersubjektivität*: 30.

38 Vladimir Teplov, *Russkie predstaviteli v Car'grade, 1496–1891* (Saint Petersburg: Tipografija A.S. Suvorina, 1891).

39 Reinhard Wittram, *Peter I. Czar und Kaiser. Zur Geschichte Peters des Großen in seiner Zeit*, 2 vols. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 1964).

rative strategy was one of reduction: The captivity was reduced to a pure act of violence and described as such, embellished with appropriate details. Levašov virtually celebrated the asymmetry in the power relationship between the prisoners (including himself) and the Ottomans. He reinforced this motif by depicting the physical deterioration of Obreskov and other members of the mission, which was allegedly caused by the conditions in the fortress.⁴⁰

A measured description of the captivity or of the violent scene with the ladies of the Habsburg mission may have come closer to reality and would certainly have been historically more honest, but for that very reason it would have been scandalous: it would have meant that Levašov was downplaying a bitter, and, even more, an un-Christian enemy, that is to say, writing contrary to the expectations of the reading public in Russia. It would also have been against his own interest, and that of his publisher, to diminish the suffering and danger he (allegedly) experienced and thus his own heroism or at least steadfastness. Nothing that came from the Ottoman stranger was allowed to be kind and good in this narrative. But it is precisely this attitude that gives rise to another challenge, which is all the greater in an account of experiences or in a text that purports to be such: the imperative of credibility or at least authenticity of the account. In addition, there were the external circumstances of the time: at the time of the publication of this work, i.e. in 1790, the Tsarist Empire was again at war with the Ottomans, but was also in peace negotiations with them. It could therefore not appear opportune or even appropriate in terms of foreign policy to make the Sultan and his Muslim subjects appear as murderous beasts. Otherwise, the portrayal of the foreigner could promptly turn out to be pure literary fiction and the entire narrative nothing more than an adventure novel; the foreigner is only recognised as foreign if it appears credible, wherever the limits of this credibility may be drawn by authors or society. As an author, the diplomat Levašov was able to meet this double challenge in two ways: he was able to draw on his diplomatic experience and to refer to his actual observations and experiences in the service, and he was able to use his own eyewitness testimony as an argument, as he does in the *Sufferings of the Russians*.

Levašov's biography and intellectual experience are woven into the multi-layered processes of exchange between the Ottoman and Russian Empires. He epitomises almost bodily the encounter and channels of communication between two empires, as a diplomat who became a prisoner and hostage after the war had begun in 1768, only to be extradited back to Russia a few years later. His texts, like probably most travel and legation reports, tell of the experience of physical and intellectual mobility, even if the journey or mobility as such are not explicitly addressed. In the case of physical mobility, the relevant reference here to the narratives of dependency is to emphasise that this is a matter of forced mobility – a form of dependency that could be literarily processed into an intellectual experience in the depictions of the Ottoman foreigner. I

⁴⁰ Levašov, *Plen I stradanija*: 17, 22.

intend to address the aspect of depictions of involuntary mobility in future work on the project. As a preliminary remark, it can be said here that these depictions were able to generate highly reduced images precisely from this experience of captivity and coercion, especially since decidedly political and personal motifs are inherent in this narrative. At the intersection of concepts of diplomacy or knowledge of envoy practice and ceremonial, imperial politics, experiences as an individual, as a diplomat and a prisoner, and driven by his own motives, Levašov unfolded his disseminating activity as an author.

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Elena Smolarz

Context Matters – The Importance of the Narrative Situation and Actors who Transmit Information for Representations of Experienced Captivity: The Case of the Enslaved Russian Captive Iakov Zinov’ev (1838)

1 Introduction

The capture and enslavement of Russian subjects in the conflicts over the southern borderlands of the Russian Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were crucial issues in the imperial power discourse. The enslaved Russian subjects were considered as ‘unfortunate victims’ awaiting redemption from their captivity by infidels and the return to their Christian homeland.¹ The travelogues of imperial officials highlighted the suffering and painful experiences of their enslaved compatriots in Central Asian Khanates.² Those travelogues are the most well-known and accessible source for the Central Asian slave trade, although other official documents and narratives also illustrate both the Russian imperial perspective and the perspective of captured and enslaved Russians. These sources differ in content, structure, selection of events and actors as well as in their modes of narration.

In this paper, I am going to address the importance of the narrative situation for the representations of captivity experiences. For this purpose, I selected the case of Iakov Zinov’ev, a Russian captive enslaved in Khiva and Bukhara. He was captured on the Caspian Coast in 1831 and released from Bukhara in 1838. My reason for selecting this case is that multiple report versions of his captivity were written down at the

1 Elena Smolarz, “Unglückselige russische Sklaven? Opfernarrative im Kontext der Versklavung russischer Untertanen in Buchara und Chiwa in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts,” in *Opfer: Dynamiken der Viktimisierung vom 17. bis zum 21. Jahrhundert*, ed. Harriet Rudolph and Isabella von Treskow (Heidelberg: Winter, 2020): 225–44.

2 Egor K. Meyendorff, *Puteshestvie iz Orenburga v Bukharu v 1821g*, ed. N.A. Khalfin (Moscow: Nauka, 1975); Petr Demezov, *Zapiski o Bukharskom khanstve. Otcheti P.I. Demezova in I.V. Vitkevicha* (Moscow: Nauka, 1983).

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same time but in different (institutional) contexts connected to different text production purposes. The most widely disseminated and best-known version is a tale transmitted by Vladimir Dal' and published in 1839 in the newspaper *Sankt Peterburgskie vedomosti*.³ During my research on Central Asian slavery I identified the second version of his captivity, namely the official testimony recorded by the Orenburg border commission (1838) and held in the State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan.⁴

Comparing the content and narrative elements of these two versions, I will focus on the following aspects: What representations of captivity and enslavement are contained in the texts? What kinds of information were noticed by Russian imperial officials? What experiences did Iakov Zinov'ev share in the literary, revised and edited narration? What narrative strategies did he use for his purposes? How can we explain any variations across both texts? For the structure of my analysis of how captivity and enslavement were portrayed, I will apply the model developed by Marcel van der Linden focusing on three moments of coercion, i.e. the entry into slavery, the extraction of labour and the exit from slavery.⁵ Furthermore, I will take a closer look at the representations of actors involved in the capture and slave trade, their description and their relations to the narrating person. Finally, I will consider the agency in terms of narrating and information transmission of actors involved in the text production processes.

2 Historical Context and Description of Sources

From the sixteenth century onwards, the capture and enslavement of Russian subjects was a crucial issue for Russian imperial diplomacy in Central Asia.⁶ The release of Russian captives from Bukhara, Khiva and Qoqand, as well as the later prohibition of

³ Vladimir Dal', "Rasskaz plennika iz Khiva Iakova Zinov'eva [Report of the captive from Khiva Iakov Zino'ev]," *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti* 22–24 (1839): 1–41.

⁴ The unpublished material comes from post-Soviet archives, and my citation of it follows the standard system in the field of Russian studies. The archival collection, the inventory, the files and the folio respectively are thus indicated by the following Russian abbreviations: f. (fond = collection), op. (opus), d. (delo = file), and l. (list): Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan [TsGARKaz], f. 4, op. 1, d. 4673 "Delo o vyvezennykh iz Bukharii kazakhom Satybaevym russkikh plennykh [Case of Russian captives returned from Bukhara by the Kazakh Satybaev]," l. 8.

⁵ Marcel van der Linden, "Dissecting Coerced Labor," in *On Coerced Labor: Work and Compulsion after Chattel Slavery*, ed. Marcel van der Linden and Magaly Rodriguez Garcia (Leiden: Brill, 2016): 293–322.

⁶ Andreas Kappeler, *Russland als Vielvölkerreich: Entstehung, Geschichte, Zerfall* (Munich: Beck, 2001); Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500–1800* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); Yuriy Malikov, *Tsars, Cossacks, and Nomads: The Formation of a Borderland Culture in Northern Kazakhstan in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2011); Virginia Martin, *Law and Custom in the Steppe: The Kazakhs of the Middle Horde and Russian Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Richmond: Routledge, 2001); Willard Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field: Colonization and Empire on the Russian Steppe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

the Central Asian slave trade, shaped Russian colonial discourses until the end of the nineteenth century. In the first half of the nineteenth century, most Russian subjects were captured from the southern border regions in the Kazakh Steppe or at the Caspian coast by nomads and brought to the Central Asian khanates. In Khiva and Bukhara these enslaved captives worked in agriculture, served in households, at the court or in military units.⁷ Their return to the Russian Empire was facilitated by imperial ransoming practices, diplomatic negotiations with Central Asian rulers, imperial cooperation with local nomadic elites, or escape.

Iakov Zinov'ev, a fisherman from Astrakhan', was captured in 1831 on the Caspian Coast and brought by Turkmen to Khiva. He spent several years on an estate of the Khi-van khan, where he irrigated the fields. After a successful escape to Bukhara, Iakov Zinov'ev served as a guard at the Emir's court. In 1838 he and other Russian slaves were ordered to return to Russia according to a diplomatic agreement. A Kazakh nomad (Sattybaev) took them to Orenburg (see Map 1). After crossing the border, Iakov was interrogated by the clerk of the Orenburg Border Commission.



Map 1: The Journey of the enslaved Russian captive Iakov Zinov'ev (1831–1838).⁸

⁷ Audrey Burton, “Russian Slaves in Seventeenth-Century Bukhara,” in *Post-Soviet Central Asia*, ed. Touraj Atabaki and John O’Kane (London: Tauris Acad. Studies, 1998): 345–65.

⁸ Yuri Bregel, ed., *Historical Maps of Central Asia: 9th–19th centuries A.D.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 2000). The itinerary has been added by the author [E.S.].

The official testimony of Iakov Zinov'ev is kept in the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The "Case of Russian captives returned from Bukhara by the Kazakh Satybaev" comprises 164 pages of internal reports from the Orenburg Border Commission, correspondence with particular governors and local civil courts, and the testimonies of released captives. His testimony has the same structure as all other documents of that type: After identifying themselves, the captives narrate their reasons for being in the border region, the circumstances of their capture and the actors involved, their entry into the status of dependency (captivity), the actors involved in the slave trade, and the circumstances of their return to the Russian Empire. Other issues related to reimbursement of losses and to information about the power relations and the economic situation in the regions where the captives had been held. Our testimony was written by a clerk in the name of Iakov Zinov'ev. The text does not contain any questions, but follows an established structure based on institutional interests and imperial bias.

The Orenburg Border Commission (*orenburgskaia pogranchnaia kommissiia*) was established in 1799 in order to influence local power structures. It coordinated and managed Central Asian affairs and collected information about trade, economy, and policy in Khiva, Bukhara and Qoqand. Its statistical reports covered the capture of Russian subjects (i.e. Cossacks, fishers from the Caspian coast, settlers and laborers), activities for their release and ransoming and their eventual reintegration. Additional sources include institutional correspondence with Kazakh and Central Asian elites about support for locating and releasing captured and enslaved Russian subjects, transcripts of witness interrogations about the circumstances of their capture and the potential whereabouts of captives, and the testimonies of escaped or released enslaved captives. Russian officials held an imperial bias, which was shaped by their interests in the identification of raiders, in the whereabouts of enslaved captives and in collecting information about Central Asian affairs. This bias is reflected in the structure of the documents.⁹

In addition to the official testimony, the experiences of Iakov Zinov'ev were published by Vladimir Dal' in a Saint Petersburg newspaper in 1839. He published a further version in 1862 in a collection of stories for peasants.¹⁰ Vladimir Dal' (1801–1872) spent eight years in Orenburg, where he served in the government administration from 1833 to 1841. So he was able to meet and speak to this released captive. As a writer and ethnographer, Vladimir Dal' collected folklore, fairy tales and stories of ev-

⁹ Svetlana Gorbunova, "Orenburgskaia pogranchnaia kommissiia i politika Rossii v Mladshem kazakhskom dzhuze" [Orenburg Border Commission and Russian Imperial Policy in the Kazakh Junior Zhuz] (PhD diss., State University of Moscow, 1998); Nikolai Ogorodnikov, *Orenburg pogranchnii* [Frontier Town Orenburg] (Orenburg: DiMur, 1995).

¹⁰ A further edition of this story was published in the collection of stories for peasants: "Rasskaz plennika Iakova Zinov'eva," in *Dva-soroka bival'shchinok dlia krest'ian*, part 1, ed. Vladimir Dal' (Saint Petersburg: M.O. Vol'f, 1862): 153–66.

everyday life of the border population, including stories of released Russian captives, and published them in the Moscow and Saint Petersburg newspapers in the 1830s and 1840s. His 41-page-long, revised literary version maintains the same structure as the testimony and is apparently written ‘by’ Iakov Zinov’ev in a first-person narrative, but includes much more narrative detail. The first 27 pages are devoted to the enslavement of Iakov Zinov’ev, while the last 14 pages focus on the geopolitical situation in Central Asia and the situation of other Russian slaves. Additional narratives are concerned with the enslavement, Iakov’s numerous attempts to escape, the working and living conditions in Khiva, the dehumanization he suffered at the hands of the estate steward, a detailed description of his escape to Bukhara – stylized into an adventure or heroic tale. This narrative can be described as a popular story, illustrating the struggles and challenges of everyday life but also the courage and ingenuity of the border population. Written in simple language with many sociolect and regiolect terms, the narrative primarily aimed at a broader audience and intended to serve as entertainment rather than to strategically collect knowledge or establish discourses of victimhood.

3 Narrated Captivity

How was his coercion viewed and narrated in both texts? To answer this question, I will examine and compare text passages in which Iakov is identified as a dependent person and which refer to the circumstances of his capture, to the conditions of his captivity in Khiva and Bukhara as well as to his release from Bukhara. I will also look at other actors involved in this captivity and enslavement, with particular focus on relational social dependency perceived and described by Iakov Zinov’ev.

3.1 Identification of Iakov Zinov’ev and Terminology of Dependency

In the titles of both texts, Iakov Zinov’ev is called a ‘captive’ (*plennyj* or *plennik*). In the official testimony this term was used for other captured and enslaved Russians. Furthermore, in the section on reimbursement the reason for his monetary loss is referred to as ‘capture’ (*plenenie*) but not ‘enslavement’ (*rabstvo*). In the other official documents, Russian subjects captured in the frontier region were generally referred to as ‘captives’ (*nevol’niki* or *plenniki*) in the sense of ‘persons held against their will’, but not necessarily in the sense of ‘captives of war’. In imperial administrative documents, the term ‘slave’ (*rab*) described a non-Christian unfree person who had been enslaved in accordance with the local social order. This term was applied to Afghans, Persians, and other non-Christians. From the perspective of the Russian Empire, the

capture and enslavement of Russian subjects by nomads of the Junior and Middle Hordes was not legal. By using the term ‘captive’, the Russian Empire indicated that this status was both temporary and illegal. In contrast, the enslavement and sale of non-Christian non-Russians was, to a great extent, accepted. For that reason, I will use the term ‘enslaved captive’ to combine the Russian official terminology and the person’s legal status in Khiva and Bukhara.

Both texts start with an identification formula:

[official version]

My name is Iakov, son of Zinovi called Zinov’ev. I am 46 years old. I am a state peasant from the Government Moscow District Bronnick and live in a village called Letvinovo. I belong to the Greek-Russian Orthodox Church. I have never been tried [or: I have not got a criminal record]. I am able to read and write.¹¹

[literary version]

I was born as a state peasant in the village Litvinovo of the government Moscow district Bronnick. I am 46 years old. I worked as a fisherman (seal catching) in Astrakhan’ for the merchant Golikov.¹²

The official version seems to have served as the model for the literary one, even though it lacks the information on Iakov’s religious affiliation, education and lack of criminal record. Reproducing the official formula was to give more reliability to the literary version and confirm the authenticity of the story.

The identifiers of Iakov Zinov’ev’s dependent status are quite similar in both texts in terms of terminology. Despite the fact that he was enslaved in Khiva and Bukhara, Iakov Zinov’ev is never called ‘slave’ (*rab*), but always ‘captive’ (*plennik*) in the official testimony. Further references addressed his capturer (*pleniteli*), his capture (*plenenie*) and his relation to other Russian captives (*plenniki*).

In the narrative version, the narrator Iakov Zinov’ev calls himself a ‘captive’ (mostly *nevol’nik*¹³ and sometimes *plennik*¹⁴). The local actors, i.e. slave holders, raiders or just the local population, refer to him mostly as ‘labourer’ (*rabotnik*),¹⁵ ‘infidel’ (*kiafyr*),¹⁶ ‘Russian’ (*urus*),¹⁷ and finally ‘slave’ (the emic term *kul*, translated in the text as ‘captive’ (*nevol’nik*)).¹⁸ These terms are also used of other enslaved persons. They do not relate to their dependent status, but rather to their gender, age, ethnicity and their tasks or position in the local social system. This corresponds more with the internal designation, based on pragmatic cooperation within a system.

11 CGARKaz, f. 4, op. 1, d. 4673, l. 8.

12 Dal’, “Rasskaz plennika iz Khivy”: 1.

13 Dal’, “Rasskaz plennika iz Khivy”: 6 and 7.

14 Dal’, “Rasskaz plennika iz Khivy”: 16 and 26.

15 Dal’, “Rasskaz plennika iz Khivy”: 16 and 25.

16 Dal’, “Rasskaz plennika iz Khivy”: 9 and 13.

17 Dal’, “Rasskaz plennika iz Khivy”: 24 and 26.

18 Dal’, “Rasskaz plennika iz Khivy”: 20 and 26.

3.2 Representations of the Capture

The beginning of both stories is quite similar. The use of the official introductory formula in the literary version is intended to lend authenticity to the narrative. But there are clear differences in how the capture is described.

[official version] On 15th September 1831, I was captured on the Caspian coast. I had been hired for fishing and seal catching by commissioner Vasilii Isaev, who worked for Grigorii Golikov, a merchant of the second guild. I was on a sailing boat (*rasshiva*) with fourteen other people. I remember three of them: Zinovii Semenov, Mikhail Kachakin and Andreian Ivanov. The first two were citizens from the city Petrovsk and from Samara respectively. I do not know anything about the last one. In the upper part of the island called Morskoi, about 60 Kirgiz [=Kazakhs] and Turkmen on four boats captured us while we were asleep and brought us to the Turkmen ridge the next day.¹⁹

In the official version, the focus lies on the geographical location, the identification of fellow captives and of the raiders, as well as on the circumstances of the capture. These priorities correspond with the institutional (imperial) interest in investigating the capture and enslavement of Russian subjects for the purpose of returning them and punishing the raiders.

In this passage, three types of actors are mentioned. Firstly, detailed data and the names of Iakov's employers, i.e. the merchant Grigorii Golikov and the commissioner Vasilii Isaev, helped the imperial officials to verify the circumstances of how he came to cross the border. In this way, they could exclude the possibility of an escape from the Russian Empire or other criminal purposes. Secondly, Iakov Zinov'ev was asked about other Russian fishermen captured on the Caspian coast. Their names were important to document missing people in order to identify the circumstances of their capture and possible whereabouts. Finally, the data on the captors – in this case the Kazakhs and Turkmen – enabled the search for missing people, the punishment of raiders and the reconstruction of slave trading networks in order to control and stop the trade. Furthermore, Iakov Zinov'ev remembered that he met four Kazakh raiders in Astrakhan' at the market and bought Khivan clothes for his journey in their store.

[literary version]

In 1831 we were at sea in a fishing boat, for fishing and seal catching. On 15 August, we arrived near the island of Morskoi with three fishing boats. After dinner we went to sleep in the lower hold, without any worries. In the night about 60 people came across in their boats, entered our boat, closed the hatches and gave a loud shout – so we woke up. After opening a hatch, the raiders (*bandity*) pointed their firearms at us, called us one by one and hit us on the head and on the shoulders. After that they bound us together. [. . .] I jumped out of the hatch, crossed myself and tried to catch Turkmen in the darkness. I wanted to get two of them and drown them in the

¹⁹ CGARKaz, f. 4, op. 1, d. 4673, l. 8–8a.

sea. But was not able to hold on to their shaved heads. They defeated me, hit me on the head, trussed me up and cut my heel. But I do not remember how. I guess I was unconscious.²⁰

The narrative version stresses struggles associated with the capture: the stealthy raid, the desperate and unequal fight and the brave efforts of Iakov Zinov'ev. The experience of the capture could be perceived by the protagonist as emasculation and disempowerment. The description of the fight and his state of unconsciousness as he is being overpowered are intended to help the protagonist to maintain his "masculine dignity".

Surprisingly, the narrator does not mention any names in this part of the narrative. The raiders are called 'bandits' (*razboiniki*), 'local Asians' (*Aziatcy zdesnie*), and 'Turkmen' (*turkmeny*) without any further specification. Similarly, the narrator refers to his fellow Russian captives just as 'we' (*my, nas*), 'our [people]' (*nashi*), 'companions' (*tovarishchi*). By using the term 'bandits', the narrator indicates that his capture and the way he was enslaved are illegal. Furthermore, the terms 'we', 'us', 'our' show the high degree of solidarity and allegiance with other Russian captives. The depiction of oppression in this section is defined by coerced immobility and by enforced labour in the households of the raiders. His one active interaction with the raiders takes place on the boat in form of a fight. The nameless, oppressive captors, the extremely limited autonomy of the captives and a lack of verbal communication highlight the objectification and dehumanization.

3.3 Extraction of Labour in the Khanate of Khiva

The next entry relates Iakov's transport to Khiva with another Russian captive. While en route, he was sold to Turkmen. At that stage, we can speak about his enslavement, as he was no longer at the mercy of raiders, but had been sold as a human commodity.

[official version]

One and a half months later [after our capture], six Kirgiz took me and the above-mentioned Adrian Ivanov to Khiva. Along the way, they sold us after 19 days to Turkmen, one of whom was called Khodja Bey, but I do not know any other names. Approximately on the sixth day, Khodja Bey took us [9a] to the Khiva [= Khivan khanate] to the city Tashauz. [. . .] I was submitted (or paid) as a tax to the Khan. Other [captives] were sold, but I do not have any information about their masters and whereabouts.²¹

In the official version, the imperial interest in identifying actors involved in the slave trade dominates the narration. The local traders, trade markets and trade conditions have priority. The fates of enslaved Russian subjects, and especially their owners and whereabouts, are another priority. Once more the names, places, and distances are

²⁰ Dal', "Rasskaz plennika iz Khivy": 1–2.

²¹ CGARKaz, f. 4, op. 1, d. 4673, l. 9–9a.

noted for the precise identification of slave trade configurations and practices. The living conditions and the duties of Russian slaves do not seem to be worth mentioning, because the entire two-year stay in Khiva is described with one sentence: “After two years at the Khan’s estate, I fled to Bukhara.”²² Interestingly, records of what the captives had suffered did not play an important role for the internal imperial documentation.

The literary version dedicates fourteen pages to Iakov’s agricultural labour on the estate Ivanda, the hard working conditions in the irrigation system, the poor circumstances in which they lived and provisions, the degradation he felt, and his attempts to escape to Bukhara. In contrast to the official report, his duties and provisioning are described in some detail:

[literary version]

Here I lived and worked as a so-called ‘arba’, i.e. transporting soil hither and thither, levelling plowland and beds in order to improve the quality of the irrigation system. These tasks are extremely exhausting, as the soil had to be flattened by eye only, without a level. [. . .] On this Ivanda estate, we were about forty Russian and Persian captives (*nevol’niki*). Everyone got one pud [sixteen kilograms] of wheat with soil mixed in per month and nothing else. You have to mill it yourself and give five pounds [2.5 kilograms] wheat in payment. You have to bake the bread yourself without getting any firewood. The firewood you can steal from neighbours and bake the bread by night. Sometimes you are so exhausted after the hard work, you want to eat and to sleep at the same time, and you do not know what you should start with.²³

By carefully describing everyday life on this estate and employing some local terms, the narrator tried to convey an authentic picture of being enslaved. He illustrates his dependency by depicting his relations to some powerful actors, in this case the steward of the estate, called *mashruk*, and the khan with his wife. All local actors were mentioned by their position in the local social system without using their names. As a result of this narrative technique, relations between slave holders and slaves in the agricultural sphere appeared functionalized and objectified.

Interestingly, this part of the narrative is complemented with embedded short conversations about the provisioning of slaves. When Iakov asks for firewood, the steward answers: “Have you no arms? Can’t you see? There is your firewood!” With these words, he pointed to the neighbour’s fence.²⁴ In other conversations with the neighbours, the steward covered for the slaves’ thefts: “Catch him and I will punish him. Unless you do, don’t speak about that!”²⁵ or: “Go and search for it [a stolen cow]! If you find it, we will answer for it. But if you don’t, I will detain you.”²⁶ In this manner, the narrator illustrates the disinterest of the steward in providing appropriate living conditions on the estate, and consequently his unwillingness to fulfil his duties.

²² CGARKaz, f. 4, op. 1, d. 4673, l. 9a.

²³ Dal’, “Rasskaz plennika iz Khivy”: 5–6.

²⁴ Dal’, “Rasskaz plennika iz Khivy”: 6.

²⁵ Dal’, “Rasskaz plennika iz Khivy”: 7.

²⁶ Dal’, “Rasskaz plennika iz Khivy”: 7.

In other examples, the protagonist argues with the khan and his wife. He finds the harsh working conditions and poor provisions unacceptable:

[literary version]

Once the old wife of the khan came into the garden. I asked her: 'Are you not ashamed or uncomfortable to see us nearly naked? Could not the khan give us clothes?' And she answered: 'Why should I be ashamed? For me it is the same to look at you or at a dog, which is also without clothes.' At that moment I decided to leave them [to escape].²⁷

The narrator interprets the masters' negligent attitude towards the well-being of their slaves as neglecting the responsibility for human resources.

[literary version]

The common life goes on: no meals, no clothes, but carrying on around the fields! [. . .] You let us work, but starve us to death. How can a hungry and thirsty man work? If we keep livestock, we look after it. Either you will give us clothes or money for it! We all don't even possess shabby clothing!²⁸

In both extracts he compares his position to that of working animals. This perceived dehumanization and degradation is based on the treatment of slaves on this particular estate rather than on the legal status of slaves in Khiva in general. Interestingly the protagonist complains about these circumstances in order to negotiate better living conditions. The state of affairs is not acceptable for him for a long-term stay. His narration does not resemble a story of suffering, like a Christian soul among unbelievers or like an unprotected and lost stranger. As an entrepreneur he prefers the self-determined solution: seeking to escape.

3.4 Exit from Slavery and Captivity

In the official version, we supposedly look for details of his living conditions and working tasks in Bukhara:

[official version]

The head of the city of Kara-Kul, Iman Kazi, sent me to the Khan of Bukhara, where I spent all my time. Last spring, he [the Khan] sent me to Russia together with two other captives, Chernetsov and Romanov, with a caravan.²⁹

In this part, imperial clerks recorded the last part of the coerced mobility of Iakov Zinov'ev and paid special attention to his return with traders and other Russian captives. Again, the actors involved in this process have priority. The report does not include any emotional parts such as complaints about painful experiences during

²⁷ Dal', "Rasskaz plennika iz Khivy": 7–8.

²⁸ Dal', "Rasskaz plennika iz Khivy": 18.

²⁹ CGARKaz, f. 4, op. 1, d. 4673, l. 10.

captivity or an exultation due to the long-awaited return to the homeland. The language of the document is factual and objective. The main purpose of this official testimony was the collection of reliable information about missing Russian subjects, their whereabouts, and slave trade configurations. Iakov Zinov'ev used passive voice to highlight his coerced/coercive experiences. This position enabled him to claim financial satisfaction. According to the official protocol, Russian captives were entitled to ask for reimbursement of their lost goods and money. During a raid and capture, Iakov had lost his belongings worth 100 Roubels as well as 750 Roubels in cash. During his enslavement he suffered a loss of 260 Roubels because he was not able to fulfil his (fishing) contract. In this way, the entrepreneur Iakov Zinov'ev provided strategically relevant information to the Russian officials and made use of the imperial institutional releasing practices.

The literary version contains more details of his stay in Bukhara:

[literary version]

So I arrived in Bukhara, at the Emir's court. My stay there – I should say – was good and I felt free (*privol'no*), like all Russian captives [at court], whose number amounted to above twenty people. The food supply was good, we walked freely (*na vole*), just had to fulfill guard duty at the court. And the guard duty was so – just take your bed under your arm and go to the gate. Russians were originally held by different masters (*khozaeva*). But now, after the last visit of a Bukharian envoy in Russia, the Emir asked to send all Russians [slaves] to the court. Not one of them should be held enslaved by private persons (*chtob v nevole ne bylo ikh ni u kogo*), but only by the Khan. It was told to the three of us: the government claimed you by name, thank God. So we were sent at once. And the Emir said to us personally many times that he would send the other Russians at once if somebody claimed them.³⁰

Iakov arrived in Bukhara as an escaped Khivan slave and expressed a wish to serve the Emir. As a guard at the Emir's court, he lived in better conditions: better food, clothes, additional income by raiding, spatial mobility due to military raids. He described his life in Bukhara with the word *privol'no*, 'feeling free'. The customary use of this term emphasizes human agency, will and aspiration, the absence of coercion and dependency as well as the ability to exercise power. In this part, the narrator refers to the perceived 'freedom' in terms of *volia*, in the sense of self-determination and autonomy.³¹ The 'coercion' is perceived in terms of the absence of individual agency.

³⁰ Dal', "Rasskaz plennika iz Khivy": 26–27.

³¹ Elena Smolarz, "Speaking about Freedom and Dependency: Representations and Experiences of Russian Enslaved Captives in Central Asia in the First Half of the 19th Century," *Journal of Global Slavery* 2 (2017): 49–55.

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to consider the functions of representations of enslavement in both texts. The perspective of the official documents is shaped by imperial interests in identifying actors involved in the capture and enslavement of Russian subjects in order to control the Central Asian slave trade, and in collecting information about enslaved Russians for ransoming or release in order to protect imperial subjects. Furthermore, collecting information about Central Asian landscapes and the geopolitical situation plays an important role. The captives' individual experiences during their enslavement in Central Asia (living conditions, working tasks, etc.) and emotional representations of their suffering do not seem to be worth mentioning. Therefore the function of these narratives can be identified as providing reliable information about slave trade networks and practices. The interest of editor Vladimir Dal' in folklore and popular stories led him to collect stories from the everyday lives of the border population. This genre does not include particular thematic foci. The narrative should appear authentic and provide insights into the experiences of ordinary people. For this purpose, the editor adopted the structure of the official testimony while retaining sociolects and regiolects. This genre offers enough room for representations of individual experiences related to enslavement. In this case, coercion might be considered a part of daily life with a focus on individual strategies of coping with it.

After considering how both textual contexts frame the narratives of dependency, I would like to add another important aspect – narrative agency of the captured person. Even if Iakov Zinov'ev can be considered a resource for data provision, he still had the opportunity to act at least within certain transmitting contexts. As he was able to identify institutional interests or specifics of literary genres, he adapted his narration to the expectations of the audience and used the narrative situation for his individual purposes. In the official testimonies, he provided relevant information and stressed his experiences of captivity in hopes of the reimbursement of lost belongings. The genre of popular stories offered him the opportunity for self-presentation as a brave and ingenious entrepreneur.

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Pia Wiegink

Narrative, Affective Communities, and Abolitionist Cosmopolitanism in the American Gift Book *The Liberty Bell* (1839–1858)

In her essay “Networks of Antebellum Print Culture” Anna Luker Gilding examines women’s magazines as part of material, textual, and personal networks. As Gilding explains, “women editors viewed periodical print as an appropriate form in which to preserve their own sentiments as well as those within their networks of family, subscribers, and readers; the preservative property of print then brings to light real networks of affective relationships.”¹ In my essay, I would like to use Gilding’s notion of the “preservative” quality of periodical print culture as a cue to examine women’s partaking in American antislavery print culture.² More precisely, I analyze a particular genre of American antislavery literature, the abolitionist gift book. The gift book was a form of a literary anthology popular in the first half of the nineteenth century in Great Britain and the United States. The gift book was a hybrid literary medium that combined features of the periodical, the album, and the literary anthology and that was given to a loved one (usually a woman) as a token of sympathy. It thus held symbolic value as the material object of the book, which often came in decorative and costly bindings, was given as a present, hence the name gift book. An abolitionist gift book is a compilation of antislavery writings that was usually produced by an anti-slavery organization to raise awareness and funds for the cause of abolition.

In this essay, I focus on the most prominent example of this genre, *The Liberty Bell*, which was produced in fifteen volumes from 1839 until 1858 and sold at an annual fair by the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, a women’s organization supporting William Lloyd Garrison and the American Anti-slavery Society in their fight for the abolition of slavery in the United States. I examine how the editor of the gift book, Maria Weston Chapman, used what Gilding referred to as “preservative” quality of periodicals to put forth a deliberate narrative of a cosmopolitan community of abolition. Gift books were originally considered a medium of national literature; they primarily comprised fiction

¹ Anna Luker Gilding, “Preserving Sentiments: American Women’s Magazines of the 1830s and the Networks of Antebellum Print Culture,” *American Periodicals: A Journal of History & Criticism* 23, no. 2 (2013): 159.

² This essay is a condensed and revised version of parts of chapter 3 of my monograph *Abolitionist Cosmopolitanism: Reconfiguring Race, Gender, and Nation in American Antislavery Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2022).

by Americans, for Americans, and about America.³ By contrast, *The Liberty Bell* frequently included contributions by foreigners—almost one fifth of the contributions can be identified as written by foreign authors. In addition, the gift book also includes numerous contributions by American abolitionists who hail the work of international supporters. Furthermore, the contributions frequently emphasize transatlantic friendship and collaboration. Thus, *The Liberty Bell* is a prime example to trace how the gift book chronicles the transatlantic affiliations of U.S. abolitionists and like-minded reformers in the Atlantic World. In this essay, I show how *The Liberty Bell* adopted genuine characteristics of women's magazine culture, such as the idea of preservation of community, to turn the gift book into a powerful chronicle of affective transatlantic networks in support of the abolition of slavery. Chapman, I argue, makes use of what Anna Luker Gilding referred to as "preserving sentiments"⁴ of antebellum women's magazines. According to Gilding, these sentiments aimed at "binding" people together and preserving personal and textual networks.⁵ I illustrate how Chapman's inclusion of letters, obituaries, and editorial commentary of foreign contributors further enhanced the notion of a transatlantic affective community. Drawing on Jessica Berman's emphasis on the function of narrative for the creation of community, I show how Chapman's compilation of a diverse, that is local, national, and international, body of antislavery literature enabled the editor to connect the critique of slavery in the United States with various cosmopolitan discourses of human brother- and sisterhood.⁶ While the genre of the gift book functioned as a suitable medium to create and express affection for the community of those lobbying for abolition, *The Liberty Bell* was also published as a fundraiser for antislavery work and must thus be considered a material object symbolizing support for the enslaved men, women, and children in the United States. In a final step, I will thus examine the politics of representation inherent in this narrative of a cosmopolitan abolitionist community in the gift book. I will show that while Maria Weston Chapman successfully uses the gift book as a means of "binding" her local community of antislavery activists and their transatlantic supporters together, she fails to incorporate enslaved people and Black abolitionists as equal members in her narrative of a cosmopolitan community.

The Liberty Bell was a literary anthology that was produced each year as fundraiser for antislavery work and aimed at convincing readers of the moral necessity to abolish slavery in the U.S. One powerful strategy in demonstrating this moral necessity consisted of showing readers that the need to abolish slavery was not the idea of a few (radical) New England abolitionists, but rather that their ideas reverberated

3 Ralph W. Thompson, *American Literary Annuals & Gift Books 1825–1865* (New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1936): 23, 32, 86.

4 Gilding, "Networks of Antebellum Print Culture": 157.

5 Gilding, "Networks of Antebellum Print Culture": 162.

6 Jessica Berman, *Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism, and the Politics of Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 3.

with a broad community of likeminded people from all over the world. For this endeavor, Chapman's role as editor was pivotal. As Ellen Gruber Garvey observes, for magazines "[e]ditors act as crucial gatekeepers, admitting or excluding materials."⁷ Furthermore, she continues, editors also act "as generators of community, inviting readers to see themselves as gathered around the magazine."⁸ Chapman, by editing all fifteen volumes of *The Liberty Bell*, thus used the periodical features of magazine culture for the abolitionist gift book. The sympathizers in the cause, who bought *The Liberty Bell* at the annual fair of the BFASS, were able to experience themselves as part of an abolitionist community as it materialized in the gift book. This community was abstract and imagined as well as personal and intimate.

Literary studies scholar Jessica Berman argues that in addition to sharing common values and performing joint cultural practices, the idea of community and its perseverance is first and foremost dependent on "narrative construction" and storytelling. "Communities," Berman explains, "come into being to a large extent in the kinds of stories of connection we have been told or are able to tell about ourselves."⁹ In other words, for communities to perform their function of an affective unity of identification, they depend on narratives in order to reaffirm and adapt themselves.

Berman decidedly expands sociological and political concepts of community by emphasizing the relevance of storytelling. Here, Berman draws on ideas put forward by Tönnies and Anderson to define her notion of cosmopolitan communities: The late nineteenth-century German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies considered face-to-face interaction as a prerequisite of his rather nostalgic idea of *Gemeinschaft* (community), which, according to him, was then replaced by the larger unit of affiliation, *Gesellschaft* (society), which failed to provide the personal ties between its members.¹⁰ In *Imagined Communities* (1986) historian Benedict Anderson emphasized the pivotal role print culture, or more precisely, "print capitalism"¹¹ played for the creation of national communities and the affective bonds between their members. Berman shares Anderson's attention to print culture and the function of narrative for imagining, that is, creating communities, but she expands his focus of inquiry by presenting (Tönnies' notion of) communities as sources of identification that may not adhere to the confines of the nation. Berman defines her idea of cosmopolitan communities as follows:

7 Ellen Gruber Garvey, Foreword to *Blue Pencils and Hidden Hands: Women Editing Periodicals, 1830–1910*, ed. Sharon M. Harris and Ellen Gruber Garvey (Lebanon, NH: Northeastern University Press, 2004): xii.

8 Garvey, Foreword: xii.

9 Berman, *Modernist Fiction*: 3.

10 Berman, *Modernist Fiction*: 8.

11 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 1991): 43.

Rather than a series of concentric rings situated around the (universal) human subject, what we might call a 'cosmopolitan community' would imagine, as the matrix of both self and community, overlapping webs of relation, some clearly woven out of local affiliations. Cosmopolitan communities then in a sense might be rooted [. . .] while still in a very crucial sense remaining unbordered. [. . .] [A]s we recognize national, communal, and cosmopolitan narratives as always already implicated in each other, we must also see them as particular discourses, spoken from a particular location at a specific moment in time.¹²

Berman here highlights the interconnectedness of the local, communal affective groupings with not only national but also cosmopolitan communities. Cosmopolitan communities, in other words, both emerge out of very specific local and historic conditions and, at the same time, envision themselves as part of a larger whole.

Taking Berman's idea as a starting point for thinking about antislavery literature, I am interested in how the abolitionist gift book *The Liberty Bell* creates notions of identification and affinity, that is, how the gift book functions as a means of creating, re-imagining, and preserving identification for American abolitionists and their transatlantic supporters. Berman's notion of cosmopolitan community as "a series of concentric rings," I think, works well to describe the diverse narrative of abolitionist community the gift book continuously evokes in its fifteen volumes. In what follows, I explore how the female editor Maria Weston Chapman used *The Liberty Bell* as a powerful narrative of a transatlantic network of abolition. Her deliberate inclusion of letters to the editor, obituaries of foreign supporters, and her editorial prefaces turned the gift book into an important literary space which represented transatlantic dialogue, facilitated abolitionist cosmopolitan exchange, and thus literally 'bound' diverse people together. Chapman, I argue, turned the abolitionist gift book into a multifaceted mouthpiece of various affective bonds—between giver and recipient of the gift book, between different supporters of American abolition, and between abolitionists and enslaved people.

For the contributions to *The Liberty Bell*, Chapman recruited American authors coming from diverse networks ranging from well-known Garrisonians (Wendell Phillips, Samuel J. May, Edmund Quincy, Francis Jackson, and of course, Garrison himself), to representatives of the New England intellectual, literary, and religious elite (James Russell Lowell, Henry Longfellow, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Theodore Parker), members of the BFASS and affiliated local female abolitionists (Chapman's sisters Caroline Weston and Anne Warren Weston, Lydia Maria Child, Eliza Lee Follen, Henrietta Sargent, or Maria White Lowell), and members of other, both national and foreign, female antislavery organizations (Lucretia Mott and Mary Grew from the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society or Elizabeth Pease from the Darlington Ladies Anti-Slavery Society, England). While a broad range of foreign authors, it must be assumed, contributed to *The Liberty Bell* due to their personal contact with Garrison or Wendell Phillips, a large number of contributors also appeared in *The Liberty Bell* because of Chapman's

12 Berman, *Modernist Fiction*: 16–17.

personal connection and correspondence. The Irish printer and abolitionist Richard D. Webb, for example, was not only among the first to welcome Chapman when she first arrived in Liverpool in 1848,¹³ he also wrote more than one hundred letters to Chapman; this sheer number of letters is already indicative of the level of transatlantic exchange that must have taken place between the female Boston abolitionist Chapman and the founder of the Hibernian Antislavery Association.¹⁴

As a “gatekeeper,”¹⁵ the female editor was in a powerful position of deciding who would be printed in the gift book and she was in charge of determining the overall content. When taking a closer look at the content of *The Liberty Bell*, it becomes obvious how carefully Chapman balanced a broad variety of texts and authors. Rather than merely printing literary contributions such as poetry and short fiction, Chapman also included personal letters (written to her with the intent of being published in the gift book), travel accounts, as well as obituaries in various forms. The effect of the inclusion of these personal texts is that they chronicle autobiographical relationships and networks between diverse people. As Gilding observes, “networks of real people—as opposed to the ‘imagined’ communities that are often invoked in relation to periodical print—leave traces within magazines, and these traces, in turn, reveal that the two networks of sentimental attachments and textual form are interconnected.”¹⁶ In other words, while for the detached recipient of the gift book the compilation of texts in each annual volume may function as an imagined community, for those actively involved in the cause, *The Liberty Bell* is a material object that occupies a pivotal function in “preserving” not only abolitionist sentiment but abolitionist community.

Obituaries perform this preserving function extremely well. The fifteen volumes of *The Liberty Bell* include an impressive number of obituaries which appear in various forms and which commemorate a diverse body of people. Among the more than twenty obituaries printed in *The Liberty Bell* are different text forms, ranging from short poems to many-page reminiscences. Obituaries were authored by men and women, by American abolitionists and foreign contributors, and they commemorated the death of both male and female members of their abolitionist community ranging from famous spokespersons (like the newspaper editor Elijah P. Lovejoy, who was killed by a proslavery mob in 1837) to domestics (like Eliza Garnaut). Anne Weston Warren’s “Lines”¹⁷ published in the very first *Liberty Bell* of 1839 can be read as a general remark setting the tone for how American abolitionists remembered the de-

13 Clare Taylor, *The Women of the Anti-Slavery Movement: The Weston Sisters* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994): 70.

14 The number of letters is derived from research in the Boston Public Library’s Anti-Slavery Collection, a collection that archived approximately 1,200 letters of the Weston sisters.

15 Garvey, Foreword: xii.

16 Gilding, “Networks of Antebellum Print Culture”: 157.

17 Anne Weston Warren, “Lines,” in *The Liberty Bell*, ed. Friends of Freedom (Boston, MA: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1839): 22–25.

ceased members of their cosmopolitan community. The “Lines” have the explanatory subtitle “[w]ritten on hearing the remark of a friend, that a large number of Abolitionists had died during the preceding years.”¹⁸ The poem itself comments on the function these deceased have for those still alive:

Their shadowy presence girds our souls in hours of sacrifice.
Is our path bright? we mourn that they its beauty should not share,—
Is the way dark? we would not fear, were they but with us there.
But while in fervent grief we weep above each lowly grave,
May we like them the weak protect, from wrong the helpless save;
Their pure devotion, earnest faith, and love of human kind,
Within our inmost souls let these an answering echo find [. . .].¹⁹

Anne Weston Warren here epitomizes the importance of mourning and of commemoration for the community. While the loss of those dead is a cause of grief and weeping, the work they accomplished serves as an inspiration for those alive. Obituaries function as sentimental cultural practices of creating and preserving communities. Accordingly, Mary Louise Kete observes in *Sentimental Collaborations: Mourning and Middle-Class Identity in Nineteenth-Century America* (2007) how sentimental tropes are essential to the culture of mourning in the nineteenth century. She explains: “[s]entiment [. . .] structures a collaboration through which individuals can join together in solving the seemingly local problem of grief.”²⁰ What Kete emphasizes here is not the individual act of mourning, but its collaborative, communal function. She continues this thought: “sentimentality might best be understood as a specific kind of mourning [. . .]. To mourn was to break down the borders of distance or death and to establish the connection through which one could understand and identify oneself.”²¹ Sentimentality, then, as a particular mode of mourning, aims at establishing a relationship between the self, the deceased, and the community. The poem composed by Anne Weston Warren provides a sentimental expression of collaborative mourning; it employs sentimentality as a dominant mode of how abolitionists remembered their deceased compatriots.

The abolitionist community created in *The Liberty Bell* by means of commemorating deceased abolitionists is at once local, national, and transnational, and includes both men and women. The fifteen volumes of *The Liberty Bell* not only honored well-known figures of Boston’s abolitionist scene such as Charles Follen, a German immigrant and professor of German at Harvard University, or the famous Unitarian minister William Ellery Channing, we also find several obituaries commemorating local

¹⁸ Warren, “Lines”: 22.

¹⁹ Warren, “Lines”: 22–23.

²⁰ Mary Louise Kete, *Sentimental Collaborations: Mourning and Middle-Class Identity in Nineteenth-Century America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000): 3.

²¹ Kete, *Mourning and Middle-Class Identity in Nineteenth-Century America*: 32.

women activists. Women like Anne Greene Chapman, Eliza Garnaut, or Catherine Sargent were members of the BFASS and thus most likely known to local Bostonians, but most probably not known to a wider (and transnational) readership. In a contribution of 1839, William Lloyd Garrison mourns the death of Anne Greene Chapman,²² Maria Weston Chapman's sister-in-law who died of tuberculosis in 1837.²³ In *The Liberty Bell* of 1851, Wendell Phillips contributes a long essay on the death of Eliza Garnaut.²⁴ This essay is significant because in addition to her membership in the BFASS and other benevolent organizations of Boston, Eliza Garnaut was a domestic working in the Phillips household. In his essay, Phillips elaborates on Eliza's life and the cause of her death—while taking care of others infected with cholera, she herself got infected²⁵—and most of his essay is dedicated to Eliza's benevolent work. Ignoring differences of class and gender, Phillips does not mention that Eliza worked for him but instead dedicates almost the entire twelve-page essay to praising Garnaut's work for the community.²⁶ Another noteworthy example of the commemoration of a member of the local community is the contribution by Lydia Maria Child on the death of Catherine Sargent in *The Liberty Bell* of 1856. Child's "Lines" have the subtitle "suggested by a lock of hair from our departed friend, Catherine Sargent."²⁷ In the poem, it is "[t]hat little lock of silvery hair" that triggers the speaker's reminiscences of the fellow abolitionist,²⁸ who had been, together with her sister Henrietta Sargent, an active member of the BFASS. Helen Sheu-maker comments on hair as a material object closely associated with cultural practices of mourning:

Memorial hair—that is hair saved on the event of a person's death—triggered tears and thus began the necessary process of mourning [. . .]. After this initial stage, hair could move the mourner along the path of grief to a more transcendent stage of remembering. [. . .] Memories were objects—both literally (hair, rings) and figuratively—to be hoarded and fondled, just as a

22 William Lloyd Garrison, "Anne Greene Chapman," in *The Liberty Bell*, ed. Friends of Freedom (Boston, MA: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1839): 20–21.

23 Clare Taylor attributes the idea for publishing *The Liberty Bell* to Anne Greene Chapman, which Maria Weston Chapman then realized after Anne's early death at the age of 35. Taylor, *The Women of the Antislavery Movement*: 88.

24 Wendell Phillips, "Mrs. Eliza Garnaut," in *The Liberty Bell*, ed. Friends of Freedom (Boston, MA: National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, 1851): 97–108.

25 Phillips, "Mrs. Eliza Garnaut": 99.

26 The fact that Ann and Wendell Phillips will adopt Eliza Garnaut's daughter Phebe after Eliza's death and Phebe will stay with them until her marriage in 1862 testifies to the close relationship between Garnaut and Phillips. Caroline Healey Dall, *Daughter of Boston: The Extraordinary Diary of a Nineteenth-Century Woman*, ed. Helen R. Deese (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2006): 408.

27 Lydia Maria Child, "Lines: Suggested by a Lock of Hair From our Departed Friend, Catherine Sargent," in *The Liberty Bell*, ed. Friends of Freedom (Boston, MA: National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, 1856): 159.

28 Child, "Lines": 159.

miser might caress her piles of gold. The hair was not valuable as such for being of the person but for being an objectified version of the departed.²⁹

In the context of mourning, hair of the deceased takes on a double function; it is both an object that evokes a memory of the dead person as well as a kind of substitute object or wildcard of that person. It was thus not uncommon that locks of deceased beloved people became keepsakes, were put into albums, or, as it was the case at the Boston antislavery fair, the hair of a reformer from India was sold as memorabilia. In *The Liberty Bell* commemorations of deceased abolitionists function similarly to the locks of hair: they are at once an expression of mourning and a conjuring up of the work of the deceased for the cause of abolition.

In the gift book, commemorations of the local and predominantly female supporters appear side by side with famous advocates of abolition from across the Atlantic, such as Thomas Clarkson or William Allen. While this might be indicative of what James G. Basker referred to as the “democratic inclusiveness”³⁰ of the genre of American antislavery writing, it seems, however, even more surprising that the gift book, which celebrates abolitionists’ “pure devotion, earnest faith, and love of human kind”³¹ regardless of color or creed, mostly remembers dead white people. There are only two obituaries which commemorate the death of Black abolitionists. One is an editorial preface by Chapman to a poem by the Cuban poet Plácido in *The Liberty Bell* of 1845³² and the other is not a classic obituary but a reminiscence of the death of the Haitian revolutionary leader Toussaint Louverture, who had already died in 1803, written by the white Unitarian minister John Weiss in *The Liberty Bell* of 1847.³³ In contrast to the intimacy and the affinity that the other obituaries exhibit towards the person commemorated, these two contributions first and foremost turn their subjects, the Cuban poet and the Haitian leader, into martyrs of their race. While John Weiss

29 Helen Sheumaker, *Love Entwined: The Curious History of Hairwork in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007): 56–57.

30 James G. Basker, ed., *American Antislavery Writings: Colonial Beginnings to Emancipation* (New York: Library of America, 2012): xxx.

31 Warren, “Lines”: 23.

32 Maria Weston Chapman, “Plácido,” in *The Liberty Bell*, ed. Friends of Freedom (Boston: Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair, 1845): 67.

33 John Weiss, “Death of Toussaint L’Ouverture,” in *The Liberty Bell*, ed. Friends of Freedom (Boston, MA: National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, 1847): 124–34. During the Civil War, John Weiss fashioned Toussaint Louverture as a representative of “black valor” and he repeatedly promoted the bravery of Black men and thus promoted the possibility of enlisting African Americans in the Union Army in essays in prominent magazines and newspapers like *The Atlantic Monthly* or the *New York Evening Post*. Matthew J. Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War: The Promise and Peril of a Second Haitian Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010): 80–82, 87.

honors Toussaint as “the opener of a better future”³⁴ and praises his name as “prophetic,”³⁵ Toussaint, who had died more than 35 years ago, cannot be remembered as a member of a local, national, or even transnational community who the author was personally acquainted with, but is turned into a romanticized recollection of a mythical man. Accordingly, Weiss opens his reminiscences as follows: “No tale of magic ever absorbed our childhood with such scarce and credible transformations [. . .] as this man’s life and reign, ending in tears and in sorrow”.³⁶ And despite praising Toussaint as “the child and favorite of liberty, the turgid orator of equality”³⁷ who is “private to no age or race,”³⁸ Weiss exoticizes Toussaint as a “child of the tropics.”³⁹ Thus, in contrast to the obituaries discussed before, here, the tropes of sentimentalism are not employed to commemorate the death of a close member of the community, but to idolize a larger-than-life hero from a distant time and place. Weiss’ depiction of the Haitian revolutionary echoes the literary representation of Toussaint by fellow anti-slavery authors, such as Harriet Martineau. In 1841, Martineau’s fictional two-volume biography of Louverture entitled *The Hour and the Man* presented Toussaint as an intelligent, heroic, Black family man and leader.⁴⁰ Contrary to proslavery depictions of the submissive and obedient slave, Weiss, Martineau, and Chapman celebrate Black leadership and rebellion. Although Weiss’ contribution performs a similar preserving function, that is, keeping the memory of an important person for the cause alive for the community, the sentiment of mourning displays the characteristics of romantic racialism which turn Toussaint into the subject of a ‘tale of magic.’

Taken together, *The Liberty Bell* includes different forms of commemorating deceased abolitionists. These commemorations and obituaries chronicle a cultural practice that transcends the local abolitionist community addressed in and evoked by *The Liberty Bell* and becomes a more general source of encouragement for those lobbying for abolition. In other words, the obituaries and reminiscences printed in the gift book perform a twofold function: They function as a means of preservation, that is, commemorating and worshipping the lives and the work of individual people. At the same time, by means of evoking the shared sentiment of mourning the loss of a dear person, a transatlantic supporter, or a larger-than-life antislavery martyr, they also unite and thus create readers as a community of likeminded people who not only mourn and commemorate together but also pursue a common political goal.⁴¹

34 Weiss, “Death of Toussaint L’Ouverture”: 130.

35 Weiss, “Death of Toussaint L’Ouverture”: 134.

36 Weiss, “Death of Toussaint L’Ouverture”: 124.

37 Weiss, “Death of Toussaint L’Ouverture”: 128.

38 Weiss, “Death of Toussaint L’Ouverture”: 129.

39 Weiss, “Death of Toussaint L’Ouverture”: 133.

40 Susan Belasco, “Harriet Martineau’s Black Hero and the American Antislavery Movement,” *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 55, no. 2 (2000): 159–60.

41 I am transferring here what Anna Luker Gilding observed for Caroline Howard Gilman’s juvenile magazines *The (Southern) Rose Bud* to the abolitionist book. See Gilding, “Preserving Sentiment”: 159.

In addition to obituaries, letters published in *The Liberty Bell* are a particularly apt medium to trace the multifaceted transatlantic exchanges between Chapman and various European sympathizers of American abolitionism. Abolitionist newspapers like *The Liberator* or *Frederick Douglass' Paper* often had special sections dedicated to the publication of correspondence. The letters printed in these columns ranged from private correspondence made public to letters to the editors and other letters written with the intention to publish them. Thus, printing letters in antislavery newspapers, magazines, and gift books profoundly blurred the line between private and public correspondence and was a recurring feature in antebellum American abolitionist print culture.⁴² As Sarah Meer points out, “Long before literary critics discovered ‘interpretive communities,’ abolitionist print culture was demonstrating them. [. . .] Accordingly, antislavery editors cultivated readers, they invited specific readings and they counted on particular interpretations, demarcating community in terms of textual response.”⁴³ Meer continues this thought by emphasizing the crucial function letters performed for these interpretive communities of abolitionist culture. She writes that letters “borrowed from their style and modes of address from the private exchange of friends. They demonstrated that a letter’s significance could depend on its reception: not just who read it, but in what circumstances, and in what company.”⁴⁴ Meer emphasizes the affective community-building function of letters and how this characteristic was employed in abolitionist print culture. The sheer number of letters printed in *The Liberty Bell* once more signals the hybrid genre of the abolitionist gift book as it blended elements from diverse genres of antebellum print culture.

In *The Liberty Bell*, many contributions take part in the creation of a transatlantic abolitionist community. The impression that this publication is comprised of the collection of expressions of support from members of a community who are close to each other is often already indicated in the titles of the contributions, such as a “Letter to a Friend”⁴⁵ or “A Word of Encouragement.”⁴⁶ In addition, in many contributions authors emphasize that this community extends across the Atlantic. A contribution from 1844, for example, is authored by the Duchess of Sutherland, a female advocate of abolition who will write the famous Stafford House Address to the women in Amer-

42 Sarah Meer, “Public and Personal Letters: Julia Griffiths and Frederick Douglass’ Paper,” *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 33, no. 2 (2012): 257, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0144039X.2012.669902>.

43 Sarah Meer, “Old Master Letters and Letters from the Old World: Julia Griffiths and the Uses of Correspondence in Frederick Douglass’s Newspaper,” in *The Edinburgh Companion to Nineteenth-Century American Letters and Letter-Writing*, ed. Celeste-Marie Bernier, Judie Newman and Matthew Peters (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016): 377.

44 Meer, “Old Master Letters and Letters from the Old World”: 377.

45 Susan Copley Cabot, “Letter to a Friend,” in *The Liberty Bell*, ed. Friends of Freedom (Boston: Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair, 1844): 100–105.

46 James Haughton, “A Word of Encouragement,” in *The Liberty Bell*, ed. Friends of Freedom (Boston: Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair, 1844): 30–39.

ica in 1853. In this letter, the Duchess is “stretching [her] weak hand across the Atlantic”⁴⁷ in a gesture of symbolic support for Chapman and her cause. In addition, in the titles of many contributions the gesture of support is explicitly marked as a transatlantic one: Titles such as “A Word From Ireland,”⁴⁸ “A Voice from Erin,”⁴⁹ or “Offerings of English Women from the Old World to the New.”⁵⁰ Such contributions express words of encouragement from Ireland and England to America.

Some examples of letter writing as a chronicle of abolitionist communities as they have been preserved and celebrated in the gift book shall be given here: Years before her travel account *The Homes of the New World* (1853), Swedish writer Fredrika Bremer sent a “Letter on Slavery” addressed to Chapman, which was published in *The Liberty Bell* of 1845. As a personal correspondence between Anne Weston and her sister Caroline from December 28, 1849 indicates, Bremer was well connected with the Boston women. During her stay in Boston as part of her travels through the States in 1849 (which was documented in *Homes*), Bremer was escorted by Chapman’s sister Anne to the annual fair of the BFASS.⁵¹ In her letter, Bremer replies to a letter sent to her by Chapman and exclaims: “O! readily do I lift my voice and join in the universal chorus which is raised on earth by Christianity, for the Liberty of Man—for the Abolition of Slavery.”⁵² Although Bremer argues in the remainder of her letter that she believes that the answer to the question “how shall we make Slavery cease?”⁵³ must come from Americans and abolition must be a national endeavor, she explicitly and repeatedly expresses her support for this cause.

In *The Liberty Bell* of 1853 and 1856, Chapman printed two letters addressed to her (one in French and one in English) by the Russian political theorist Nicolai Tourgueneff. Nicolai Ivanovitch Tourgueneff (also spelled Nicholas Turgenev, 1789–1871) was a relative of the novelist Ivan Tourgueneff and a radical Russian thinker of the Decembrist revolt, who lived most of life in exile in London and Paris (due to the fact that he was sentenced to death in absentia and thus denied a safe return to Russia). One of his major political critiques consisted in his plea for the abolition of Russian

47 Duchess of Sutherland, “Extract of a Letter,” in *The Liberty Bell*, ed. Friends of Freedom (Boston: Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair, 1844): 179.

48 Richard D. Webb, “A Word from Ireland,” in *The Liberty Bell*, ed. Friends of Freedom (Boston: Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair, 1843): 18–24.

49 James Haughton, “A Voice from Erin,” in *The Liberty Bell*, ed. Friends of Freedom (Boston: Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair, 1842): 59–63.

50 Mary Carpenter, “Offerings of English Women from the Old World to the New,” in *The Liberty Bell*, ed. Friends of Freedom (Boston, MA: National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, 1848): 238–42.

51 Anne Warren Weston, “[Letter to] Dear Caroline [Weston],” December 28, 1849, Boston Public Library Anti-Slavery Collection, Boston, MA, <https://archive.org/details/lettertodearcaro00west31/page/n15> [accessed 07.09.2023].

52 Fredrika Bremer, “Letter on Slavery,” in *The Liberty Bell*, ed. Friends of Freedom (Boston: Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair, 1845): 72.

53 Bremer, “Letter on Slavery”: 73.

serfdom. In both his contributions he connects the situation of the serfs in Russia with the plight of the U.S. American enslaved men and women. In his second letter, for example, he considers himself a “co-labourer in another hemisphere.” He continues, “I am thoroughly persuaded that all success obtained in America in the cause of the coloured race will be eminently serviceable to my poor countrymen in Russia. It is then, first, as a man, and secondly as a Russian, that I hail the efforts of Mr. Garrison [. . .].”⁵⁴ Tourgueneff’s expression of solidarity repeatedly downplays the confines of racial identity, class membership, and national belonging, and instead emphasizes the commonalities of American and Russian causes and the benefits of transatlantic exchange.

The examples of letter writing in *The Liberty Bell* discussed here thus show how Chapman used this community-building characteristic of the letter in order to turn the gift book into a material object that chronicled and preserved these transatlantic abolitionist networks of abolitionist friendship and support. The gift book also becomes a cultural space in which different reform endeavors are compared and can enter into a dialogue with each other and in which American abolitionists become part of a larger, multifaceted cosmopolitan community. Here, the role of the editor is of prime importance as Chapman makes use of editorial prefaces to reframe individual contributions in order to emphasize their relevance for American abolitionism. Tourgueneff’s contribution in *The Liberty Bell* of 1853, for example, is accompanied by an editorial in which Chapman introduces the author to her American readership and explains why his text is relevant for the cause of abolition. She uses Tourgueneff’s contribution as a case in point to present the gift book as a literary meeting place in which reformers from all over the world can become “acquainted with each other.”⁵⁵ Her editorial preface to Tourgueneff’s contribution thus highlights how Chapman’s editorial work impacted the way a contribution was read. As Ellen Gruber Garvey observes, editorials are “highly visible and can be essential statements of the editor’s vision.”⁵⁶ Chapman emphasizes both Tourgueneff’s cosmopolitan mindset and his comparative perspective on the institution of slavery. She thus presents *The Liberty Bell* as a space in which likeminded people “of all countries” stress the need for “universal and absolute right[s].”⁵⁷ Rather than reflecting on the national character of U.S. American slavery, by bringing these diverse

54 Nicolai Tourgueneff, “Letter,” in *The Liberty Bell*, ed. Friends of Freedom (Boston, MA: National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, 1856): 102. In a very similar fashion, an anonymous contribution praises the cosmopolitan ideals of the Irish abolitionist Richard Allen in *The Liberty Bell* of 1842: “Though his [Allen’s] heart is Irish, it beats for the world.” “Sketch of ‘A Foreign Incendiary,’” in *The Liberty Bell*, ed. Friends of Freedom (Boston: Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair, 1842): 70.

55 Maria Weston Chapman, “Russia and the Russians,” in *The Liberty Bell*, ed. Friends of Freedom (Boston, MA: National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, 1853): 210.

56 Garvey, Foreword: xiii.

57 Chapman, “Russia and the Russians”: 210.

voices together, Chapman highlights the common moral values which link abolition with other reform movements throughout the world.

In a similar fashion, Chapman provides a preface to an “Extract from a Letter” by Wendell Phillips in *The Liberty Bell* of 1839 in which she outlines the commonalities between American abolitionists and the newly founded British India Society. The British India Society promoted both the rights of the Indian people who were oppressed by British imperialism in general and the abolition of slavery in India (which was accomplished in 1843) respectively. Chapman praises the work of the British India Society as “doing their work for them [American abolitionists].”⁵⁸ Many British advocates of American abolition, such as the orator and member of Parliament George Thompson, supported the British India Society. Rather than promoting the British exploitation of the Indian cotton economy as a means of weakening American cotton growth, American abolitionists, as Chapman writes in her preface, see the work of the British India Society and American abolitionism as inextricably entwined in their fight to end slavery and indentured labor on a global scale.⁵⁹ Thus, in form of editorial prefaces (as well as replies), Chapman makes visible connections between diverse reform movements and presented individual contributions as part and parcel of her overall narrative of abolitionist cosmopolitanism.

However, as her editorial work also indicates, Chapman not only mediated between different reform movements but also crucially framed them within the particular context of American abolitionism. One striking example is her preface to the Cuban poet Gabriel de la Concepción Valdés, who published under the pen name Plácido, in *The Liberty Bell* of 1845.⁶⁰ Plácido was publicly executed in Havana in 1844 as a reaction of Spanish authorities to one of the biggest revolts by enslaved people and free people of color against white colonial rule, which is referred to as the ‘Ladder Conspiracy’ (‘Conspiración de la Escalera’). In the volume of 1845, Chapman re-printed Plácido’s poem “A Díos,” which he had supposedly written while waiting for his execution. The original poem in Spanish and its English translation were preceded by Chapman’s introduction of the poet. As Sibylle Fischer observes, “few figures in nine-

58 Maria Weston Chapman, “The British India Society,” in *The Liberty Bell*, ed. Friends of Freedom (Boston, MA: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1839): 81.

59 Prominent abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison or George Thompson repeatedly presented the commonalities of these two reform movements. A representative example is George Thompson’s 1840 publication *Lectures on British India*, which includes a preface by William Lloyd Garrison. George Thompson, *Lectures on British India, Delivered in the Friends’ Meeting House, Manchester, England, in October 1839* (Pawtucket: W. and R. Adams, 1840), *HathiTrust Digital Library*, babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044020561833;view=1up;seq=5 [accessed 07.09.2023]. Maria Weston Chapman’s editorial preface to Phillips’ letter must thus be considered a deliberate attempt to incorporate, and thus to cherish and remember, these international affiliations. See also George Thompson, “A Fragment, Verbatim et Literatim From my Journal in Upper India,” in *The Liberty Bell*, ed. Friends of Freedom (Boston: Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair, 1846): 1–6.

60 Chapman, “Plácido”: 67.

teenth-century Cuba are more troubling, more ambiguous, and more resistant to interpretation than the poet [. . .] Plácido.”⁶¹ Chapman must have been among the first American editors to print Plácido’s deathbed poem, which has been re-printed numerous times in various translations in the following years.⁶² The poem was printed in *The Liberty Bell* of 1845, but given the fact that the gift book was usually already sold at the annual fair in December of the previous year, the poem went into print in the year of Plácido’s death. Although, until today, scholars debate the actual role of Plácido in the slave revolt,⁶³ in *The Liberty Bell* of 1845, Chapman introduced Plácido as the martyr poet who had died for the cause of freeing the enslaved men and women of Cuba. Her framing of Plácido is representative of how Black and white American abolitionists appropriated the figure of Plácido for their cause. In this context, Ifeoma Kiddoe Nwanko, who puts the reception of the figure of Plácido and his poetry at the center of her examination of racial consciousness in the Americas of the nineteenth century, elaborates on the importance of Plácido:

Inherent in the discourse of Plácido (then and now) is a tension between the view of him as an exemplar of the particularities of the Cuban context and the perception of him as a representative of the elements of the broader experience of people of the African Diaspora in particular, and of humans more broadly. Cosmopolitanism is, therefore, implicated in representations of Plácido in two ways. First, his story itself travels and becomes part of the discourse of the Atlantic world. Second, those who represent him seek to achieve their goals by either highlighting or negating his connection to the world beyond Cuba.⁶⁴

61 Sibylle Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004): 77.

62 Russell Joseph Boutelle traces the earliest English translation to the poet John Greenleaf Whittier, who published several translations of his poetry in the essay “The Black Man” as part of his 1845 collection *The Stranger in Lowell*. Russell Joseph Boutelle, “Imagining Juan Placido, Imagining Cuba: Rethinking U.S.-Cuban Relations and the Transamerican Geographies of Abolition in J.G. Whittier’s ‘The Black Man’” (Master’s thesis, Vanderbilt University, 2012): 41, <http://hdl.handle.net/1803/12496>; John Greenleaf Whittier, “The Black Man,” in *The Stranger in Lowell* (Boston, MA: Waite, Pierce and Company, 1845): 58–59. In 1848, *The North American Review* published a review article entitled “The Poetry of Spanish America,” in which a translation of Plácido’s poem is reprinted under the title “Prayer to God.” “The Poetry of Spanish America,” in *The North American Review* 68, no. 142 (1849): 146–47. In addition, in 1852, another abolitionist gift book, *Autographs for Freedom*, edited by the British abolitionist Julia Griffith for the Rochester Ladies Anti-Slavery Society, printed another translation of the (untitled) poem. William Gustavus Allen, “Placido,” in *Autographs for Freedom*, ed. Julia Griffith (Boston, MA: Jewitt and Company, 1853): 258–59. In 1863, William Wells Brown will cover the life of the poet in his *The Black Man: His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements* (1863), which includes another translation of the poem entitled “To God – A Prayer.” William Wells Brown, *The Black Man: His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements*, 2nd ed. (New York: Thomas Hamilton, 1863): 89–90, babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc2.ark:/13960/t2w37mk5k;view=1up;seq=7 [accessed 07.09.2023].

63 Russell Joseph Boutelle, “Greater Still in Death”: Race, Martyrology, and the Reanimation of Juan Plácido,” *American Literature* 90, no. 3 (2018): 487, n5.

64 Ifeoma Kiddoe Nwankwo, *Black Cosmopolitanism: Racial Consciousness and Transnational Identity in the Nineteenth-Century Americas* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005): 48.

In *Black Cosmopolitanism*, Nwankwo examines how different groups—colonial government representatives in Cuba, white British and American abolitionists, and Black abolitionists in the United States—appropriated the figure of Plácido to make him fit best into their respective narratives.

The travels of both the poetry and the story of Plácido are thus another example that illustrates how Chapman's *Liberty Bell* was pivotal in creating a cosmopolitan abolitionist narrative that positioned American abolitionists as part of larger transatlantic, Atlantic and transnational reform and resistance movements. In this process, specific national contexts were often tailored to the demands of an abolitionist cosmopolitan narrative, a narrative which pointed out the seemingly inevitable affiliation of other reform movements with American abolitionism. Chapman's preface to Plácido's poem is a case in point. She begins her editorial preface to Plácido by briefly referencing the national context of the hailed poet: "This noble being was publicly executed in Havana, in July last, on the charge of having attempted to free the slaves of Cuba."⁶⁵ Already in the following sentence, she Americanizes the Cuban poet by labeling him "the Washington of his race," a "noble being" who faced death with "heroic calmness."⁶⁶ Although Nwankwo does not include Chapman's portrayal of Plácido in her study, her observation that in particular in U.S. American discourses Plácido was turned "into a race man,"⁶⁷ that is, a model of Black manhood representative of his race, seems particularly fitting because Chapman compares Plácido to the U.S. American Ur-father, George Washington, who led his people into freedom. Thus, rather than praising the deeds of an individual, Plácido becomes representative for his race. Comparable to the Black Haitian revolutionary leader Toussaint Louverture, for American abolitionists Plácido becomes a traveling icon appropriated by white abolitionists who use the symbolic potential of his life narrative for the domestic endeavor of ending race-based U.S. slavery. In addition to Chapman's reprinting of "A Dios" in *The Liberty Bell* of 1845, *The Liberty Bell* of 1848 includes the contribution "Plácido, the Cuban Poet" by British Quaker Benjamin Wiffen, who reprints another poem of Plácido and praises the poet as a "great natural genius," a "noble mind," and recounts once more his tragic death.⁶⁸ In 1852, African American abolitionist Richard G. Allen concludes his praise for Plácido in his contribution to *Autographs for Freedom* with the observation that "God hath not given to one race alone, all intellectual and moral greatness."⁶⁹ In *The Black Man: His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements* (1863), William Wells Brown lists Plácido next to Toussaint Louverture, Frederick Douglass, and Alexandre Dumas. In his biographical sketch of the poet, Brown hails Plácido as "the slave's poet of freedom" and

65 Chapman, "Plácido": 67.

66 Chapman, "Plácido": 67.

67 Nwankwo, *Black Cosmopolitanism*: 25.

68 Benjamin Wiffen, "Plácido, the Cuban Poet," in *The Liberty Bell*, ed. Friends of Freedom (Boston, MA: National Anti-Slavery Bazaar, 1848): 60, 63.

69 Allen, "Plácido": 263.

a “martyr-poet.”⁷⁰ All these American abolitionists’ writing about the Cuban poet emphasize how Plácido died a martyr death not primarily for Cuba but for his (African) race and thus highlight his exemplary status for the universal cause of abolition (irrespective of any national contexts).⁷¹

An important characteristic of this narrative that all these accounts have in common is that Plácido is commemorated as the former slave who died to free his people. In fact, however, Plácido had never been enslaved. Instead, American abolitionists merged the stories of Juan Francisco Manzano, the author of a Cuban slave narrative, with that of the Cuban poet Plácido.⁷² Thus, instead of assessing Plácido’s participation in the Ladder Conspiracy in its Cuban context, Chapman, like other abolitionist predecessors and successors, as R.J. Boutelle observes, turned the “‘Cuban martyr poet’ into a transnational race man.”⁷³ With her editorial preface to the poet, Chapman decisively participated in channeling the U.S. American abolitionist reception of both the poet and his ‘deathbed’ poem in a distinct direction. Her editorial celebrates the poet as “a man of color” and wrongly refers to him as a former slave, who died as a “noble being”⁷⁴ and hero who attempted to free the enslaved men and women of Cuba. In spite of Chapman’s outspoken praise of the Cuban poet, the politics of this glorification need to be examined more carefully. In her editorial, Chapman turns Plácido’s heroic death into a moral incentive for U.S. American abolitionists. Most paradoxically, Chapman interprets Plácido’s ‘deathbed’ poem not as a call to arms of African Americans to follow the courageous example of Plácido but as a call for non-violent resistance as she describes how the poet’s “heroic calmness,” while he walked from his cell, “produced an impression of the deepest regret on the throngs through which he passed to execution,”⁷⁵ Chapman continues this thought: “The recital [of the poem] will make the American Abolitionists resolve anew, as at the commencement of their enterprise, to reject, and to entreat the oppressed to reject, physical force in their attempts to gain deliverance.”⁷⁶ Chapman’s preface of Plácido’s poem not only erased the distinctly national socio-historical context of Cuba’s imperial politics and presented the text as an almost mythical source of revelation for American abolitionists,

70 Brown, *The Black Man*: 90. One should also mention that Martin Robison Delany presents a fictionalized account of Plácido in his novel *Blake, Or The Huts of America* (1859–61). In Delany’s novel, Plácido is the lighter-skinned cousin of the American protagonist and freedom seeker Henry.

71 Nwankwo points out that while Cuban officials referred to Plácido “as a *pardo* (mixed race person),” abolitionists almost exclusively referred to him “as a member of the African race.” Nwankwo, *Black Cosmopolitanism*: 48–49.

72 Boutelle, “Race”: 462; Nwankwo, *Black Cosmopolitanism*: 51. R.J. Boutelle traces the concurrence of the two poets to John Greenleaf Whittier’s 1845 essay “The Black Man,” which was published in his collection of essays *The Stranger in Lowell*. Boutelle, “Imagining”: 13; Boutelle, “Race”: 461–75.

73 Boutelle, “Race”: 461.

74 Chapman, “Plácido”: 67.

75 Chapman, “Plácido”: 67.

76 Chapman, “Plácido”: 67.

it also tried to present the supposed leader of a revolt as a symbol of non-violent resistance.

Taken together, the discussed examples of the use of obituaries, letters, and Chapman's editorial prefaces shed light on how the editor used the gift book as a literary space to put forth a narrative of American abolitionism as not only a cosmopolitan endeavor but as inextricably connected to other reform movements. Yet, what also comes to the fore is the problematic and ambivalent incorporation of Black abolitionists in her supposedly cosmopolitan vision. The commemorations of Toussaint L'Ouverture and Plácido in *The Liberty Bell* are characterized by a kind of deliberate ignorance of local and national contexts and are instead unconcernedly tailored to fit into a narrative of U.S. American abolition.

Considered in the context of both the fact that only very few African Americans contributed to *The Liberty Bell* and the social practices attributed to the genre of the gift book, the representation of Black abolitionists is yet only one component in a series of editorial choices that results in a problematic politics of representation undermining the cosmopolitan vision presented in *The Liberty Bell*: While contributions of international supporters are part and parcel of *The Liberty Bell's* cosmopolitan narrative, out of more than five hundred contributions in the fifteen volumes of the gift book, less than ten could be identified as authored by African American writers.⁷⁷ Given the fact that *The Liberty Bell* is a print publication that promoted the end of race-based slavery, these numbers appear even more striking. Although these few contributions are penned by some of the most prominent African American abolitionists like William Wells Brown, Charles Lenox Remond, and Frederick Douglass, it is striking that in comparison to other writers they contributed only one, maximally two, pieces to "Chapman's otherwise diversified gift-book."⁷⁸

Furthermore, the peculiar genre of *The Liberty Bell*, the gift book, further enhances this imbalance. With regard to social practice attributed to the gift book in which its gifting "served to initiate or reaffirm a bond between the giver and the recipient,"⁷⁹ the abolitionist gift book additionally functions as an expression of the bond between (predominantly white) abolitionists and enslaved people. This solidarity with the enslaved and the critique of the institution of slavery is also visually emphasized at the beginning of most volumes of *The Liberty Bell* by an engraving of a bell, which bears the inscrip-

⁷⁷ It must be stated, however, that not all contributors could be fully identified.

⁷⁸ Valerie Domenica Levy, "The Antislavery Web of Connection: Maria Weston Chapman's Liberty Bell" (PhD diss., University of Georgia, 2002): 140, https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/levy_valerie_d_200205_phd.pdf [accessed 07.09.2023]. In the 1830s, Boston's Beacon Hill was home to a large African American community that included many important abolitionists, among them David Walker, John J. Smith, and Maria Stewart. Given the prominent community of Boston's Black abolitionists, it also seems remarkable that only John T. Hilton, a prominent barber in the local community, contributed a piece in *The Liberty Bell*.

⁷⁹ Isabelle Lehuu, *Carnival on the Page: Popular Print Media in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000): 80.

tion “Proclaim liberty to ALL inhabitants.” But the bond between abolitionist and enslaved person as it is presented in the gift book is one that presents abolition as an almost exclusively white and predominantly female endeavor, while the enslaved people remain silent objects on whose behalf abolitionists lobby. On the cover of *The Liberty Bell* we often find an image of a bell which depicts a variation of Josiah Wedgwood’s iconic image of the kneeling enslaved man “Am I not a Man and Brother?” (1787). Images of the kneeling enslaved figure dependent on white benevolence were frequently circulated by abolitionists to arouse pity for the suffering enslaved men and women. Cynthia S. Hamilton commented on the ironic fact that the image of the kneeling slave, designed to “protest against the commodification of its human counterpart,” became a commodity itself as the image was not only frequently reprinted but also applied to various material objects.⁸⁰ On the cover of a gift book, which was designed to be given away as a present to a loved one, this image then illustrates the racialized protocols informing the intricate relation of benevolence and consumerism. Thus, while the act of buying an antislavery artefact like the gift book or other products depicting a variation of Wedgwood’s kneeling figure expresses agency of the (predominantly white) consumer, it is also dependent on the objectification and commodification of the enslaved Black man or woman. “Slaves, however symbolic,” as Teresa Goddu so aptly demonstrated in *Selling Antislavery*, “remained pieces of property to be bought, sold, and literally consumed.”⁸¹ What we have here is a paradoxical act of purchasing consumer goods depicting those who were sold like commodities. The purchase of objects like the gift book is thus complicit in further commodifying enslaved bodies.

Maria Weston Chapman’s editorial work for *The Liberty Bell* contributed significantly to the both gendered and transatlantic perspectives Garrisonian abolitionists provided on slavery. As editor in chief of the fifteen volumes of the gift book and as principal organizer of the annual fair Chapman participated in a transatlantic intellectual as well as material discourse about the moral and political wrongs of slavery which embedded the discussion of what U.S. American supporters of slavery wanted to confine to a domestic affair within a much broader, that is, global frame of reference. Chapman’s *Liberty Bell* clearly chronicles the multifaceted contours of an affective network of local, national, and international supporters of American abolition.

Rather than presenting a continuous narrative between silk-lined covers, *The Liberty Bell* assembles, juxtaposes, and sometimes contrasts diverse authors, topics, and points of view. Taken together, this diversity does not amalgamate into a linear, coherent narrative but rather offers a kaleidoscopic perspective on and critique of American slavery that includes various transatlantic perspectives and references and that counters American slavery with a cosmopolitan vision of universal brother- and

⁸⁰ Cynthia S. Hamilton, “Hercules Subdued: The Visual Rhetoric of the Kneeling Slave,” *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 34, no. 4 (2013): 633.

⁸¹ Teresa A. Goddu, *Selling Antislavery: Abolition and Mass Media in Antebellum America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020): 93.

sisterhood. By means of printing obituaries commemorating the death of valued members of the community, personal letters from international supporters and editorial prefaces, Chapman presented *The Liberty Bell* as both a mouthpiece and a chronicle of a cosmopolitan affective community of advocates of abolition.

However, when considering the relatively small number of African American women in the BFASS and the equally small number of African American contributors to *The Liberty Bell*, it must also be assumed that the abolitionist cosmopolitanism envisioned in *The Liberty Bell* is first and foremost the literary product of white Americans and their international (predominantly white) supporters. While heroic Black leaders like Toussaint Louverture or the Cuban poet Plácido are commemorated in the gift book, they are celebrated as larger-than-life ‘race men.’ Lacking agency within the BFASS and representation in *The Liberty Bell*, African American abolitionists cannot be identified as genuine members of the affective community of abolitionists that *The Liberty Bell* chronicles. Considered as a consumer project that was bought and sold, the gift book, although, of course, demanding the abolition of slavery and thus the end of the commodification of human beings, paradoxically relied on the logic of the agency of (the predominantly white) consumer which profoundly depended on the objectification of Black bodies. What Teresa Goddu observed in the context of her analysis of antislavery fairs, namely, that the fairs “reinforced inequality even as they proclaimed freedom”⁸² also appropriately describes the problematic politics of representation inherent in *The Liberty Bell*. While *The Liberty Bell* presented a narrative of cosmopolitan abolitionism that included and commemorated a community of local activists, national advocates, and transatlantic supporters of American abolition, it ultimately did not manage to overcome the racialized protocols informing the discourse of chattel slavery in the United States.

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⁸² Goddu, *Selling Antislavery*: 107.

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Michael Zeuske

Narrative Self-Representations of Enslaved People under Slavery Regimes – Myth or Reality?

Pocas veces tenemos ocasión de escuchar, sin mediaciones distorsionadoras, la voz de los esclavos. En la literatura de su tiempo o en la historia emerge siempre en condición de representado.

Rarely do we have the opportunity to listen, without distorting mediations, to the voice of the slaves. In the literature of their own time or in history they are always being written about.¹

p.[ar]a juntar el cap.[ital] de su libertad

to collect the capital of his freedom²

No ha habido un libro como este antes y es improbable que vuelva a existir otro como él

There has never been a book like this before and it is unlikely that there will ever be another like it³

1 Introduction

Did enslaved people speak, tell, sing, narrate or even write about their own real lives, their work, their suffering, conflicts, and joys? My main argument here is – yes, they did. But possibly mainly among themselves in their respective times. We have relatively few sources and virtually no self-representations of slaves.⁴ Only very, very few wrote with their own hand. This means we know a great deal about the institutions of slavery and slavery regimes, about slavery laws, slave trade, economic data, and slav-

1 Gloria García, “Estudio introductorio,” in *La esclavitud desde la esclavitud*, ed. Gloria García (La Habana: Ciencias Sociales, 2003): 3.

2 “Declaracion del esclavo Roberto,” La Habana, 2 de Marzo de 1818, in *Archivo Nacional de Cuba* (ANC), *Escritania de Daumy*, legajo (leg.) 370, number (no.) 1 (1818): Daniel Botefeuf, contra su esclavo Roberto sobre hurto, f. 9r–13r, f. 10v.

3 Graham Greene in a sort of blurb on Miguel Barnet’s *Cimarrón* book, quoted twice in one of the latest editions in Cuba: Miguel Barnet, *Biografía de un Cimarrón* (La Habana: Ediciones Cubanas, ARTEX, 2014): 238 and back cover.

4 Rare exceptions are the “Princes of Calabar” and Mohammed Ali Said: Mohammad Ali Sa’id, *The Autobiography of Nicholas Said; A Native of Bornou, Eastern Soudan, Central Africa* (Memphis: Shotwell & Co., 1873), www.docsouth.unc.edu/neh/said/said.html [accessed 04.04.2017]; Randy J. Sparks, *The Two Princes of Calabar: An Eighteenth-Century Atlantic Odyssey* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

ers, their support staff, and the respective slave society, and we are debating a great deal about the so-called heritage of slavery, but we know extremely little about the real life of slaves in slavery. This also means that everyone who speaks and writes about slavery and the slave trade or even their heritage today, in the representation of enslaved people does so across a gigantic void.⁵ There is a huge field of discourse despite a lack of sources. In the following, I want to place at least a few bars over the void.

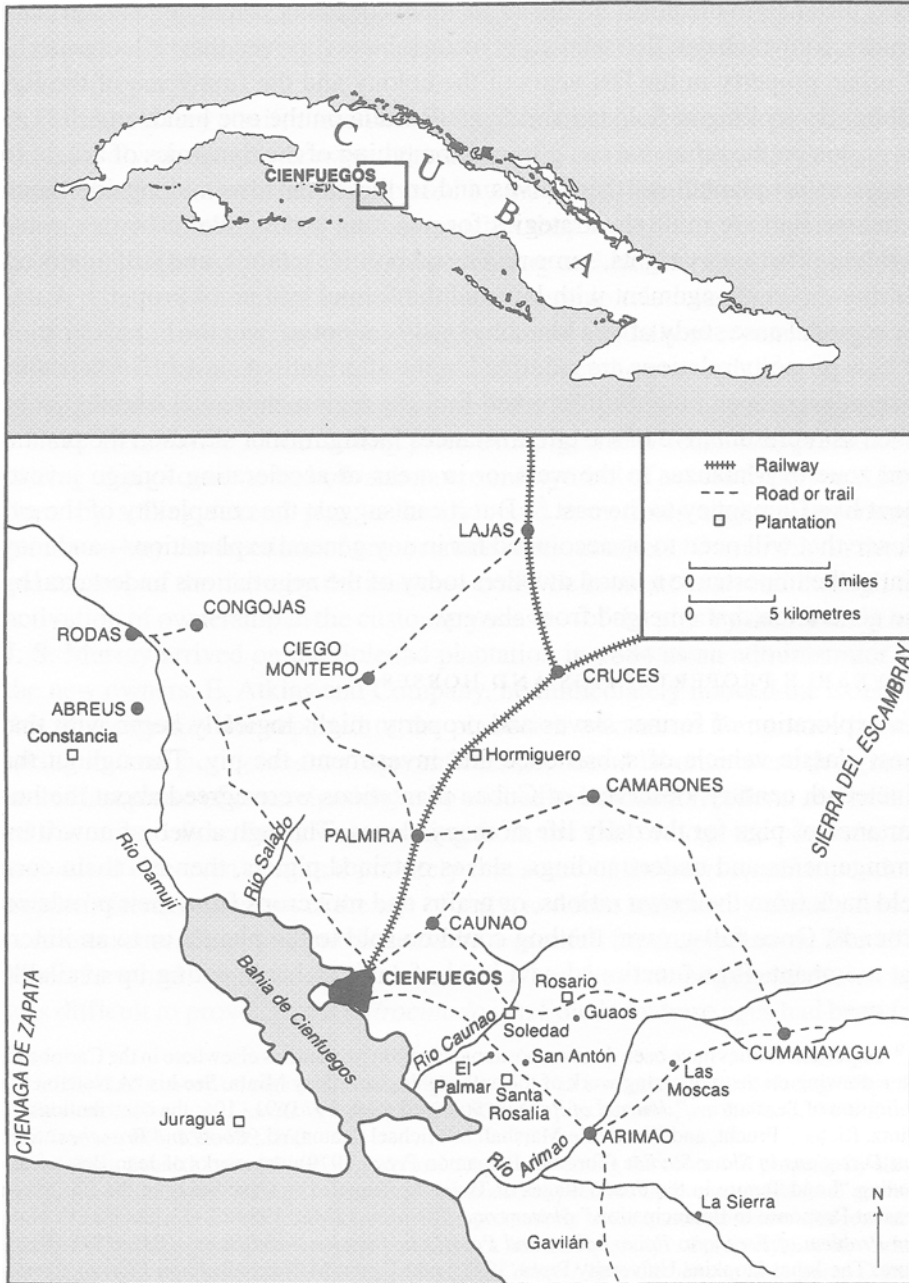
In 1993, i.e. more than 30 years ago, I started researching ‘voices of the enslaved’, a version of ‘the voices of the voiceless’, in the region around Cienfuegos.⁶ In the 1880s, Cienfuegos, in Southern Central Cuba, was the most technologically, economically, and technically developed region of Atlantic sugar slavery. It embodied rural slavery capitalism, with 16 gigantic sugar factories (*centrales*) (see Maps 1 and 2 and Fig. 1).⁷ From this research undertaken over a period of almost one historical generation (1993–2024), I have achieved results in numerous areas, aspects of which I will present in this contribution – that is what I mean by ‘bars’.

The initial, basic problem is twofold: firstly, the micro-history of the lives that slaves lived in reality (their *life histories*) and, secondly, the question of whether slaves represented themselves and whether they were heard – at the respective time – and if so, by whom. After all, during the time of Atlantic slavery (1500–1888), around 11 million people were abducted from Africa alive to the Americas. In other global areas many more people were abducted. In his research on Dutch Transatlantic and Indian Ocean slavery, Guno Jones comments on the problem of the void: “Impactful, horrific stories of many millions have disappeared into black holes of epistemological nothingness, and there is

5 Herman L. Bennett, “Writing into a Void: Representing Slavery and Freedom in the Narrative of Colonial Spanish America,” *Social Text* 25, no. 4 (2007): 68–89.

6 Michael Zeuske, “‘Los negros hicimos la independencia’: Aspectos de la movilización afrocubana en un hinterland cubano – Cienfuegos entre colonia y república,” in *Espacios, silencios y los sentidos de la libertad: Cuba 1878–1912*, ed. Fernando Martínez Heredia, Rebecca J. Scott and Orlando García Martínez (La Habana: Ediciones Unión, 2003): 193–234; Michael Zeuske, “Hidden Markers, Open Secrets. On Naming, Race Marking and Race Making in Cuba,” *New West Indian Guide / Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 76, no. 3–4 (2002): 235–66; Michael Zeuske, “Verborgene Zeichen, offene Geheimnisse. Sklaverei, Postemanzipation, Namen und die Konstruktion von Rasse auf Kuba, 1870–1940,” *Zeitschrift für Weltgeschichte* 2 (2002): 89–117; Rebecca J. Scott and Michael Zeuske, “Property in Writing, Property on the Ground: Pigs, Horses, Land, and Citizenship in the Aftermath of Slavery, Cuba, 1880–1909,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History. An International Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (2002): 669–99.

7 Cf. Edwin F. Atkins, *Sixty Years in Cuba* (New York: Arno Press, 1980) [1st ed.: *Sixty Years in Cuba. Reminiscences of Edwin A. Atkins* (Cambridge: At the Riverside Press, 1926)]; Orlando García Martínez, “Estudio de la economía cienfueguera desde la fundación de la colonia Fernandina de Jagua hasta mediados del siglo XIX,” *Islas* 55–56 (1976–1977): 117–69; Orlando García Martínez, *Esclavitud y colonización en Cienfuegos 1819–1879* (Cienfuegos: Ediciones Mecenias, 2008); Fernando Martínez Heredia, Rebecca J. Scott and Orlando García Martínez, *Espacios, silencios y los sentidos de la libertad: Cuba 1878–1912* (La Habana: Ediciones Unión, 2003); Zoila Lapique Becali and Orlando Segundo Arias, *Cienfuegos, Trapiches, ingenios y centrales* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2011).



Map 1: Cienfuegos and region. Taken from: Rebecca J. Scott and Michael Zeuske, “Property in Writing, Property on the Ground: Pigs, Horses, Land, and Citizenship in the Aftermath of Slavery, Cuba,



Map 2: The transformation of *ingenios* into *centrales* c. 1890. *Revista de Agricultura* 9, no. 30 (1889): 360. Taken from: Carmen Guerra Díaz and Isabel Jiménez Laestre, “La industria azucarera cienfueguera en el siglo XIX: Notas históricas para su estudio,” *Islas* 91 (1988): 52–76, 76 (map 5).

no way to retrieve them.”⁸ I will concentrate on Atlantic slavery in the following – also to show how little we really know. We will see whether we really have to speak pessimistically of “epistemological nothingness” or whether we simply have not searched enough.

Throughout history, enslaved people have been among the ‘subalterns’.⁹ ‘Subaltern’ slaves spoke, but where are the sources representing their individual ‘voices’ (or whatever was spoken and fixed in written texts / images or other traces)? These are the aspects of the problem of narrative self-presentation I will address in the following:

Map 1 (continued)

1880–1909,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44, no. 4 (2002): 669–99, 673 (.Map 1: “The Cienfuegos region, showing selected plantations”).¹⁰

⁸ Guno Jones, “The Shadows of (Public) Recognition: Transatlantic Slavery and Indian Ocean Slavery in Dutch Historiography and Public Culture,” in *Being a Slave. Histories and Legacies of European Slavery in the Indian Ocean*, ed. Alicia Schrikker and Nina Wickramasinghe (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2020): 288.

⁹ I do not like the term, and I only use it out of respect for Gramsci.

¹⁰ See also: Orlando García Martínez, “Estudio de la economía cienfueguera desde la fundación de la colonia Fernandina de Jagua hasta mediados del siglo XIX,” *Islas* 55–56 (1976–1977): 117–69.

ANEXO VI.
Centrales cienfuegueros

<i>Partidos</i>	<i>Centrales</i>
Camarones	1. Andreíta
	2. Hormiguero
	3. Teresa
	4. Portugaleta
	5. San Francisco
Cartagena	6. San Lino
	7. Lequeitio
	8. Parque Alto
Cumanayagua	9. Soledad
Las Casas	10. Manuelita
	11. Dos Hermanos
Yaguaramas	12. Constanca
	13. Cienagueta
Lajas	14. San Agustín
	15. Dos Hermanas
	16. Caracas

Fig. 1: List of the most important *centrales* (stationary gigantic sugar factories) in the Cienfuegos region c. 1890. Taken from: Carmen Guerra Díaz and Isabel Jiménez Lastre, “La industria azucarera cienfueguera en el siglo XIX: Notas históricas para su estudio,” *Islas* 91 (1988): 52–76, 71 (anexo VI).

- the role of names as access, or as the key, to the real lives of slaves;
- the oral history of the families of formerly enslaved people, i.e., a treasure of 10,000 names and life histories in the Cienfuegos region;
- 200,000 documents about buying and selling enslaved people (notaries’ protocols);
- a considerable number of written police reports, interrogations, depositions, and court cases (murder, jealousy cases, theft, fraud, flight, conspiracy, rebellion – legal material);
- The source categories *Esclavitud* (slavery) and *Quejas* (complaints) by enslaved people as well as interrogations / depositions of enslaved people from slave ships after the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade as special dimensions of the legal material.

In the last part of the chapter, I will analyze some contemporary forms of memory: reminiscences of formerly enslaved people about their African origin (or the African

origin of other enslaved people), their individual destiny in slave ships, i.e., in slave trade and in slavery.

I will round off the article with the literary testimonial *Memoirs from the Future* by Esteban Montejo, called *el Cimarrón*. The biographical book, orally narrated by Esteban Montejo and documented / written down by Miguel Barnet,¹¹ was and still is a world bestseller as ‘testimonio’.

I will primarily draw upon individual cases, in which slaves and ex-slaves spoke (and wrote) *in* slavery or *shortly after* slavery about their life histories. One exception in this regard is Esteban Montejo, who narrated his life to Miguel Barnet in the 1960s. The other exception is María de los Reyes Castillo Bueno, who narrated her life to her daughter in the 1990s. The expression ‘*in* slavery or *shortly after* slavery’ addresses a specific but very common problem in research on enslaved people in slavery regimes: the opposition *in* and *after* slavery. All narratives dating from the time after the abolition of slavery (in Cuba in 1886; the same applies to the USA (1865) or Brazil (1888)) are not “slave narratives” but “freedom narratives”.¹²

At the very end of the present chapter, I will briefly touch upon other forms of self-representation – images of enslaved people (and their bodies, clothes, skin-markers (‘dermographs’)). Mainly non-textual or performative visual memories, i.e., individual corporal marks – tattoos, scars, brandings, cultural mutilations, and religious masquerades (with some images) – will be taken into consideration.

2 Oral History / Memory and their Relation to the History of Enslaved People in Slavery or: How We Can Find Real Life Histories Narrating the Existence of Slaves *in* Slavery

The concrete starting point for me was a change from the historiography of a global elite of leaders and/or intellectuals of ‘bourgeois’ revolutions and from class analysis based on Karl Marx, of course without banning them entirely, to archival research in provincial archives on the one hand and oral history on the other.¹³ The oral history is that of many persons, who I assumed belonged to families of formerly enslaved in the

¹¹ The original text is Miguel Barnet, *Biografía de un cimarrón* (La Habana: Instituto de Etnología y Folklore, 1966); the English translation is Miguel Barnet, *Biography of a Runaway Slave*, trans. W. Nick Hill (Evanstone: Curbstone/Northwestern University Press, 2016).

¹² Paul Lovejoy, “Freedom Narratives’ of Transatlantic Slavery,” *Slavery & Abolition* 32, no. 1 (2011): 91–107.

¹³ Michael Zeuske, “Writing Global Histories of Slavery,” *Writing the History of Slavery*, ed. David Stefan Doddington and Enrico Dal Lago (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022): 41–57.

sugar production region around Cienfuegos in Southern Cuba (1994–2004): c. 10,000 names and life histories. In research in provincial archives, in a persistent (in Cuban slang one says *horas nalgas* – roughly translated: “hours on the buttocks”) but more and more disappointed search for traces of slaves I later analyzed about 200,000 documents about buying and selling enslaved people (notaries’ protocols); a large number of written police reports and court cases (murder, jealousy cases, theft, fraud, flight – legal material); *Esclavitud*, *Quejas* (complaints of slaves) in the archives *Gobierno Superior Civil* and *Gobierno General* (*Archivo Nacional de Cuba* – National Archives of Cuba). I came to the second research dimension (analysis of notarial files and legal material) by accident.

The problem was that no researcher in any former slavery area can and should just ask people directly about their slave ancestors. When I started doing archival and field research in and around Cienfuegos in 1993, I initially had the extremely naïve notion that it would be an easy task to find access to their enslaved ancestors through contact with people from former slave families. I imagined that it would be possible to start from their narratives and materials (letters, photos, memoirs, newspapers, etc.) and identify individual enslaved ancestors before the formal abolition of slavery (in Cuba in 1886, in Brazil in 1888). Luckily, at the time, I refused to read ‘postmodern’ literary theory. Otherwise, I would not have started this research. I went to Cienfuegos with Humboldt’s *Essay on Cuba*¹⁴ and Miguel Barnet’s *Cimarrón* (published in 1970 in the GDR¹⁵) and, with support of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), happily set to work. I found everything, but not what I was looking for. No Answer.

Fernando Martínez (1939–2017), a famous Cuban intellectual and good friend, saved me. His grandfather was a Black veteran of the anti-colonial wars of liberation against Spain (1868–1880 and 1895–1898). He kept telling him the phrase *los negros hicimos la independencia* [literally: “we, the negros, made independence”], meaning “we” – the Cuban Black people, as soldiers and officers, as *libertadores de la patria* (“liberators of the fatherland”), gained independence from Spain.¹⁶ Thus, I started with army lists of soldiers and officers of the *Ejército Libertador Cubano* 1895–1899 (ELC = Cuban Liberation Army).¹⁷ I looked for names of soldiers and officers who had only one surname (*primer apellido*). In the Iberian naming tradition, a person whose parents are officially

14 Alexander von Humboldt, *Cuba-Werk*, ed. Hanno Beck (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992).

15 Miguel Barnet, *Der Cimarrón. Die Lebensgeschichte eines entflohenen Negersklaven aus Cuba, von ihm selbst erzählt*, trans. Hildegart Baumgart (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1970).

16 One of my first publications on this topic has exactly this title: Michael Zeuske, “Los negros hicimos la independencia: Aspectos de la movilización afrocubana en un hinterland cubano – Cienfuegos entre colonia y república,” in *Espacios, silencios y los sentidos de la libertad: Cuba 1878–1912*, ed. Fernando Martínez Heredia, Rebecca J. Scott and Orlando García Martínez (La Habana: Ediciones Unión, 2003): 193–234.

17 See: *Yndice Alfabético y Defunciones del Ejército Libertador de Cuba. Datos compilados y ordenados por el Ynspector General del Ejército Libertador Mayor General Carlos Roloff y Mialofsky, ayudado del*

married is given two surnames: in the Castilian tradition, the father's first surname as the first surname (*primer apellido*) and the mother's first surname as the second surname (*segundo apellido*); in the Portuguese tradition, the mother's surname comes first and the father's surname second. That soldiers with enslaved mothers had only one surname was a consequence of the realities of late slavery in Cuba (slave women were rarely formally married) and the legal developments of the official abolition process.

The Spanish overseas minister Segismundo Moret had issued the *Ley Moret* of July 4, 1870, because of the anti-colonial war of the Cubans against the Spanish Empire (named also *Ley de Vientres Libres* = "Law of Free Womb"), since from the time of the proclamation children born to slave women, slaves older than 60 years and *emancipados* (see below) were formally free (retroactive from September of 1868). In the reality of rural slavery, the children who were now 'free' stayed with their enslaved mothers. Mothers gave their children only one 'civil' name, their maternal surname (which is usually also the surname of one of the last owners). The place of the second name was left blank in written documents (protocols and other forms). *Un sólo apellido* (just only one surname) remained a social disgrace until 1959 and in a way even to this day. *Sin segundo apellido* ('no second surname') or *sin otro apellido* ('no other surname') became a marker of poverty and social shame. Though it was much more: racism 'without racism' of spoken or written words. This wording or its written abbreviation (*soa* or *ssa*; usually *soa*) was recorded in legal documents, such as notarial records, in the space where the second surname normally appeared.¹⁸

A majority of enlisted soldiers and sergeants of the 1895–1898 War of Independence were young men with only one *apellido*; among them were some poor white people, but the bulk were sons of formerly enslaved mothers. For me, that was a first step towards connecting today's memories with ex-slaves and with those who were enslaved in slavery.

So, as we see, there was another fundamental initial problem – let us call it the threshold of slave names and ex-enslaved names (initially mostly on lists; not only army lists, but also plantation lists, cemetery books and election lists). This specific problem occupied me for about five years. Finally, it was called the "problem of slave names".¹⁹ It concerns how I recognize on the basis of the information from today's

Jefe del Despacho, Comandante de Estado Mayor Gerardo Forrest, Editado oficialmente por disposición del General Leonard Wood, Gobernador Militar de Cuba (Habana: Ymprenta de Rambla y Bouza, 1901).

¹⁸ Michael Zeuske, "'Sin otro apellido'. Nombres esclavos, marcadores raciales e identidades en la transformación de la colonia a la república, Cuba 1870–1940," *Tzintzun. Revista de Historia* 36 (2002): 153–208; Rebecca J. Scott and Michael Zeuske, "Le 'droit d'avoir des droits': Les revendications des esclaves à Cuba (1872–1909)," *Annales HSS* 3 (2004): 521–45.

¹⁹ Michael Zeuske, "Hidden Markers, Open Secrets: On Naming, Race Marking and Race Making in Cuba," *New West Indian Guide / Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 76, no. 3–4 (2002): 235–66; Zeuske, "'Sin otro apellido'"; Michael Zeuske, "The Names of Slavery and Beyond: The Atlantic, the Americas and Cuba," in *The End of Slavery in Africa and the Americas: A Comparative Approach*, ed. Ulrike Schmieder, Katja Füllberg-Stolberg and Michael Zeuske, *Sklaverei und Postemanzipation. Esclavitud y*

oral histories, i.e., spoken words and archival research in written sources (texts, lists), firstly real people who were enslaved until they gained the respective ‘freedom’ (manumission, will, abolition) in the nineteenth century. Secondly, how do I recognize the same people according to the respective ‘freedom’ in an emerging independent nation (Wars of Independence against Spain 1868–1878; 1895–1898; Spanish-American War in 1898), whose economic basis was, thirdly, sugar production on large industrial plantations (*centrales*) and in general an economy/services with many Black and colored workers.²⁰ And finally: can today’s memory be combined with the information gained from the second and the third dimensions.²¹

3 Slaves Have No ‘Proper’ Names – The Entrance to the World of Slaves

Names were my keys into the world of the enslaved *in* slavery. It was possible to identify slaves on the basis of their names. These names of slavery also have a history. Enslaved persons from slaving zones in Africa were sold to Atlantic slave traders who almost always ignored the ‘African’ names (I must use this extreme generalization here). Since they all came across the Atlantic, both the ships from Europe and those from the Americas, they were ‘Atlantic’ to Africans. Catholics sometimes gave ‘Christian’ names on the coasts of Africa – but this was done rather rarely. The ‘proper’ baptism then took place in the Catholic territories in the Americas. As we know, two-thirds to three-fourths of the c. 11 million enslaved came to Catholic areas of the Americas and the Caribbean, especially Brazil (c. 4 million), the Spanish Empire until 1825 (more than 1 million), or colonial Cuba (c. 1 million). Most of the people who were forced to cross the Atlantic as slaves, slave women and enslaved children of ‘Christian powers’ were recorded in ship lists (as cargo) without names, only as male or female bodies, with their apparent age. The latter was guessed on the basis of an examination of their physical condition in Africa; sometimes this was done by medi-

Postemancipación. *Slavery and Postemancipation 4* (Münster: LIT, 2011): 51–80; Michael Zeuske, “The Second Slavery: Modernity, Mobility, and Identity of Captives in Nineteenth-Century Cuba and the Atlantic World,” in *The Second Slavery: Mass Slavery and Modernity in the Americas and in the Atlantic Basin*, ed. Javier Laviña and Michael Zeuske (Münster: LIT, 2014): 113–42.

²⁰ Michael Zeuske, “Legados de la esclavitud y afrodescendientes en Cuba,” in *Afroamérica, espacios e identidades*, ed. Ricardo Piqueras and Cristina Mondejar (Barcelona: Icaria editorial, 2013): 146–80.

²¹ Fernando Martínez Heredia, Rebecca J. Scott and Orlando García Martínez, eds., *Espacios, silencios y los sentidos de la libertad: Cuba 1878–1912* (La Habana: Ediciones Unión, 2003); Rebecca J. Scott, “A Cuban Connection: Edwin F. Atkins, Charles Francis Adams, Jr., and the Former Slaves of Soledad Plantation,” *Massachusetts Historical Review* 9 (2007): 7–34.

cal professionals (like the German slaver Daniel Botefeuf²²). In the slave ports, for instance in one of the main slave ports of the Americas, Havana in Cuba, they were also identified only in terms of their gender and biographical group/age as well as their relation to the general slave value *pieza de Indias*. The term *pieza de Indias* (or *peça* in Portuguese, literally: Indian piece) was used as a unit for bookkeeping throughout the Iberian empires. Fernando Ortiz describes that a full *pieza* referred to a healthy man (called only *varón* without a name in the *armazón* lists) between 15 and 30 years of age and of at least a certain height, or a healthy, tall young woman (called *hembra*). Older women (over 25 years old), along with adolescents and children as well as babies (*piezas varones* or *piezas hembras*, children between 7 and 14 years were called *mulecones/-as*, children up to 7 years *muleques/-as* or when very little, *mulequitos*), were regarded as half or two-thirds of a full *pieza*.²³ Little children up to the age of 5 had no *pieza* value and were sold together with their mothers.

That means enslaved persons were inscribed without individual names in the *armazón* list (the list of the human ‘cargo’ of an arriving slave ship). This was also the case during the sale itself when a so-called *papel de armazón* was issued; the only difference is that now an *individual* body with price, origin, and ship name as well as buyer was given (Figs. 2a–b). The ‘slave name’ (first name/personal name) was then only assigned by the buyer and noted in the purchase record (*protocolo notarial*), written down by the notary or one of his scribes. Slaves had this single name for a long time. In a court case in 1887–1888, which I shall discuss in more detail below, i.e. in the year after the abolition of slavery, the niece (the brother’s daughter) of a formerly enslaved woman, who was quite well off, had to demonstrate the legality of her claim to inherit, being the nearest direct relative and heir. In this context, the practice of slave names is explained in a very matter-of-fact manner: “que todos los negros de Africa al llegar á esta Isla perdían los nombres que tenían en su país y tomaban el que les daban sus dueños y el apellido de éstos [that all the negros from Africa, when they came to this island, lost the names that they had in their land and they took the [name] that their masters gave them and [also] the surname of those].”²⁴ In further

22 Michael Zeuske, “Del reino de Hannover a Cuba y Estados Unidos, pasando por el infierno de la trata en Senegambia y el Atlántico: el médico y negrero alemán Daniel Botefeuf 1770–1821,” in *Caribe hispano y Europa: Siglos XIX y XX. Dos siglos de relaciones*, ed. Josef Opatrný, Ibero-Americana Pragensia Supplementum 48 (Prague: Universidad Carolina/Editorial Karolinum, 2018): 47–81.

23 Fernando Ortiz, *Hampa afro-cubana: Los negros esclavos. Estudio sociológico y de derecho público* (La Habana: Revista Bimestre Cubana, 1916); Fernando Ortiz, *Los negros esclavos* (La Habana: Ed. de Ciencias Sociales, 1976). See also: Manuel Lucena Salmoral, “El período de los asientos con particulares (1595–1700),” in *La esclavitud en la América española*, ed. Manuel Lucena Salmoral (Warsaw: Universidad de Varsovia / Centro de Estudios Latinoamericanos, 2002): 178–205.

24 “Intestado de la morena Belén Álvarez, Escribanía de Gobierno,” *ANC*, leg. 864, exp. 9, f. 145v-f. 151v, Francisco O. Ramírez, La Habana, 18 de enero de 1888, f. 149r. This is not true for the so-called *emancipados* (see below).

sales, this slave name was often provided with a designation that mixed culture, tribe and region of origin in Africa (*nación* – “nation”). But that was not a name. The designations of the *naciones* (*congo*, *mina*, *gangá*, *arará*, *carabalí*, *lucumí*, *angola*, *macuá*, etc.²⁵) were usually written in lower case letters in formal documents. Out of habit and custom, urban slaves were first given a kind of surname – that of their owner. Usually only when an individual was released (often in a will, as in the case of Albertina Escher, the illegal daughter of a Swiss owner²⁶), but certainly when the inscription in the civil register took place after the formal abolition of slavery (1886²⁷) was a surname documented. A case in point is Cristobal *lucumí* as slave, who adopted the civil name Cristobal Ribalta after his self-ransom.²⁸ Former slaves were officially listed in this register with the first surname of one of their last owners. Until 1893, on election lists this racist designation appeared: “Albertina parda Escher” (“Albertina colored Escher”) or “José moreno Apezteguía” (“José black Apezteguía”). This was the practice of documenting names of enslaved people.

It seems that there was also a hidden practice of names in *lengua* – in the language of the respective *nación*. In 1833, there was an uprising on the San Salvador *cafetal* (a coffee-plantation west of Havana). Military action ensued. Most of the fight-

25 Rafael L. López Valdés, *Africanos de Cuba* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe, 2004); Jesús Guanache [Pérez], *Africanía y etnicidad en Cuba (Los componentes étnicos africanos y sus múltiples denominaciones)* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2009); on the designations see especially: Guanache, “Anexos,” in Guanache [Pérez], *Africanía y etnicidad en Cuba (Los componentes étnicos africanos y sus múltiples denominaciones)* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2009): 195–284 (Anexo 19: “Presencia histórica de los componentes africanos en Cuba según las principales zonas geográficas de procedencia,” Guanache [Pérez], *Africanía y etnicidad en Cuba*: 274–84).

26 Michael Zeuske, “Tod bei Artemisa. Friedrich Ludwig Escher, *Atlantic Slavery* und die Akkumulation von Schweizer Kapital ausserhalb der Schweiz,” *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 69, no. 1 (2019): 6–26.

27 “Estadística de la abolición de la esclavitud en la Ysla de Cuba por. D. Manuel Villanova,” *Gobiero General, Esclavitud*, leg. 522, no. 26920 (1880).

28 Número 18. “Libertad”, Sagua la Grande, 25 de mayo de 1845, Protocolos Notariales de Andrés Arceo, 1845, Archivo Histórico Provincial de Villa Clara (AHPVC), f. 16r–16v: “en el Puerto de Sagua la grande [. . .] D. Tomás Rivalta de este vecindario y Comercio [. . .] que entre sus esclavos tiene uno nombrado Cristobal de nacion Lucumí le ha suplicado le conceda su libertad p.r la cantidad de seiscientos dose p.s, los cuales le ha entregado en moneda corriente [. . .] Tomas Ribalta [in the Port of Sagua la grande [. . .] D. Tomás Rivalta of this neighborhood and Commerce [. . .] who among his slaves has one named Cristobal of the Lucumí nation has begged him to grant him his freedom for the amount of six hundred and two p.[eso]s, which [he] has given him in current currency [. . .] Tomas Ribalta.” In a later annulment protocol, it is mentioned that Cristobal could not raise the full 612 pesos and worked off the remainder of 112 pesos in half a year; he is referred to by the notary as Cristobal Ribalta; see: Núm. 166 “Cancelacion,” Sagua la Grande, 20 Agosto 1845, Protocolos Notariales de Andrés Arceo, 1845, *Archivo Histórico Provincial de Villa Clara*, f. 148r–148v.



Figs. 2a–b: *Papel de armazón* – A purchase deed certified by a notary that had to be given to the buyer when they acquired a single slave from a specific slave ship (the deed contained both the name of the ship and the captain). Photo 2a: “[Papel de armazón] Habana, Mayo 21 de 1810,” in: ANC, *Protocolos de Cayetano Pontón*, 1811, vol. 1, f. 274r–v. Photo 2b: “[Papel de armazón] Habana, D[iciemb]re 29 de 1812,” in: ANC, *Notaría Marina* 1818, vol. 1, f. 636r–v. Collection of papers of armazones. Private archive of Michael Zeuske (Leipzig/Bonn).

ing insurgents were killed. Of the dead leaders, only their *lucumí* names are documented in the archives because the testimonies of most recaptured slaves were in *lucumí*. They claimed to know only these names.²⁹ It may be that there were religious reasons for this as well.

²⁹ “Contra los autores y complices principales de la sublevacion de negros del Cafetal Salvador de D. Francisco Santiago de Aguirre ubicado en Banes ocurrida la noche del 13. de Agosto por cuyo delito se juzgan á Pedro el Carretero, Gonzalo mandinga, Eusebio gangá, Luis idem, Pascual Lucumí, Romualdo id., Antonio lucumí, Agustin id., Hilario id., Juan id., Hermenegildo id.,” ANC, *Fondo Miscelánea de Expedientes* [Comisión Militar] (FM), leg. 540, Exp. B (1833); Gloria García, “La Guerra en tierra de Mariel (Banes, 13. August 1833),” in Gloria García, *La esclavitud desde la esclavitud* (La Habana: Ciencias Sociales, 2003): 205–09; Michael Zeuske, “Saint-Domingue en Cuba: el levantamiento en Banes, 13 y 14 de agosto de 1833,” in *Esclavitud, huida y resistencia en Cuba*, ed. Christian Cwik, Javier Laviña and Michael Zeuske (Berlin: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2013): 139–82.

4 Notary's Protocols: The Reality of Human Bodies in a Slavery Regime

The truth of the existence of real bodies with short life histories is important. As discussed above, I found slave names primarily in notarial records of purchase/sale and manumission. Over the years, I have seen c. 200,000 notarial protocols, the majority of which documented the acts of buying and selling enslaved people (notaries protocols/purchase deeds³⁰) as well as manumission and wills.³¹ Moreover, I have seen many written police reports and court cases (murder, jealousy cases, theft, fraud, conflicts over the use of drums, rebellion, conspiracy, flight). That is legal material. The second-slavery-regime in Cuba,³² because of fears of slave rebellions, had since c. 1825 a special military commission (*Comisión Militar*) to prosecute real and suspected conspiracies and rebellions.

In summary, the most important category of sources for the study of slavery in Cuba is that of the notarial records of the purchase and sale of male and female slaves. Ever since I decided to write a history of the slaves in Cuba (around 2005), I have made the following assumption: in the nineteenth century there were around 700,000–1,000,000 male and female slaves who had been abducted to Cuba directly from Africa or via other Caribbean regions.³³ Estimates are difficult to verify because

30 Catherine LeGrand and Adriana Mercedes Corso, “Los archivos notariales como fuente histórica: una visión desde la zona bananera del Magdalena,” *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura* 31 (2004): 159–208; Aisnara Perera Díaz and María de los Ángeles Meriño Fuentes, “El registro de la voz esclava,” in *La Cesión del patronato: Una estrategia familiar de la emancipación de los esclavos en Cuba (1870–1880)*, ed. Aisnara Perera Díaz and María de los Ángeles Meriño Fuentes (La Habana: Editorial Unicornio, 2009): 36–39. Tomás Ribalta was the owner of Esteban Santa Teresa, later Esteban Montejo.

31 Pedro Deschamps Chapeaux, “Testamentaria de pardos y morenos libres en La Habana del siglo XIX,” Pedro Chapeaux Deschamps and Juan Pérez de la Riva, *Contribución a la historia de gente sin historia* (La Habana: Ed. de Ciencias Sociales, 1974): 97–110.

32 For the concept of second slavery see: Dale W. Tomich and Michael Zeuske, eds., *The Second Slavery: Mass Slavery, World-Economy, and Comparative Microhistories*, 2 vols. (Binghamton: Binghamton University, 2009) [special issue of *Review: A Journal of the Fernand Braudel Center* 31, no. 2–3 (2008)]; Dale W. Tomich, ed., *The Politics of Second Slavery* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016); Michael Zeuske, “The Second Slavery: Modernity, Mobility, and Identity of Captives in Nineteenth-Century Cuba and the Atlantic World,” in *The Second Slavery: Mass Slavery and Modernity in the Americas and in the Atlantic Basin*, ed. Javier Laviña and Michael Zeuske (Münster: LIT, 2014): 113–42.

33 Juan Pérez de la Riva, *El monto de la inmigración forzada en el siglo XIX* (La Habana: Ed. de Ciencias Sociales, 1974); Juan Pérez de la Riva, *El barracón y otros ensayos* (La Habana: Ed. de Ciencias Sociales, 1975); Jorge Felipe-González, “Reassessing the Slave Trade to Cuba, 1790–1820,” in *From the Galleons to the Highlands: Slave Trade Routes in the Spanish Americas*, ed. Alex Borucki, David Eltis and David Wheat (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2020): 223–48. This chapter contains today's most accurate estimate of the number of slaves trafficked to Cuba – but not for the entire nineteenth century, i.e., not for the time of illegal slave smuggling (*hidden Atlantic*), 1820–1880.

of the endemic smuggling of so-called *mala entrada* (literally: ‘bad entrance’ – a legal concept whereby slave traders could buy their way out of smuggling by paying a fine) for the period between 1820 and 1880. So, around a million. If we assume that all abductees/enslaved people were sold/bought at least twice in Cuba, that would result in around 2 million notarial records.

In 30 years of archival research in central and provincial archives I have seen about a tenth of these, i.e., the c. 200,000 documents mentioned above. They contain all sorts of legal property stamps, prices, concepts of power regarding disposal/dominion in legal, formulaic language (power of disposition/transfer of ownership forms). Basically, like today’s notarial records, they served to avoid future conflicts over expensive and valuable goods (back then this meant land, houses, ships, livestock as well as enslaved people) and to have the sale/purchase acts recorded by notaries in a legally binding manner, secured by witnesses and archived (in central legal territories such as the Iberian states/colonies – where there is a tradition of notaries and notarial offices with archives (these archives do not exist in spaces of Common law). For research on the self-representation of slaves, notarial records are of no use at first (apart from minor insertions, for example when the name of a slave child was misspelled, and the mother, who was present, protested). But, in the description of a body, its wounds, sometimes (rarely) corporal markings, character traits (for example: *cimarrón/cimarrona*, i.e., tends to run away, *tomador/tomadora* (drinker), *respondón/respondona* – constantly contradicts, etc., sometimes illnesses or mental peculiarities) and above all the age and the place where the slave is located, as with today’s data traces, we are confronted with a rudimentary life history of a person. So to speak, we can deduce the life profile of an individual slave, an enslaved woman, or a slave child.

It is often claimed that archives only register the voices of the powerful and the ruling class. This is not the case. Everyone and everything are present in the archive – we must, however, search, find, link and interpret the information. Archive historians who have examined the lives of slaves for a long time must at some point understand that the notarial records contain one incontrovertible truth regarding the history of slaves within a particular slavery regime. The information we find is always about a real human body (sometimes several bodies whose sale is referred to in one protocol), i.e., the only thing that really interested slave traders and owners. This means that what is at stake is truth in relation to the historical reality of human bodies. Since that is exactly what interested the buyer and the seller, and given that these bodies had considerable value as ‘capital of human bodies’ (or *pieza*), the short profiles in which they are described are, on the one hand, partly legal fiction (the name of the slave is invented by the buyer); on the other hand, we are confronted with an almost individual truth. It was really about the presentation of a real, individual body. So at least we have access to a large quantity of data on slaves in the form of short profiles. That is a lot. It is not a matter of narrating for the most part, but a matter of counting and profiling.

An average notary's protocol from a location in Cuba looked like this:

la morena libre Pilar de la Paz vecina de esta población, dice [. . .] vendo [. . .] á D. José M.a Dária una negra mi esclava nombrada Clara criolla como de veinte as y su hija nombrada Candida de cuarenta dias de nacida [. . .] ambas de doscientos cincuenta ps

the free *morena* [Black] Pilar de la Paz, a neighbor of this town, says [. . .] I am selling [. . .] to D. José Maria Dária a black slave named Clara, a *criolla* [Creole], about twenty years old, and her daughter named Candida, forty days old [. . .] both for two hundred and fifty pesos.³⁴

'Criolla' – slave in Cuba means a woman born as a slave in Cuba. Instead of *criolla* (lowercase), many protocols use 'negro bozal' (*bozal* = born in Africa), 'negro ladino' (*ladino* = mostly for enslaved persons from African regions where an Iberian language was spoken, such as Angola) or 'negro de Africa', usually followed by a mention of the *nación*.

The next example is a protocol on *coartación*, the purchase of one's own body by an enslaved person, paying a predetermined sum of money:

[. . .] comparece el Ldo. D. Manuel Suarez del Villar, casado, mayor de edad, abogado y propietario, natural de Trinidad i de este vecindario [. . .] i dice: Que se halla ser apoderado representante encargado de los bienes quedados al fallecimiento de su legitimo padre el Sor. Magistrado Dr. D.n Gabriel Suarez del Villar [. . .] otorga: que ahorra i liberta de todo cautiverio i servidumbre al negro africano Adriano, de cincuenta años de edad, empadronado en el partido de Camarones i perteneciente á la dotacion del ingenio 'Palmasola'; i esta libertad es por el precio de dos mil cuatrocientos sesenticinco pesetas en oro; que del mencionado esclavo confiesa haber recibido en dinero efectivo

Don Manuel Suarez del Villar, married, of legal age, lawyer and owner, a native of Trinidad and of this neighborhood [. . .] appears and says: That he is found to be the representative in charge of the goods left at the death of his legitimate father, Sr. Magistrate Dr. Don Gabriel Suarez del Villar, [. . .] granted: that he saves and frees from all captivity and servitude the African negro Adriano, fifty years old, registered in the district of Camarones and belonging to the endowment of the 'Palmasola' sugar mill; and this freedom is [to be] for the price of two thousand four hundred and sixty-five pesetas in gold; that from the aforementioned slave he confesses to have received in cash.³⁵

What a written uproar of 'Roman' legal formulas!

³⁴ "Venta de sierva," San Juan de Dios de Cardenas, 12 de diciembre de 1843, *ANC, Fondo Protocolos Notariales, Protocolos de Cárdenas. Protocolos Notariales de Carlos Acosta Spou*, no. 309, Año 1843, tomo 1, f. 104v–105r.

³⁵ "Libertad," Cienfuegos, 20 de Agosto de 1874 *Archivo Histórico Provincial de Cienfuegos (AHPC), Protocolos José Rafael de Villafuerte y Castellanos*, 1874 (Enero–Dic.), fols. 295r–296v (escritura no. 107).

5 Legal Material from Investigations, Interrogations, Depositions, Representations, Testimonies in General, and Testimonies at Trials

There are already several excellent publications based on legal material as source.³⁶ Yet, these publications possibly overestimate the agency of the enslaved. This is because it seems to be the only existing type of source where enslaved agency – however defined – can be demonstrated.³⁷ As already mentioned above, an analysis of the narratives of the enslaved in this category of source must always consider an extremely important filter and often also a pre-filter. The filter consists in the fact that

36 Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba. The Transition to Free Labor, 1860–1899* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985) [repr., Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000]; Keila Grinberg, “Freedom Suits and Civil Law in Brazil and the United States,” *Slavery & Abolition* 22, no. 3 (2001): 66–82; Sue Peabody and Keila Grinberg, eds., *Slavery, Freedom, and the Law in the Atlantic World: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford St. Martin’s Press, 2007); Orlando García Martínez and Michael Zeuske, “Notarios y esclavos en Cuba, siglo XIX,” *Su “único derecho”: los esclavos y la ley*, ed. Alejandro de la Fuente (Madrid: Fundación Mapfre/Tavera, 2004) [= *Debate y perspectivas. Cuadernos de Historia y Ciencias Sociales* 4 (2004): 127–70]; María de los Ángeles Meriño Fuentes and Aisnara Perera Díaz, *Para librarse de lazos, antes buena familia que buenos brazos. Apuntes sobre la manumisión en Cuba* (La Habana: Editorial Oriente, 2009); Andrew Fede, *Roadblocks to Freedom: Slavery and Manumission in the United States* (New Orleans: Quid Pro Quo Books, 2011); María de los Ángeles Meriño Fuentes and Aisnara Perera Díaz, *El universo de Hipólito criollo. Derecho, conflicto y libertad en el ingenio La Sonora, La Habana (1798–1836)* (Artemisa: Editorial Unicornio, 2011); Rebecca J. Scott and Jean-Michel Hébrard, *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); Edward Bartlett Rugemer, *Slave Law and the Politics of Resistance in the Early Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018); Edgardo Pérez Morales, *Unraveling Abolition: Legal Culture and Slave Emancipation in Colombia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022); Sue Peabody, “Political and Legal Histories of Slavery,” in *Writing the History of Slavery*, ed. David Stefan Doddington and Enrico Dal Lago (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022): 153–70. Carlo Ginzburg rightly pointed out that legal sources are problematic: “The use of court records [. . .] does not imply that historians, disguised as judges, should try to reenact the trials of the past – an aim that would be pointless, if it were not intrinsically impossible”, Carlo Ginzburg, “Checking the Evidence: The Judge and the Historian,” *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 1 (1991): 90.

37 Walter Johnson, “On Agency,” *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (2003): 113–25; Anne C. Bailey, “African Agency in the Atlantic Slave Trade. Realities and Perceptions,” in Anne C. Bailey, *African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Beyond the Silence and the Shame* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006): 57–93; Anne C. Bailey, “European and American Agency in the Atlantic Slave Trade: From Raid and Trade to Operational Breakdown,” in Anne C. Bailey, *African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Beyond the Silence and the Shame* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006): 115–51; Walter Johnson, “Agency: A Ghost Story,” in *Slavery’s Ghost: The Problem of Freedom in the Age of Emancipation*, ed. Richard Follett, Eric Foner and Walter Johnson (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011): 8–30; Juliane Schiel, Isabelle Schürch and Aline Steinbrecher, “Von Sklaven, Pferden und Hunden: Dialog über den Nutzen aktueller Agency-Debatten für die Sozialgeschichte,” *Schweizerisches Jahrbuch für Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte. Annuaire suisse d’histoire économique et sociale* 32 (2017): 17–48.

professional scribes, notaries, and lawyers, often also law enforcement commissions (such as the abovementioned *Comisión Militar* in Cuba) conducted interrogations, recorded the results and wrote down the texts we find in the documents; the pre-filter mentioned above is translation (often by other slaves from the respective *nación*). Overall, however, we are only at the beginning of the research, especially in view of the masses of legal sources. This is especially true for the large number of *Quejas* (complaints of slaves, also with other subtitles, like *Esclavitud* and *Negros*) – special categories of legal material in Cuba.

With regard to the legal material, as mentioned above, there are often claims that the agency of slaves was particularly evident here. This can certainly be assumed for some cases (as in relation to the release of the individual, biological children, or close relatives, i.e., above all *coartación* (literally: restricted slavery; legal self-ransom)).³⁸

There were, however, three barriers to the agency of enslaved people: first, very few slaves, especially rural slaves, did have a person who could write for them, or a person with legal knowledge in the general sense, to a *síndico* (a special trustee urban advocate of the poor or city slaves);³⁹ secondly, in all measures (interrogations, depositions) taken by the slavery society to prosecute what was considered a crime (committed by a slave), the owners and direct controllers of slaves (*mayordomos*, *mayorales*, administrators, owners, policy, prosecutors, state organs), slaves showed an unwillingness to testify (and even less to appear as a witness), thirdly, we learn something about their concrete living and working conditions from the interviews, statements and complaints of the enslaved themselves, but little about what they themselves thought. That means, mostly about the negative sides. Even these comparatively ‘direct’ sources are never written by the enslaved themselves. This probably also applies to the sheer mass of *Quejas* (and similar funds, like *Esclavitud* or *Negros* in the Spanish legal system).⁴⁰ In some of these sources, however, archive historians have the impression that the slave or the slave child is standing or lying next to the writer, i.e., is ill or on her/his deathbed. The best representation of such an individual closeness between the people presented, in this case María Coleta and her Capuchin confessor, is discussed in an article by Rebecca J. Scott and Carlos Venegas.⁴¹

38 Claudia Varella and Manuel Barcia, *Wage-Earning Slaves: Coartación in Nineteenth-Century Cuba* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2020).

39 In 1874, a slave woman from Güines even managed to send a written request about her *coartación* to the governor; she wanted to appear in front of a *síndico* in Havana, see: “Expediente promovido por la morena Joaquina Gomez esclava de D. Fernando Gomez vecino de Guines, solicitando ser coartada ante uno de los tres Sindicos de esta Capital (Habana),” *ANC, Gobierno General*, Esclavos, leg 566, no. 28173 (1874).

40 Digna Castañeda Fuertes, “Demandas judiciales de las esclavas en el siglo XIX cubano,” in *Afrocubanas: Historia, pensamiento y prácticas culturales*, ed. Daisy Rubiera Castillo and Inés María Martiatu Terry (La Habana: Editorial Ciencias Sociales, 2011): 17–29.

41 Rebecca J. Scott and Carlos Venegas Fornias, “María Coleta and the Capuchin Friar: Slavery, Salvation, and the Adjudication of Status,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 76, no. 4 (2019): 727–62.

The most complete publication about the subject of enslaved narratives in legal sources about diverse conflict situations and *Quejas/Esclavitud* (complaints) so far is Gloria García's *La esclavitud desde la esclavitud* (Slavery from the point of view of slavery⁴²). The book traces the social structure of a slavery regime and its most important spaces of representation – historically and functionally (functionally from ‘top to bottom’). First, there is an analysis of the forms of slavery up to the emergence of the *ingenio* (the mechanized slave plantation), which is characteristic of second slavery, including the slave family and their parentela (‘kinship’), urban slavery and slave resistance. The larger second part of the book is dedicated firstly to the legal space of the Spanish Empire, i.e. the imperial representation of the *Código negro* (Collection of laws on dealing with slaves and the colored free population; 31 May, 1789), which was never officially proclaimed and no longer functioned due to the revolution in Saint-Domingue/Haiti and the independence of the continental colonies of America (1808–1830).⁴³ The imperial legal representation was replaced by a still colonial, but de facto pre-national *Reglamento de Esclavos* (1842), which was in fact a decree of a liberal Captain General. It was only valid in Cuba.⁴⁴ Then follows a whole chapter on “The slave and his family world”, which addresses diverse complaints (*Quejas/Esclavitud*) by enslaved people, which were written down by scribes or *síndicos*. In Cuba's slavery regime, which was hardly controlled by the state, this legal form of paper gained such fame among enslaved people that the fixed phrase *buscar papel* emerged (literally ‘to seek/obtain paper’, also *buscar amo*, literally ‘to seek master’, meaning another master).⁴⁵ Legally, this was the written permission for slaves by the state (*Reglamento*), but written by the old owner, to seek a new master (*amo/ama* – master/mistress) if they felt they were being treated too harshly. They got permission on a piece of paper (*papel*).

We learn most about the real living conditions of enslaved people in Cuba's high-tech plantation economy in the chapter “The Social Structure of the Plantation” with the exciting sub-chapters “Slaves and Mayorales” (*mayorales* were the chief overseers, i.e., (mostly) white managers, primarily old soldiers, or boatswains with some agricultural knowledge⁴⁶); “Conflicts in the dotación” (*dotación* = term for all slaves of a plantation) and “Solidarity against Injustice”. The next two chapters are called “The coartado slave and his labor relations” and “The violence of the masters”. The interests of the slaves evident from the book, which, from the sources used by Gloria Gar-

42 Gloria García, *La esclavitud desde la esclavitud* (La Habana: Ciencias Sociales, 2003).

43 The *Código* was still effective over rumors that the king had set the slaves free; see: Wim Klooster, “Slave Revolts, Royal Justice, and a Ubiquitous Rumor in the Age of Revolutions,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 71, no. 3 (2014): 401–24.

44 Since 1826, Puerto Rico also had such a pre-national regulation adapted to the local slavery regime.

45 For example: “Expediente en que el negro Agustín Montalvo solicita papel para buscar nuevo amo,” *GSC, Esclavitud*, leg. 947, no. 33444 (1852).

46 “Circular para que todos los amos de fincas de campo que tengan dotación de negros, pongan mayorales blancos,” *GSC, Esclavitud*, leg. 936, no. 33039 (1832).

cía (the majority are from *Esclavitud* and/or *Quejas* from *Gobierno Superior Civil* or *Gobierno General*), are their individual relationships, mostly with relatives, spouses, and children,⁴⁷ as well as with their direct owners, overseers (*mayorales*, *mayordomos*). Group interests can also be found (e.g., in strikes of field workers, but also in runaways as group/*dotación* for some days) but are rather rare. Not really ‘class’ interests at all.

I analyze below a source in which an influential free Black man argues in favor of an enslaved woman. It can be found in the chapter “The coartado slave and his labor relations”. Even if it involves the abovementioned problem of having been written by persons other than the enslaved, the source is very interesting for our approach. From three sides, the interests of an enslaved woman are negotiated. One could almost speak of four sides since the writer also plays a role. The most important actor mentioned is the “moreno libre Pedro Real, de nación congo y primer capataz del cabildo de sus paisanos y vecino del barrio de Chávez [free moreno Pedro Real, from the Congo nation and first foreman [*capataz*] of the council of his countrymen [*cabildo de nación*] and resident [*vecino*, literally: neighbor] of the Chavez neighborhood [*barrio*].”⁴⁸ Pedro Real represents the interests of his enslaved *paisana* (countrywoman, i.e., someone also from the *nación conga*). A slightly longer section (translated by me) shows what problems arose in the legal space of the extremely dynamic second slavery in Cuba:

A Vuestra Excelencia dice que habiéndosele presentado la morena de su nación con el papel por dos días para buscar amo, nombrada María Luisa González, coartada en la cantidad de 350 pesos y los derechos atrasados, de la propiedad de don Ángel Arrechabaleta [a Basque, MZ], este le dio papel a pedimento de la dicha esclava para buscar amo por los dos dichos días y yo le busque para que la comprara al [this is probably a copyist’s mistake and should be *el* in the original; it might of course also be an error on the part of the original writer, MZ] señor licenciado don José Fornaris [a notary, MZ]; que el dicho señor estaba esperando al dicho Arrechabaleta para hacer la escritura de la compra y que sucedió que el ante dicho amo [Arrechabaleta, MZ], en lugar de pasar a la escribanía, no lo hizo y arrebató a la negra y la mandó al campo a que la castigaran, y gozando el esclavo coartado de las preeminencias de no poderse vender para el monte no siendo a gusto del siervo, y más cuando ésta tenía comprador [. . .]. A Vuestra Excelencia suplico, como capataz de su nación, se sirva expedir una orden para que inmediatamente mande el amo a buscar a la negra para que el comprador haga la escritura [. . .]

47 See the heartbreaking example of an already free mother begging for the freedom of her four children: “Expediente promovido por la parda libre Clara Linares pidiendo la libertad de sus cuatro hijos esclavos de D Juan Fernandez Salgas,” *ANC, Gobierno General*, Esclavos, leg 566, no. 28174 (1874); or the example of the free *morena*, who is the mother of a slave woman and demands a *papel de buscar amo* for her daughter: “Expediente promovido por la morena libre Apolonia Criolla, madre de la de igual color Eduarda Yosefa proponiendo se de papel a la ultima para variar de dueño, que lo es hoy D.n Juan Valdes Mumpienes,” *ANC, Gobierno General*, Esclavos, leg 519, no. 26885 (1877).

48 Gloria García, “Pedro Real congo, capataz del cabildo, representa a su paisana María Luisa González, La Habana, 21 de abril de 1854,” Gloria García, *La esclavitud desde la esclavitud* (La Habana: Ciencias Sociales, 2003): 146.

To your Excellency he says⁴⁹ that, having been approached by the *morena* of his nation named María Luisa González, who held a paper for two days to look for a [new] master,⁵⁰ valued at the amount of 350 pesos⁵¹ plus the right to arrears, of the property of Mr. Ángel Arrechasabaleta [a Basque, MZ] who had given the said slave at her request a paper to look for a master for the two said days, and I⁵² looked for him to purchase her from Mr. José Fornaris [a notary, MZ]; that the said man was waiting for the said Arrechasabaleta to make out the deed of purchase⁵³ and that it happened that the aforementioned master [Arrechasabaleta, MZ], instead of going to the notary's office, did not do so and snatched the black woman and sent her to the field⁵⁴ there to be punished, and the constrained slave enjoying the preeminence of not being able to sell himself to the mountain,⁵⁵ not being to the liking of the serf, and even more so when the latter had a buyer [. . .] I beg Your Excellency, as foreman of her nation, that you may please issue an order so that the master immediately sends for the black woman so that the buyer can make the deed [. . .]⁵⁶

49 This is a complaint to the Captain General of Cuba. The formal *dice* with which every written concern begins means 'he says', not *digo* ('I say'), which reflects that the respective actor 'only' spoke and the notary procured the written version in legal language). Many purchase and sale protocols in which the words of free members of the slave-owning society have been written by notaries begin in this way (*digo* - I say).

50 This means that the *amo* (= master/owner) gave the slave a paper with written permission for a certain number of days, allowing her to look for a new master to buy her during that time.

51 The price of the slave woman had been set at 350 silver pesos (by a *síndico*, a city slave attorney); at this price (in total or in installments/rates) the slave could legally buy her freedom. If the slaves had paid a deposit on the total sum, here the female slave, they became a *coartado* or a *coartada* (literally "limited", i.e., no longer a "full" slave). As a *coartada*, the slave woman could legally request this document from her previous *amo* (= *buscar papel*) and look for a new *amo* (who wanted to buy her at her now lower price, which means, among other things, *buscar amo*). The *amos* were not actually allowed to increase the fixed price of the *coartación* (but obviously they often did), see: "Expediente promovido por el Síndico 2º de esta Capital (Habana) para que no se haga por los escribanos escritura de venta de esclavos coartados sin que se presente por los dueños el documento de coartación, expresivo de la cantidad en que está y clase de moneda," *ANC, Gobierno General, Esclavos*, leg 566, no. 28179 (1876).

52 The "I" here is unusual since both Black people and writers typically referred to the enslaved by third-person pronouns or by terms referring to their function.

53 The purchase notary protocol.

54 That means: A house slave was sent to a plantation to work in the fields – a severe punishment that all female house slaves and most house slaves feared especially; see Claudia Varela, "Roaming Coartados: Strengthening the Rural Slave Sector," Claudia Varela and Manuel Barcia, *Wage-Earning Slaves: Coartación in Nineteenth-Century Cuba* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2020): 66–82.

55 *Vender al monte* means being sold for working outside the house.

56 Gloria García, "Pedro Real congo, capataz del cabildo, representa a su paisana María Luisa González, La Habana, 21 de abril de 1854," Gloria García, *La esclavitud desde la esclavitud* (La Habana: Ciencias Sociales, 2003): 146; according to (original): "Espediente en que el negro Pedro Real se queja del mal trato que le dá Dn Angel Arechavaleta á su esclava M.a Luisa (1854)," *ANC, Gobierno Superior Civil, GSC, Esclavitud*, leg 948, no. 33540, Hab.a 21 de Abril 1854 f. 3r–3v. In the same document there is a note from the *síndico* Miguel Estorch (May 16, 1854) that the *amo* gave the slave another paper for three days and another for two days. When María Luisa could not find a buyer, contrary to Pedro Real's statements, she fled for four days (*cimarrona*), was recaptured, and sent back to the countryside as punishment. The *síndico* recommends that the Captain General should not comply with Pedro

What real information do we have? One of the *ilustres apellidos*, i.e., a big man of the urban elite of free blacks, the chief (*capataz*) of a *cabildo de nación conga*, possibly also a militia officer and himself the owner of slaves, makes a deliberate (?) false statement regarding the notary's intention to buy in favor of a *conga* slave. Notaries were considered very powerful as scribes of all papers connected with the fate of enslaved people. The owner and master (*amo*) of the slave performs his duties as prescribed by the *Reglamento* formally; i.e., he accepts an installment of money for self-ransom. He makes, certainly reluctantly, the *papel* formally due to the slave (albeit for a very short time). At the same time, he is delaying the whole process – that is what the statement refers to (*derechos atrasados* – rights in arrears). Finally, by virtue of the right to dispose of his property, he sends the slave woman to his rural plantation. He does this like most slave owners in Cuba: he takes the slave's money,⁵⁷ which he believes is due to him anyway as *peculium* according to traditional 'Roman' law, and then punishes her for her intention to exercise agency by having her sent to the countryside, probably for field work. We learn nothing concrete about the slave herself, about her living and working conditions. We can only conclude that she was well-informed about the legal situation, that she had some relationship with the *capataz* Pedro Real and possibly with the notary José Fornaris, and that she defended herself against her *amo* with a brief escape, as a *cimarrona* (maroon; runaway). She attempted to exert agency but was confined in the harsh structures of private property slavery. The *papel* for two days referred to is in the bundle of the *queja*:

Doy licencia ami esclava Luisa conga para que busque Amo en la Cantidad de trescientos Cincuenta pesos en que esta coartada, habien [hardly legible] mas unos dros [derechos] atrasados segun Consta de esdra. Pub.ca, es sana y sin tachas pero sin re[i]cción á red[h]ibitoria es de oficio buena labandera y planchadora le vale por los dos días Contados desde la fecha Habana y M.zo 27/854 debe dormir en mi casa. – – Angel de Arechavaleta

I give license to my slave Luisa Conga to seek a Master for the amount of three hundred and fifty pesos, which [is the amount at which] she has been valued, there are [hardly legible] plus some [rights] to the arrears according to the *esdra. Pub.ca* [*escritura Pública* = the notary's protocol],

Real's request because "por ahora [for now]", the "L.do José Fornaris q.e la queria comprar no se halla muy dispuesto á hacerlo [Graduate (licenciado) José Fornaris, who wanted to buy it, is not very willing to do so]" ("Espediente en que el negro Pedro Re.l se queja del mal trato q.e le dá Dn Angel Arechavaleta á su esclava M.a Luisa (1854)," *ANC, Gobierno Superior Civil*, GSC, Esclavitud, leg 948, no. 33540, Hab.a 21 de Abril 1854, La Habana, Abril 25 1854, f. 2r).

57 The types of money were a special problem, see: "Expediente promovido por el Síndico 2º de esta Capital (Habana) para que no se haga por los escribanos escritura de venta de esclavos coartados sin que se presente por los dueños el documento de coartación, expresivo de la cantidad en que está y clase de moneda [File promoted by the 2nd síndico of this Capital (Havana) so that the public scribes do not issue a deed of sale of coartado slaves without the owners presenting the document of coartación, expressing the amount and type of currency]," *ANC, Gobierno General*, Esclavos, leg 566, no. 28179 (1876).

she is healthy and without blemishes, but without recourse to recission, she is by profession a good laundress and ironer. This paper is good for the two days counted from the date of Habana and M.zo [March] 27/854, she must sleep in my house . . . — Angel de Arechavaleta⁵⁸

In a letter dated May 16, 1854, Miguel Estorch informed the Captain General of what happened after Luisa Conga had fled:

[. . .] vencidos estos [dos papeles], en vez de regresar á su casa se fugó, habiendo sido preciso llamarla por los periódicos segun consta del que se acompaña. Capturada á los cuatro dias por D. Joaquin Oliva en la calla dela Merced esquina á la de la Habana, fué entregada á su dueño que tuvo que pagar la Captura. Por via de correccion la mandó al Campo [. . .]

Once these [two papers] had expired, instead of returning to her house she ran away, her [flight] having been announced through the newspapers as stated by the one accompanying [this letter]. Captured four days later by D. Joaquin Oliva in Calle de la Merced [at the] corner of Havana [Street], she was handed over to her owner, who had to pay the Capture. By way of correction, he sent her to the field.⁵⁹

There is another *Queja* with a formal semi-subject status of a slave: the *moreno* Manuel Ramírez found a scribe and complained with a *Queja* to the captain-general that his master was demanding from him more and more of his *jornal* (the money he earned daily). Manuel worked as *esclavo de jornal/esclavo alquilado* (rental slave). The *amo* also constantly increased the price of the *coartación*. He argued with Manuel about the money already paid (*ahorros*). In a letter from La Habana dated May 7, 1849 to the Captain General, we read on behalf of the slave, who, however, ‘speaks’ himself in this *Queja*, as can be seen from the verb *dice* (‘he says’): “Manuel Ramirez esclavo coartado de Dn Pedro Ant. o Diaz, con la humildad que acostumbra y es debida á VE dice [. . .]. Por no saber firmar hace + [Manuel Ramirez, coartado slave of Don Pedro Antonio Diaz, with the usual modesty that he owes you says [. . .]. Because he cannot write, he makes + [a cross as signature]]”. As a result, the owner Pedro Antonio Diaz had to issue his slave a *licencia para buscar amo* (license to search for a new master = the formal name for a *papel de buscar amo*) due to the instructions of the Captain General: “Doy Licencia por tres dias, á mi Esclavo Manuel Ramirez para que busque Amo en Cantidad de doscientos cincuenta pesos cuartado [sic], es esselente [sic] Jornalero. Habana Mayo 14/849.- Pedro A. Diaz [I give a license for three days to my slave Manuel Ramirez to look for a Master in the amount of two hundred and fifty pesos cuartado [sic], he is [an] esselente [= excellent – sic] Day Laborer. Havana May 14/ 849.- Pedro A. Diaz]” (Fig. 3).

⁵⁸ Glued on: *ANC, Gobierno Superior Civil, GSC, Esclavitud, leg 948, no. 33540, Hab.a 21 de Abril 1854, f. 3v.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 4r.

Quejas and the other categories of sources in *Gobierno Superior Civil* or *Gobierno General* like *Esclavitud* are to be regarded as a special category among the legal sources that may only exist for the second slavery in Cuba under the legal regulations of the 1842 *Reglamento*. Despite the many *Quejas* and *Esclavitud* sources that Gloria García evaluated for her excellent book, the enormous number of this kind of sources in Cuba's National Archives alone has not really been systematically explored from the point of view of narrative self-representation.

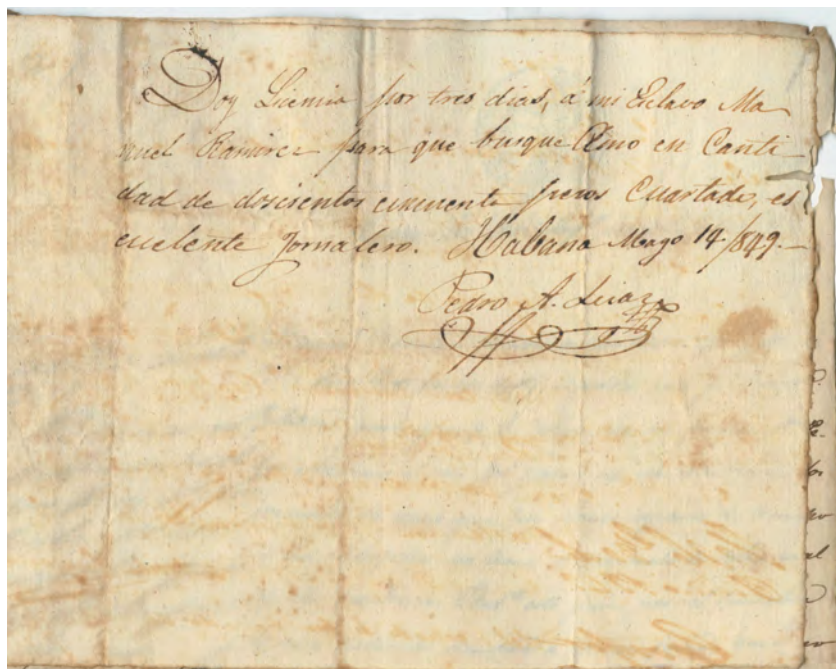


Fig. 3: *Papel de buscar amo* – document issued by a lawyer for the poor (síndico) at the request of a slave, which allowed the slave to look for a new owner during a fixed period of time (in this case: three days) who could buy him or her for a specified sum. GSC, *Quejas*, No. 52776, leg. 1350, 1849: Expediente en que el moreno Manuel Ramírez se queja de que su amo D. Pedro Díaz se niega a rebajarle del precio de su coartación, el ahorro que ha dejado en su poder el tiempo que expresa (without foliation). Private archive of Michael Zeuske (Leipzig/Bonn).

6 Ships and Narratives – Presentations of Enslaved People in the Shiploads of Captured Ships of the Hidden Atlantic

If *Quejas* and *Esclavitud* are a special category of legal sources, this also applies to statements (depositions) by enslaved people on slave ships, which had been seized after the formal abolitions of the Atlantic slave trade (in the United States and Great Britain in 1808 and in Spain in 1820). A third special category of legal sources are those on emancipated slaves/*emancipados* (a kind of new state slavery of the nineteenth century). A relatively extensive literature already exists on emancipated slaves/*emancipados*.⁶⁰ I will therefore only mention them briefly and focus instead on the depositions of enslaved people from slave ships – so to speak before they became emancipated slaves/*emancipados*.

Some slave ships were wrecked or captured. The people on the lower deck of slave vessels were generally considered “*armazón* of slaves” by the slave vessels’ crews and captains (the cargo of one slave vessel is called *armazón*). Because their depositions are sources on the Atlantic and Caribbean slave trade, they are inherently broader in a spatial sense than national sources on land slavery. But are they narrative self-representations?

Jonathan M. Bryant recently explored the long legal dispute over people from captured ships in the United States in the case of the slave ship *Antelope* (see also the famous *Creole* or the slave vessel *Solicito*).⁶¹ I will also use the wealth of these sources in the United States in the Federal District Courts in the south, which are collected in

60 Henry B. Lovejoy, “The Registers of Liberated Africans of the Havana Slave Trade Commission: Transcription Methodology and Statistical Analysis,” *African Economic History* 38 (2010): 107–35; Henry B. Lovejoy, “The Registers of Liberated Africans of the Havana Slave Trade Commission: Implementation and Policy, 1824–1841,” *Slavery & Abolition* 37, no. 1 (2016): 32; see also: Sharla M. Fett, “Middle Passages and Forced Migrations: Liberated Africans in Nineteenth-Century US Camps and Ships,” *Slavery & Abolition* 31, no. 1 (2010): 75–98; Sharla M. Fett, *Recaptured Africans: Surviving Slave Ships, Detention, and Dislocation in the Final Years of the Slave Trade* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Beatriz G. Mamigonian, *Africanos livres. A abolição do tráfico de escravos no Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2017); Inés Roldán de Montaud, “On the Blurred Boundaries of Freedom: Liberated Africans in Cuba, 1817–1870,” in *New Frontiers of Slavery*, ed. Dale W. Tomich (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015): 127–55.

61 John T. Noonan, *The Antelope: The Ordeal of the Recaptured Africans in the Administration of James Monroe and John Quincy Adams* (Berkeley: University of California, 1977); Walter Johnson, “White Lies: Human Property and Domestic Slavery Aboard the Slave Ship *Creole*,” *Atlantic Studies* 5 (2008): 237–63; Anita Rupprecht, “‘All We Have Done, We Have Done for Freedom’: The *Creole* Slave-Ship Revolt (1841) and the Revolutionary Atlantic,” *International Review of Social History* 58 (2013): 15–34 [special issue: *Mutiny and Maritime Radicalism in the Age of Revolution: A Global Survey*, ed. Clare Anderson, Nyklas Frykman, Lex Heerma van Voss and Marcus Rediker]; Jonathan M. Bryant, *Dark Places of the Earth: The Voyage of the Slave Ship Antelope* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2015).

Atlanta and are concerned with violations of the 1807 Atlantic Slave Trade Abolition Law (such as: “Caricubura, Arrietta and Company v. Josefa Segunda and 152 Negro Slaves, filed July 18, 1818”, in: Survey of Federal Archives in Louisiana, 1940).⁶²

This category of sources also includes sources from Spanish and Cuban archives about ships wrecked off the north coast of Cuba (such as the slave ship *Guerrero*⁶³ or the slave ship (*goleta*) *Batans* alias *Brick Segundo*⁶⁴) as well as a ship “without a name” with 16 traumatized boys between 7 and 16 years of age who came from a ship

Solicito see: deposition of captain Juan Villas y Aprisa, capitan, maestre y primer piloto, to Comandante Militar de Marina in Havanna, La Habana (no date, c. December 1820), in *ANC, Tribunal de Comercio (TC)*, leg. 240, no. 14 (1820). Hernandez (Gaspar). “Varios de la Tripulacion del Bergantin Negro ‘Solicito’ contra D.n Gaspar Hernandez su armador sobre soldadas,” f. 15r–18v; see also: Sean M. Kelley, *The Voyage of the Slave Ship Hare: A Journey into Captivity from Sierra Leone to South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016); see also: *ANC, Fondo Miscelánea de Expedientes* (Miscelánea de Expedientes/Libros) (FME/L), tomo XI, Leg. 1502, F: Expediente de salida del bergantín americano “Antelope,” Habana 1821; *ANC, FME/L*, tomo XIII, Leg. 1864, Bd: Expediente de entrada de la goleta americana “Creole,” Habana 1835; *ibid.*, Leg. 1912, no. Año. Expediente de salida de la goleta americana “Antelope,” Habana 1822. There has been more and more very interesting research on individual slave ships in recent years, see for example: Leitão de Almeida and Marcos Abreu, “African Voices from the Congo Coast: Languages and Politics of Identification in the Slave Ship *Jovem Maria* (1850),” *Journal of African History* 60, no. 2 (2019): 167–89; Alex Borucki, “The U.S. Slave Ship *Ascension* in the Río de la Plata: Slave Routes and Circuits of Silver in the Late Eighteenth-Century Atlantic and Beyond,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 29, no. 4 (2020): 630–57.

62 See the Spanish documents about Carricaburu and Arrieta in *ANC, TC*, leg. 97, no. 11 (1820). Carricaburu Arrieta y C.a. (Sociedad). La casa de Carricaburu Arrieta y C.a contra la de seguros de esta Plasa [sic], sobre el que practicaron en el bergantín goleta, Segunda Josefa.

63 Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN), Madrid, Estado, Trata de Negros, Legajo (Leg.) 8022/8, no. 12: “Lista de los Buques que han Salido de la Habana para la Costa de Africa durante el Año de 1827” (26 españoles, 1 Francés, and also, July 14, 1827 “Bergantin Guerrero”, Maestre Jose Gomez, with a note “Observacion”: “Apresado. Mas despues hizo naufragio en el Arrecife de la Florida. Regresó Enero 5 de 1828”; AHN, Madrid, Estado, Trata de Negros, Leg. 8022/8, no. 13: “Lista de los Buques que han Regresado de la Costa de Africa, y han conseguido Desembarcar Cargamentos de Negros en las inmediaciones de la Habana durante el Año de 1827” (10 Españoles, 5 de Diciembre de 1827: Bergantin Guerrero, observaciones [notes]: “Apresado por la Goleta de S.M. “Nimble”, pero se encalló despues en el Arrecife de la Florida. 400 de los Negros fueron desembarcados en la Ysla por dos Wreckers Americanos”); AHN, Madrid, Estado, Trata de Negros, Leg. 8022/8, no. 14, Translation of a report by H.J. Kilbee u W.S. Macleay from Havana, 3 de Enero de 1828 to Conde Dudley, about trying to bring up the “Guerrero”, with 500 or 600 enslaved (“negros”), but then at night, they were brought by American Wreckers to Florida, and partly to the port of Santa Cruz del Norte, between Havana and Matanzas; see also: National Archives, Washington, RG 45, M124, Roll 115 (courtesy of Gail Swanson, who found, transcribed and kindly made the document available to me; cf.: Gail Swanson, *Slave Ship Guerrero. The Wrecking of a Spanish Slaver off the Coast of Key Largo, Florida with 561 Africans Imprisoned in the Hold While Being Pursued by the British Warship HBM Nimble in 1827* (West Conshohocken: Infinity, 2005).

64 Testimony of Antonio, kidnapped on the goleta *Batans*, October 7, 1854, in: “Testimonio del expediente gubernativo instruido para la averiguacion de la introduccion de negros bozales por la Costa de Nuevitas” (contemporary orthography and punctuation), in AHN, Madrid, Estado, Trata de negros,

wrecked on a rocky reef. They had been discovered by fishermen.⁶⁵ The Cuban naval attorney had to form a commission to interview the boys with the help of translators.⁶⁶ The translators played an extremely important role; firstly, in negotiations between the newly arrived enslaved and the legal institutions of slaving apparatuses (in Portuguese, Spanish or English, etc., with its own language of ‘nations’ and often corporal characteristics).⁶⁷ They acted within the orality of the world of the enslaved, but could also make themselves heard in the literate world.⁶⁸ Shipwrecks in which enslaved people escaped are even less visible in government documents, economic documents or legal documents (such as notarial files or reports on illegal landings). There are very interesting studies on this in Mexico (especially on the Costa Chica between Acapulco and Puerto Escondido (Oaxaca)).⁶⁹

The main part of the research consisted of analyzing cargo lists that include African names drawn from several slave ships (*Ninfa Habanera* 1824–1825, *Negríto, Joaquina, Manuelita* 1833, *Carlota, María, Chubasco* 1834⁷⁰) and the interviews conducted especially with enslaved children on the *Jesús María* from 1841 or with those enslaved

leg. 8060, no. 4/3, f. 119v–120r; testimony of Manuel María de la Concepción, kidnapped on the goleta *Batans*, October 7, 1854, in: *ibid.*, f. 154v–156r; see also: Arturo Arnalte, *Los últimos esclavos de Cuba: Los niños cautivos de goleta Batans* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2001).

65 For general information on trauma, see: Janett Reinstädler and Michael Zeuske, “Esclavitud y memoria cultural en Hispanoamérica,” in *Trauma y memoria cultural: Hispanoamérica y España*, ed. Roland Spiller, Kirsten Mahlke and Janett Reinstädler (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020): 125–43.

66 AHN, Madrid, Estado, Trata de Negros, leg. 8059/1, no. 2 (without foliation): “Testimonio de la sumaria formada en averiguacion del naufragio de un bergantin que se ignora el nombre, nacion y procedencia, en los arrecifes de Cayo Verde, Quebrado del Sardinero,” Boca del rio [Sagua] (today: Isabela de Sagua), 27 de febrero de 1853 – La Habana, 18 de Abril de 1853.

67 Leitão de Almeida, “African Voices from the Congo Coast”: 167–89.

68 National Archives, Washington, RG 45, M124, Roll 115, f. 79 (courtesy of Gail Swanson). See also: Dale T. Graden, “Interpreters, Translators, and the Spoken Word,” in Dale T. Graden, *Disease, Resistance, and Lies: The Demise of the Transatlantic Slave Trade to Brazil and Cuba* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014): 150–77 as well as Michael Zeuske, “Afrikanische und amerikanische Atlantikkreolen und Atlantisierung,” in Michael Zeuske, *Sklavenhändler, Negreros und Atlantikkreolen. Eine Weltgeschichte des Sklavenhandels im atlantischen Raum* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015): 196–205.

69 Sébastien Lefèvre and Paul Mvengou Cruzmerino, “Propuestas para una ‘relectura’ trasatlántica afrodiaspórica de las Américas negras a partir del caso mexicano,” in *Nuestra América Negra: Huellas, rutas y desplazamientos de la afrodescendencia*, ed. Flor Márquez, Inés Pérez-Wilke and Eduardo Cobos (Caracas: Ediciones de la Universidad Bolivariana de Venezuela, 2016): 5–44.

70 The National Archives, Kew/London (TNA), Foreign Office (FO) 313/67 (1819–1866): Logbooks of Captured Ships, condemnations of slave ships, etc. et al. There is a logbook of the slave vessel “*Ninfa Habanera*”, with a documented slave voyage from April 1824 to early 1825. Many lists with African names can be found in: Register of Slaves (TNA, FO 313/ 56–62). For example, TNA, FO 313/59 Register of Slaves 1833 (bigger than an octave-sized volume, hardcover, lists of slaves of the British-captured ships with the serial number “nombre Africano” [African name], “id Cristiano” [Christian name], sex, age, “nación” [African nation], “estatura” [stature/size] (it is not entirely clear whether Spanish or English units are referred to), “señales” [body markings] and [African or enslaved] translators). The first

on the slave ship *Negrinha*. I have identified several cases of mostly young men from Africa who were aboard ships that are considered slavers (slaving vessels). Some captains of ships that seized the slaving vessels used the formerly enslaved in an unclear status as sailors (translators or cooks or guards/*dispenseros/dispenseiros* (food distributors)) on their ships, as in the case of the US ship *General Paez*.⁷¹ Access to U.S. Federal District Court records is crucial for these. The translators in the *Amistad* case also

(numbers 199 to 477; a few pages are missing), f. 0v–29r, are the slaves of Bergantín *Negrino* (almost all *lucumiés*, a few *mina popo* and *arará*), La Habana, January 5, 1833; FO 313/59 Register of Slaves 1833 “Cargam to de la Goleta mercante Española Joaquina,” no. 1–318 (f. 29v–62r), all “Carabali suama”, “Carabali vivi” (1 from 193), no. 306 and 307 are “Lucumí tapa”, no. 308 “Lucumí cacanda”, 309 “Lucumí mico” as well as no. 310–318 are “Lucumí Baza”; FO 313/59 Register of Slaves 1833 “Cargamento de la Goleta mercante Española Manuelita”, no. 1–477 (f. 62v–110r), almost everybody “Lucumí Ecumachó”, almost all between 10 and 26 years, translator “Ant.o Lozano y Fernando esclavos de Dn Casimiro Lozano y de Dn Pedro Robira” (f.63r). Other translators (f. 71r): “Joaquin Dasenebe moreno libre y el citado Antonio esclavo de D.n Casimiro Lozano”. Nos. 411–415 are “Arará Magín” (f. 103v), translator: “Antonio y Ysidro esclavos de D.n Casimiro Lozano y de D.n Fran.co Mendiola” (f. 104r); the numbers 416–417 are “Carabali Orú”; Translator: “Julian y Norverto, esclavos de D.n Ant.o del Castillo y D.n Ygn.o Roca” (f. 104r), the remaining ones “Lucumí Ecumachó” (numbers 418–477); FO 313/60 Register of Slaves 1834 “Cargamento de la Goleta mercante Carlota” (bigger than an octave-sized volume, hardcover, lists the slaves of the British-captured ships with consecutive numbers “nombre Africano”, “id Cristiano”, sex, age, nación, stature, body markings and interpreters). The first (numbers 13 to 163; a few pages are missing), f. 1v, 1r–16r, La Habana, December 7, 1834. Almost all “Ganga Longobá”, but also (f.1v) “Ganga Bahi” (no. 15–18) and “Ganga maní” (no. 20–22, f. 1Ar / v), no. 30 African name “Balá” (f. 1v), no. 39 is “Ganga Guiri” (f. 2v). No. 95, African. Name “Cuara” is a “Ganga conó” (f. 4v); FO 313/60 Register of Slaves 1834 “Cargamento de la Goleta mercante Esp.a María”, no. 1–340 (f. 15v–50r), almost everything “Carabali”, with many names of towns and village names, including no. 101, African. Name “Odeque” (f. 25v) a “Carabali Ybo”, La Habana, February 1, 1835 [sic]; FO 313/60 Register of Slaves 1834 “Cargamento del Bergant.n Gol.a Esp.a Chubasco”, no. 1–230 (f. 109v–134r), almost everybody “Mandinga” (no specifications), no. 135–146 “Gangá” with names: Viá, Nimó, Balá, Abalá, Sirgué, Tormú, Bagó, Mamado [Mamadu, MZ], Bián, Caculá, Gücá, Chabú (f. 124r / v), no. 227–230 again “Gangá”, names: Güemé, Talá, Fomá, Lobá (f. 132v), La Habana, May 17, 1835. Translator at all (f. 110r): “Quirino esclavo del Rey, é Ygnacio emancipado, destinado al Jardin Botanico”. For the important role of translators: Leitão de Almeida, “African Voices from the Congo Coast”: 167–89.

71 For the case of the ship *General Paez*: “The first involved a courtcase in Baltimore that had its beginnings near Cape Mesurado, where a war in 1821–1822 produced captives who became commodities in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Captain John Chase’s schooner *General Paez* intercepted the slaver in the Middle Passage and transported the captured slaves to the British West Indies, where he received the assigned bounty per slave found on board. Chase offered employment to fourteen of the freed Africans as members of his crew and proceeded northward to Baltimore to resupply his vessel. Upon entering Baltimore harbor, however, Chase was charged with failing to pay past debts, apparently to someone in Baltimore, and the *General Paez* was forced to remain at an anchor until that matter was resolved. Chase’s problems grew when harbor officials informed persons on shore that Africans were members of the ship’s crew. The presence of Africans among his crew appeared to some to be a clear violation of the Slave Trade Prohibition Act of 1819. That Act required that such persons be taken into custody and their repatriation to Africa be arranged. Those with colonization, abolitionist, and emi-

reported in their accounts of their biographies that there had been a constant shift in their experiences between slavery and other forms of dependency.⁷²

The investigation report after the capture of the slave ship called “Jesus Maria” shows the violence of the Atlantic slave trade. A document of real horror and horrific trauma. Hundreds of people trafficked from Africa, many of them children, were subjected to extreme sexual violence, which was carried out by crew members (among them free people of color), officers, and certainly also by the captain. As in almost all legal documents, the enslaved were questioned in the interest of the respective commission and pressed to make statements. The main interest of the commission was the general prosecution of the Atlantic slave trade by Spanish ships, underpinned by the interest in the great conflict between Spain and Great Britain as well as the special interest of the British ship crews and officers to declare the captured ships (precisely because of the slave trade) as ‘good booty’, from which they received shares:

Examinations

[. . .] referring to the treatment of certain Africans, on their passage from Africa to Havana, by one Vicente Morales, the Master of a Slave Vessel called “Jesus Maria” and which was captured by Her Majesty’s Ship “Ringdone” . . . [a huge list of crimes, including rapes and killings of children follows; here are some excerpts]

No. 139. Crossy. – an African Girl of about the age of 14 years, one of the Witnesses named in the Despatch, being examined through an Interpreter named Thomas Weatherfield, a Private in H. M.’s 2.d W.I. Regiment [a colored or black soldier, MZ], states that while on board the “Jesus Maria”, Manual [sic], an African, one of the Captain’s servants, broke a Demyohn [demijohn, a clay bottle, MZ] containing Rum, on account of which the Captain, Vicente Morales, took a stick and severely beat him, which caused his Death, in about two days after, as the Examinant be-

gration sentiments at Baltimore joined forces to bring the Africans onshore and to the court’s attention and to embroil Captain Chase, the Baltimore court system, and the Maryland Federal District Court in litigation from mid-1822 to late 1823”, see Bruce L. Mouser, “The Baltimore/Pongo Connection: American Entrepreneurism, Colonial Expansionism, or African Opportunism?” *The International Journal of African Studies* 33, no. 2 (2000): 316; see also: Bruce L. Mouser, “Baltimore’s African Experiment, 1822–1827,” *Journal of Negro History* 80, no. 3 (1995): 113–30.

⁷² Benjamin N. Lawrance, “‘Your Poor Boy No Father No Mother’: ‘Orphans,’ Alienation, and the Perils of Atlantic Child Slave Biography,” *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (2013): 672–703; Benjamin N. Lawrance, “La Amistad’s ‘Interpreter’ Reinterpreted: James Kaweli Covey’s Distressed Atlantic Childhood and the Production of Knowledge about Nineteenth-Century Sierra Leone,” in *Slavery, Abolition and the Transition to Colonialism in Sierra Leone*, ed. Paul Lovejoy and Suzanne Schwarz (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2014): 215–56; Benjamin N. Lawrance, *Amistad’s Orphans: An Atlantic Story of Children, Slavery, and Smuggling* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014); Benjamin N. Lawrance, “‘A Full Knowledge of the Subject of Slavery’: The Amistad, Expert Testimony, and the Origins of Atlantic Studies,” *Slavery & Abolition* 36, no. 2 (2015): 298–318; see also: Jaime Rodrigues, *De costa a costa: escravos, marinheiros e intermediários do tráfico negreiro de Angola ao Rio de Janeiro* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2005); Jaime Rodrigues, “Marinheiros forros e escravos em Portugal e na América Portuguesa (c. 1760–c. 1825),” *Revista de História Comparada* 7, no. 1 (2013): 9–35.

lieves, and that the Cotton steeped in Rum and Gunpowder was put up the Fundament of several of the Africans for the avowed purpose of destroying worms.

No. 150.-Mahuma and 146 Mamboisi, African Females about 12 years of age, examined, and fully corroborate the foregoing statement of Crossy No. 139.

No. 147.-Cunha a Female, -No. 7 Barron and No. 3 Duba, Males, also corroborate the statement of Crossy in the fullest manner. In reference to the cruelties and abuses committed on the Females on board the Schooner "Jesus Maria" and alluded to in the Despatch the following examinations were taken viz:

No. 167. Jumer, African Girl, about 12 years, examined and states that no Spaniard, or other Person had any connection with her.

No. 148.-Jaddy, an African Girl about 14 years examined, states that one of the sailors of the "Jesus Maria", had connection with her against her will, and that she was previously a Virgin.⁷³ [see appendix 1].

It was only after the Spanish-Cuban slave ship had been brought up that the names of the enslaved were even asked for; it was their African name.

An internal letter from the Spanish ministry in Madrid shows the quantitative dimensions. Spanish officials, in general, took the investigation of those abducted from Africa, including their narrations, and in particular the written report from Nassau, fairly seriously, as can be seen from the following internal summary from Madrid (possibly contributing to the enactment of *Reglamento de Esclavos* and the *Bando de Buen Gobierno* of 1842):

El buque [Jesús María, MZ] iba cargado con 240 negros africanos, de los cuales sobrevivieron 233 cuando llegaron á las Bahamas [. . .]. Del numero de estos desdichados 136= son varones y 97= hembras, todos jovenes, particularmente las hembras que no tienen sino de 13 á 15 años de edad. Estas muchachas segun sus declaraciones ante el Gobernador de Nassau, en Nueva Providencia, el 8 de febrero ult.o, cuyos detalles son adjuntos, fueron violadas y mal tratadas por el Capitan del "Jesus María", llamado Vicente Morales, y por otros individuos de la tripulacion, durante su viaje de Africa á Cuba

The ship [Jesús María, MZ] was loaded with 240 black Africans, of whom 233 had survived when they arrived in the Bahamas [. . .]. Of the number of these unfortunates, 136= are male and 97= female, all of them young, particularly the females, who are only between 13 and 15 years old. These girls, according to their statements before the Governor of Nassau, in New Providence, on February 8, the details of which are attached, were raped and mistreated by the Captain of the "Jesus María", named Vicente Morales, and by other individuals. of the crew, during their trip from Africa to Cuba.⁷⁴

⁷³ Attachment of a letter from Francis Cockburn of New Providence, Nassau, Bahamas, February 24, 1841 to Lord John Russell (original copy) *Archivo Histórico Nacional*, Madrid (AHN), Estado, Trata de negros, leg. 8020/45, no. 4; for the slave ship Jesús María see also: www.slavevoyages.org [accessed 07.09.2023]. Voyage ID=2071 (April 18, 2009) as well as: "Letter Acknowledging Receipt of the One that Reported the Seizure of the Slave Ship 'Jesus Maria'," *ANC, Reales Cédulas y Ordenes*, leg. 121, no. 175 (Habana, 21 de Abril de 1841).

⁷⁴ Letter from the Palacio [King's Palace], July 22, 1841, unsigned; extract for internal use in the *Primera Secretaría del Despacho de Estado* [in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs] *AHN, Estado, Trata de ne-*

Summarizing these cases, we reach the following conclusions: the short biographies (profiles) that can be extracted from the surviving documents as well as the names that are mentioned show that for the worlds of Atlantic Slavery – as a functioning system of slavery-regimes and slave trades, this is what I mean with the concept “*in Slavery*” – the omnipresence of extreme cruelty and violence can be proved.⁷⁵ But there was also a high ambiguity between temporary liberation, other forms of dependency, manumission, re-enslavement, and ‘voluntary’ enslavement. Atlantic slavery also produced specific jobs, for instance that of translators or those of the final sellers of individual slaves (often free Black or colored people, often also women). Each of these forms of dependency could result on a temporary basis, due to hunger, political conditions, violence, or transport costs, and might alternate with a life as a sailor or doing another job on board or as dock worker in the ports of the Atlantic.

7 Talking Commodities and Writing Slaves

In the following part, I will briefly review some particularly interesting cases. For a long time, I had the impression that only a micro-historical approach can help us identify narrative self-representations of enslaved people. We know of at least one ‘talking commodity’ in self-representation: Roberto Botefeur. That is one of the most important cases of a courageous slave speaking for himself. Roberto Botefeur, as we will see, even talks about his work and his personal circumstances (appendix 2). Iberian slave traders have always considered themselves less ‘capitalist’ than slave traders of other religions, particularly the English and the Dutch. This is a recurring theme regarding slave owners and slave traders (as well as the respective slave-owning societies) from Brazil to Cuba, from Portugal to Spain, from Simón Bolívar to Francisco de Arango, during the period of slavery’s existence.

In the Spanish colony of Cuba, however, some ‘new’ slavers were more capitalist than those in other societies. The Hanoverian surgeon, slave trader and slave owner Daniel Botefeur (c. 1770–1821) was a pioneer of the cosmopolitan and Atlantic slavery capitalism. He was most likely a Lutheran before his career as Catholic slave trader. After his time in Africa (Gallinas), he fought in a real and symbolic way against the traditional rights of slaves in Cuba. Francisco de Arango called these traditional rights *los cuatro consuelos* (‘the four consolations’); the *coartación* already analyzed, which

gros, leg. 8020/45, no. 8; see also: Michael Zeuske, “Slaving – Traumata und Erinnerungen der Verschleppung,” in Michael Zeuske, *Sklavenhändler, Negreros und Atlantikkreolen: Eine Weltgeschichte des Sklavenhandels im atlantischen Raum* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015): 55–115.

⁷⁵ See the book about the slaveholder and plantation owner Thomas Thistlewood in Jamaica (1750–1786), in which violence had an extremely sexual dimension (Thistlewood records 3,852 sexual assaults, mostly rapes of enslaved women), see: Trevor Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and his Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

only became a law in 1842 but was practiced before, is an example of these rights. Daniel Botefeuf sued his own *esclavo de confianza* (slave of trust) Roberto Botefeuf, who wanted to become a *coartado* by paying money in 1818; he wanted to buy the freedom of his entire slave family. But there was more than that. Daniel Botefeuf also complained about the traditions of slavery in Cuba before 1820 that were mentioned above. He was a pioneer of modern, capitalist second slavery. The interesting thing is that Daniel Botefeuf was successful in this specific case (and maybe for a few years in relation to the climate of self-purchase/enslavement), but not in general. *Coartación* became a mass phenomenon in Cuba, despite the appalling hardships and many years of extra labor demanded from the enslaved.⁷⁶

First, Daniel Botefeuf, a man who was experienced in dealing with legality and illegality, accused his slave Roberto of stealing 2,000 pesos from what he himself refers to in a record as an “iron box in which I deposit my cash”. He then talks about the real reason for his conflict with his “trusted” slave: “My suspicion has been confirmed that the negro Roberto is the thief, because his wife has been telling his companions these days that the husband [Roberto, MZ] must free her and four children”. As mentioned above, Roberto Botefeuf wanted to achieve the *coartación* of his whole family in one fell swoop. Being also a very experienced and cosmopolitan man, he appeared in the office of the mayor of Havana and dictated what we might call a *representación*, which is actually a document of a ‘talking commodity’ and a slave who legally could not represent himself, but does so before the *coartación* becomes legal (in 1842):

Robin Botefaud [sic] moreno esclavo de D.n Daniel Botefaud con el mayor rendimiento à V[os] dice: que [en] muchas ocasiones ha deseado salir del poder de su amo, y este le ha exigido 4000. p.s por el, la mujer y tres hijos menores, lo que no le ha permitido lograrlo por lo escandaloso de este precio; pero conciliando [. . .] tiene determinado libertarse, contribuyendo à su amo amas de las quince onzas que la tiene el demas dinero q.e llene su precio, regulado por un Perrito [a specialist]: en esa virtud AV suplica, [. . .] se haga saber [. . .] à su amo D.n Daniel, manifieste por [. . .] cuanta cantidad estima por la libertad al exponente [. . .], La Hab.a y En.e 31 de 1818 – – – A ruego del esclavo

Robin Botefaud [sic] *moreno* slave of Don Daniel Botefaud with the highest devotion to your [Excellency] says: that [on] many occasions he has wanted to leave his master's power, and that the latter demanded 4,000 pesos for him, the woman and three underage children, which did not permit him to achieve it due to the scandalous price; but seeking a reconciliation [. . .] he has determined to free himself, paying to his master the fifteen ounces that he has [and] the other money that is his price, as determined by a *perrito* [a specialist]: in virtue of which AV begs [your [Excellency]], [. . .] let [. . .] his master Don Daniel know, [and] state [. . .] how much he estimates for the freedom of the exponent [. . .], Havana and Jan. 31, 1818 – – – At the request of the slave.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Varella and Barcia, *Wage-Earning Slaves*: passim.

⁷⁷ “Representación al Señor Alcalde Ordinario, La Habana y Enero 31 de 1818,” *ANC, Escribanía de Daumy*, leg. 370, no. 1 (1818): Daniel Botefeuf, contra su esclavo Roberto sobre hurto, f. 4r-v.

On February 26, 1818, Daniel Botefeuf wrote to the tribunal convened by the mayor, demanding “that my slave be brought before the S.or [Señor] Assessor and respond to the details of the closed interrogation that I sent S[u] S[eño]ria [your reignship]”. Daniel Botefeuf had compiled a questionnaire entitled “Interrogation [closed], with which the negro Roberto, slave of Don Daniel Botefeuf, should be questioned”. The owner is asking his slave to represent himself – albeit in a closed, non-public session of a tribunal.

That list of questions and answers in appendix 2 allows us to reconstruct much of the daily life of a house slave under almost full control of his master. His master is basically fighting all agency of his slave.

The source describes what happened next. Robin Botefeuf must go to a *depósito* (a Slave Depot – we do not know which one) and from there he must appear in court, swear an oath and answer (which shows that a slave could have legal personality): “appeared before the Assessor the moreno Roverto slave of Don Daniel Botefeuf from whom the oath was received”. The written trace of his voice is found in the “Declaration”, made in Havana, March 2, 1818.⁷⁸ It contains scenes from the life of an enslaved person, narrated by himself (appendix 3). Roberto was manumitted in 1821 or 1822, according to the will of Daniel Botefeuf. He continued to work on one of the Botefeuf family’s *cafetales* (coffee plantations) to buy the freedom of his whole family.

8 Writing Slaves: Margarito Blanco and his Club of Stevedores-*Abakuás*

There were also slaves who perhaps wrote themselves. Two specific sources are examples in which the enslaved ‘speak’ to us by writing themselves. Neither of the writers of these two sources had been subject to forced migration or the Atlantic slave trade, since both had been born in Cuba as Creole house slaves (*esclavos criollos*), but they nevertheless were ‘talking commodities’, because they always faced the risk of being sold on by their respective owners. One of these examples, that of Juan Francisco Manzano, is very well-known. Manzano, while still a slave in Cuba, wrote and recited poetry that the slave owners (and possibly his co-enslaved) liked to hear. His freedom was purchased by a group of slave owners and writers, and he wrote an autobiography.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ “Declaracion del esclavo Roberto,” La Habana, 2 de Marzo de 1818 (original spelling) *ANC, Escribanía de Daumy*, leg. 370, no. 1 (1818): Daniel Botefeuf, contra su esclavo Roberto sobre hurto, f. 9r–13r.

⁷⁹ Letter to José Luis Alfonso stating that they have already paid Manzano’s ransom to María de Zayas and commenting on her reaction. He expresses that Manzano has put a candy shop, Habana, julio 23, 1836 *Biblioteca Nacional de Cuba* (BNC), Colección Manuscritos (C.M.) Monte, no. 5: Monte y Aponte, Domingo del, 1804–1853 (2 pages); José Luciano Franco, ed., *Autobiografía, cartas y versos de Juan Fran-*

The other possible writer, by contrast, is much less known: a young slave in Havana, Margarito Blanco, who, with the written permission of his master, had his own house and looked for work on the streets or in the harbor. What we know of him comes from his recorded testimony before the Military Commission in 1839: he was 22 years old, a Creole slave, married, living in the quarter Jesús María (outside the walls, but near to them and to the harbor of Havana), and he had two jobs, as a cook and a harbor worker. He had asked the authorities for permission to hold a nightly dance with a drums event (*bailar Diablito* – “dancing little devil”,⁸⁰ i.e., *abakuá* dances with *ekpe*-masquerade as a leopard [see Figs. 4a–b]) with drums at the walls of Havana.⁸¹ Not only did Margarito speak as a ‘talking commodity’; he also left some texts written in his own hand on pieces of paper.⁸² From other sources it seems that Margarito was

cisco Manzano (La Habana: Municipio de la Habana, 1937); Juan Francisco Manzano, *Autobiografía de un esclavo*, introduction, notes and modernization of the text by Ivan A. Schulman (Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, S.A., Madrid, 1975); Gera C. Burton, *Ambivalence and the Postcolonial Subject: The Strategic Alliance of Juan Francisco Manzano and Richard Robert Madden* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004); Alain Yacou, ed., *Un esclave-poète à Cuba au temps du péril noir: Autobiographie de Juan Francisco Manzano (1797–1851)* (Paris: Karthala, 2004); Matthew Pettway, *Cuban Literature in the Age of Black Insurrection: Manzano, Plácido, and Afro-Latino Religion* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2020). In addition to Manzano and the free man Gabriel de la Concepción Valdés, Plácido (1809-1844), there are some more examples of enslaved or free Black and colored writers / poets; see Francisco Calcagno, *Poetas de color* (Havana: Imprenta militar de la v. de Soler y compañía, 1978): 47-48.

80 “Declar.n del comisario del Barrio de S.n Ysidro” [Declaration of the commissar of the neighborhood of San Ysidro], La Habana, 22 de Julio de 1839 *ANC, Comisión Militar* (CM), leg. 23, no. 1 (2 Tomos): Contra los morenos, Cap.n Leon Monzon, Sub.tes José del Monte del Pino, Pilar Borrego, y Ambrosio Noriega, Sarg.to José Florencio Daván, José Andrade, José Felipe Cabrera, Agustín Toledo, Margarito Blanco, Tomas Peñalver, Eusebio de Mora, Serapio Villa, Gabriel Rodríguez Padrón, Regino Abad, Bartolomé Villena, Tadeo Abrantes, José Nemesio Jaramillo y los profugos Fran.co Valdes Nogares, y Fran.co Valdivia, acusados de haberse reunidos clandestinamente con el fin de trastornar el orden publico (1839), 1ª Pieza (Tomo I), *ANC, Comisión Militar* (CM), legajo (leg.) 23, no. 1 (2 tomos), (in the following quoted as: *ANC, Comisión Militar* (CM), legajo 23, no. 1 (2 vols.): *Contra los morenos . . .* (1839)), f. 86v–87v, f. 86r.

81 Original copies of the interrogation protocols, signed by Juan Almansa, La Habana, 13 a 15 de Julio de 1839 *ANC, Comisión Militar* (CM), legajo (leg.) 23, no. 1 (2 tomos): *Contra los morenos . . .* (1839), f. 18r–32v, f. 27v–29v [original spelling]; see: Pedro Deschamps Chapeaux, “Margarito Blanco, el ‘Oongo de Ultan’,” *Boletín del Instituto de Historia y del Archivo Nacional* 65 (1964): 95–109; Tato Quiñones, “De la causa seguida contra Margarito Blanco y otros por asociación ilícita. Barrio de Jesús María, La Habana, 1839,” in Tato Quiñones, *Asere. Nuncue Itiá. Ecobio Enyene Abacua de la ciudad de La Habana* (La Habana: Editorial José Martí, 2016): 24–31, see also: Gloria García Rodríguez, “El complot del capitán Monzón,” in García Rodríguez, *Conspiraciones y revueltas: La actividad política de los negros en Cuba (1790–1845)* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 2003): 107–13.

82 “Papeles aprehendidos á los 7. Negros q.e expresa el anterior oficio,” *ANC, CM*, leg. 23, no. 1, f. 11r–17v, f. 14r–v. Margarito stated in his deposition that he has not written these papers and it was written by a friend (a free taylor named Francito), but this is because slaves should not learn to write and read; see: “Instructiva de Margarito Blanco,” [Instruction of Margarito Blanco] La Habana, 14 de Julio de 1839 *ANC, Comisión Militar* (CM), leg. 23, no. 1 (2 Tomos): *Contra los morenos, Cap.n Leon Monzon, Sub.tes José del Monte del Pino, Pilar Borrego, y Ambrosio Noriega, Sarg.to José Florencio Daván,*

a senior member of a secret mutualistic society (*asociación clandestina*⁸³), known in Cuba as *abakuá* or *ñáñigos*.⁸⁴ He held the rank of *ocongo* or *mocongo*, considered to be the highest leader and warrior, responsible for making the sacred drum sound (which is considered the voice of the leopard). Men like Margarito Blanco worked as well as “labor contractors who used their position to provide favors and jobs to society members, but also to exploit them”.⁸⁵ The heads of the secret society were often required to sign contracts for their members in the ports.⁸⁶

For this reason, such slaves and former slaves learned to read and write. But there were also those who arrived as slaves from Africa and were already proficient in Latin alphabetical script. This was the case with the Efik people from the Cross River region between today’s Nigeria and Cameroon as well as the *ambakistas* (*ambaquistas*) or *ambacas* from the Congo and Angola regions, Black slave traders from the town of Ambaca.⁸⁷ As very active slavers and merchants in Africa, the Efik interacted with the mainly English-speaking slave traders and captains of European, Cuban, and North

José Andrade, José Felipe Cabrera, Agustín Toledo, Margarito Blanco, Tomás Peñalver, Eusebio de Mora, Serapio Villa, Gabriel Rodríguez Padrón, Regino Abad, Bartolomé Villena, Tadeo Abrantes, José Nemesio Jaramillo and los profugos Fran.co Valdes Nogares, y Fran.co Valdivia, acusados de haberse reunidos clandestinamente con el fin de trastornar el orden público (1839), 1^a Pieza (Tomo I), f. 27v–29v, f. 28v.

83 Gloria García Rodríguez, “El complot del capitán Monzón,” in García Rodríguez, *Conspiraciones y revueltas: La actividad política de los negros en Cuba (1790–1845)* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 2003): 107–13, 107.

84 Lydia Cabrera, *La sociedad secreta Abakuá, narrada por viejos adeptos* (La Habana: Ediciones C.R., 1958); Enrique Sosa Rodríguez, *Los Ñáñigos* (La Habana: Ediciones Casa de las Américas, 1982); Enrique Sosa Rodríguez, “Origen y expansión del ñáñiguismo,” in *España y Cuba en el siglo XIX*, Estudios de Historia Social 44–47 (Madrid: Ministerio de Trabajo y Cultura, 1988): 539–50; Tato Quiñones, “Los ‘Íremes’ o ‘diablitos’ de los ñáñigos cubanos,” in Tato Quiñones, *Ecorie Abakuá. Cuatro ensayos sobre los ñáñigos cubanos* (La Habana: Ediciones Unión, 1994): 13–22; Stephan Palmié, *Wizards & Scientists: Explorations in Afro-Cuban Modernity & Tradition, Durham and London* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002); María del Rosario Díaz, “The Tragedy of the Ñáñigos: Genesis of an Unpublished Book,” *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 79, no. 3–4 (2005): 229–37; Ivor L. Miller, *Voice of the Leopard: African Secret Societies and Cuba* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009); Manuel Martínez Casanova and Nery Gómez Abreu, *La Sociedad Secreta Abakúa (Visión de la única sociedad iniciática de guerreros africanos que sobrevivió en América)* (Santa Clara: Universidad Central de Las Villas, no year); Stephan Palmié, “Ekpe/Abakuá in Middle Passage: Time, Space and Units of Analysis in African American Historical Anthropology,” in *Activating the Past: Historical Memory in the Black Atlantic*, ed. Andrew Apter and Lauren Derby (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2010): 1–45.

85 Rafael López Valdés, “Abakuá,” in *The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Aviva Chomsky, Barry Carr, Alfredo Prieto and Pamela Maria Smorkaloff (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019): 201; see also his early anthropological work: Rafael López Valdés, “La Sociedad Secreta ‘Abakuá’ en un Grupo de Obreros Portuarios,” *Etnología y Folklore* 2 (1966): 5–26.

86 López Valdés, “Abakuá”: 201. In the survey of the group of men, the question of the ability to ‘read and write’ was also asked. Almost everyone could do it to varying degrees, see: “Instructiva,” *ANC, CM*, leg. 23, no. 1, f. 18r–32v (several interviews [*instructivas*]).

87 Jan Vansina, “Ambaca Society and the Slave Trade, c. 1760–1845,” *Journal of African History* 46 (2005): 1–27.



Fig. 4a–b: (a) Día de los Reyes (Epiphany) (b) Diablito (Little Devil). Both painted by Víctor Patricio de Landaluze. Public domain. Private archive of Michael Zeuske (Leipzig/Bonn); see: *Colección de artículos: Tipos y costumbres de la isla de Cuba por los mejores autores de este género. Obra ilustrada por D. Víctor Patricio de Landaluze, fototipia Taveira* (La Habana: Editorial Miguel de Villa, 1881 [Facsimile edition, La Habana: Biblioteca Nacional de Cuba José Martí, 2009]).

American slave ships, the *ambaquistas* interacted mainly with Luso-Africans and Portuguese. As slaves they were called *ladinos*. As in all enslavement societies and slavery regimes, slave traders also lived dangerously – some of them were enslaved themselves and were forced to migrate across the Atlantic as ‘talking commodities’.

One of those arrested in the case of Margarito Blanco, a free man, “Bartolomé Villena, natural del partido de Tapaste, vecino del Barrio de Jesús estramuros de esta Ciudad, Soltero de oficio albañil y de edad de diez y siete años de condición libre [Bartolomé Villena, a native of the Tapaste district, a resident of the Jesús Estramuros neighborhood of this city, single, bricklayer, age seventeen, free status]”.⁸⁸ The coroner asks him when, where and why he was arrested. The man said before the Teniente de Gobernador (coroner):

⁸⁸ “Instructiva Bartolome Villena,” *ANC, CM*, leg. 23, no. 1, La Habana, 13 de Julio de 1839, f. 18r–20r, f. 18r.



Fig. 4a–b (continued)

Preguntado: quién lo aprehendio, en que día, a que hora, porque causa y de orden de que Señor Juez, dijo: Que el capitán y dos tenientes del Barrio de Jesús María el día dies del corriente a las cinco de la tarde, hallándose en la casa de la morena Dominga su hermana; y que la causa fue porque dicho Capitán creyó que el declarante estaba reunido con otros negros que había en la Casa inmediata a la de su referida hermana, no siendo así, porque lo que sucedió fue que habiendo salido el esponente para el patio como este no tiene división y es uno mismo el de las dos casa alcanzo a ser allí varios individuos de color que estaban escribiendo y disputando a cual lo hacia mejor y acercándose a ver lo que hacían llegó entonces la justicia y les prendieron a todos sin saber la causa

Asked: who apprehended him, on what day, at what time, for what reason and by order of which Lord Judge, [Villena] said: That the captain and two lieutenants of the Barrio de Jesús María on the tenth day of the current [month] at five in the afternoon, he being in the house of the *morena* Dominga, his sister; and that the cause was because the said Captain believed that the deponent was meeting with other blacks who were in the house next door to that of his sister; but that this was not the case, because what happened was that, the speaker having left by way of the patio, which does not have a division and so is only a single one for both houses, there were several individuals of color there who were writing and arguing over which one was doing better, and he approached to see what they were doing, whereupon the judiciary arrived and arrested all of them without knowing the cause.

The very important statement for the argument of this chapter, which comes up several times in the depositions, is: “varios individuos de color que estaban escribiendo y

disputando a cual lo hacia mejor” [several individuals of color [. . .] who were writing and arguing over which one was doing it better]⁸⁹ – meaning writing and reading.

It is striking that these sources, written by enslaved people, are not texts with descriptions of living and working conditions. They are rather texts with a religious function, mixed with economic and cultural matters (chiefs of working gangs of stevedores) and, in the case of Blanco, perhaps with intentions of secret actions. But that probably corresponds to the fact that these papers were preserved. I am sure that more narrative sources of this kind will turn up in archives if we search more intensively.

9 Memories and Other Self-Representations: Individual Cases and Performances

Of course, there were contemporary self-representations of formerly enslaved people (or emancipated slaves) in the form of memories. These are also essentially based on interrogations by others (either depositions or interviews by abolitionist newspapers). But there are also memories and short life stories.

a) The *Emancipado* Lorenzo Clarke: An ex-state slave who did not want to stay in slavery Cuba

An exceptionally valuable self-representation of an ex-enslaved and later emancipated slave (*emancipado*) is that of Lorenzo Clarke (1854). He testified that he was between 35 and 38 years old in 1854 and had arrived in Cuba on the slave vessel *El Negrito* about 22 years earlier (in 1832) (see Fig. 5). Clarke was from Lagos (Oyo) and was captured there in a war between *jefes nativos* (native chiefs).⁹⁰ He had to make the passage to Cuba on the large brigantine *El Negrito* together with 560 other abducted and sold people, many of whom were women. (This brigantine was a notorious *negrero* of over 500 tons, which, among other things, had already been hijacked by the English in 1829 under the name *Octavio* and sold to a Spaniard in Sierra Leone under the name *El Negrito* for 5,000 pesos.⁹¹) On the ship, the women were separated from the men. Many of the en-

⁸⁹ “Instructiva Bartolome Villena,” *ANC, CM*, leg. 23, no. 1, La Habana, 13 de Julio de 1839, f. 18r–20r, f. 18r.

⁹⁰ Juan Pérez de la Riva, “Antiguos esclavos cubanos que regresaron a Lagos,” in *Contribución a la historia de la gente sin historia*, ed. Pedro Deschamps Chapeaux and Juan Pérez de la Riva (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1974): 163–90.

⁹¹ See the 1832 crew employment contract for this voyage: “Contrata,” Bergantin Negrito, Francisco Antonio de Sarria, capitan y maestre, La Habana, 14 de Junio de 1832, expedicion a las islas del Principe y Santomé, *ANC, Notaría Marina* 1832, f. 264v–265v. On the sale of 1829: “Certification” *ANC, Notaría Marina* 1830, f. 452r William Cole, Colony of Sierra Leone, 26 of December 1829; see also “V.ta de Buq.e” [Sale of Ship], D.n Antonio Malvan, La Habana, 10 de Julio 1830 (sale to Antonio Maria de Viniegras for 5000 pesos), *ibid.*, f. 452r–468r. The 1829 Sierra Leone acknowledgment of sale is part of the

slaved were ill and 22 people died. They were extremely cramped on the steerage decks, and it was difficult to sit down. An English cruiser raised the *Negríto* and directed it to Havana.⁹² Clarke's African name was *Ocusona* or *Okusona* (Òkúsoná = *lucumí*, meaning *nación lucumí*).⁹³ Lorenzo Clarke remembered his crossing on the slave ship *El Negríto* very well and also talked about his time in the Alameda barracks (*barracones del Consulado*) and other barracks (Consulate del Lucillo [Husillo]).⁹⁴ They were held there for 22 days, until they regained their strength. Then some of the enslaved were taken to the *Consulado del Cerro* [*barracón* Misericordia at the end of the *Paseo Militar* (today Carlos III)], where their names were noted in a book. Clarke had to work as an *emancipado* in road construction and in the construction of the railway from Havana to Güines. While building the railroad, Lorenzo became a personal slave to an American engineer named Clarke (who is also the source of Lorenzo's last name). Clarke cheated him out of 300 pesos out of earnings (*ahorros*) and a lottery win; so Lorenzo Clarke sent a complaint (*queja*) to the Captain General, who ordered him to a *síndico*. The *síndico* questioned him about his history (life history) and his status, informed him about his rights as an *emancipado* and forced the engineer to hand over the

Havana sale contract. There is a list of the crew who brought the ship to Praia, Cape Verde, and from there to Havana (38 men, very cosmopolitan, including people from Bremen, New York, Pernambuco, Ibiza, Madeira, Philadelphia, Gallinas, Cape Verde, London, Maracaibo, Bordeaux, Vienna, Faro, Baltimore, Praia, 22 de Março de 1830, Secretario do Governo Antonio Marques da Contabares, in *ibid.*, f.460r. See "Contrata," la Habana, 25 de octubre de 1830, Don Francisco Azpeitiya, segundo piloto (second pilot), for another human trafficking voyage, an "expedición de este Puerto á las Yslas de Príncipe y Santomé [expedition from this Port to the Islands of Principe and Santomé]" (f. 650v), in *ibid.*, 1830, f. 650v–651v. For the voyage that took place from June 1832, back to São Tomé; see "Contrata," La Habana, 14 de Junio de 1832, in *ibid.*, f. 264v–265v, with 9 officers, boatmen, craftsmen, a surgeon (Don José Sacramento, 25 pesos), cook as well as 9 seamen (25 pesos) and 10 novice seamen (*mozos*, 20 pesos), 1 page (15 pesos), the two 2nd officers got 50 pesos each (everything for 265r) – very high earnings.

92 Anon., "Cuban Slaves in England," *The Anti-Slavery Reporter. Under the Sanction of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society*, vol. 2, Third Series (London: Peter Jones Bolton, 1854): 234–39; Pérez de la Riva, "Antiguos esclavos cubanos que regresaron a Lagos": 163–90; Michael Zeuske and Vicent Sanz, "El Negríto y la microeconomía política de la trata negrera en el Atlántico: La arribada a puerto con un cargamento de esclavizados," in *Reflejos de la esclavitud en el arte: Imágenes de Europa y América*, ed. Aurelia Martín Casares, Rafael Benítez Sánchez-Blanco and Andrea Schiavon (Valencia: tirant humanidades, 2021): 138–60.

93 Henry B. Lovejoy, "The Registers of Liberated Africans of the Havana Slave Trade Commission: Implementation and Policy, 1824–1841," *Slavery & Abolition* 37, no. 1 (2016): 23–44, 32; see also: Henry B. Lovejoy, "The Registers of Liberated Africans of the Havana Slave Trade Commission: Transcription Methodology and Statistical Analysis," *African Economic History* 38 (2010): 107–35.

94 Henry B. Lovejoy, "New Lucumí from Òyó," in Henry B. Lovejoy, *Prieto: Yorùbá Kingship in Colonial Cuba during the Age of Revolutions* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018): 96.

money. Lorenzo received his papers as a *liberto* (newly liberated ex-slave)⁹⁵ and worked as a stevedore in the port.⁹⁶

Lorenzo Clarke returned to Lagos with other ex-enslaved/*emancipado* people.⁹⁷



Fig. 5: Slave vessel El Negrito. Privately owned; courtesy of the owner. Private archive of Michael Zeuske (Leipzig/Bonn); see also: Pablo Diener, Katherine Manthorne and François Mathurin Adalbert, Barón de Courcy, *Ilustraciones de un viaje, 1831–1833* (México: Artes de México, 1998): 29, 93; Michael Zeuske and Vicent Sanz, “El Negrito y la microeconomía política de la trata negrera en el Atlántico. La arribada a puerto con un cargamento de esclavizados,” in *Reflejos de la esclavitud en el arte. Imágenes de Europa y América*, ed. Aurelia Martín Casares, Rafael Benítez Sánchez-Blanco and Andrea Schiavon (Valencia: tirant humanidades, 2021): 139–60.

b) Ex-slave and free *morena* Belén Álvarez

The most interesting information about Africa (the Oyo Empire in what is now Nigeria) has been written down in the case of an ex-slave named Belén Álvarez. Belén,

⁹⁵ Aisnara Perera Díaz and María de los Ángeles Meriño Fuentes, “Los libertos,” in Aisnara Perera Díaz and María de los Ángeles Meriño Fuentes, *Para librarse de lazos, antes buena familia que buenos brazos: Apuntes sobre la manumisión en Cuba* (La Habana: Editorial Oriente, 2009): 152–69.

⁹⁶ Pérez de la Riva, “Antiguos esclavos cubanos que regresaron a Lagos”: 163–90, 172.

⁹⁷ Pérez de la Riva, “Antiguos esclavos cubanos que regresaron a Lagos”: 163–90.

morena libre, lucumí, was born in Africa and taken to Cuba, single and without children. She died in Havana in 1887 (one year after the final abolition of slavery) at the age of 65.⁹⁸ She had suffered from heart disease for a long time, but did not leave a will. When she died she owned two stone houses with tiled roofs, an eight-room built *solar* for rent, expensive furniture and trinkets, and a 6,500 pesos account in the *Banco Español de La Habana*. Two white caretakers were in her service. Belén was rich. For a time, she also owned and traded slaves. One slave sale is documented in a record (notary's protocol) from 1845. Belen Alvarez, as she is called in this document, sells a young mother with a six-month-old infant:

Maria Belen Alvarez morena libre viuda vecina de esta Ciudad otorgo que vendo en favor de D.a Toribia Martinez viuda vecina del Barrio de Jesus Maria extramuros una negra mi esclava nombrada Carmen de nacion Mandinga como de veinte y cinco años de edad y su hija nombrada Trinidad [. . .] expresada negra [. . .] compré á Da Ysabel Miranda [. . .] [es] labandera y planchadora [. . .] [precio] trescientoscincuenta pesos [. . .] trescientos la madre en que se halla coartada para no poder ser vendida en mayor suma

Maria Belen Alvarez, free *morena*, a widow and resident of this City, I declare that I sell in favor of Doña Toribia Martinez, a widow from the Barrio de Jesus Maria outside the walls, a black woman, my slave named Carmen of the Mandinga nation, about twenty-five years old, and her daughter named Trinidad [. . .] the said black woman [i.e. the slave] [. . .] I bought from Doña Ysabel Miranda [. . .] [she is] a laundress and ironer [. . .] [price] three hundred and fifty pesos [. . .] three hundred for the the mother, to which she is limited so she may not be sold for a larger sum.⁹⁹

Belén Álvarez had no husband and no children. As mentioned, she also left no will (*intestado* = i.e., a legal case when a person had died without a will). Her niece Evarista González y Gómez was her direct heir. However, the niece could not accept the inheritance easily. Evarista had to prove, first, that Belén's parents (Evarista's grandparents in Africa/Oyo) had been legally married and, second, that her father Agustín González really was Belén Álvarez's biological brother and Belén thus her aunt. To this end, Evarista filed a *juicio intestado* with the help of a lawyer (*procurador*) named Juan Martí. The testimonies in this court case show how much the slave trade and slavery destroyed traditional social relationships and names and transculturated the identities of those who were abducted from Africa. Belén's parents had married in Oyo according to local rites and had always stayed in Africa.¹⁰⁰ There was no written document about

98 Intestado de la morena Belén Álvarez ANC, *Escribanía de Gobierno*, leg. 864, exp. 9; see also: Ohilda Hevia Lanier, "Reconstruyendo la historia de la exesclava Belén Álvarez," in *Afrocubanas: Historia, pensamiento y prácticas culturales*, ed. Daisy Rubiera Castillo and Inés María Martiatu Terry (La Habana: Editorial Ciencias Sociales, 2011): 30–53.

99 "Venta de esclavas," La Habana, 14 de noviembre de 1845 ANC, *Notaría Marina 1845*, f. 559r–v; Belén Álvarez Belén probably could not write but had a signature; she signs this way: "Belenalbares".

100 Intestado de la morena Belén Álvarez ANC, *Escribanía de Gobierno*, leg. 864, exp. 9, f. 112r–118r, Juan Martí, La Habana, 15 de noviembre de 1887 (Martí opens *juicio intestado* and explains his motives as well as the procedure, questions and the results of questioning the witness).

the African wedding. Moreover, there was nothing written about the illegal import (after 1820 the Atlantic slave trade was illegal in the Spanish Empire) as abductees of an *expedición negrera*, as lawyer Juan Martí emphasized several times, there “no había [. . .] traza alguna”¹⁰¹ – there was not a trace – of a written form (a lie). Evarista was therefore unable to prove immediately in written form that her father and Belén were the children of a legitimately married couple and that they were actually biological siblings. However, the *Ley de Enjuiciamiento Civil* allowed witnesses to be questioned who might have seen the wedding and who could also testify that Evarista’s aunt (Belén) and father (Agustín) were siblings. The testimonies state that the parents of the enslaved siblings were Esin (or Esí) and Dadá and that Agustín had borne the name Oyó and Belén Luoco in Oyo. According to their statements, both siblings (and the witnesses) came from the “tribu de Oyó”, i.e., from the famous Oyó empire (or Oyo) in today’s Nigeria, had arrived in Cuba on the same (illegal) slave ship and had been sold to different owners there. As urban house slaves they bore the surnames (*apellidos*) Álvarez and González. Agustín was married to María Loreto Gomez (Evarista’s mother). Slaves should marry; then they were considered “casados y seguros [married and safe]”.¹⁰² Although all friends and other relatives knew that both were siblings and treated them as such, it was difficult to provide legal proof for Martí’s “slavery reasons” mentioned above. The lawyer searched and found five elderly former slaves. All of them lived in Regla near to Havana and belonged to the “tribu de Oyó”. They came from the same area in Africa and had been abducted with the siblings in the same slave vessel. All had lived in the same African *caserío* (settlement) as Agustín and Belén’s parents and had seen their wedding. Martí made them testify. A man who apparently used an African name as surname, Manuel Curunié, for example, remembered and stated: “Preguntado si conocio a Agustin y Belen en Africa y á los padres de ellos dijo: que vivian muy inmediatos y por eso los conocia y sabe cuanto ha dicho [Asked if he knew Agustin and Belen in Africa and their parents, he said: that they lived very close and that is why he knew them and knows how much he has said]”. A memory and a narrative presentation of a life history covering several generations (and their African roots) very close to the time of slavery and of life *in* slavery.

c) Ex-Slave and Free *moreno* Antonio Pérez

The ex-slave Antonio Pérez declares paternity of a boy and gives the child his African genealogy as a memory and as part of his life history:

[. . .] Ante mi [. . .] comparece el moreno libre Antonio Perez, sin segundo apellido, natural del pueblo de Yisá, de nacion Lucumí, en Africa, soltero, de edad de cincuenta y un años, labrador de campo y de este domicilio, [. . .] y dice: que con motivo de las relaciones amorosas que llevó con la de su clase, morena libre Regina Pared, natural y vecina de esta ciudad, soltera, mayor de

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, f. 115v.

¹⁰² María del Carmen Barcia, “Desbrozando caminos para el estudio de la familia esclava en Cuba,” *Anales de Caribe* (2004): 79.

edad, y ya difunta, de sus resultas dió luz la misma el dia veinte de Diciembre de mil ochocientos setenta y ocho [1878] un niño, que cual hijo de ella y de padre no conocido, fué bautizado [. . .] con el nombre de Julio Domingo [. . .]. Respecto a dicho niño, por la presente [. . .] otorga: que declara y reconoce por su hijo natural al nombrado Julio Domingo [. . .] y por lo tanto le corresponde el derecho á los alimentos y educacion, y á sucederle como heredero forzoso [. . .] facultándole para que desde luego pueda usar su apellido; queriendo dejar consignado á los efectos oportunos que los abuelos paternos del niño reconocido eran Yícocun Hova y Fá Chipe, ambos naturales de dicho pueblo de Yisá, y ya difuntos [. . .]

Before me [. . .] appears the *moreno* Antonio Perez, without a second surname, a native of the town of Yisá, of the Lucumí nation, in Africa, single, fifty-one years old, a farm worker from this place [. . .] and says: that with respect to the amorous relations he had with a free *morena* of his class, Regina Pared, native and resident of this city, single, of legal age, and already deceased, as a result of which she gave birth on December twentieth, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-eight [1878], to a child, who as a son of hers and of an unknown father, was baptized [. . .] with the name of Julio Domingo [. . .]. With respect to the said child, hereby [. . .] [Antonio] declares: that he declares and recognizes as his natural son¹⁰³ the aforementioned Julio Domingo [. . .] who therefore has a right to food and education, and to succeed him as his legal heir [. . .] – so that as of now he is entitled to use his last name; wanting to record for the appropriate purposes that the paternal grandparents of the acknowledged child were Yícocun Hova and Fá Chipe, both natives of said town of Yisá, and already deceased [. . .]¹⁰⁴

The memory of the father Antonio is linking a sugar mill in middle Cuba and a barrio in Cienfuegos, where his ‘natural son’ Julio Domingo was living, with the collapsed Oyo empire in what is now Nigeria – what a transatlantic life history!

d) *Negra* María de los Reyes Castillo Bueno

These biographical transatlantic references to Africa form something like a known, but hidden tradition in Cuba. Reyita (María de los Reyes Castillo Bueno, 1902–1997), who told her biography and life story to her daughter Daisy Rubiera, a famous Black historian of Cuba, remembers her grandmother from Angola.¹⁰⁵ Daisy Rubiera’s mother, nicknamed Reyita, told her daughter what she had heard about the fate of her beloved grandmother, nicknamed Tatica, as a child. Tatica was from Cabinda (Portuguese Congo). She was kidnapped from her village as a child and, together with two sisters, crossed the Atlantic, and was taken to a sugar plantation (*hacienda* Hechavarria) in eastern Cuba.

¹⁰³ Karen Y. Morrison, “Creating an Alternative Kinship: Slavery, Freedom and the Nineteenth-Century Afro-Cuban hijos naturales,” *Journal of Social History* 41, no. 1 (2007): 55–80.

¹⁰⁴ “Acta de reconocimiento de hijo natural por el M.eno [Moreno] Antonio Perez,” Cienfuegos, 28 de Febrero de 1885 *AHPC, Protocolos José Rafael de Villafuerte y Castellanos*, 1885, t. 1 (Enero–Abril), fols. 164r–166v (escritura no. 27).

¹⁰⁵ Michael Zeuske, “Schwarze Erzähler – weiße Literaten. Erinnerungen an die Sklaverei, Mimesis und Kubanertum,” in *Ich, Reyita. Ein kubanisches Leben*, ed. Daisy Rubiera Castillo, trans. Max Zeuske (Zurich: Rotpunktverlag, 2000): 211–62 (Spanish original: Daisy Rubiera Castillo, *Reyita, sencillamente (Testimonio de una negra cubana nonagenaria)* [La Habana: Prolibros, 1997]; in English: *Reyita. The Life of a Black Cuban Woman in the Twentieth Century. By María de los Reyes Castillo Bueno, as Told to her Daughter Daisy Rubiera Castillo* [Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000]).

One of her daughters, Isabel, Reyita's mother, was later a domestic slave and raped by a male member of the *amo* family at the Hechavarría sugar mill. The owners had the surname (*apellidos*) Castillo Hechavarría. When slavery came to an end (abolition in 1886), the slaves of the Hechavarría plantation had to adopt the Hechavarría name as their civil surname. Since many members and relatives of Reyita's family were *mambises* (an African-Cuban slang term for fighters for Independence) in the 1895 War of Independence, they thereafter, as veterans, changed their name from that of the enslaver and enlisted in the registers with the surname Castillo Bueno.¹⁰⁶

e) Esteban Montejo – The *cimarrón* Boy who Remembers his Life in Slavery Eighty Years Later

There are also less timely 'memories from the future'. The most important memory from the future is the *testimonio* by Esteban Montejo 1860 (1868)–1974 (Fig. 6). The Cuban revolutions in the twentieth century (1930s, 1950s) took place at a time when many people from the time of Atlantic slavery (1500–1886) were still alive in Cuba or at least the first and second generations of their descendants were active. Ex-slaves and their descendants, too. There is a tradition among Cuban intellectuals dealing with the subject of slaves, slavery, and the slave trade to seek advice from informants from this group.¹⁰⁷ They listened to their narratives and wrote them down. The informants were a *f fuente viva* (a 'living source'). The writer Miguel Barnet founded a book series using this title (*Colección la Fuente Viva*) in his foundation (*Fundación Fernando Ortiz*) and published a book with this title.¹⁰⁸ Since the plantation proprietor and slave-owning writer Anselmo Suárez y Romero (who turned the life of the slaves on his sugar mill *Suriname* into literature) this tradition was an important basis for all research – including the works of Lydia Cabrera and Fernando Ortiz and many others. After all, Ortiz published a book with the title *Los esclavos negros* and not with the title "Slavery" or "The Slave Trade".¹⁰⁹ Ortiz subordinated the two structural concepts to his cultural history of people *in* slavery – even if it did not yet use the concept of life history.

Miguel Barnet did so, too. Esteban Montejo, in the parts of the book about the slavery era, recalled the 'normal' life of slaves in the *barracones* (barracoons: the nineteenth-century 'modern' plantation slave housing) (see Fig. 7). He talks less about work than about social relationships, resistance, dance, music, festivals, women, sex,

¹⁰⁶ See "Anmerkungen," in Rubiera Castillo, ed., *Ich, Reyita*: 189–96, 189, footnotes 2 and 3; Zeuske, "Schwarze Erzähler – weiße Literaten": 211–62.

¹⁰⁷ For a more general picture see: Martin Lienhard, *Disidentes, rebeldes, insurgents: Resistencia indígena y negra en América Latina. Ensayos de historia testimonial* (Vervuert: Iberoamericana, 2008).

¹⁰⁸ Miguel Barnet, *La fuente viva* (La Habana: Editora Abril, 2019) [first edition: 1970].

¹⁰⁹ Fernando Ortiz, *Hampa afro-cubana: Los negros esclavos. Estudio sociológico y de derecho público* (La Habana: Revista Bimestre Cubana, 1916) [rev. edition: Fernando Ortiz, *Los negros esclavos* (La Habana: Ed. de Ciencias Sociales, 1975)].



Fig. 6: Photo of Esteban Montejo. Collection of images. Private archive of Michael Zeuske (Leipzig/Bonn).

food, colors, clothes, love affairs, bets, Chinese coolies, *naciones*, as well as short escapes to the pubs (*cantinas*) surrounding the plantations to do business, drink, and gamble. According to the book's perspective, there were also joys in slavery. The problem with this form of memory, self-presentation and its being written down by a white writer is that we do not know what Esteban Montejo portrays in a glorified way from the perspective of an old man (who was between 90 and 100 years old when narrating [appendix 4]) and what the writer did not include in his documentation of the narration. Despite these reservations, the book is the best, most colorful and most interesting account of the inner life of the slaves in the barracoons on sugar-plantations of the second slavery. It is also a coherent biography of important stages of an actor's life history, something like an aria in a huge choir of less individual subaltern voices and profiles.

In addition to a chapter on the 1895 War of Independence and the involvement of sons of enslaved mothers, such as Esteban Santa Teresa (this was his 'first' slave name, because he was born and lived as a formally 'free' boy on the sugar mill Santa Teresa), a later chapter shows that not much had changed for ex-slaves and black



Fig. 7: Ingenio with barracón. Ingenio Unión (Cantero/Laplante). Private archive of Michael Zeuske (Leipzig/Bonn). Taken from: Luis Miguel García Mora and Antonio Santamaría García, eds., *Los Ingenios. Colección de vistas de los principales ingenios de azúcar de la Isla de Cuba* (Madrid: CEDEX_CEHOPU; CSIC, Fundación MAPFRE Tavera y EDICIONES Doce Calles, S.L., 2005): 182.

sugar workers in the ‘post-slavery’ labor regimes.¹¹⁰ Esteban Montejo, as a *mambí* (freedom fighter), also changed his slaver surname after the War of Independence and entered the civil register with the status of two *apellidos*: Esteban Montejo y Mera.¹¹¹ There is a slave who could probably tell more about the birth and early life of Esteban Santa Teresa. In a notary’s protocol we can read:

Sagua la Grande en veinticuatro de noviembre [1869] . . . ante mi [. . .] compareció D. Francisco Santos de Lamadrid, de este vecindario [. . .] dijo: que con poder bastante [. . .] de D. Tomás Ribalta [. . .] ahorra de cautiverio y servidumbre y dá libertad á la negra gangá nombrada Trinidad Machado, como de cincuenta años y perteneciente á la dotación del Yngenio Santo Tomás propiedad de su representado; y procede por la suma de mil ochenta y ocho escudos á sean quinientos

¹¹⁰ The latest German edition: Miguel Barnet, *Der Cimarrón. Die Lebensgeschichte eines entflohenen Negersklaven aus Cuba, von ihm selbst erzählt*, trans. Lisa Grüneisen (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1999); English translation: Miguel Barnet, *Biography of a Runaway Slave*, trans. W. Nick Hill (Evanston: Curbstone/Northwestern University Press, 2016).

¹¹¹ Zeuske, “Schwarze Erzähler – weiße Literaten”: 211–62.

cuarenta y cuatro pesos que de dicha morena ha recibido el otorgante en monedas corrientes a su satisfacción [. . .]. Fran.co S. de Lamadrid

Sagua la Grande, the twenty-fourth day of November [1869] . . . before me [. . .] appeared D.[on] Francisco Santos de Lamadrid, of this neighborhood [. . .] [and] said: that with sufficient power [. . .] of D.[on] Tomás Ribalta [. . .] he saves from captivity and servitude and gives freedom to the black *gangá* woman named Trinidad Machado, about fifty years old and belonging to the staff of the Yngenio Santo Tomás [the other sugar mill owned by Tomás Ribalta, MZ], his client's property; and further that the grantor has received from the said *morena* the sum of one thousand eighty eight escudos, or five hundred forty four pesos, in current coins to his satisfaction [. . .] Fran.co S. de Lamadrid.¹¹²

Unfortunately, we have no other sources about and from Trinidad Machado.

10 Body Markers and Corporal Representations: Dancing Devils

Special cases of self-representations were body markers, performances, and religious masquerades. They are special because they are not written texts, but visualizations. Almost all enslaved people from Africa had body markings and/or tattoos, denture mutilations, and scarifications.¹¹³ In Africa, these were primarily affiliation and status markers.¹¹⁴ Raid enslavers and slave traders in Africa and – as Atlantic slave traders – on the coasts of Africa recognized enslaved people based on these markers and assigned them to *naciones*. Enslaved people on ships formed groups, often lifelong friend-

112 N.o 284 “Libertad.”, Sagua la Grande, 24 de Noviembre de 1869, *Archivo Histórico Provincial de Villa Clara*, Santa Clara (AHPVS), Protocolos Notariales de Antonio Ponce, 1869 Enero-Diciembre, f. 290v–291v.

113 Andrew Apter and Lauren Derby, eds., *Activating the Past: Historical Memory in the Black Atlantic* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2010); João José Reis and Beatriz Gallotti Mamigonian, “Nagô and Mina: The Yoruba Diaspora in Brazil,” in *The Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World*, ed. Toyin Falola and Matt Childs (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004): 77–110; Sandra Estévez Rivero, Pedro Castro Monterrey and Olga Portuondo Zúñiga, eds., *Por la identidad del negro cubano* (Santiago de Cuba: Ediciones Caserón, 2011); Michael Zeuske, *Sklavenhändler, Negreros und Atlantikkreolen: Eine Weltgeschichte des Sklavenhandels im atlantischen Raum* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015); José Antonio Piqueras, ed., *Orden político y gobierno de esclavos: Cuba en la época de la segunda esclavitud y de su legado* (Valencia: Centro Francisco Tomás y Valiente UNED Alzira; Fundación Instituto de Historia Social, 2016).

114 Paul E. Lovejoy, “Scarification and the Loss of History in the African Diaspora,” in *Activating the Past: Historical Memory in the Black Atlantic*, ed. Andrew Apter and Lauren Derby (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2010): 99–138.

ships and quasi-kinship relationships (*carabelas*) based on these visual identification markers.¹¹⁵ Those who were enslaved by Iberian slave traders and slave owners as well as ex-slaves adopted the term associated with their respective *nación* and activated the African symbols, here the tattoos, dermographs and corporal markers/scarifications, of their life histories for their re-socialization in the Americas (see Figs. 4a–b). In the religious masquerades for (permitted) catholic processions/celebrations, the masked religious leaders of the legal (*cabildos*¹¹⁶) and illegal associations of ex-slaves, free blacks as well as *pardos* and *mulatos* presented themselves as cultural counter-hegemony. Free ex-slaves also formed one of the first street cultures in the world and dressed/masked in the latest fashions (see Fig. 8). This was *transculturación*.¹¹⁷

But there was also control and oppression: The latest technologies were also used to recognize escaped slaves, to fight diseases/epidemics or to prove racist theories through visualization. Often all three problem areas together.¹¹⁸

One of the many descriptions of body markers and their use for control and as emerging biotechnology for person recognition is that of a *cimarrón* named Julián macuá in the *depósito de esclavos* [penal depot]: “como de 28. a.s buena estatura, embuelto en carnes, cabal dentadura y afilados los de arriba, rallitas [rayitas] en la f. [ren]te dijo ser de D. José Maria de la Cruz: vecino del Aguac.te [about 28 years old, good build, muscular, good teeth and filed the upper [incisors] to a point, scratches

115 Gabino La Rosa Corzo, *Tatuados: Deformaciones étnicas de los cimarrones en Cuba* (La Habana: Fundación Fernando Ortiz, 2011).

116 *Cabildos* were corporate councils with their own houses as part of Spain's political culture; see: “Expediente donde se relacionan cabildos de distintos barrios, con sus nombres, calles donde hacen sus diversiones y capataces y matronas de que se componen,” *GSC, Cabildo*, leg. 1677, no. 83995 (1843); “Relación de Cabildos del cuarto Distrito,” *GSC, Cabildo*, leg. 1677, no. 84010 (1868); “Expediente en que se solicita la aprobación de capataces y matronas para el Cabildo de la nación Carabalí bricamo,” *GSC, Cabildo*, leg. 1677, no. 83987 (1864); “Tomas de razón de las patentes de capataces y matronas de los Cabildos de la Santísima Trinidad y de Arará Magino Segundo,” *GSC, Cabildo*, leg. 1677, no. 83982 (1865); “Expediente en que el Cabildo de la nación carabalí Isicuato y titulado S. Benito de Palermo solicita permiso para efectuar la reunión con objeto de proceder a la elección de capataz,” *GSC, Cabildo*, leg. 1677, no. 83999 (1863); see also: Rafael L. López Valdés, *Pardos y morenos esclavos y libres en Cuba y sus instituciones en el Caribe Hispano* (San Juan de Puerto Rico: Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe, 2007).

117 Fernando Coronil, “Transculturation and the Politics of Theory: Countering the Center, Cuban Counterpoint,” in *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, ed. Fernando Ortiz (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995): IX–LVI.

118 Henry Dumont, *Antropología y patología comparadas de los negros esclavos*, trans. L. Castellanos (La Habana: Calle L, esq. a 27, 1922 [1876]); Gabino La Rosa Corzo, “Henri Dumont y la imagen antropológica del esclavo africano en Cuba,” in *Historia y memoria: sociedad, cultura y vida cotidiana en Cuba, 1878–1917*, ed. José Amador and Fernando Coronil (La Habana: Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo de la Cultura Cubana Juan Marinello; Latin American and Caribbean Studies Program of the University of Michigan, 2003): 175–82; Michael Zeuske, “Doktoren und Sklaven: Sklavereiboom und Medizin als ‘kreolische Wissenschaft’ auf Kuba,” *Saeculum* 65, no. 1 (2015): 177–205.



Fig. 8: *Negros curros* (Free Blacks). Painted by Víctor Patricio de Landaluze. Public domain. Private archive of Michael Zeuske (Leipzig/Bonn); see: *Colección de artículos: Tipos y costumbres de la isla de Cuba por los mejores autores de este género. Obra ilustrada por D. Víctor Patricio de Landaluze, fototipia Taveira* (La Habana: Editorial Miguel de Villa, 1881 [Facsimile edition, La Habana: Biblioteca Nacional de Cuba José Martí, 2009]).

[decorative scars] on the forehead he says he is [slave] to Don José María de la Cruz: citizen of Aguacate”.¹¹⁹ (Fig. 9)

¹¹⁹ *Negros cimarrones que quedaron existentes en las obras de caminos en 31. de Diciem. de 1830* (La Habana), *Noviem.e 25* (1831) *ANC, Miscelánea de Libros*, no. 2370, f. 190r.

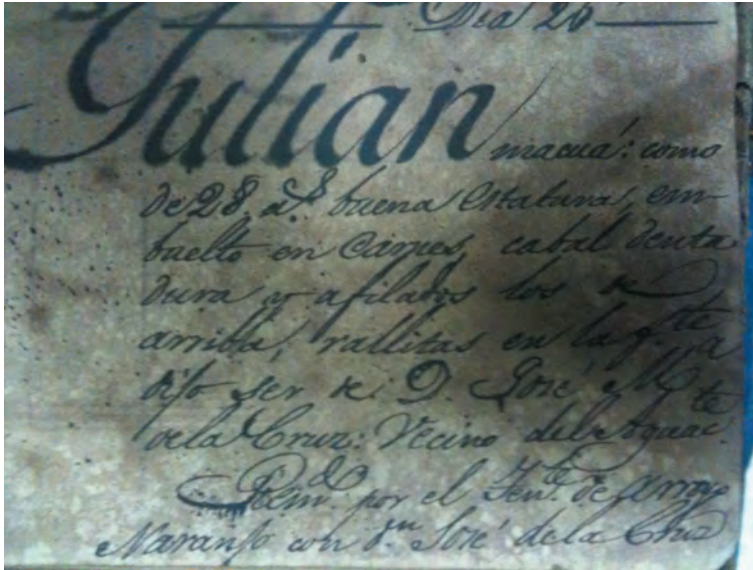


Fig. 9: Description of a *cimarrón* named Julián. From ANC, Miscelánea de Libros, no. 2370: Negros cimarrones que quedaron existentes en las obras de caminos en 31. de Diciem. de 1830 (La Habana), Noviem.e 25 (1831), f. 190r. Private archive of Michael Zeuske (Leipzig/Bonn).

11 A Short Conclusion

Self-representations of enslaved people *in* slavery are not a myth. They existed. They are in the archives. But they are extremely rare, hard to find and, with very few exceptions, not written by slaves themselves. The words of slaves were almost always heard (and written down) by men in functions of control and oppression or members of slavery society who benefited from slaves and slavery/the slave trade or had jobs in and because of slavery as an economic system. Few were friendly to enslaved people. But there are touching examples of people who listened to slaves or ex-slaves and wrote down their words. It is still a kind of non-history, primarily *in* slavery.¹²⁰ Immediately after the formal end of slavery, ex-slaves themselves, first of all women, started to use the notary offices.¹²¹ We can start to fill this void of non-history with

¹²⁰ Michael Zeuske, “Die Nicht-Geschichte von Versklavten als Archiv-Geschichte von ‘Stimmen’ und ‘Körpern’,” *Jahrbuch für Europäische Überseegeschichte* 16 (2016): 65–114.

¹²¹ Rebecca J. Scott and Michael Zeuske, “Property in Writing, Property on the Ground: Pigs, Horses, Land, and Citizenship in the Aftermath of Slavery, Cuba, 1880–1909,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History. An International Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (2002): 669–99; Rebecca J. Scott and Michael Zeuske, “Le ‘droit d’avoir des droits’. Les revendications des ex-esclaves à Cuba (1872–1909),” *Annales HSS*, no. 3 (2004): 521–45.

life histories, depositions, images, and artifacts, as well as reports on legal and illegal associations (often connected with the so-called slave religions, such as *santería*, *palo monte*, *vudú*, *espiritismo*, *abakuá*, ancestor invocations, etc.¹²²). I wish we could fill the void with music, performances, songs, rhythms and lyrics too, but this extremely interesting type of sources is almost impossible to date at all.

Appendix

1) Examinations

At Nassau, New Providence, between the 8th and 15th of February 1841; before the Governor, Colonel Francis Cockburn, the Hon. W.^m Hamlyn, a member of H.M.'s Council of Collectors of H.M.'s Customs; Robert Duncome Esq.^{re}, Police Magistrate of the Colony, Charles R. Nesbitt Esq.^{re} Provincial Secretary, and Keeper of the Records, and John Richardson Esq.^{re}, Principal Medical Officer, and which took place in consequence of a Letter, a copy of which is hereto attached from David Turnbull Esq.^{re}, Her Britannic Majesty's Consul and Agent for Captured Slaves at Havana, referring to the treatment of certain Africans, on their passage from Africa to Havana, by one Vicente Morales, the Master of a Slave Vessel called "Jesus Maria" and which was captured by Her Majesty's Ship "Ringdone" [. . .] [a huge list of crimes and raped as well as killed children follows; here are some excerpts] No. 139. Crossy. – an African Girl of about the age of 14 years, one of the Witnesses named in the Despatch, being examined through an Interpreter named Thomas Weatherfield, a Private Soldier in H. M.'s 2.d W.I. Regiment [a colored or Black soldier, MZ], states that while on board the "Jesus Maria", Manual [sic], an African, one of the Captain's servants broke a Demyohn [a clay bottle, MZ] containing Rum, on account of which the Captain, Vicente Morales, took a stick and severely beat him, which caused his Death, in about two days after, as the Examinant believes, and that the Cotton steeped in Rum and Gunpowder was put up the Fundament of several of the Africans for the avowed purpose of destroying worms.- No. 150.- Mahuma and 146 Mamboisi, African Females about 12 years of age, examined, and fully corroborate the foregoing statement of Crossy No. 139. No. 147.-Cunha a Female, -No. 7 Barron and No. 3 Duba, Males, also corroborate the statement of Crossy in the fullest manner. In reference to the cruelties and abuses committed on the Females on board the Schooner "Jesus Maria" and alluded to in the Despatch the following examinations were taken viz:

122 Joel James [Figarola], José Millet and Alexis Alarcón, *El Vodú en Cuba* (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 1998); Margerite Fernández Olmos and Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert, *Creole Religions of the Caribbean: An Introduction from Vodou and Santería to Obeah and Espiritismo* (New York: New York University Press, 2003); Jesús Fuentes [Guerra] and Grisel Gómez Gómez, *Cultos afrocubanos: Un estudio etnolingüístico* (La Habana: Ed. de Ciencias Sociales, 1994); Fuentes Guerra, *La nganga africana: Un tratado de magia blanca y medicina tradicional* (Cienfuegos: Ediciones Mecenás, 2000); Fuentes Guerra and Armin Schwegler, *Lengua y ritos del Palo Monte Mayombe. Dioses cubanos y sus fuentes africanas* (Frankfurt am Main/Madrid: Vervuert/Iberoamericana, 2005); Claudia Rauhut, *Santería und ihre Globalisierung in Kuba: Tradition und Innovation in einer afrokubanischen Religion* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2012); Montserrat Becerril García and Anne-Marie Brenot, *Diccionario negro de Cuba. Palabras y testimonios del siglo XIX* (Madrid/Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert-Iberoamericana, 2016).

No. 167. Jumer, African Girl, about 12 years, examined and states that no Spaniard, or other Person had any connection with her.

No. 148. Jaddy, an African Girl about 14 years examined, states that one of the sailors of the “Jesus Maria”, had connection with her against her will, and that she was previously a Virgin.

No. 147. Cunha, a Girl about 14 years of age examined, states that one of the crew of the “Jesus Maria”, a Black Man, forced her to have connection with him, and against her will.

No. 171. Mamber, a Girl about 11 years of age, states that one of the Crew of the “Jesus Maria” held her while another had connection with her, they were black men, she was much hurt at this time.

No. 168.-Mania, a Girl about 13 years of age, examined, states that the Captain of the “Jesus Maria” held her nose and mouth to keep her from screaming and had connection with her, she was hurt at the time.

No. 140.-Matta, a Girl about 15 years of age, states that a Black Man, one of the Crew of the “Jesus Maria” held her mouth and beat her with a Rope to have connection with her, and that she cried after the Rape had been perpetrated.

No. 157.-Lah, a Girl about 11 years of age, states that one of the Sailors of the “Jesus Maria” threatened to kill her, if she did not allow him to have connection with her and that he hurt her very much at the time. [. . .]

Examinations taken at the African Hospital on the 9th February 1841, through Interpreters named Jenny Colebrooke and Bella Dalzell.

No. 47.-Cattaway, a boy about 8 years of age examined and states that a boy named Quallabo was thrown into the Sea, by order of the Captain of the Slave Schooner “Jesus Maria”, and drowned, in consequence of the Boy refusing to take medicine: – this examinant fully corroborates the statement of Crossy No. 139 regarding the murder of Manuel.

No. 2.-Fooly, a Boy about 12 years of age, states that he saw Quallabo thrown into the Sea and drowned, it was by orders of the Captain of the “Jesus Maria”, he was thrown overboard by the Sailors.”¹²³

2) Representación al Señor Alcalde Ordinario [Representation to the Lord Mayor] (1818)¹²⁴

Primeramente diga como es verdad que lo compré en la costa de Africa en el año de mil ochocientos, y desde entonces lo apliqué á mi servicio.

2 Ytt [Item, MZ]. Como tambien es cierto que lo puse á aprehender el oficio de herrero en una fortaleza inglesa q.e está, en la misma costa de Africa, y en efecto aprehendió bien este oficio y arte.

3 Ytt. Como lo es que situado yo en esta Ciudad y antes de casarme, tenia yo una herreria en mi propia casa, en la que p.r mi cuenta, y a mi vista trabajaba el q.e absuelve.

4 Ytt. Como tambien es verdad q.e luego q.e me case, quité aquella herreria, y apliqué al q.e absuelve como antes a mi servicio domestico.

¹²³ Attachment of a letter from Francis Cockburn of New Providence, Nassau, Bahamas, February 24, 1841 to Lord John Russell (original copy) *Archivo Histórico Nacional*, Madrid (AHN), Estado, Trata de negros, leg. 8020/45, no. 4.

¹²⁴ “Representación al Señor Alcalde Ordinario,” La Habana y Enero 31 de 1818 *ANC, Escribanía de Daumy*, leg. 370, no. 1 (1818): Daniel Botefeur, contra su esclavo Roberto sobre hurto, f. 7r–9r (original spelling).

5 Ytt. Como tambien es cierto q.e le entregué las llaves de mis almacenes de azucar, café, y otros efectos q.e guardaba en aquellos.

6 Ytt. Como tambien es verdad q. era el único esclavo de / [f. 8v] mi confianza, y p.r este motivo estaba encargado de barrer y asear diariam.te el cuarto escritorio, y atender la cama del dependiente q.e allí dormia, p.r cuyo fin tomaba libremente la llave para hacer este servicio en dicho escritorio, donde entraba y salia sin embarazo.

7 Ytt. Diga como es verdad q.e en dicho cuarto escritorio, q.e está en el descanso de la escalera, tengo una caja grande de hierro en que guardo todo mi dinero.

8 Ytt. Diga como es verdad que habrá ocho meses mas o menos q.e lo llamé un dia para q.e viera y examinara la dicha caja y su maquina, y en efecto abrió, desarmó la cerradura, untó aceyte á sus piezas, limpiandolas, cuya operacion executó delante de mi, hasta volver á armar la cerradura y dexarla como estaba.

9 Ytt. Como es cierto q.e todos los domingos le daba yo ocho reales [1 peso de a ocho¹²⁵] para cigarros, los que gastaba en este objeto y en su muger é hijos mis esclavos.

10 Ytt. Como tambien es cierto q.e yo le visto á el y á su muger con todo aseo, q.e cuanto me ha pedido siempre tanto le he facilitado: que le he advertido constantemente q.e me pidiese quanto necesitara, y en / [f. 9r] efecto siempre la daba las cosas q.e me pedia.

11 Ytt. Diga como es cierto q.e yo tenia prevenido q.e si alguna persona le hacia algun regalo, especialmente de dinero, o si lo adquiria p.r algun otro motivo justo, me lo dixese, me lo enseñare, no para cogerlo yo, sino para saber con q.e titulo ó razon habia adquirido.

12 Ytt. Como es verdad que nunca me dió aviso de que tuviere dinero alguna; y como tambien le es q.e preguntandole yo una vez si tenia dinero, me contestó que no, haciendome la reconvenccion de q.e ¿como podia èl tener dinero?

13 Ytt. Diga como es cierto que habrá un año y medio que se me desaparecieron dos pares de pantalones de casimir nuevos del todo; y q.e preguntandole yo p.r ellos me contestó que los habia tomado un cuñado mio.

14 Ytt. Como tambien es verdad que algun tiempo despues de esta ocurrencia, y durmiendo el q.e contesta en una casa extramuros, donde yo tenia unos negros bosales, lo sorprendí una mañana en que estaba vestido con un par de aquellos pantalones.

15 Ytt. Como es verdad q.e habiendolo yo mandado á una diligencia desde dicha casa extramuros á la q.e tengo en esta Ciudad, al presentarse el q.e absuelve á mi muger vestido con los mismos pantalones, dixo ésta sorprendida, esos son los pantalones que decias tu haber tomado mi hermano.

16 Ytt. Diga como es cierto que habiendome dicho, habrá tres ó / [f. 9v] cuatro meses, q.e queria ganar jornal, me le niegué á ello diciendole que no estaba en necesidad de tal cosa. –

17 Ytt. Diga como es cierto que habiendome dicho q.e tenia quien lo comprara, le di papel p.r tres dias, el q.e me devolvió el q.e contesta al cabo de media hora, pidiendome perdon.

18 Ytt. Diga quien le ha dado dinero para libertarse á sí mismo, á su muger, y a sus hijos segun lo ha dicho en el Tribunal.

19 Ytt. Diga de donde ha adquirido tanta cantidad como necesita para libertarse él, su muger y cuatro hijos.

125 Carlos Marichal, “The Spanish-American Silver Peso: Export Commodity and Global Money of the Ancien Regime, 1500–1800,” in *From Silver to Cocaine: Latin American Commodity Chains and the Building of the World Economy, 1500–2000*, ed. Steven Topik, Carlos Marichal and Frank Zephyr (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006): 25–52.

20 Ytt. Expresé claramente, y sobre esto llamo la atención del S.or Asesor el origen de la adquisición del dinero, los medios de haberlo proporcionado, el tiempo q.e hace q.e lo este juntando, la cantidad q.e tenga, quien es su depositario en el día, quien lo ha sido hasta aquí, sobre lo cual no se omitirá circunstancia alguna.

21 Ytt. Diga como es cierto q.e compré á la muger del q.e absuelve en la costa de Africa, bosal, q.e en mi poder se casaron, y q.e los dos no han conocido otro amo q.e yo.

Ytt [sin numeración] Diga como es verdad q.e nunca lo he separado de mi lado que siempre ha estado destinado á mi servicio, q.e nunca ha ganado jornal, y q.e ha sido el criado de todas mis confianzas. Havana y Febrero 26 de 1818.-----

Daniel Botefeur

D.^r Sebastian Fernandez de Velasco

Firstly I state that it is true that I bought him on the coast of Africa in the year one thousand eight hundred, and from then on, I employed him in my service.

2 Item. Just as it is also true that I put him out to learn the trade of blacksmith in an English fortress that is on the same coast of Africa, and in effect he learned this trade and art well.

3 Item. As it is that located in this City and before I got married, I had a forge in my own house, in which on my own account, and in my own sight, the one who is acquitted worked.

4 Item. As it is also true that after I got married, I removed that forge, and I employed the one who is acquitted as before to my domestic service.

5 Item. As it is also true that I gave him the keys to my stores of sugar, coffee, and other effects that I kept in them.

6 Item. As it is also true that he was the only slave I trusted, and for this reason he was in charge of sweeping and cleaning the writing room daily, and tending the bed of the clerk who slept there, for which purpose he freely took the key to perform this service in said room, where she went in and out without embarrassment.

7 Item. I also state that it is true that in said writing room, which is on the landing of the stairs, I have a large iron box in which I keep all my money.

8 Item. I also state that it is true it will have been about eight months ago that I called him one day to see and examine the said box and its mechanism, and in effect he opened, disassembled the lock, oiled its pieces, cleaning them, which operation he carried out in front of me, until I put the lock back together and left it as it was.

9 Item. As it is true that every Sunday, I gave him eight reales [=1 *peso de a ocho reales*, peso of eight reales¹²⁶] for cigars, which he spent on this object and on his wife and children, my slaves.

10 Item. As it is also true that I dress him and his wife with all cleanliness, that whatever he has asked of me I have given him: that I kept telling him to ask me for whatever he needed, and in effect always have him the things he asked me for.

11 Item. I also state that it is true that I warned him that if someone gave him a gift, especially money, or if he acquired it for some other just reason, he should tell me, he should show it to me, not to take it myself, but to know for what cause or reason he had acquired it.

12 Item. As it is true that he never gave me notice that he had any money; and as it is also [true] that when I asked him once if he had money, he answered no, putting to me the question of how he could have money?

126 Marichal, "The Spanish-American Silver Peso": 25–52.

13 Item. I also state that it is true that about a year and a half ago two pairs of brand-new cashmere pants disappeared; and that when I asked him about them he replied that a brother-in-law of mine had taken them.

14 Item. As it is also true that sometime after this occurrence the accused was sleeping in a house outside the city walls where I had some *bosal* blacks, where I surprised him one morning as he was wearing a pair of those pants.

15 Item. As it is true that having sent him in a diligence from the said house outside the walls to the one I have in this City, he appeared to my wife dressed in the same pants, whereupon she said, surprised, Those are the pants that you said my brother had taken.

16 Item. I also state that it is true that three or four months ago he told me that he wanted to earn wages, which I refused, telling him that he was not in need of such a thing. –

17 Item. I also state that it is true that having told me that he had someone who would buy him [one of the legal operations of *coartación*, see above, MZ], I gave him a paper for three days, which he returned to me after half an hour, asking for my forgiveness.

18 Item. I ask who gave him money to free himself, his wife, and his children, as he said in court.

19 Item. Where did he acquire the sum of money he needs to free himself, his wife and his four children?

20 Item. He must state clearly, and to this I call the attention of the Assessor, the origin of the the money he acquired, the means by which he obtained it, how much time he has been collecting it, the amount that he has, who kept it for him until now, about which no circumstance must be omitted.

21 Item. I also state that it is true that I bought the woman he acquitted on the coast of Africa, *bosal*, that they got married in my power, and that the two of them have not known another master than me.

Item. [no number] I also state that it is true that I have never separated him from my side, that he has always been assigned to my service, that he has never earned a wage, and that he has been the servant of all my trust.

Havana and February 26, 1818.-----Daniel Botefeuf Mr. Sebastian Fernandez de Velasco¹²⁷

3) Answers to the Interrogation Questionnaire by Roberto Botefeuf

[respuestas a las preguntas de la lista arriba] Al prim.o que es exacto que sólo su S.or lo compro en la costa de Africa, y que no / [f. 9v] save si fue el año de ochocientos pero si que era muy joven habiendolo á su servicio desde su adquisicion -----

Al segundo: que el sugeto q.e tenia por amo quando lo compró el q.e interroga lo tenia puesto a aprender el oficio de herrero en una fortaleza Ynglesa cituada en la costa de Africa y que continuo en su aprendizaje en la misma Fortaleza por Ord.n y designa.n de su actual S.or hasta perfeccionarse en el oficio -----¹²⁸

[Las respuestas de Robin Botefeuf en cuanto a la tercera y cuarta pregunta fueron:] “es cierto el contenido de la pregunta”,¹²⁹ lo que deja reconocer que el esclavizado tenía conocimientos legales.

127 Ibid., f. 7r–9r.

128 Ibid., f. 9r–v.

129 Ibid., f. 9v.

“Al quinto: que su amo no le encargo la llaves de sus almacenes como supone en la pregunta aunque alguna vez se las franqueaba p.a / [f. 10r] sacarse algunos efectos lo que executaba á su presencia debolviendosela inmediatamente que serraba -----

Al sexto: que si merecia la confianza de su S.or y que entraba diariam.te en el quarto escritorio aseandolo y limpiandolo aunque no tendia la cama donde dormia el dependiente pues esto lo hacia una neg.a [negra] su compañera, que para este servicio tomaba librem.te la llave [llave] de la referida pieza [cuarto] en la q.e entraba y salia sin embarazo pero siempre á vista de su S.or ó del depend.te -----

Al septimo: que es cierto que en el precitado quarto escritorio esta la caja grande de hierro donde el S.or . . . / [f. 10v] . . . guarda todo su dinero -----

Al octavo: que es cierto todo el contenido de la pregunta -----

Al noveno: que es cierto q.e su S.or le daba todos los domingos un peso p.a cigarros pero lo guardaba p.a juntar el cap.[ital] de su libertad ó la de su hijo si acaso falleciera sin haverlo ganado jamas -----

Al decimo: que es cierto que su S.or le tenia prevenido que quando alguna otra persona le hiciera algun regalo de dinero ó si el declarante adquiria algunos reales por algunos medios ilicito [ilicitos] se le abisare è instruyese, no para apropiarselo sino para saver la legitimidad de su adquisicion pero que como en cierta ocacion le presentase quatro p.[eso]s y se quedare con / [f. 11r] tres entregandole solo uno, no le bolvio á enseñar otra canti.[dad] de las que adquiria dejando de cumplir aquel precepto [eso significa qué Robin no siguió a los avisos de su amo – eso es importante para la realidad del llamado *peculium* (peculio), MZ].

Al duodécimo: que despues q.e le presento los cuatro p.s de que ha hecho referencia en su antr contesta.n no le dio abiso [aviso] ni le comunico que hubiese alg.n dinero y que su S.or no le pregunto jamas ni tenia dinero con cuyo motivo no tubo que hacerle la reconvenccion que indica la pregunta -----

Al decimo tercio: que es cierto que habra tiempo de mas de un año que su S.or le pregunto por dos pares de pantalones de casimir, q.e habian desaparecido, y que le contesto q.e ignoraba su paradero siendo falso el que hubiese asegurado de que los tuvo un cuñado del q.e interroga -----

Al decimo cuarto: que le encontro con / [f. 11v] unos pantalones de mesclilla picaros que habia desechado el mismo q.e pregunta no siendo de los pares que le habian robado ó desaparecido -----

Al decimo quinto: que es falso el cont.o de la pregunta [¡un esclavizado valiente! – MZ] -----

Al decimo sexto: que es cierto que habrá dos o tres meses, que manifesto a su S.or que queria ganar jornal ò lo vendiese habiendole contestado q.e no tenia necesidad de semejante cosa -----

Al decimo septimo: que es cierto que pidió a su S.or pap.l [papel – uno de los ‘cuatro consuelos’, MZ] para buscar amo no por que entonces tubiese qui.[e]n lo comprase, pero q.e habiendole expresado el mismo su S.or que si salia / [f. 12r] de la parte afuera de su casa no bolvia á entrar le debolvio el pap.l q.e ya le habia ministrado pidiendole perdon -----

Al decimo octavo: que solo tiene dinero para libertarse asi mismo y no á su muger è hijos: que lo habia reunido con los pesos que su amo le daba todos los Domingos, y con otras partidas pequeñas de dinero que le franqueaban algunos amigos del propio su S.or en cuyo servicio se ocupaba algunas veces por mandato de aquel

Al decimo nono: que se remite á su anterior contesta -----

Al vigesimo: que tendra un capital de / [f. 12v] quinientos p.s poco mas ò menos el que ha podido reunir en los terminos y por los medios q.e lleba inaugurados desde que bino á esta Ciudad [18 años con más o menos 40–50 pesos – es probable, MZ]: que aquella suma la tiene depositadas, doscientos cinquenta y cinco p.s y una onza mas en un dependiente de que le interroga nom-

brado D.n José y el resto lo tiene entregado á una señora blanca, que vive en el Barrio del Monserate cuyo nombre ignora-

Al vigesimo primo: que es cierto el con.t de la pregunta -----

Al vigesimo nono [sic, en vez de secundo]: que igualmente es cierto y responde que lo que ha declarado es la verdad no cargo de su juramento se le leyo y espuso estar conforme que es mayor de veinte y cinco a.[demás] no fir / [f. 13r] mo por que dijo no saver [. .] el S.or Asesor de que doy fe

Benito [escribiente]

Antemi

José Rafael Dequesa

With [?] two attendances [witnesses] To the first [question he said that] it is correct that only his master bought him on the coast of Africa, and that he does not / [f. 9v] know if it was the year eight [een] hundred, but that he was very young, having been at his service since his acquisition -----

To the second: that the subject he had for a master when he bought him, the one who interrogated him, had him learn the trade of blacksmith in an English fortress located on the coast of Africa and that he continued his apprenticeship in the same Fortress by the order and designation of his current master until completion in the trade.”

[Robin Botefeuf's answers to the third and fourth questions were:] “the content of the question is true”, which shows that the enslaved person had legal knowledge.

To the fifth: that his master did not entrust him with the keys to his stores as he stated in the question, although he sometimes opened them to [f. 10r] remove some effects, which he did in his presence, returning them to him immediately after closing it -----

To the sixth: that he did deserve the trust of his master and that he entered the writing room daily tidying and cleaning it although he did not make the bed where the clerk slept because this was done by a *negra* [Black woman], his companion [wife], [and that] for this service he freely took the key of the aforementioned room in which he entered and left without embarrassment but always in view of his master or the clerk-

To the seventh: that it is true that in the aforementioned writing room is the large iron box where the master . . . / [f. 10v] . . . keeps all his money -

To the eighth: that all the content of the question is true -

To the ninth: that it is true that his master gave him a peso every Sunday for cigars, but that he kept it to save up the capital for his freedom, or that of his son in case he died without ever having earned it-

To the tenth: that it is true that his master had warned him that when some other person made him a gift of money or if the declarant acquired some *reales* [money] by some illicit means, he [the master] should be told and advised, not to appropriate them but to be aware of the legitimacy of his acquisition, but that as on a certain occasion he presented him with four pesos and [the master] kept / [f. 11r] three and returned only one to him, he did not again show him [the master] any money that he acquired and so failed to comply with that order [in other words Robin did not follow his master's warnings - that is important for the reality of the so-called *peculium*, MZ].¹³⁰

To the twelfth: that after he showed him the four pesos mentioned in his previous reply, he did not give him notice or inform him that there was any money, and that his master never asked him nor did he have any money, for which reason he did not have to make the reply mentioned in the question -

To the thirteenth: that it is true that it had been more than a year ago that his master asked him about two pairs of cashmere pants which had disappeared, and that he had answered that he did not know their whereabouts, it being false that he had replied that his brother-in-law had them -

130 Question and answer no. 11 are missing in the original.

To the fourteenth: that he [the master – MZ] found him with / [f. 11v] some pantaloons he himself had discarded, not one of the pairs that had been stolen or had disappeared – –

To the fifteenth: that the content of the question is false [a brave enslaved person!, MZ] –

To the sixteenth: that it is true some two or three months ago he told his master that he wanted to earn wages or buy himself, his master answered that he had no need of such a thing –

To the seventeenth: that it is true that he asked his master for a *papel* [paper – written permission to look for a new buyer, one of the so-called ‘four consolations’, MZ] to look for a [new] master [but] not because he had someone to purchase him, but that having stated the same, his master [said] that if he went outside of his house he need not return again, he returned the paper he had already been given asking for forgiveness –

To the eighteenth: that he only has money to free himself but not his wife and children: that he had saved it up from the pesos that his master gave him every Sunday, and with other small amounts of money that some friends of his master’s gave him in whose service he sometimes occupied himself by order of that [master] –

To the nineteenth: that refers to his previous reply –

To the twentieth: that he has a capital of some five hundred pesos more or less, which he has been able to save up by those means ever since he came to this city [i.e. some forty or fifty pesos per year during eighteen years, which sounds feasible, MZ]: that he deposited [half] the money, two hundred and fifty-five pesos and an ounce more, with a clerk named Don José of he who interrogates him,¹³¹ and that he had handed over the rest to a white lady living in the Barrio del Monserrate whose name he does not know.

To the twentieth-one: that the content of the question is true –

To the twenty-ninth [sic, not the twenty-second, MZ]: that it is also true, and he replies that what he has said is the truth, not under oath; it was read to him and he agreed that he is over twenty-five years of age. He did not sign it / [f. 13r] because he said he could not [write] . . . the Assessor that I attest Benito [clerk] Before me Jose Rafael Dequesa”.¹³²

4) Baptismal Record for the Child Esteban

Estéban Santa Teresa was baptized at the age of six months on August 5, 1869, on the plantation Santa Teresa (near Rodrigo, some kilometers south of Sagua la Grande) by the parish priest Francisco Sirola (from the church of Sagua la Grande) in north-central Cuba. Sirola wrote the following text in the Baptismal Book for Blacks of the Parish Church (Iglesia Parroquial de Ascenso de la Purísima Concepción de Sagua la Grande)¹³³:

¹³¹ Roberto Botefeur evidently had supporters among the traditional *hacendado* elite (Creole land-owners and slave owners who depended in a variety of ways on, and owed money to, slave traders like Daniel Botefeur); the clerk Don José must have been the straw man of this elite.

¹³² “Declaracion del esclavo Roberto,” La Habana, 2 de Marzo de 1818 *ibid.*, f. 9v–13r.

¹³³ Registros parroquiales de bautizo, parroquia Inmaculada Concepción, Sagua la Grande, diócesis Santa Clara (Registros Sagua la Grande); Libro de bautismos de color 4 (domingo, 1 de Marzo de 1868 hasta domingo, 31 de Mayo de 1874), f. 66, n°. 188; on the importance of baptism for enslaved Africans in the diaspora, see: James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kingship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441–1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003): 196–97. On the fact that Esteban Montejo was born in 1868 and not in 1860, as claimed in Miguel Barnet’s book, see: Michael Zeuske, “The Cimarrón in the Archives: A Re-Reading of Miguel Barnet’s Biography of Esteban

<p>“Nº. 188 Estéban Santa Teresa Mº.Eº. <u>Libre por beneficio de la Ley de 23 de Junio de 1870</u> <u>Por autorización de S.S.I.</u></p>	<p>Jueves cinco de Agosto de mil ochocientos sesenta y nueve años: Yo D. Francº. Sirola, Cura Beneficiado de la Iglesia Parroquial de ascenso de la Purísima Concepción de Sagua la Grande y Vicario Fóraño de ella y su jurisdicción, bauticé solemnemente y puse por nombre <u>Estéban</u>¹³⁵ a un niño que nació el día veinte y seis de Diciembre del año próximo pasado [1868, MZ], hijo de la morena Dionisia conga, perteneciente al Ingenio Santa Teresa, de D. Tomas Ribalta. Fué su padrino Quintín criollo,¹³⁶ á quien advertí el parentesco espiritual y obligaciones que contrajo; y lo firmé = Francº. Sirola“</p>
<p>No. 188 Estéban Santa Teresa M[oreno].S[lave] Freed by charity of the law on June 23, 1870 [Ley Moret] By authorization of S.S.I.[¹³⁴]</p>	<p>Thursday, August 5, eighteen hundred and sixty-nine: I, D[on] Francisco Sirola, parish priest in charge of the Parish Church of Ascenso de la Purísima Concepción de Sagua de Sagua la Grande and vicar forane of the church and its jurisdiction, solemnly baptized and gave the name Estéban to a child who was born on December 26 of last year [1868], son of the <i>morena</i> [Black woman] Dionisia conga who belongs to the <i>Ingenio</i> Santa Teresa, by D[on] Tomás Ribalta. His godfather was Quintín criollo, to whom I communicated the spiritual kinship and the commitments he has made; signed = Francisco Sirola.</p>

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134 “Su Santidad Ilustrísima” – “His Most Illustrious Holiness” refers to the bishop in charge.

135 Underlined in the original.

136 Most baptized children also had a godmother (*madrina*), Esteban Santa Teresa had only a godfather (*padrino*). Maybe Quintín criollo was his biological father.

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Zeynep Yeşim Gökçe

Reading Asymmetrical Dependencies in the Narratives of Nineteenth-Century Women Travelers in Ottoman Lands

1 Introduction

Historical travel writing provides a unique domain from which a very significant amount of information on social and urban history can be deduced. While the authenticity of the reported facts may be open to debate, what is valuable in travel writing is not only *what* was related, but *how* this was done. Reading different forms of asymmetrical dependencies through the eyes of outsiders, who themselves are part of profound dependency relations, may offer us much information about the microcosms they were produced in. Employing nineteenth-century British women's travel writing as my main sources, in this article I will portray the narrative representations of slavery and asymmetrical dependencies in Ottoman lands.

This article aims to challenge and go beyond the dichotomy of 'east' and 'west', and beyond Orientalist discourses, and will consider female authors not only as agents of Orientalism and shadows of their male counterparts, but as producers of narratives themselves. In considering them as 'narrative makers', and in analyzing their narration, I aim to situate the female authors and their writings in their own historical contexts: the long nineteenth century of the European and Ottoman empires. After all, travel literature not only demonstrates the various forms of modern identity, "but it is also one of the principal cultural mechanisms, even a key cause, for the development of modern identity."¹ By historicizing the aspects of nineteenth-century western female authors' identities that thus developed in the 'Orient', this study will interpret the narratives of slavery and other forms of asymmetrical dependencies in the context of Anglo-Ottoman relations in the nineteenth century.

The first part of my paper examines the historical developments during that period in the Ottoman world and demonstrates that western influence and British expansionist politics led to the signing of formal conventions for the abolition of slavery in the Ottoman Empire. It also provides a brief history of the authors as dependent individuals, whose dependency was shaped by a modernizing state. The second part will then focus on the genre of travel writing in general, and on British women's travel writing in particular. It also problematizes the authorship as well as the dependency of those writers. Finally, the concluding part illustrates the various narrative

¹ Jaś Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés, "Introduction," in *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel*, ed. Jaś Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés (London: Reaktion Books, 1999): 4.

techniques employed by them to present slavery and different forms of asymmetrical dependencies.

2 Historical Background

“Great Britain, being completely disinterested in the question of the East, has pursued one sole object: the independence and integrity of the Ottoman empire. This was the object proposed by her to all the courts, adopted by them, pursued by them all, and by France as well as by the other powers,”² states the “Dispatch Addressed by M. Thiers, President of the Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs to the French ambassador in London” of 1840. Thiers’ words summarize official British policy towards the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century: supporting Ottoman sovereignty and independence at the expense of making it dependent on British economic and political power. The years between 1830 and 1926 can be classified as the climax of European imperialism in the Middle East. The impact of imperialism started with the decline of Ottoman power, which reached its final stage at the end of World War I, which caused the dissolution of the Empire.³ The process that culminated in the dissolution and disintegration of the Ottoman Empire itself was a turning point in nineteenth-century history, particularly for ‘Europe’ and the ‘Middle East’. During this long process, the European powers sought for a steady and strong administration of the Ottoman Empire, since it would be easier and more profitable for them to dominate the Empire’s markets through the privileges and concessions granted by a single, centralized Ottoman administration. Over the course of the century, the central state became more powerful and functional, and more authoritative in terms of imposing its power on its subjects. This was a shared goal of the ruling elite and the European powers.⁴

The nineteenth century witnessed notable changes in Ottoman social, economic, and political life. The international position and territorial possessions of the former great power steadily declined.⁵ During the long nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire became increasingly dependent on foreign aid and trade and accumulated significant levels of foreign debt.⁶ The Empire during this period went through dramatic

2 “Copy of a Despatch Addressed by M. Thiers, President of the Council, and Minister of Foreign Affairs to the French Ambassador in London,” *The Manchester Guardian (1828–1900)*, 14.10.1840.

3 Geoffrey Nash, *From Empire to Orient: Travellers to the Middle East 1830–1926* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005): 13.

4 Halil İnalçık and Donald Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 762.

5 İnalçık and Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914*: 761.

6 Michael Ferguson and Ehud Toledano, “Ottoman Slavery and Abolition in the Nineteenth Century,” in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, vol. 4, *AD 1804–AD 2016*, ed. David Eltis et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017): 199.

shifts, which were mostly prompted by global political transformations. The international relations between the British and Ottoman Empires that stimulated British expansionist policies in the Ottoman Empire constitute the focal point of this study. The most significant event with respect to Anglo-Ottoman relations was the famous Anglo-Ottoman convention of 1838. It was signed under pressure in order to secure British support for the struggle in Egypt, and the treaty paved the way for the elimination of state monopolies and removed “many of the barriers in the way of European merchants.”⁷ The 1838 treaty is one of the most extensively debated events in relation to the decline of Ottoman industry in the nineteenth century. Britain’s objective was to secure free trade agreements, and the Anglo-Ottoman convention became the basis of all concessions Britain acquired.⁸

In response to the instability in international politics, the free trade treaty signed with the British Empire, and the loss of territories resulting from nationalist uprisings, the Ottoman reformists began to undertake a number of critical steps. Internal reforms were carried out as a response to western – mostly British – pressure. The structure of the Ottoman state had to survive and to accommodate itself to the new European order. The political and social reform agenda of the Ottoman Empire eventually resulted in the proclamation of the *Tanzimat* edict in 1839. As the Ottoman Empire continued to lose very significant swathes of territory, the reformists nurtured a new social and political order; and they themselves came to be seen as unavoidable.⁹ The established historiography argues that most of these internal reforms were associated with external pressure applied by European nations. As Frank Edgar Bailey states in his 1942 study, “internal reform was the best means of insuring the favor of western nations, particularly Britain.”¹⁰ These reforms, which began under Sultan Mahmud II and which became established during the reigns of his sons, resulted in new measures that increased levels of centralized control through the use of a restructured army and the development of a large central bureaucracy.

The state began to take an interest in many areas of its subjects’ lives, including their education and social habits, as it aimed at “civilizing” them. These areas had previously been left to non-territorial autonomous systems. The new reforms in education, institutions, law, and religious orders also meant that the state developed a keen interest in how women should be regulated. The state started drawing clear boundaries for social relations, especially those of women. For the first time in its history, the state had a new image of women. The dependency of women was controlled

7 İnalçık and Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914*: 764.

8 Şevket Pamuk and Jeffrey G. Williamson, “Ottoman De-Industrialization, 1800–1913: Assessing the Magnitude, Impact, and Response,” *The Economic History Review* 64, no. S1 (2011): 161.

9 Akin Sefer, “British Workers and Ottoman Modernity in Nineteenth-Century Istanbul,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 99 (2021): 148.

10 Frank Edgar Bailey, *British Policy and the Turkish Reform Movement: A Study in Anglo-Turkish Relations, 1826–1853* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942): 179.

through different means. According to Yasemin Avcı, the question of women's emancipation was vital to discussions during the *Tanzimat* period. She classifies the reform period as a state-driven authoritarian modernization period where the situation of women was a key issue. The pressure on women increased as the intellectual elites put the Ottoman family at the core of reforms.¹¹ As with other nations, the state was going through a period where reforms with respect to women's lives were seen as part of a more general modernization. This new social order, which was both directly and indirectly related to British politics, was a topic of interest for both writers and visitors.

The Anglo-Ottoman convention, followed by the reorganization measures and *Tanzimat* proclamation of 1839, was one of a number of critical events as far as the British Empire's hegemonic power in relation to the Ottoman Empire was concerned. British abolitionist practices in the Ottoman Empire have commonly been regarded in recent scholarship as another manifestation of British hegemonic power over the Ottoman Empire. "Western European (chiefly British) pressure was the main force acting on the Ottoman Empire to take part in the suppression of the slave trade, after efforts to have the government abolish slavery failed in the early 1840s."¹² By the 1850s, the Ottoman Empire's economic dependence on the British, French and other European powers was so extensive that the Ottomans had no choice but to listen to British warnings in relation to the slave trade.¹³ Finally, another edict was issued banning the African slave trade into the Empire in 1857. And the next major step taken in the abolition of slavery was the Anglo-Ottoman Convention for the Suppression of the Black Slave Trade in 1880. Even though the Ottoman Empire was never under British rule, "Britain pondered the question of what to do with this failing power in much the same way as it discussed its colonies: the Ottoman Empire was perceived to be both in need of civilizing and as strategically and economically important to Britain."¹⁴

In parallel with these internal and external political changes, the situation of 'Oriental' women and enslaved concubines occupied British female authors, feminists, and missionaries of the nineteenth century. The newly westernizing eastern women, slaves and polygamy, the differences and similarities of Ottoman social life became a source of increasing interest for travelers to the 'east' from the 1830s onward. I will analyze the representations of different forms of asymmetrical dependencies through the eyes of these female authors, who, given the legal situation of women in Britain at the time, were dependents themselves and who came from a place that was politically

11 Yasemin Avcı, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tanzimat Döneminde 'Otoriter Modernleşme' ve Kadının Özgürleşmesi Meselesi," *Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi* 21 (2007): 11.

12 Ferguson and Toledano, "Ottoman Slavery and Abolition in the Nineteenth Century": 210.

13 Ferguson and Toledano, "Ottoman Slavery and Abolition in the Nineteenth Century": 210.

14 Teresa Heffernan, *Veiled Figures: Women, Modernity, and the Spectres of Orientalism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016): 50.

and economically oppressing the land they were visiting; such an approach offers a potentially fertile multi-layered domain of research.

3 Travel Writing: Female Travels to Ottoman Lands – The Genre in Context

“The facilities in traveling to very distant corners of the earth have transferred the pen, which was heretofore only held by male tourists into adventurous female hands; and a lady, nowadays, thinks little of trusting herself among Magyars, Turks, Barbarians, Pagans, or Cannibals.”¹⁵ The London-based *Literary Gazette* stated in 1840 that ‘ladies’ had started braving the perils of traveling among various people that were commonly denigrated as the ‘other’. It is hardly surprising that the magazine was founded by Henry Colburn, the publisher of several women’s travel books in Britain.

The nineteenth century was an age in which mobility was significantly enhanced, and it offered increasing opportunities for travel. While imperial expansion created the basis for modern forms of globalization and forced the merging of former regionalized economies, it also brought different cultures into more regular contact. Simultaneously, new, faster modes of transport came to the fore. During the nineteenth century, railways, telegraphy, bicycles, and other forms of mobilization emerged.¹⁶ In the mid-nineteenth century, technological advances, mainly in the British Empire and France, created new modes of travel to the Middle East, including steamships, which made it possible to travel via the Mediterranean. The development of the railroad also enabled western tourists to reach the east.¹⁷ As the new trend for continental travel became increasingly popular, travel writing also witnessed a very important change: it was not only the ‘male pen’ that traveled and wrote, female travelers had also started to travel and publish.

Travel writing had conjured up imaginative geographies, constructed and reconstructed them *continuously for centuries*. Before global mass communication technologies were developed, travel writing had been the only means through which images of the ‘other’ were dispersed and, more generally, political discourses about ‘the east’ were created and disseminated. According to Paul Smethurst, travel writing played a crucial role in the discursive formation of empires. The discourse that was reproduced and reconstructed by both travel and travel writing itself contributed to the formation

¹⁵ *The Literary Gazette, and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences*, 21.11.1840: 747.

¹⁶ Carl Thompson, “Nineteenth-Century Travel Writing,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. Nandini Das and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019): 108.

¹⁷ Ali Behdad, “The Politics of Adventure: Theories of Travel, Discourses of Power,” in *Travel Writing, Form, and Empire: The Poetics and Politics of Mobility*, ed. Julia Kuehn and Paul Smethurst, Routledge Research in Travel Writing 1 (New York: Routledge, 2009): 90.

of the west defining itself vis-à-vis the east. It was built on a system of ideologically charged asymmetrical relationships.¹⁸ Filiz Turhan argues that during the years that the British Empire expanded its power in the East, the Ottoman Empire's position as a decaying empire was both familiar and yet still foreign, and this made it a popular topic for authors who wanted to understand and situate the British Empire's policies within a global context.¹⁹

While travel writing offers indispensable insights into discourse and ideology, travel writing by women offers an even more fruitful politically loaded domain due to the fact women were allowed to travel much later and the number of women who got the chance to travel was much limited. I suggest that travel writing by women should not only be analyzed in order to deconstruct the Orientalist gaze or imperialist desires, but that the female gaze itself should also be evaluated by taking into consideration an author's own vulnerabilities and asymmetrical dependency relations. Travel and cultural contacts were crucial means of narrating cultural exchanges. Through the negotiation between these two, travel narratives by Western women recreated different types of social and sexual norms, especially through a comparison of the supposed *wild sexuality* of the local women with the writers' own, tamer European sexuality.²⁰ The sexuality of European women has been restructured through the images of the women in the lands they traveled to. The female subjects, mostly slaves but also free women, of the Ottoman Lands, are sometimes represented as wild, untamed sexual objects of desire, while the European other is portrayed as educated and more sexually restrained.

According to Susan Bassnett, the nineteenth century witnessed a marked increase in travel accounts, especially by male writers, that boldly sexualized some parts of the world, "contrasting the 'masculine' northern regions with the softer, eroticized, feminine Orient."²¹ She claims that this distinction is less apparent in women travel writers. Even though they echoed what their male counterparts did to some extent, they affirmed femininity by including accounts of domestic life.²² Descriptions of the domestic sphere in the travel books mentioned above are mainly of the inside of the 'harems'. Harem here does not necessarily signify the imperial harem, inhabited by the Sultan, his wife or wives and slaves, but elite households that could afford such harems. Reina Lewis's take on this is that harem literature was based on the presenta-

18 Paul Smethurst, "Introduction," in *Travel Writing, Form, and Empire: The Poetics and Politics of Mobility*, ed. Julia Kuehn and Paul Smethurst, Routledge Research in Travel Writing 1 (New York: Routledge, 2009): 1.

19 Filiz Turhan, *The Other Empire: British Romantic Writings about the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003): 161.

20 Durba Ghosh, "Gender and Colonialism: Expansion or Marginalization?" *The Historical Journal* 47, no. 3 (2004): 740.

21 Susan Bassnett, "Travel Writing and Gender," in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 239.

22 Bassnett, "Travel Writing and Gender": 239.

tion of Ottoman domestic life and that harem literature contributed to the political discourse created around harem and women's life. The women writers' political stances differed and were historically specific, informed by western debates about foreign policy, and in the late Victorian era foreign policy commentary became more popular.²³ Billie Melman argues that travel books are "reconstructions by a narrative 'I'", which can be very personal or impersonal, "of a slice of life, or lives,"²⁴ but that when it comes to women's autobiographical writing, women's sense of the past is collective rather than individualist, as they emphasize relations to others.²⁵

Travel writing by women in the British Empire became popular in the nineteenth century, due to the developments listed above. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who was one of the best-known female authors, traveled to Istanbul in the eighteenth century, long before the genre and tourism had become fashionable. Her notorious book *Turkish Embassy Letters* was published in 1763 and was considered to be pioneering in female travel writing about the east. Since then, according to Lewis, western women did their best to satisfy the appetite of a western readership curious about domestic life and harems. What gave them their unique selling point was the fact that they had actually seen the harems, places that were inaccessible to men.²⁶

The increase in the social mobility of middle-class British women, many of whom travelled as nurses, teachers, nannies and missionaries, combined with an expanding market for harem literature, had generated an impressive number of nineteenth-century women's travel narratives about the Ottoman world.²⁷

Some 75 books were written and published during the nineteenth century by British female authors who had travelled to the Middle East as tourists, or accompanying male relatives (fathers or husbands) who went there for professional reasons or as missionaries.

Most of those authors who had been to or lived for a longer period of time in Ottoman lands, were 'dependents'. By this I mean they were either wives or daughters, or sometimes sisters, of officials traveling to Ottoman lands, or of someone appointed there. Domestic aspects of the households, mostly the lives of women, were the main interest of these authors; it was a matter of both personal interest to them and conferred on them a unique advantage, since male travelers were not allowed inside the harems. Nineteenth-century women's travel writing is full of non-descriptive elements

23 Reina Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel and the Ottoman Harem*, Library of Ottoman Studies 4 (London: Tauris, 2004): 15.

24 Billie Melman, *Women's Orients, English Women and the Middle East, 1718–1918: Sexuality, Religion, and Work* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1992): 27.

25 Melman, *Women's Orients, English Women and the Middle East, 1718–1918*: 27.

26 Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism*: 13.

27 Heffernan, *Veiled Figures*: 48.

that aim to inform readers about the legal status of women, their economic position, multiple marriages, concubinage, and culinary habits.²⁸

I argue that there are three primary reasons why western women's travel writing is ideal for identifying different forms of asymmetrical relationships: 1) The female subjects from Europe/the West are part of a modernization project who are commodified and presented as figures of freedom, development, and civilization; 2) although the authenticity of their reports may be questioned, only female authors had access to female-only places such as harems, which their male counterparts were not allowed to visit; 3) the majority of female authors were in relations of dependency with the men whom they accompanied; therefore the patterns and symbols of asymmetrical dependencies they chose to include in their writings are apt to be particularly self-revelatory.

3.1 Two Travelers: Julia Pardoe and Lady Hornby

There are many metaphors and analogies through which female travel writers represent asymmetrical dependencies. I mainly focus on two different categories – the asymmetrical dependency of female slaves, mostly in a domestic context, and of the free women whom the authors represent as dependents. As previously noted, the authors of the texts, Julia Pardoe and Lady Hornby, in the following examples, are dependents themselves. Both accompanied a male relative and had limited freedom of choice. By implicitly comparing their own levels of freedom with that of the enslaved women of the households, and that of the wives and mistresses, they stress their own spaces of freedom. The recounting of these dependency relations by a dependent makes these narratives special. Moreover, given the historical and political background, I also focus on a third layer of dependency, namely the economic dependency relation between the Ottoman Empire, a former superpower, and the principal European states, primarily the British Empire. By reflecting the values of British invasive politics in their accounts, Western women authors also give expression to their conception of their own liberty.

3.1.1 Julia Pardoe

Julia Pardoe is the author of *The City of the Sultan; and Domestic Manners of the Turks, in 1836*, which was published in 1837. Although there is some debate over her birth date, she was born sometime between 1804 and 1806. Pardoe's father, Major Thomas Pardoe, was assigned to Istanbul and she accompanied him, arriving in the

²⁸ Melman, *Women's Orient, English Women and the Middle East, 1718–1918*: 101.

city in December 1835.²⁹ As stated in the British literary magazine *Athenaeum* in 1837, “Miss Pardoe arrived in Constantinople on the 30th of December, 1835, and at once plunged into the female society of that capital, if society that may be called, which consists of mingling with the gaily dressed uneducated and gentle creatures of the harems.”³⁰ The condescending tone in the British magazine suggests a widespread trivialization of the Ottoman women the female travelers encountered. She spent three months in Istanbul, where she had the chance to visit the houses of some elite inhabitants whom she met thanks to her father’s high-ranking position. Her descriptive narrative is based on observations, and she includes lengthy descriptions of how women lived in Istanbul and how the elite household harems functioned. According to the *Literary Gazette* of London in 1837, “Coming from the pen of a lady who enjoyed opportunities for observing her sex in Constantinople, such as male writers could not attain, we shall chiefly direct our attention to sketches connected therewith.”³¹

The principal reason for choosing Julia Pardoe’s book for this paper is that it was written shortly before the closure of the slave markets in Ottoman Turkey, in a period where the country was going through ‘westernizing’ reforms. It was a time of political and economic transformation. As stated in *The Literary Gazette*, “[s]ince Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, we have had nothing of female observation upon the manners of Turkey; and were therefore prepared to welcome these volumes as agreeable accessions to our information upon a subject always of considerable interest, and now much enhanced by the curious transition state through which the Ottoman Empire is at present passing.”³²

I am quite conscious that more than one lady reader will lay down my volume without regret, when she discovers how matter-of-fact are many of its contents. The very term ‘Oriental’ implies to European ears the concentration of romance; and I was long in the East ere I could divest myself of the same feeling. It would have been easy for me to have continued the illusion, for Oriental habits lend themselves greatly to the deceit when the looker-on is satisfied with glancing over the surface of things; but with a conscientious chronicler this does not suffice; and, consequently, I rather sought to be instructed than to be amused, and preferred the veracious to the entertaining.³³ [. . .]

I would not remove one fold of the graceful drapery which veils the time-hallowed statue of Eastern power and beauty, but I cannot refrain from plucking away the trash and tinsel that ignorance and bad taste have hung about it.³⁴

²⁹ Julia Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan, and, Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1836* (London: H. Colburn, 1837): 1.

³⁰ “The City of the Sultan, and the Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1836,” *The Athenaeum* 501, 03.06.1837: 394.

³¹ William Jerdan, “The City of the Sultan; and Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1836,” *The Literary Gazette: A Weekly Journal of Literature, Science, and the Fine Arts* 1063, 03.06.1837: 345.

³² Jerdan, “The City of the Sultan”: 345.

³³ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 106.

³⁴ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 108.

These words of Julia Pardoe encompass the main elements employed by the narrator in her book. 1) Women are Pardoe's principal target audience – she addresses her words to female readers. She aims to inform her female readers about Ottoman domestic life, especially as it pertains to the lives of women within the household; 2) she claims that her information is evidence-based; 3) she often uses analogies and metaphors for 'veiled'; and 4) the descriptions of the beauties of the 'east' are usually followed by depictions of negative characteristics that are attributed to the 'Orient' such as superstitiousness or ignorance.

The book opens with depictions of a snow-covered Istanbul, and Pardoe describes some beautiful Istanbul scenes. One of the first sections of the first chapter is called *Romance versus Reason*. Pardoe visits the city during Ramadan and is charmed by the Ramadan decorations and lights that hang between the minarets of the mosques and illuminate the city. She reflects on the illuminated, magical view of the city, and compares reason and science-obsessed Europe with the colorful, illuminated East. She concludes that the obsession with science blinds the individual to the possibility of fully perceiving and enjoying the beauties and colors of life, something that easterners enjoy: "I detest the spirit, which reduces everything to plain reason, and pleases itself by tracing effect to causes where the only result of the research must be the utter annihilation of all romance, and the extinction of all wonder."³⁵ Pardoe equates the "ignorant, vulgar, uneducated beauties" of the east with "romance", and the "education, civilization, and development" of the West with "reason".

Western women provide varied and complex discourses on the female social space in Ottoman society. They were received as guests in harems, and British women had the chance to enter the harems where free Muslim women had brought and trained their female slaves. During their visits, they discussed slavery, marriage, divorce, and various topics in relation to the harem and women's lives.³⁶ Julia Pardoe provides lengthy descriptions of how free women and slaves lived in Istanbul, what they wore, and how they spent their time. She considers herself privileged, as she easily obtains permission to visit an elite household harem. "My first anxiety was to pass a day of Fast in the interior of a Turkish family. This difficult, and in most cases, impossible, achievement for a European was rendered easy to me by the fact that, shortly after our landing, I procured an introduction to a respectable Turkish merchant, and I had no sooner written to propose a visit to his harem than I received the most frank and cordial assurances of welcome."³⁷ Once she enters the harem for the first time, she mentions that she was struck by the beauty of the young daughter and surprised by her blue eyes and golden brown hair – physical features which she prob-

³⁵ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 9.

³⁶ Irene Kamberidou, "Interacting, Sharing and Bonding: 'Notes of Personal Experience' by Nineteenth-Century Women Travellers," *Gender, Place & Culture* 23, no. 3 (2016): 386.

³⁷ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 16.

ably attributes to western origin.³⁸ She describes the beauty of the female dresses, the silk veils, ornaments, and garments; items which she considers to be luxurious.

Pardoe is impressed by the ‘veils’ that cover these women: the word ‘veil’ is repetitively used, both in a literal and metaphorical sense. These ornamented, beautifully fabricated veils cover the women. “Their time is spent in dressing themselves, and varying the position of their ornaments.”³⁹ Pardoe describes the women as uneducated idlers, who are unable to pass the time in any meaningful way: “Their habits are, generally speaking, most luxurious and indolent, if I except their custom of early rising, which, did they occupy themselves in any useful manner, would be undoubtedly very commendable; but, as they only add, by these means, two or three hours of ennui to each day, I am at a loss how to classify it.”⁴⁰ The women, being lazy and idle, according to Pardoe, even “not unfrequently engage their guests to take a nap with the same *sang-froid* with which a European lady would invite her friends to take a walk.”⁴¹ She compares European women to Ottoman women and portrays the latter as lazy and idle, while the former are seen as educated and having an active social life.

Following her harem visit, she comments on the habits of Turkish women. She elaborates on their shopping habits and marks the degree to which they prepare themselves for these trips. “Nor are women of high rank exempt from this indelicate fancy, which can only be accounted for by the belief that, like caged birds occasionally set free, they do not know how to use their liberty.”⁴² In underlining the fact that the women have no meaningful way to spend their time except for shopping and spending money, she employs the “caged bird” metaphor. The words “freedom” and “liberty” are used frequently when she refers to the lives of the women, and these words and metaphors have symbolic meaning. In the case of Pardoe, they represent the different forms of strong asymmetrical dependencies, but they also act as agents by means of which the superiority and liberty of western women are attested.

If, as we are all prone to believe, freedom be happiness, then are the Turkish women the happiest, for they are certainly the freest individuals in the Empire. It is the fashion in Europe to pity the women of the East; but it is ignorance of their real position alone which can engender so misplaced an exhibition of sentiment.⁴³

Here, Pardoe states that in Europe, women are deceiving themselves by pitying the women of the east. This passage may, at first glance, seem to praise the Turkish women by comparison. The author, however, looks down on these Turkish women,

³⁸ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 19.

³⁹ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 20.

⁴⁰ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 20.

⁴¹ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 21.

⁴² Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 33.

⁴³ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 100.

who, while they have freedom to go shopping if they cover themselves,⁴⁴ are in her view uneducated and ignorant, and have no interests other than buying clothes and dressing up. Pardoe's portrayal serves to negatively highlight and contrast the dependencies of these women with what she wants to underline, her alleged freedom and independence.

The almost total absence of education among Turkish women, and the consequently limited range of their ideas, is another cause of that quiet, careless, indolent happiness that they enjoy; their sensibilities have never been awakened, and their feelings and habits are comparatively unexact; they have no factitious wants, growing out of excessive mental refinement; and they do not, therefore, torment themselves with the myriad anxieties, and doubts, and chimeras which would darken and depress the spirit of more highly-gifted females.⁴⁵

The author of this text is however a dependent herself. She is there to accompany her father and she does not enjoy full freedom, though the amount of freedom she enjoys is higher in comparison with what she observes in the east. In presenting the deficiencies of Turkish women, she seeks to create her own space of liberty and to assume a position of superiority.

Throughout Julia Pardoe's book *The City of the Sultan and Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1836*, there are numerous references to slaves and slavery. Pardoe discusses two forms of female slavery in her book: (a) slaves in the households, responsible for serving and other domestic tasks, and (b) *odaliks* or concubines, with accounts of the latter generally held to have generated the greatest interest. Although she does not comment on the possible existence of a hierarchical structure among the slaves, her choice of words and expressions of amazement clearly communicate her views on the matter. The first group of slaves are not described in detail, but are referred to by their number or skin color. During her visit to a Turkish merchant's household harem, she mentions a slave announcing dinner: "and, as a slave announced dinner, we all followed her to a smaller apartment, where the table, if such I may call it, was already laid."⁴⁶ During the same dinner her observations are as follows: "the room was literally filled with slaves, 'black, white, and gray' from nine years old to fifty."⁴⁷ She does not furnish elaborate descriptions but rather refers to the number of slaves or describes their menial tasks. Invited to sleep at the merchant's house after the dinner, she relates how her bed was made: "At the lower end of every Turkish room are large closets for the reception of the bedding and the slaves no sooner ascertain that you have risen, than a half a dozen of them enter the apartment, and in five minutes every vestige of your couch has disappeared."⁴⁸ The absence of any real descriptive

⁴⁴ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 101.

⁴⁵ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 103.

⁴⁶ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 21.

⁴⁷ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 23.

⁴⁸ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 32.

detail with respect to slaves and her not providing further detail do tell the reader about her position. “The instant that you have eaten, a slave stands before you with water and a napkin to cleanse your hands.”⁴⁹ These descriptions, devoid as they are of any humanizing detail, speak to the presence of these asymmetrical relations.

With regard to the first group of slaves that Pardoe mentions in her accounts, i.e. the household slaves, she usually underlines their skin color. She usually calls the black slaves “negroes” and refrains from giving much information about their clothes or habits. Pardoe for instance refers to a young slave girl with black skin as “a negro slave girl of twelve or thirteen years of age.”⁵⁰ As Bernard Lewis mentions in his pioneering work on race and slavery in the Middle East, race plays a role in shaping attitudes and perceptions in society. He notes that in descriptions of the black slaves’ physical appearance, many authors employ pejorative adjectives such as “ugly,” “dull,” or even “monstrous.”⁵¹

When Pardoe visits the principal of a military school to talk about education, “during the conversation, tea was handed to us in the Russian fashion by his dragoon, attended by two negro slaves and after partaking of it we commenced our survey of the establishment.”⁵² Likewise, when she goes to visit the harem of Mustafa Pasha, a high-ranking officer, they were welcomed in front of the entrance by “half a dozen servants, several of them negroes, [who] were lounging in listless idleness at the entrance, which our arrival instantly changed into ready and officious bustle.”⁵³ Pardoe chooses to explicitly mention the skin color of the slaves. “A couple of the negroes accompanied us upstairs, and, leading us across a very handsome saloon, whose recesses were filled with cushions, and whose open gallery and commanded the court beneath, showed us into a smaller apartment, and seated us on a sofa.”⁵⁴ She continues: “At the extremity of the dais a pile of cushions were heaped upon the floor; and at the upper end of the sofa squatted the Pasha, with a negro slave on each side of him, busied in arranging his pipe which had been just replenished.”⁵⁵ Pardoe gives special attention to the descriptions of the interior spaces of the houses, and in her narration it seems as if the black slaves are no more than a part of these interior design descriptions. Similar to how she describes menial black slaves in harems, she chooses to use pejorative words to depict black eunuchs as “hideous”⁵⁶ or “the most unwieldy person”.⁵⁷

49 Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 106.

50 Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 131.

51 Bernard Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East: An Historical Enquiry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990): 92.

52 Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 196.

53 Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 229.

54 Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 230.

55 Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 249.

56 Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 274

57 Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 274

Pardoe is mostly interested in the Circassian female slaves, as was the case with most of the authors of her time, and gives special attention to odalisques. She talks about Circassian parents selling their own children into slavery, “no assertion of mine can, however, so satisfactorily prove the fact which I have here advanced, as the circumstance that almost all the youth of both sexes in Circassia insist upon being conveyed by their parents to Constantinople where the road to honour and advancement is open to everyone.”⁵⁸ While such accounts tended to be employed to convey how “barbarous” such people could be, and to highlight the “disgraceful behavior” of those parents willing to sell their own children for money, there is indeed evidence in the archives that families would sell their own children. Historian Ceyda Karamürsel states, “it is not possible to argue the wholesale inexistence of such cases of self-enslavement by relatives, as there is documentary evidence, particularly in British archives, which underlines the pervasiveness of Caucasian parents selling their children into slavery.”⁵⁹ I suggest here that as the British Empire was directly involved in population movements in the Caucasus, and was politically involved in the internal politics of the region, that when parents are described as “selling their children to slavery”, such descriptions are reproduced to demonstrate the supposed evilness of the east.

In Ottoman Istanbul, Circassian and Georgian women mostly served as concubines. Circassian women often reached the harems of the urban upper class of the Empire, not infrequently attaining positions of prestige and comfort as wives of middle and upper-level functionaries.⁶⁰ These concubines are called *odalik*, sometimes spelled *odalique* or *odalisque* by European writers. According to Pardoe, a Turkish man, “usually marries a woman of his own rank; after which, should he, either from whim, or for family reasons, resolve on increasing his establishment, he purchases slaves from Circassia and Georgia, who are termed *Odaliques*.”⁶¹ Pardoe has the chance to visit a high-ranking officer, Scodra Pasha, and recounts the lengthy story of a concubine whom she met in this harem. The daughter of the household, Heymine Hanım, explains to Pardoe that her mother could not have a male child and that that was why her father, Scodra Pasha “wrote to a friend in Constantinople to purchase for him four young Circassians, and to embark them, under the charge of an elderly woman, for Albania.”⁶² The odalisque whom Pardoe met, sitting next to the Pasha’s mother, had two sons by the Pasha. When the concubine enters, similar to most of the

⁵⁸ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 104.

⁵⁹ Ceyda Karamürsel, “‘In the Age of Freedom, in the Name of Justice’: Slaves, Slaveholders, and the State in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Turkish Republic, 1857–1933” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2015): 46.

⁶⁰ Ehud Toledano, *The Ottoman Slave Trade and its Suppression: 1840–1890* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983): 8.

⁶¹ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 102.

⁶² Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 241.

other descriptions of Circassian slaves/odaliques, Pardoe is amazed: “She was by far the prettiest woman of the three, but there was a subdued and hopeless expression about her, which showed at once that she had not been a favourite child of fortune. She was slight and beautifully formed, with a low, soft voice which was almost music.”⁶³

Another story that Pardoe relates is that in relation to a concubine from Mustafa Nazif Efendi’s house, the Egyptian *chargé d'affaires*. “[T]he little history of her life, which, although by no means remarkable in Turkey, is so characteristic, and will, moreover, appear so extraordinary to European readers, that I shall give it, as nearly as my memory will serve me, in her own words.”⁶⁴ By mentioning that her account will appear extraordinary to European readers, she implies that this story is morally unacceptable. The concubine’s story is that she was sold by her parents in Istanbul when she was nine and that she had another master, but that during a visit to this house, she was admired by the mistress and was sold to the household. “I pitied the poor young creature as I listened to her narrative. [. . .] She was not pretty; but she was so childlike, so graceful and so gentle, that she inspired an interest which, when I had heard her story, was even more painful.”⁶⁵

I will conclude the examples of representations of slavery with a scene where Pardoe describes the freedom of choice that slaves in Ottoman Turkey enjoy. A final example of representation of slavery in Pardoe’s *The City of the Sultan, and, Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1836* is the part where Pardoe makes her point about the freedom of choice that slaves in Istanbul enjoy. “There is a remarkable feature in the position of the Turkish slaves that I must not omit to mention. Should it occur that one of them, from whatever cause it may arise, feels himself uncomfortable in the house of his owner, the dissatisfied party requests his master to dispose of him.”⁶⁶ To prove her point on this relative freedom, she relates the story of a woman who used to be the slave of Ahmet Pasha, the governor. The slave falls in love with a young man of the neighborhood and “was desirous to become his property. Such being the case, she informed her mistress that she wished to be taken to the market and disposed of, which was accordingly carried into effect.”⁶⁷ I suggest that the representation of freedom in female slavery is one of the many methodologies that Pardoe uses to prove her point about the romantic east being uncivilized yet colorful. The east, illuminated and colorful, is a place where even slaves can have the freedom to make irrational choices.

⁶³ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 242.

⁶⁴ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 117.

⁶⁵ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 118.

⁶⁶ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 105.

⁶⁷ Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan*: 105.

3.1.2 Lady Emilia Hornby

The second text is *Constantinople during the Crimean War* by Lady Emilia Hornby. The book was published in 1863, almost thirty years after Julia Pardoe's work. It was written during the Crimean War, a war that played an important role in the Ottoman modernization process. It introduced many new social practices, and it also increased the number of visitors to Istanbul as well as the contacts between Europeans and Ottomans.⁶⁸ The war was significant in terms of the European powers' intervention in Ottoman policy, as French and British troops sided with the Ottoman Empire against Russia during the conflict.⁶⁹

Lady Hornby's work, according to the publisher, was an extension of a previous book of hers, entitled *In and Around Stamboul*.⁷⁰ Lady Hornby arrived in Istanbul in August 1854, in the company of her husband, who was the British Loan Commissioner. The author stayed six years in Istanbul, and spent her time writing to her friends in England describing the city's people, manners and customs.⁷¹ According to a book review published in 1864 in the magazine *The Reader*,

Sir Edmund Hornby's official position, and the length of their residence in the East, enabled Lady Hornby to give a most minute and trustworthy account of a country which, though interesting in many respects, was but little known in England previous to the Crimean war. The letters are simple yet graphic accounts of what an educated, unprejudiced English lady saw and did.⁷²

Lady Hornby's book starts with an account of her journey to Istanbul by boat. Upon her arrival, her first visit takes her to a public park where people usually gather for picnics. She describes a group of women she meets there as follows: "Nothing in point of colouring and groupings, could be more strikingly beautiful than these clusters of women by the trees and fountain. Imagine five or six in a row, their jet-black eyes shining through their white veils, under which you can see the gleam of jewels which confine their hair."⁷³ She continues with extensive descriptions of what they wear, and how colorful their choice of clothing is. Similar to Julia Pardoe, the author is impressed by the color and illumination.

According to Hornby, the wives of high-ranking officials "look like hothouse flowers, and are really cultivated to the highest perfection of physical beauty, having no other employment but to make their skins as snow-white and their eyebrows as jet-

⁶⁸ Candan Badem, *Ottoman Crimean War, 1853–1856*, *The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage* 44 (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 329.

⁶⁹ Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism*: 132.

⁷⁰ Mrs. Edmund Hornby, *In and Around Stamboul* (Philadelphia: J. Challen & Son, Lindsay & Blakiston, 1858).

⁷¹ "Lady Hornby's Constantinople during the Crimean War," *The Reader*, 1863–1867, 09.01.1864: 39.

⁷² "Lady Hornby's Constantinople during the Crimean War": 39.

⁷³ Mrs. Edmund Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War* (London: R. Bentley, 1863): 57.

black as possible.”⁷⁴ Hornby’s descriptions of women are similar to Pardoe’s; the women are very beautifully dressed, their clothes are colorful, and they are “veiled.” It becomes clear though that these are descriptions of what the author regards as entirely superficial. The women are held to be not well educated and are seen as lacking in any other skills, bar those required to beautify themselves. According to Hornby, watching an ordinary Turkish woman – not belonging to any elite household – walk is a miserable experience; “nothing can be more wretched than to see the poor thing attempting to walk, or to make herself at all useful. She shuffles along the ground exactly like an embarrassed parrot, looking as if her loose garments must inevitably flutter off at the next step.”⁷⁵ And “[i]f she is not a beauty and is not the property of a rich man, she is the most miserable looking creature possible.”⁷⁶ The women are dependent, and their descriptions in the text bear comparison with those accorded to decorative objects. The ones who are not wives or daughters of rich men, the lower-class women, look funny according to Hornby when they walk or try to take any independent action. Being the “property of a rich man” is the only thing that makes these women graceful. Lady Hornby depicts a woman who sees her in the street and is amazed by her beauty: “They have very simple engaging ways, and seem so inclined to love you, taking hold of one or two fingers, as children do, and looking into your face appealingly, which is very touching to me, for they seem to think us so free and happy, so different to themselves.”⁷⁷ Lady Hornby imagines herself in an almost motherly role. This assumption of a parental role seems to hint at the British-Ottoman relationship of the period during which Ottoman Istanbul had become something akin to a British protectorate. As Frances Gouda states in her work on gendered discourses and colonialism, “parental symbols established a taxonomy of authority, tutelage, and obedience; they served as universally recognizable emblems of differential positions of power.”⁷⁸ In a very similar state of mind, Lady Hornby reports a talk she has had with an Admiral Slade, a British admiral who was served in the Ottoman navy at the time. Hornby and Slade talk about the situation of women in Turkey: “We had a long chat about the women the other day, and agreed that, pretty, gentle and intelligent as they generally are, their ignorance would be in the highest degree ludicrous, were it not so lamentable.”⁷⁹ Hornby shows the same maternal attitude while comparing Turkish women with animals and referring to them as slaves:

How profoundly you would pity these poor degraded women, when young, so pretty and soft and gentle and intelligent, —but mere animals, though they be gazelles or fawns, —and when

74 Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 58.

75 Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 59.

76 Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 60.

77 Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 166.

78 Frances Gouda, “The Gendered Rhetoric of Colonialism and Anti-Colonialism in Twentieth-Century Indonesia,” *Indonesia* 55 (1993): 5.

79 Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 394.

their first bloom and vivacity is past, indolent to disease, gluttonous, spiteful, hopeless! Such they are made by the tyranny of their masters, when nature has given them everything.⁸⁰

Hornby describes the Turkish women as pretty and intelligent, both when she quotes her conversation with Admiral Slade and when she notes down her own observations. According to her, the Turkish women are naturally beautiful, they are blessed with intelligence, but as they lack education they are no different than animals or slaves.

In February 1856, after the Crimean War had ended, Sultan Abdülmecid (r. 1839–1861) attended two European balls. He first appeared at the British Embassy in February and then at the French Embassy.⁸¹ The balls were significant as it was the first time a Sultan had appeared at a ball. His presence there was indicative of the progress of the process of Europeanization. Lady Hornby was invited to the first ball that was given at the British Embassy. She recounts the story of two Turkish officers watching the European women dancing at the ball. She overhears their conversation. When one of the men asks the other what he thinks about the dance, the answer is surprising: “Is it possible that our gentle, veiled women will ever rush around in the arms of officers, like these?”⁸² It is highly unlikely that this conversation occurred as reported. Lady Hornby’s Turkish was such that she would have been unable to follow such an exchange. But the decision to include it is nonetheless intentional. Hornby is keen that her readers observe this tension and the process of political transition then underway in Turkey. It is worth mentioning that both the question of women and the debate surrounding the issue of the veil are indicative of the ongoing process of Europeanization and modernization, as observed and noted by Hornby. She describes another scene where a Turkish gentleman wanted to meet Hornby and her friends. Her interpreter warns Hornby before her visit: “Although of the new school, and affecting European manners, he seemed shy of ladies.”⁸³ And after spending some time in his house, she asks him about his wife. He replies that “she still wears that rag, that symbol of slavery, the *yashmak*⁸⁴ [emphasis mine], which I long to see torn from the faces of our women.”⁸⁵ In this imagined conversation, the gentleman, who is supposedly fond of European manners, describes the veil as a symbol of slavery. This sentence alone is testimony to how Hornby views the contrast between European and eastern manners as well as that between slavery and freedom.

⁸⁰ Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 397.

⁸¹ Badem, *Ottoman Crimean War, 1853–1856*: 333.

⁸² Hornby, *Constantinople During the Crimean War*: 221.

⁸³ Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 280.

⁸⁴ A *yashmak* is a veil worn by Muslim women that is wrapped around the upper and lower parts of the face so that only the eyes remain exposed to public view. *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, s.v. “*yashmak*,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/yashmak> [accessed 02.07.2021].

⁸⁵ Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 283.

Like Pardoe, Hornby uses the term “veiled” very often, almost every time she describes a group of women in public walking around, traveling on boats or sitting in a garden. “Fancy a pretty villa mingling its shadows in the water with the high trees surrounding it, the blue sky peeping in above, and a distracting peep of rose and orange gardens on either side, in which Turkish ladies, veiled and splendidly attired are walking slowly about”⁸⁶ writes Hornby. She describes a boating scene as follows: “Fancy, in contrast to this, a Turkish boat, stealing noiselessly along, filled with veiled and silent women, and carefully guarded by hideous and ferocious Blacks.”⁸⁷ And looking at the shore from a boat she observes, “by the landing-place the banks were literally lined with white-veiled Turkish women, their *feridjees*⁸⁸ of every possible brilliant or delicate hue, from blue, trimmed with rose pink, and cherry trimmed with silver, to delicate apple green and the palest straw-colour.”⁸⁹ She is surprised to have observed “[a] few veiled black women [. . .] squatting on the edge of the Bridge of Boats”⁹⁰ or “a crowd of veiled women, lame, halt, and blind, [. . .] dispersing.”⁹¹ The description of the women as veiled serves both as a tool to underline the fact that Turkish women cannot go out without covering themselves, and also as a way of disregarding the agency of women, by referring to them as covered crowds.

Irene Kamberidou’s remarks on references to slavery in women’s accounts are as follows: “The female accounts repeatedly corroborate that an Ottoman harem – especially that of the elite and the so-called middle class – was made up of women from different nations: Islamized slaves, liberated slaves and descendants of slaves, the prototype being the imperial harem.”⁹² Kamberidou’s remarks are very apparent in Hornby’s account; it contains numerous references to elite and middle-class harems, where she talks about various modes of slavery. She not only talks about concubinage in harem slavery, but like Pardoe refers to the menial servitude of slaves and how black slaves would usually accompany their masters outside. As mentioned before, the most common form of asymmetrical dependency to be found in the accounts of women writers is that in relation to slavery.

The slave markets in Istanbul were closed in 1846 under British pressure, in line with westernization policies,⁹³ however Lady Hornby reports that she passed by the slave market of Istanbul. As Reina Lewis states, “Westerners were regular visitors to the slave market, which had become a feature of the tourist itinerary as well as a sta-

86 Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 378.

87 Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 379.

88 Feridjee; Ferace: A long coat [emphasis mine].

89 Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 381.

90 Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 30.

91 Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 199.

92 Kamberidou, “Interacting, Sharing and Bonding”: 393.

93 Toledano, *The Ottoman Slave Trade and its Suppression: 1840–1890*: 107.

ple of high and popular representation.”⁹⁴ European visitors liked to visit slave markets, where they could observe and write about ‘exotic’ slaves. Whether Hornby had actually been to the slave market is questionable, but her representations of the slaves in the market are worth noting.

Such a sad, humiliating sight! There were only about a dozen blacks to sell, mostly women; and several had little children or babies in their arms. I thought they looked cheerful, and very much at home with their Turkish master, with the exception of one poor creature who sat aloof from the rest, the image of sullen despair.⁹⁵

Hornby gives her a peach and a little money. “She took hold of my hand and said something which I could not understand. Poor soul! My heart could only ache for her.”⁹⁶ Similar to the previous account where she described a woman who had apparently been captivated by her beauty, she plays the role of ‘mother of the poor’, adopting sentimental language.

Hornby tends to pity the slave women, whom she finds beautiful if they are Circassians, whereas she usually does not even regard black slaves as human beings. She utilizes distinct terms for the different types of slavery. While she tends to provide lengthy descriptions of the physical appearance of the Circassian concubines and their costumes, both of which she usually finds very beautiful, she rarely describes the black slaves in any detail. She assumes every black person she encounters in the streets to be a slave and she refers to them as “negroes” or “black creatures”, the choice of vocabulary explicitly indicative of the hierarchy in place as she sees it. Phrases such as “hideous Nubian slaves”⁹⁷ or “hideous and ferocious Blacks,”⁹⁸ are neither unexceptional nor rare in her account. The adjective “hideous” is overused by both Julia Pardoe and Lady Hornby, mostly in reference to black slaves. Lady Hornby’s descriptions of black people can be regarded as reflective of her own country’s colonialist policies in the Middle East, with her politically loaded narration alluding to black people generally as socially inferior.

The author, like many of the other female writers, has a keen interest in harems and harem slavery. Given the chance to visit a harem of a high-ranking officer, a Pasha, she describes the various slaves she meets in the harem. “Evidently in a dreamy kind of reverie, sat the principal wife of Pasha, surrounded by her slaves, some sitting on the steps beneath the divan, at her feet, others laughing together and strolling about. She rose as we approached, and gave her hand, after the English fashion, to each. The slaves all crowded round to look at us, and I assure you that the

⁹⁴ Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism*: 132.

⁹⁵ Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 26.

⁹⁶ Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 26.

⁹⁷ Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 25.

⁹⁸ Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 379.

variety and brilliancy of their costumes was almost dazzling.”⁹⁹ As she describes the scene in the harem, she refers to black slaves, young and old female slaves and their costumes. She is fascinated by the costumes and expensive clothes of the slaves. But she is most fascinated by a “lovely young Circassian lady, who was, as we afterwards found out, the Pasha’s second wife, and a present from the Sultan.”¹⁰⁰ Hornby and her two British friends, who had dinner at the harem of the Pasha, called this woman “the fair Circassian”¹⁰¹ because of her beauty, which Hornby dedicates one page to. As discussed earlier, “with slaves’ value reflecting a racialized hierarchy of beauty, Caucasian women were held in the highest esteem.”¹⁰²

One final example of Hornby’s representations of slaves is again from one of her visits to a harem. During the visit to a high-ranking official’s harem, Hornby recounts the purchase of a slave girl. According to her account, the head nurse of the family was invited to the harem that day also. The woman came to the harem, to bring the mistress a very young slave girl, whom Hornby describes as “of rare beauty; deep, deep blue eyes [. . .] such dear little bare white feet, gleaming from the tiny embroidered slippers!”¹⁰³ Hornby describes the following scene where the very young slave girl’s physical features were checked to determine whether she was perfect enough to be purchased as a slave. At some point, the mistress opines that “her complexion is too dark for blue eyes, but the nurse thinks she is sunburnt or flushed, so they are going to wipe her cheeks with cool rose-water.”¹⁰⁴ The girl, during this examination, shows signs of anger: “The suppressed anger of the child was intense; her nature was true then. No doubt she had always been taught to look forward to being sold at some great harem at Constantinople, – all the Circassian and Georgian girls are; but her natural instinct of shame, insult and degradation was powerful still.”¹⁰⁵ Whether the purchase of the slave was staged or authentic, the narrative is informative with respect to the views of the author. While she shows pity and even regret at staying at the house during the humiliating process that the girl goes through, she does not refrain from describing the black slaves’ hands as “ugly.”¹⁰⁶ The descriptions of the hierarchy of the slaves based on their skin color are both detailed and explicit. Moreover, her account also records the well-established belief that both the Circassian and Georgian girls were looking forward to being sold, as did Julia Pardoe’s. However, the author finds this voluntary enslavement shameful and projects her ideas onto the enslaved girl, who, according to Hornby, showed signs of instinctive shame.

99 Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 239.

100 Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 240.

101 Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 241.

102 Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism*: 130.

103 Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 363.

104 Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 363.

105 Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 364.

106 Hornby, *Constantinople during the Crimean War*: 364.

4 Concluding Remarks

Nineteenth-century women's travel writing provides a unique domain from which a very significant amount of gendered asymmetrical dependencies can be deduced. As I have tried to demonstrate, although the authenticity of the reported facts is questionable, historical travel writing offers a perspective through which readers can glean information on the motivations of what is stated.

I argue that female authors like Julia Pardoe and Lady Hornby, in this particular case, were part of profound dependency relations. They were dependent on their male relatives, and their stay in Istanbul was dependent on the latter. Moreover, their books were published and read because their accounts were marketable and had a degree of commercial value in England. Their narration was directly dependent on the political situation pertaining at that time and the relationship that persisted between the British and Ottoman Empires during this period. Therefore, I suggest that when the narrations of female travelers to Ottoman lands in the nineteenth century are analyzed, three different layers of dependency relations should be considered: 1) the Ottoman Empire's political and economic dependency on the British Empire, which triggered the abolition of the slave markets and slavery in the Ottoman Empire; 2) the dependency of 'free' British women on their male relatives (usually husbands and fathers, whom they accompanied); and 3) the dependency relations of free and enslaved women in the Ottoman Empire.

We are therefore faced with different forms and degrees of asymmetrical dependencies seen through the lens of British female authors of the nineteenth century. I propose that, in representing enslavement and other forms of asymmetrical dependencies in the social lives of the women of the period, these authors, who were themselves dependent to some extent, created a space of freedom for themselves. As such, in presenting accounts of 'eastern' life, which so distinctly contrasted with their own, they affirmed their own impression of possessing personal liberty. Moreover, by showing pity or almost maternal affection for the enslaved women, the British women echoed and reiterated a colonial and invasive discourse. Nevertheless, women's travel writing is an essential, if not the only, source from which to derive information on the lives and social interactions of slaves in the elite household harems.

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Miriam Quiering

Hierarchies and Dependency as a Narrative Legitimation Strategy for Female Leadership in an Islamist Framework: A Case-Study of Zainab al-Ghazali's Prison Memoirs

1 Introduction: Forms of Dependency in *Ayyām min ḥayyātī*

This paper¹ aims to analyse how forms of dependency are narrated in Zainab al-Ghazali's prison memoirs *Ayyām min ḥayyātī*² with a focus on the interplay of dependencies and gender in the text. It will be shown how al-Ghazali uses hierarchies and dependency as a strategy in her narrative to legitimize her role as a female leader in an Islamist framework, where the primary purpose of women is to be wives and mothers and not necessarily political leaders, like Zainab was.

Zainab al-Ghazali (1917–2005) was an Islamist activist and famous member of the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwān al-muslimīn*). She published her memoirs in 1977 in Cairo, in which she mainly recounts her political activism before as well as during her imprisonment in the torture prison of Gamal Abdel Nasser, who ruled Egypt from 1952 to 1970.

There are several distinct layers and forms of dependency inside and in the context of the text, starting with Zainab's strong physical dependency as a prisoner on the guards. With regards to gender, there is the dependency between husband and wife, in which the wife, according to Islamist ideas, must be subordinate to the husband, who is the head and breadwinner of the family. Another form of dependency,

1 This paper was written in the context of the “Narratives of Dependency” conference hosted by the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS) on June 15 and 16, 2021. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the organizers Prof. Marion Gymnich and Prof. Elke Brüggem for the chance to participate in the conference. I would also like to thank Prof. Christine Schirrmacher, in whose seminar on the Muslim Brotherhood the idea for this article originated, and my dear colleague Dr. Anna Kollatz for her helpful corrections and advice. My greatest thanks go to Prof. Stephan Conermann, through whom I was given the opportunity to participate in the Narratology Working Group preparing for the conference in the first place and who gave me great encouragement to give a talk myself.

2 *Ayyām min ḥayyātī* literally means “Days of my Life”. The English publication was named “Return of the Pharaoh”, which refers to the key role of Gamal Abdel Nasser, under whose rule Zainab was imprisoned. In this paper the following English translation will be cited: Zainab al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh: Memoir in Nasir's Prison*, trans. Mokrane Guezzo (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 2006).

which results from Zainab's membership in the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and the hierarchical structure of this organization, is her dependency on the (male) leaders of the MB. Finally, there is Zainab's dependency as a believer on God, the almighty creator. Thereby, total devotion to God creates a relationship between God and the believer, which, from the perspective of the believers, is indeed characterized by strong asymmetrical dependency. To leave this relationship would not only mean losing certain material resources provided by the network of believers, but also the loss of eternal life, which is the most precious thing a human can possess, according to Zainab's beliefs. Even if we leave the ideological framework in which Zainab operates, we face institutions in Egyptian jurisprudence which label conversion from Islam or renunciation as apostasy. This can be legally punished or simply not recognized, not to mention the social discrimination faced by people confronted with such charges.³

While the first two forms of dependency (on the guards/on the husband and gender rules) are perceived as worldly and finite by Zainab, the latter two (on the leaders of the MB/on God) are described as spiritual and eternal. So, with regard to the title of this paper and the question of the legitimation of female leadership within an Islamist framework, it will be argued that Zainab draws upon these 'spiritual' dependencies in her narrative to overcome the 'worldly' ones. This means her submission to the Islamist ideology and network and finally to God himself enables Zainab to overcome not only her physical dependency on the guards and torturers in prison, but also the gender-based rules and hierarchies between man and woman or wife and husband – and thus functions as a narrative legitimation strategy for female leadership.

In the first part of this paper, some background information about Zainab and about the 'Islamist framework', in which Zainab's narrative can be situated, will be presented. In this context, the role women are supposed to play within the ideology of the MB will be briefly sketched to highlight where Zainab oversteps this role in her writings. In a next step, some general information about the text and its narrative structure will be given with emphasis on the question how Zainab presents herself as a political and spiritual leader in her narrative and thereby establishes a contrast to the Islamist ideal of femininity. In the fourth section, different narrative strategies will be explored which Zainab uses to reintegrate into the Islamist ideal of womanhood. Consequently, in section five I will argue that certain hierarchies, which Zainab perceives as divine and thereby irrevocable, and finally her total dependency on God himself, can be considered her strongest and most effective narrative strategy to legitimize overstepping gender-based hierarchies and rules.

³ See for example the Report of Freedom House on apostasy laws in Egypt: Freedom House, ed., "Policing Belief: The Impact of Blasphemy Laws on Human Rights," Freedom House Online, n.d. https://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/PolicingBelief_Egypt.pdf [accessed 03.09.2021].

2 Contextualization: Zainab al-Ghazali and the Muslim Brotherhood

Zainab al-Ghazali was born in Egypt in 1917 and died in 2005. She referred to herself as the “mother of the Muslim Brotherhood”⁴ and was the founder and leader of the independent women’s organization “Muslim Ladies Association” (*jāmi‘a al-saiyydāt al-muslimīn*). In the 1950s, she became one of the leading figures in the Muslim Brotherhood and organized its underground activities when most of the male leaders were imprisoned. Later in her life she also became the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood’s ladies branch.⁵ Until today Zainab is worshiped by the members of the organization for being a *mujāhida*, a fighter in *jihād*, which in this context refers to the political struggle for a *sharī‘a*-based theocracy.⁶ On social media channels like YouTube numerous videos can be found that celebrate her as an idol for Muslim women.⁷ In this regard, Zainab al-Ghazali was a quite outstanding figure in Islamist circles,⁸ who are typically male-dominated.

The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in 1928 by Hasan al-Bannā (1906–1949), some years after Egypt had gained – at least officially – independence from the British colonial power in 1922.⁹ The organization proposed a model of society based on Is-

4 Valerie J. Hoffman, “An Islamic Activist: Zainab al-Ghazali,” in *Women and the Family in the Middle East: New Voices of Change*, ed. Elizabeth Warnock Fernea (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985): 232.

5 The Muslim Sisters Group (*qism al-aḥawāt al-muslimāt*) was founded in 1932. For further information on its emergence and development, see Omayya Abdel-Latif, “In the Shadow of the Brothers: The Women of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood,” *Carnegie Papers* 13 (2008): 1–23. For the Muslim Sisters’ role in contemporary politics, see Erika Biagini, “The Egyptian Muslim Sisterhood between Violence, Activism and Leadership,” *Mediterranean Politics* 22, no. 1 (2017): 35–53.

6 For a further analysis of the Muslim Brotherhood’s interpretation of the qur’anic concept of *jihād* and its evolution, see for example Ran A. Levy, “The Idea of Jihād and its Evolution: Ḥasan al-Bannā and the Society of the Muslim Brothers,” *Die Welt des Islams* 54 (2014): 139–58. It must be mentioned, though, that the interpretation of *jihād* as an armed struggle against secular governance and unbelievers is limited to militant Islamist circles, whereas the majority of Muslims reject this interpretation. For further exploration of the term’s qur’anic origin, see Ella Landau-Tasseron, “Jihād,” in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’an*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Washington: Brill, 2003), http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1875-3922_q3_EQCOM_00101.

7 See for example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHisZWdDc6Y>; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_dM4WCJHoc; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-j7TknrihUM>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXHhX2zCjI0> [all accessed 20.08.2021].

8 For a further definition of the terms “Islamist” and “Islamism”, see for example Andreas Meier, *Politische Strömungen im Modernen Islam* (Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag, 2002): 73–74.

9 Although Egypt had officially achieved independence in 1922 and was henceforth, at least on paper, no longer a British protectorate but a sovereign state, Great Britain continued to exert considerable influence on the country’s domestic and foreign policy. Independence was granted to Egypt only under restrictions, and Great Britain had stipulated four conditions in the declaration in which it recognized Egypt’s independence: (1) securing Britain’s communications networks in Egypt; (2) the British

lamic law, the *sharī'a*, to overcome foreign domination and thus become an independent, prosperous nation. To achieve this goal, the nation had to return to the ideals of 'true' Islam and prepare for a final overthrow of secular governance.¹⁰ To spread true Islamic values among the people, the Muslim Brotherhood strongly focused on welfare activities and propagandistic work on a grass-roots level. They built schools and hospitals and went to the villages and coffeehouses to preach.¹¹ From its founding in the 1920s until today, the organization has undergone several ideological shifts and changes depending on the political situation in the country. Its orientation reached from a very radical and militant stance toward secular governance in the late 1950s and 60s (when the Nasser government decimated the MB through extensive persecution) to a more moderate and liberal orientation in the 1970s. Furthermore, during the Arab revolutions of 2011 the MB won the elections as the organization was willing to cooperate within the democratic institutions.¹²

Women serve an important function in the Islamist worldview as biological reproducers and educators of the new generation, who have to rebuild the Islamic nation.¹³ According to an article by Hasan al-Bannā from 1936, a woman reaches perfection if she is "a girl of innocent chastity, of superior intelligence and fine sensitivity" and "if she honours the goal and the mission".¹⁴ The greatest perfection she can attain is to be a supportive wife and a caring mother, who teaches her sons about true Islam and

defense of Egypt against all foreign aggression or interference; (3) the protection of foreign interests in Egypt as well as the protection of minorities; (4) the British (military) presence in and control over Sudan. For a brief history of the political situation at that time, see Malcolm Yapp, *The Near East since the First World War: A History to 1995* (London: Routledge, 1996): 51–68.

10 Cf. Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013): 20–26.

11 Brynjar Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement, 1928–1942* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1998): 35.

12 After the military coup in 2013, the Brotherhood, which over time evolved into an international movement with branches in Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Algeria and Libya, was classified as a terrorist organization in Egypt and prosecuted by the state. For a detailed analysis of the organization's development and history, see Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood*.

13 The roles of women as biological reproducers and educators in Islamist movements have already been studied with respect to the example of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, for example by Haleh Afshar, "Women and Reproduction in Iran," in *Woman-Nation-State*, ed. Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias (London: Macmillan, 1989): 110–26. In a broader context, including national movements in countries and cultures dominated by Islam, the role of women has been explored in manifold case studies in Deniz Kandiyoti, ed., *Women, Islam and the State* (London: Macmillan, 1991).

14 Hasan al-Bannā, "al-Mar'a al-muslima 'ala mufraq ṭarīqayn" (1936), published on the Muslim Brotherhood's Online Archive "Ikhwan-Wiki": https://www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A3%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A9_%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89_%D9%85%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%82_%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%86 [accessed 01.09.2021].

their mission to build the Islamic nation.¹⁵ Although al-Bannā adopted a conservative view of the limits of women's political activism, there were situations where he encouraged the Muslim Sisters to participate in street protests, like in 1948, after the dissolution of the MB. However, the Muslim Sisters of those times mainly engaged in charity work and social activities like founding schools and medical services.¹⁶

Zainab Al-Ghazali did not start her political activism in the brotherhood, but founded an organization herself, which was called the "Society of Muslim Ladies" (*jāmi'ā al-saiyydāt al-muslimīn*). It was founded by her in 1936, when she was only 18 years old, and stayed independent from the Muslim Brotherhood. This founding was also a result of a brief mingling with secularly oriented feminists, who Zainab criticized for their inclination towards western feminism.¹⁷ In her view, western feminist ideology was hostile to Islamic ideals and therefore harmed the development of the country by destroying its native culture and exposing it to foreign cultural domination:

Our goal was to acquaint the Muslim woman with her religion so she would be convinced by the means of study that the women's liberation movement is a deviant innovation that occurred due to the Muslims' backwardness.¹⁸

In Al-Ghazali's view, Islam has provided women with all the rights they need and, therefore, the bad situation of women results from the absence of 'true' Islam, which must be implemented to achieve progress for women. For Zainab, the reintroduction of 'Islamic women's rights' is an integral part of the building of the "Islamic nation".¹⁹ She engaged in women's right to education and reforms in marriage and divorce laws and based her argumentation on religious sources. According to her memoirs, she even con-

¹⁵ Hasan al-Bannā, "al-Mar'a al-muslima 'ala mufrāq ṭariqayn". A further introduction into Hasan al-Bannā's life, thoughts and writings can be found for example in Gudrun Kraemer, *Hasan al-Bannā* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2010).

¹⁶ Abdel-Latif, "In the Shadow": 3. With the ideological changes over time, the MB's stance towards women changed too, and today the female members play a significantly more active role than they did in the early decades, as Erika Biagini has shown (Biagini, *The Egyptian Muslim Sisterhood*). But since Zainab al-Ghazali belongs to the older generation, who was mainly influenced by the teachings of the founder Hasan al-Bannā, and her narrative takes place in the late 1950s and 1960s, in other words during a phase of militant radicalization, the female ideal of the early decades will be taken as a starting point for this paper's narratological analysis. Although the field of women's participation has widened, the primacy of motherhood has not changed, however, and can be seen as a consensus among Islamist groups.

¹⁷ Cf. Jeffrey Halverson and Amy Way, "Islamist Feminism: Constructing Gender Identities in Postcolonial Muslim Societies," *Politics and Religion* 4 (2011): 513.

¹⁸ Zainab al-Ghazali interviewed by Valerie J. Hoffman (Hoffman, "An Islamic Activist": 235).

¹⁹ Hoffman, "An Islamic Activist": 235.

sulted the Saudi grand mufti on women questions.²⁰ She also engaged in the male-dominated genre of *tafsīr*, Qurʾān exegesis, and wrote her own Qurʾān comment.²¹

Zainab was clearly in line with the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology. Despite her fight for women's education and emphasis on the equal value of men and women, in her organization and writings she propagated a domestic female ideal, where being a wife and mother remained the primary role of women.²² In an interview with Valerie Hoffman, al-Ghazali stated that a woman's "first, holy, and most important mission is to be a mother and wife. She cannot ignore this priority. If she then finds she has free time, she may participate in public activities."²³ The seeming paradox about al-Ghazali, which has already been discussed by Miriam Cooke²⁴ and Pauline Lewis,²⁵ is that there seems to be a great contrast between the domestic female ideal she preached and her own life as a political leader and activist. She was not only doing a job which situated her in the male public arena, but she also officially put her political activism before her marital duties. She divorced her first husband because he kept her from practicing *daʿwa* – *daʿwa* literally means to call or invite people to God.²⁶ This term is used by the MB for all kinds of social activities that support the establishment of the Islamic state by spreading Islamist ideas in society. When Zainab remarried, she included the following condition in her marriage contract: "In the event of any clash between the marriage contract's interest and that of *daʿwah*, our marriage will end, but *daʿwah* will always remain rooted in me."²⁷ This sentence shows very clearly that Zainab preferred her religious-political activism to her role as a wife, which, at first sight, seems to contradict the female ideal she preached.

So, the questions I aimed to answer when studying her memoirs were if certain narrative strategies can be found that she uses to overcome this apparent conflict. How does she present herself in the text with regard to gender-related expectations? Where does her narration contrast the Islamist female ideal and where does it reinforce it? And finally, are there narrative strategies she uses to reintegrate herself into the Islamist ideology and to legitimize her overstepping it?

20 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 34.

21 Zainab al-Ghazali, *Nazrāt fī Kitāb Allāhi* (Cairo: Dār ash-Shurūq, 1993).

22 Al-Ghazali in Hoffman, "An Islamic Activist": 236.

23 Hoffman, "An Islamic Activist": 236.

24 Miriam Cooke, "Zainab al-Ghazālī: Saint or Subversive?" *Die Welt des Islams, New Series* 34, no. 1 (1994): 1–20; Miriam Cooke, *Women Claim Islam: Creating Islamic Feminism Through Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2004): 83–106.

25 Pauline Lewis, "Zainab al-Ghazali: Pioneer of Islamist Feminism," *Michigan Journal History* (2014) https://michiganjournalhistory.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/lewis_pauline.pdf [accessed 10.08.2021].

26 For a historical analysis of the term's origin and development, see Marius Canard, "Daʿwa," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., ed. Peri Bearman, Thierry Bianquis, Clifford Edmund Bosworth, Emeri van Donzel and Wolfhart P. Heinrichs (2012), http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1738.

27 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: ix.

3 The Narrative Structure of *Ayyām min ḥayyātī* and Zainab's Self-Presentation

Ayyām min ḥayyātī is written from the perspective of a first-person-narrator. The book consists of nearly 200 pages and was published in 1977. It has been translated into English, Bengali and Urdu and can easily be found on the internet. In this autobiography, Zainab mainly talks about her political activism in the *da'wa*-movement and her time in Nasser's military prison, where she was imprisoned in 1965, having been accused of plotting together with other Muslim Brotherhood members against Nasser's government.²⁸ In 1967, she was transferred to al-Qanatir women's prison, where she stayed until her release in 1971,²⁹ after Nasser had died and was followed by Anwar Sadat. Actually, if one reads her book in one sitting, it conveys the impression that the whole narration consists only of repetition, in which the same plot pattern is told over and over again. In this, Zainab, the hero of the narration, is subject to either violence, mostly in the form of torture, or blackmail attempts by the Nasser regime, which is trying to silence her or even to turn her around and make her work for Nasser. Zainab always resists. She withstands all kinds of torture and blackmail attempts and never changes her point of view. Above all, she stages her role as a martyr who has been put to the test by God to endure this suffering. This can be seen in the following dialogue with the prison guard Hasan Khalil and her torturer Shams Badran:

[Zainab]: 'I won't write anything except the truth. If you want to kill me, then do so. For it is a martyrdom that will be written with Allah, the Exalted.'

'We won't allow you this martyrdom!', snarled Hasan Khalil.

'Martyrdom is with Allah. If He wants it for anyone of his servants, He will give it.'

Recognizing my persistence, Shams' anger was overwhelming: 'Hang her in the air and flog her 500 times, so that she can know her God!'

The flogging was over, and God alone knows how I bore it.³⁰

At least 70 percent of the narrative consists of dialogues. In these, Zainab always appears intellectually and spiritually superior. She speaks in the tone of a teacher and her speech part always dominates. In prison, her speech parts in dialogues with her torturers are reminiscent of sermons rather than resembling answers in real dialogues, let alone interrogations.³¹ The same is true for the 'confessions' she is urged to write in prison, which consist of pages of religious speeches.³² She quotes often from the Quran and uses a very elaborate language and many religious terms. Thereby, she

²⁸ Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 45.

²⁹ Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 145, 187.

³⁰ Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 112.

³¹ For example: Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 125.

³² For example: Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 81–82, 140–41.

steadily repeats the Muslim Brotherhood's message to rebuild the Islamic nation.³³ Several times she directly speaks to the reader, urging them to recognize the injustice done to her and appealing to their Muslim duty to fight for the Islamic nation.³⁴

As a result, the plot structure, the dichotomy in the constellation of actors and language, the repetition of the Islamist message, the many Qur'ān quotations and addressing the reader – all this shows the didactic function of the text. Already in the preface of the English translation, the publisher points out that the text is supposed to be “a source of inspiration and guidance for millions of people who want to see Islam thrive and flourish.”³⁵

Through visions and miracles, Zainab also appears in the role of a saint. Once she is trapped in a room with big wild dogs who are biting her, but afterwards she finds herself unharmed despite their bites.³⁶ Another time the torturers pour hundreds of mice into her cell, which miraculously flee through the window.³⁷ She also has visions, in which even the prophet himself is talking to her.³⁸ Miriam Cooke also points out that the seven torture cells through which Zainab passes “can be seen to be the obverse of the seven heavens through which Muhammad passed on the mi'raj, or his Ascension to meet with God. This then becomes the model of the saint's journey.”³⁹

To sum up, the image of Zainab we get from the text is that of a political leader, a brilliant rhetorician, an invincible fighter under God's personal protection, a martyr and finally a nightmare for her torturers and even for Nasser himself.⁴⁰ Where her male colleagues buckle,⁴¹ Zainab remains strong and persistent, encouraging and leading her prison mates. Thus, the picture Zainab paints of herself does not fit at all into the ideal of an obedient wife and mother.

In her narrative Zainab constantly oversteps gender-based etiquette. In one scene, she describes, how young men, members of the Brotherhood, visit her in her home in the middle of the night, which clearly violates gender segregation rules.⁴² In

33 On the last page of the text, Zainab repeats the dogma of the MB once more: “The establishment of an Islamic state is an obligation on Muslims and their equipment for it is the call to Allah in the same manner the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions called to him. This is the mission of every Muslim whether they are from the Ikhwan or not.” Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 188.

34 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 13, 63, 44, 54, 55, 116, 156, 166.

35 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: viii.

36 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 50–51.

37 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 100–101.

38 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 53–54, 152–54, 169.

39 Cooke, *Women Claim Islam*: 95.

40 There are several places in the text where Zainab states that Nasser and the torturers are scared of her. See for example Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 77.

41 Zainab is outraged when she finds out that her fellow 'Alī 'Ashmawi has been turned in prison: “Alī 'Ashmawi is a mischievous liar! I'll spit in his face because he is a venal fabricator of the truth!” Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 137. Cf. also Cooke, *Women Claim Islam*: 97–98.

42 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 15.

a dialogue with her husband, she cautions him in a quite bossy way not to ask her about her political activities and reminds him of their agreement in the marriage contract.⁴³ When the young members of the Brotherhood gather in her home, it is not Zainab, but her maid who is serving the tea.⁴⁴ Actually, Zainab is never busy with any domestic work but lives the life of a political activist from the higher ranks, permanently mixing with the other gender and doing activities which fall into the ‘male’ sphere: she meets with important officials and politicians,⁴⁵ develops ideological concepts and practical action plans,⁴⁶ and is responsible for directing underground activities in the 1950s together with ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Ismā’īl.⁴⁷

4 Narrative Strategies of Reintegration

We can find numerous narrative strategies with the help of which Zainab reintegrates into the Islamist ideal of femininity and manages to overcome the seeming contrast between her political ‘male’ role and the domestic female ideal. In the following, these strategies will be briefly sketched before presenting in part five ‘Hierarchies and Dependency’ as her most effective strategy for legitimizing her leadership role and actions, which may be at odds with Islamist gender norms and rules.

4.1 Purity and Dirt as Leitmotifs

Zainab uses purity and dirt as leitmotifs, with the help of which she identifies as a pure and chaste woman. Her style is, as already mentioned, very eloquent. It is the language of a highly educated woman, peppered with a specialist vocabulary from the Islamic theological debate of the time. Some of the religious terms she uses in dialogues and in her articles are apparently not even understood by the guards. When, during an interrogation, she is asked by her torturers about Sayyid Quṭb’s writing *Ma‘alim fī l-ṭarīq*,⁴⁸ she explains his *jihād* concept in a dogmatic speech, which leads to silence:

43 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 37–38.

44 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 39.

45 For example Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 34.

46 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 39–42.

47 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 39–42.

48 Sayyid Quṭb (1906–1966) was an Egyptian writer and intellectual and became one of the most important ideologues of the Muslim Brotherhood. He, too, was arrested in 1954 by the Nasser regime. In prison he wrote *ma‘alim fī ṭarīq* (“signs on the way”; English title: “Milestones”, published in 1964), which Zainab helped smuggle out of the prison and publish. The text consists of a practical plan for an armed *jihād* and marked a radical turn in the Muslim Brotherhood’s ideology. Later, the organiza-

Silence followed for a while, and then Hasan Khalil sarcastically exclaimed ‘She is one hell of an orator!’

‘A writer too!’, added another.

He took out a set of the Muslim Ladies’ magazine, one that had been confiscated when they raided my home. He began reading a few lines from one of my editorials. He was interrupted by Shams Badran: ‘I didn’t understand a word of what she said.’

And, as his butchers resumed their flogging: ‘Clarify what you said B!’⁴⁹

In contrast to Zainab’s language, that of her enemies in prison is rough and always vulgar. Yet, Zainab does not even reproduce these vulgar expressions. She merely describes with horror how diabolical and terrible the language of these men was. The language of Zainab is ‘pure’, while the language of her enemies, the tyrants and the infidels, is ‘dirty’ and vulgar.⁵⁰ Zainab is not willing to pollute her own language in such a way, not even by quoting them. Thus, we encounter the first indication of Islamist femininity in the narrative structures. Although purity is a religious virtue not only for women but also for men, in the Islamist ideology it is clearly assigned to the feminine, which is reflected not least in the worship of female virginity.

4.2 Dissociation from ‘Atheist’ Women

Another strategy Zainab uses to reintegrate into the Islamist ideal of femininity is the strict dissociation from the other women she meets in prison and whom she labels as ‘atheists’. After her trial in 1967, Zainab is transferred to a women’s prison together with Ḥamīda Qutb.⁵¹ The sight of the other inmates is worse for Zainab than any violence to which she was subjected in the torture prison. She describes these women as “slaves to whims and desires”, who “had forgotten their humanity, honour and dignity”.⁵² For Zainab, these women are “nothing but animals with no meaning to their lives except eating and intercourse.”⁵³ The inmates, who are described by Zainab as atheists, thus form the negative opposite of the Muslim woman and all her virtues. Zainab and Ḥamīda instantly distance themselves. They do not even want to stand in line with them, and when the guard asks them why they are standing apart, Zainab promptly replies, “We’ll stand separately. We don’t belong to this income.”⁵⁴ Through

tions distanced themselves from this militant writing. An introduction into Qutb’s writing and its reception can be found in John Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism* (London: Hurst, 2010).

49 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 89–90.

50 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 47, 58, 77.

51 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 174.

52 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 175.

53 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 176.

54 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 177.

this disparagement of the other women and her dissociation from them, Zainab succeeds in enhancing her own person in favor of the Islamist female ideal.

4.3 The Construction of her Mother Role

In the ideology of the MB, motherhood is the most important task of women to help build the Islamic nation. Zainab al-Ghazali also justifies her commitment to women's education with their role as mothers. As educators of the next generation, they have a responsibility to pass on the values and teachings of the community and to prepare their children for their task of establishing the Islamic nation. Zainab al-Ghazali has no children of her own, but she steadily constructs her role as mother of the younger members of the MB. In her narrative, she does this by repeatedly mentioning how the younger ones frequent her for advice and leadership, but also through numerous dialogues in which she is called "mother".⁵⁵ One of the strongest expressions of this mother role comes in a touching scene at the end, when Zainab is to be released and refuses to leave Ḥamīdah Qūṭb behind:

It was a tremendous test! How was I to leave Ḥamīdah? How was I to leave her alone in this dark, lonely place, to face harsh treatment? All my being protested, 'No! No! I will not leave her!' But Ḥamīdah said: 'Mother, this is Allah's favour and mercy and all is from Him. Allah does not forget His slaves.'⁵⁶

Through the narrative presentation of her mother role, Zainab adapts her self-portrayal to the female ideal of the MB and, despite her function in public and politics, manages to present herself in the domestic role of a loving and caring mother.

4.4 Protection of her Chastity

One very striking strategy of reintegration is the protection of her chastity, which plays a central role in the Islamist idea of femininity. During torture, Zainab always stays dressed. There are several scenes in which this is emphasized.⁵⁷ Once, for example, she is to be hung upside down from the ceiling to be whipped in this position. She begs to be given pants beforehand, and her request is granted immediately:

⁵⁵ For example: Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 8, 49, 147.

⁵⁶ Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 186.

⁵⁷ Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 90, 92, 99, 104.

'Please give me trousers . . . I beg you!' Hasan Khalil agreed and a soldier returned with a pair so quickly you would have thought he had taken his own off. I was escorted to an adjacent room to change.⁵⁸

Not only does she get a pair of pants, but she is even allowed to change in another room. Even when she wants to go to the bathroom, she is granted privacy after a brief discussion.⁵⁹ The torturers also make several attempts to have Zainab raped by soldiers but fail constantly. One soldier refuses and converts to the 'right' faith while talking to her, whereupon he is later shot.⁶⁰ Most interesting, however, is the final rape attempt, in which Zainab uses force to defend herself for the first and only time in the entire narrative:

The soldier began begging me to tell them all they needed to know, for he had no wish to hurt me. But if he did not obey orders then a great harm would befall him. With all strength I could muster, I warned him: 'Come near me, just one step, and I'll kill you. Kill you, understand?'

I could see the man was reluctant but still he moved towards me. Before I knew it, my hands were firmly around his neck. 'Bismillah, Allahu Akbar', I shouted, and sank my teeth into the side of his neck. The man slipped out of my hands, white foam, like murky soap suds, frothed from his mouth. He fell to the ground motionless. Hardly able to believe what had happened, I slunk backwards, what little strength I had now diluted. For now, at least, I was safe. Allah, the Exalted, had infused in me a strange force. A force sufficient to overcome this beast.⁶¹

With regard to gender in the narrative, this scene forms a key moment. On the one hand, it is the scene in which Zainab acts in the most 'masculine' manner by using brute force to (presumably) kill her tormentor. However, she does so to protect her most 'feminine' side, namely her chastity. The threat to sexually abuse her is the only act of violence in the entire narrative which she does not endure with her head held high, but against which she defends herself with all her might. Obviously, one does not become a martyr by enduring rape. A woman who gambles away her chastity and thus violates the honour of her male family members seems here, to put it provocatively, to be a perpetrator rather than a victim. Zainab, who consistently refers to herself as the sister and mother of the male Muslim Brothers, thus in a manner of speaking risks the honour of the entire collective at this moment. Sexual violence is thus the only type of violence that must not be endured by a martyr and that justifies slipping into a 'male' role and defending oneself with physical violence. But the quoted scene also shows that this change of role is legitimate only under certain conditions. For one thing, it is only temporary. After having overpowered the man, Zainab instantly returns to her 'female' role: she is shocked by her act and overcome by a feeling of weakness. Nevertheless, she clearly states that the physical strength she used was given to her by God. She, as a woman, therefore, does not *per se* possess the

⁵⁸ Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 90.

⁵⁹ Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 54.

⁶⁰ Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 95–96.

⁶¹ Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 99–100.

‘masculine’ cold-bloodedness and strength necessary to carry out such an act of violence; with God’s help, she was able, to slip temporarily into the ‘masculine’ role of violent defender – and that was only done to protect her femininity.

4.5 Strategic Self-Devaluation in her Preface

Another strategy by means of which Zainab reintegrates herself into the conservative ideal of womanhood can be found at the beginning of the narrative, when she justifies her writing process:

Although I have yearned to write *Return of the Pharaoh*, now for many years, I have, nevertheless, hesitated a great deal. Had it not been for the many people, whose belief in the Islamic cause I fully trust, from amongst my children and brothers, leader of *da’wah* and exponents of it thought who lived with me during that period, believing that it was Islam’s right on us that we should record those days when Islamic *da’wah* was fought against, then perhaps it would not have come to fruition.⁶²

She thus makes it clear that she wrote this book neither on her own initiative nor for her own benefit, but only after encouragement from her brothers and sisters in the faith and in the service of the *da’wa*. Gabriele Habinger has examined such narrative strategies of “self-devaluation” using the example of European travel literature by women from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She has put forward the thesis that through this “discourse of modesty” women attempted to reintegrate themselves into the Victorian ideal of women. Since these women travellers entered the ‘male’ public sphere, on the one hand, through travelling and, on the other, through their writing, they had to justify this overstepping of boundaries upon their return.⁶³ With regards to the memoirs of other Muslim Brothers, who described similar prison experiences from that period in their memoirs, Miriam Cooke points out that “to write one’s memoirs was not a self-centered indulgence, but rather constituted an act of guidance to others”.⁶⁴ Still, Zainab’s “hesitation” to write such a piece of guidance herself could be also interpreted in Habinger’s sense as a way of reintegrating into the feminine ideal.

4.6 Sporadic Use of a We-Narrator

Another narrative strategy of reintegration can be seen in the sporadic use of a we-narrator (employing first person plural pronouns), which can be found in the intro-

⁶² Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 1.

⁶³ Gabriele Habinger, *Frauen reisen in die Fremde: Diskurse und Repräsentationen von reisenden Europäerinnen im 19. und beginnenden 20. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Promedia, 2006): 149–52.

⁶⁴ Cooke, *Women Claim Islam*: 85.

duction and in a few other places in the text, when Zainab talks about the mission of the organization. In the introduction she writes, for example: “We believe that the period of our incarceration and torture is history’s right to know of, such that those who are on the way can study and understand it.”⁶⁵ By using a we-narrator, she once more emphasizes that this narration is not the personal story of a single woman, but the story and vision of a whole movement. At the same time, the stance of the we-narrator endows her rhetorically with a higher authority: she does not speak in the voice of an individual woman, but in that of the collective. Thus, almost the entire introduction is written from the perspective of a we-narrator.⁶⁶

5 Hierarchies and Dependency as a Narrative Legitimation Strategy

According to Zainab’s understanding of Islam and the religious community, the will of the individual must be subordinated to that of the collective. In her text she states that “Islam forms a link between its leadership and soldiers, a link which transcends individual egos and makes the pleasure of Allah the goal of all. I live in peace with that knowledge.”⁶⁷ She also calls Islam “a battle of bondage⁶⁸ to Allah”⁶⁹ and refers to herself and her brothers and sisters in faith repeatedly as “slaves” and “servants”, as could already be seen in various quotations above.

Therefore, obedience and hierarchies play a central role in the Brotherhood’s ideology. The whole organization structure is characterized by strict hierarchies between the older and experienced members and the younger ones. At the top of this pyramid there is the *murshid*, which literally means ‘master’ or ‘leader’. He is the commander of the whole organization and must be obeyed at all costs.⁷⁰ The central role of this hierarchical relationship between teacher and pupil and the total devotion of the individual to the cause of the group can be traced back to Sufi teachings, which had a strong impact on the founder Hasan al-Bannā and the organization in its formative period.⁷¹ Among other things, the practical and popular orientation of the group could also be attributed to the Sufi influence. Pauline Lewis has already pointed out

65 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 2.

66 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 1–3.

67 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 60.

68 The Arabic word *‘ubūdiyya* can also be translated as ‘slavery’ or ‘servitude’.

69 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 183.

70 Richard Paul Mitchel, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969): 164–66.

71 Mitchel, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*: 2–7. Whereas the Sufi influence was strong in the early formative period, according to Lia, the Brotherhood slowly distanced themselves from Sufi elements during the 1930s. Cf. Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*: 38.

that this influence of Sufi ideology might explain Zainab's overstepping of certain aspects of gender-based etiquette.⁷² Sufism emphasizes the personal and spiritual relationship between God and the believer and, therefore, does not distinguish between men and women in the way orthodox Islam does. Already in the medieval period Sufi shrines were religious institutions where women were very active, quite unlike in the male-dominated mosque.⁷³ So, according to Pauline Lewis, Zainab did not perceive herself primarily as a woman, but as a spiritual being who reached a certain level on her way to God, where she is free from any worldly temptations, which implies that certain social rules do not apply to her any longer.⁷⁴ Lewis also points out that the strict hierarchical order between teacher and pupil might explain why Zainab favored her allegiance to God and also to Hasan al-Bannā, the leader of the organization, who she understood to be a mediator between God and herself, over that to her husband.⁷⁵ Miriam Cooke indicates in her analysis of al-Ghazali's memoirs that the primacy of building the Islamic state "provides a loophole for women's activism and public agency."⁷⁶ While the feminine domestic role is described as the "ideal peacetime behaviour", Zainab's situation as a fighter in *jihād* "meant improvising new rules of conduct".⁷⁷ She concludes that "this hierarchy allows her to use the Islamic legal system to empower herself."⁷⁸ In the following, I will draw upon these approaches and show how Zainab uses these spiritual hierarchies and the dependency on God in particular in her narrative to legitimize actions, which could be considered inappropriate for a woman according to Islamist ideology.

The first time she utilizes hierarchies as a narrative legitimation strategy is to cope with a disagreement between her and Hasan al-Bannā in 1937. This happens in the first part of the book, where Zainab describes her religious-political activities before her imprisonment.⁷⁹ It is the year 1937, shortly after Zainab got in touch with Hasan al-Bannā for the first time. Al-Bannā asks Zainab to integrate the Muslim Ladies Association into the Brotherhood's organization structure, but Zainab refuses to do so. Eleven years later, in 1948, the Muslim Brotherhood was dissolved by the state and thousands of its member were put in jail. From her brother's wife and cousin Tahia al-Jubali, who was a member of the Brotherhood's ladies branch called the Muslim Sisters, she heard some details about the events, which she does not specify but which make her suddenly regret her decision from 1937:

72 Lewis, "Zainab al-Ghazali": 21.

73 Cf. Yossef Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce in Medieval Islamic Society* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 39.

74 Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce in Medieval Islamic Society*.

75 Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce in Medieval Islamic Society*: 18–19.

76 Cooke, *Women Claim Islam*: 91.

77 Cooke, *Women Claim Islam*: 87.

78 Cooke, *Women Claim Islam*: 102.

79 Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 25–26.

It was then, that I found myself, for the first time, eager to support all of al-Banna's opinions and understood his insistence on completely merging the Muslim Ladies Group into the Ikhwan. In my office, the same office where my last meeting with al-Banna had taken place, the morning after the dissolution of the Ikhwan, I could not help putting my head in my hands and crying bitterly. I believed that al-Banna was right. He was the Imam that all Muslims must pledge allegiance to, in order that they struggle for the return of Muslims to their position of responsibility and true existence, and can implement Allah's commands. I felt that al-Banna was stronger than me and franker in disseminating and announcing the truth.⁸⁰

After this, Zainab sends a message to al-Bannā, in which she pledges allegiance to him:

Zainab al-Ghazali presents herself today devoid of everything except her servitude to Allah and her enslavement in the call to Him. You are today the only person who can do to this Ummah something for the Call to Allah in a way that pleases Him. Waiting for your instructions and orders.⁸¹

Here, Zainab not only recognizes al-Bannā as a political and spiritual authority, who she must obey in accordance with her beliefs, but she also attributes to him the gift of knowing and implementing God's will, giving him the highest possible authority. Therefore, Zainab completely subordinates herself to his will and in the first part of the quotation, she also seems to regret her disobedience to al-Bannā's demand in 1937. Even though she does not state this explicitly, one certainly gets this impression when we picture her crying in her office. Just a page later, Zainab meets al-Bannā personally and repeats her pledge again in a short dialogue:

'I pledge allegiance to you for the establishment of the Islamic State. The least I can give for this, is shedding my blood and merging the Muslim Ladies Group with the Ikhwan.'
'I accept the pledge, but the Muslim Ladies Group remains at it is.'⁸²

Her indirect admission of having been wrong is thus revised only one page later by al-Bannā's answer, who obviously does not want the merger of the organizations anymore, which seems logical due to the political situation. As readers, we already know that the independence of the Muslim Women's Society from the MB could delay its forced closure for a few years and that Zainab's decision in 1937 was therefore, probably, for the best of the entire organization. It is striking that she mentions neither her disobedience nor al-Bannā's retroactive legitimization of her actions verbatim, but leaves both between the lines. Therefore, I want to argue that she uses al-Bannā's speech strategically to express that her former actions were right. By doing so, she

⁸⁰ Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 26.

⁸¹ Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 26.

⁸² Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 27.

utilizes al-Bannā's authority as the leader of the group and as mediator between God and the members to legitimize her disobedience from 1937 in retrospect.

This narrative strategy, in which she legitimizes her own political actions through a man who is above her in the hierarchy, can be found again in several places. The first repetition occurs just two pages later: Zainab makes use of an ellipsis of one year and tells of al-Bannā's death in 1949, for which she blames the government. Hasan al-Huḍaibī is appointed as new *murshid* and adopts a more moderate course. Then, in 1952, the MB supports the military coup and begins to cooperate with the military officers around Nasser. Zainab is shocked by this new, liberal stance and begins publishing critical statements in her women's magazine strongly condemning any cooperation with the secular government. Despite being admonished by another Muslim Brother, she continues until a personal order from al-Huḍaibī is delivered to her:

'Abd al-Wadir 'Awdah again visited me, but this time with an order from al-Hudaibi, asking me to stop my commentary. I recalled my pledge of allegiance to Hasan al-Banna – may Allah have mercy on his soul – and felt my loyalty incumbent in respect of his successor. I obeyed the order.

From then on, all my activities had to conform to my pledge of allegiance to the Ikhwan, even to the extent of requiring the Murshid's prior consent for everything, including my participation in the Vienna Peace Conference.⁸³

Since the Nasser government would turn against the MB only a few months later and start persecuting its members, it is clear to us as readers once again that Zainab was also right in this instance and that al-Huḍaibī would in the near future regret his decision to cooperate with Nasser. But again, these obvious conclusions are deliberately not stated by the narrator but left between the lines. Once more, her action is legitimized by the next higher authority in the command hierarchy, in this case al-Huḍaibī, who sent her the order to stop the commentary.

Another time when Zainab took the initiative and became politically active without instructions from the organisation was in 1955, after many members of the MB had been imprisoned and executed by the Nasser regime. She writes:

I found myself, in 1955, recruited to serve Islamic da'wah without anyone's invitation. [. . .] I felt as if I were responsible for the lost, the hungry, the dispossessed and the oppressed. [. . .] In desperation, I went to see my eminent teacher Shaykh Muhammad al-Awdan, one of the very few pure and pious people of Azhar. I was in the habit of consulting him in all da'wah affairs and issues related to Islamic learning. Like myself he held the view that the non-annexation of the Muslim Ladies Group might well serve the Ikhwan in the near future. The Shaykh was also aware of my pledge to al-Banna which he both blessed and supported. He was also aware of my allegiance to da'wah.⁸⁴

⁸³ Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 28.

⁸⁴ Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 31–32.

Zainab tells the Sheikh about her urge to do something and he responds by kissing her hand and saying: “Don’t hesitate to give any help you can. Allah is the One who blesses endeavours.”⁸⁵ This marks the beginning of Zainab’s steep ascent to one of the two top positions of the MB in the underground. It is no coincidence that she intersperses this dialogue precisely at this point, i.e. shortly before she talks about her activities as *de facto* leader of the Brotherhood (and not only of a women’s organization). It is precisely at this time that Zainab is clearly performing a masculine role that departs from the female ideal.

In this passage, we can find three instances of legitimation: First, Zainab legitimizes her own initiative through the call of the poor and oppressed, indeed the call of the *da’wa*, that is, essentially, her religious commitment to God. Then there is the Sheikh, who is depicted as a pious teacher and serves as another instance offering legitimation by giving his blessings to her future actions. The MB’s critical attitude toward the traditional Azhar-scholars becomes clear in the scholars’ description, as Zainab indirectly disparages the entire group by singling out one individual in this way. Finally, there is also Hasan al-Bannā, who is not alive anymore but whose authority is in a way transferred to the Sheikh, when she writes that he knows about the pledge. What is particularly interesting is that she thereby not only legitimizes her future actions, but also again justifies her supposed misconduct of 1937 by pointing out that the Sheikh endorsed her decision.

On the next page, the same strategy is drawn upon again when she meets ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Isma’īl, with whom Zainab will jointly direct the underground activities of the entire organization. They ‘accidentally’ meet in Saudi Arabia, when Zainab is taking the Hajj, the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca:

It was ‘Abd al-Fattah Isma’īl who, after greeting me, explained that he knew about my pledge to Hasan al-Banna after our long disagreement. I asked about the source of his information and he told me it was al-Banna himself. After further enquiries about what he wanted, he explained that he hoped I would meet him in Makkah, for the sake of Allah, to talk about what al-Banna wanted from me, God willing.⁸⁶

‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Isma’īl and Zainab then meet in Mecca and discuss their plan to rebuild the MB underground. Again, this action of Zainab’s, which would theoretically fall within the male sphere of responsibility, is legitimized by her oath of allegiance to al-Bannā, the validity of which thus extends beyond his death. And again, her ‘disobedience’ of 1937 is mentioned (“after our long disagreement”), with which her supposed misstep seems more and more transparent to the reader and, thus, less open to attack.

⁸⁵ Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 32.

⁸⁶ Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 33.

As we were about to leave, he enjoined: ‘We have to link ourselves here with a pledge of allegiance that we will fight in His sake and won’t languor until we unite the ranks of the Ikhwan, and isolate all those who do not want to work for Him, no matter what their position or weight’

We swore our allegiance to fight and die for the sake of his Da’wah, and shortly afterwards I returned to Egypt.⁸⁷

Zainab again swears an oath of allegiance that pre-emptively legitimizes her future activities and protects her from criticism that the political leadership role she was to exercise in the coming months was not appropriate for a woman. Additionally, al-Huḍaibī’s permission is sought, who, as the new *murshid*, provides the next highest degree of legitimacy. In the following pages, Zainab repeats the insertion “with al-Huḍaibī’s permission” at several points when describing her underground political activities,⁸⁸ again legitimizing her actions. Zainab constantly justifies her actions, which fall in the political realm and are at odds with the domestic female ideal, with her obligations to spiritual teachers and leaders like al-Bannā, the Sheikh, al-Huḍaibī, and ‘Abd al-Fattāh Ismā’īl as a transmitter of al-Bannā’s will.

Although Zainab acknowledges al-Bannā as the mediator between her and God’s will, it becomes clear, not least through visions and dreams in which she encounters Muhammad, that she certainly also has a direct connection to God. He, who is the highest authority in the hierarchical order, therefore also provides Zainab with the strongest legitimation. Although she often justifies her actions by means of the approval and commands of men, God’s authority ultimately prevails. In her first vision, she finds herself in a desert, standing behind a “great, reverent man”:⁸⁹

I wondered silently: Could this man be the Prophet (peace be upon him)?

Silence has no safeguard with the Prophet, who replied: ‘Zainab! You are following in the footsteps of Muhammad, Allah’s Servant and Messenger.’

‘Am I, master! Following the footsteps of Muhammad, Allah’s Servant and Messenger?’

‘You, Zainab al-Ghazali are following in the footsteps of Muhammad, Allah’s Servant and Messenger.’

‘O my Beloved! Am I truly following in your footsteps?’

‘Zainab! You are on the right path. You are on the right path, Zainab! You are following the footsteps of Muhammad, Allah’s Servant and Messenger!’

Twice more I repeated my question, receiving the same response from the Prophet.⁹⁰

As Miriam Cooke observes, the way Zainab addresses the Prophet (“my beloved”; in Arabic “*ya ḥabībī*”) is a Sufi invocation. In addition, in the fourth line the English translation “You, Zainab al-Ghazali” differs from the Arabic original, where Muhammad calls Zainab only “Ghazali”, which literally means “my gazelle”. These affection-

⁸⁷ Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 34–35.

⁸⁸ Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 39, 40, 42.

⁸⁹ Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 53.

⁹⁰ Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 53.

ate forms of address indicate the intimacy of their relationship.⁹¹ So in this vision, Zainab constantly confirms being on the right path by using the Prophet's voice. Thereby, she invokes the highest possible authority and legitimizes all her actions, be they appropriate for her gender or not.

6 Conclusion

This paper explored the narrative structure of Zainab al-Ghazali's memoirs *Ayyām min ḥayyātī* with a focus on the connection of dependency and gender. Taking the contrast between the domestic female ideal of the MB and Zainab's life as a political leader as a starting point, several narrative strategies used by the author to reintegrate into the Islamist female ideal have been analysed: purity and dirt as leitmotifs (4.1), the delimitation from atheist women (4.2), the construction of her mother role (4.3), the protection of her chastity (4.4.), strategic self-devaluation in the preface (4.5), the sporadic use of a we-narrator (4.5), and finally hierarchies and dependencies, which function as narrative strategies to legitimize her actions (5). It has been shown how Zainab intersperses dialogues with leaders of the organization and with spiritual teachers as well as references to pledges of allegiances before or during her descriptions of her political actions, which could be considered to be at odds with the female ideal. Her dependency on these figures of authority and the hierarchical structure of the organization functions as a narrative legitimation strategy for her actions and enables her to overcome her dependency on rules and norms resulting from her gender.

For Zainab, the relationship between her and God as well as the spiritual relationship to her brothers and sisters in faith is situated above all other, worldly ties, including marriage. At the end of her narration, she says explicitly that “[m]arriage is only a contingent worldly event, but brotherhood in Allah is everlasting”.⁹² So, for her, total surrender to God and the abandonment of individual will represent the central aspects of her religion; in her words, Islam is “a battle of bondage to Allah”.⁹³ This unconditional submission to God ultimately overcomes all other worldly dependencies and hierarchies, including her physical dependency on the torturers, but also hierarchies between men and women. While gender functions as a structuring criterion in worldly hierarchies, it no longer plays a role in spiritual ones. In the narrative structure of her text this understanding is continuously reinforced through dialogues in which Zainab encounters men either as superior or at eye level and through her visions, in which the Prophet Muhammad himself legitimizes Zainab's actions. So, for Zainab, as a

⁹¹ Cooke, *Women Claim Islam*: 95–96.

⁹² Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 163.

⁹³ Al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh*: 183. This interpretation is also inherent in the literal meaning of the term “Islam”, which can be translated as “submission” or “submission to God”.

chosen believer, who is in direct contact with God, it is only logical that in the spiritual hierarchy she is above most men despite her gender, without contradicting Islamist ideology.

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Sinah Theres Kloß

Tattooed Dependencies: Sensory Memory, Structural Violence and Narratives of Suffering among Caribbean Hindu Women

1 Introduction

Godnas are tattooed marks representing, embodying, symbolizing, and actively (re-) constructing experiences of gender-based suffering in Suriname and Guyana. They are linked to male domination and female subordination and, therefore, to structural violence, representing asymmetrical dependencies. As sensory and embodied memories, godnas initiate and become framing principles of ‘narratives of suffering,’ which (re-)create gender roles and are used to contest and negotiate power relations in Caribbean Hindu communities.

Godna, a word for tattoos in Hindi and *Sarnami* (Surinamese Hindi), can be found among senior Caribbean Hindus, especially ‘Indian’ women born before or during the 1960s.¹ Although godnas have multiple meanings, contemporary interpretations and public discourse in Guyana and Suriname exhibit little variation. According to my interlocutors, godnas referred to a girl’s wedding and transformation into a (married) woman. Commonly, a husband’s initials were a substantial component of godnas. However, the tattooed words रामनाम or श्रीरामनाम (*Rāmnām* or *Śrīrāmnām*, the name of [Lord] Ram), the symbol and mantra ॐ (Aum), and symbols of fertility or good fortune were equally important. Godnas were placed near the crook of the right arm and sometimes extended, with a black dot on the forehead and a circular symbol on the left hand. From a contemporary perspective, godnas evoke ownership and slave markings, especially tattooing one person’s initials on the body of another. Today, young women consider godnas as ‘old-fashioned’ or even ‘backward’ signs of female subordination and dependence on men.² My informants often described godnas as signs or symbols that subjugated them to their in-laws, marking a woman as her husband’s possession. During my ethnographic fieldwork, conducted between 2017 and 2019 in Suriname and Guyana’s border region, I met with six elderly Hindu women over seventy years of age marked with godnas. I conducted between one and four formal interviews with each.

1 People who define themselves as ‘Indian’ in Guyana and Suriname consider themselves descendants of South Asian indentured laborers, who were shipped to the Caribbean to work on plantations during British and Dutch colonial rule between 1838 and the 1920s. In Guyana, the term ‘East Indian’ is sometimes used, while in Suriname the term ‘Hindoestani’ (or ‘Hindustani’) is common.

2 Sinah T. Kloß, “Embodying Dependency: Caribbean *Godna* (Tattoos) as Female Subordination and Resistance,” *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 27, no. 4 (2022): 601–612, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jlca.12644>.

In these interviews, the women elaborated on their godna and their lives in general. Due to the interviews' sequentiality and our additional informal conversations, I soon realized that the women's life narratives and explanations of godna varied. They often shifted emphases depending on varying influences, such as the interviewee's mood and health condition, interlocutors' interactional dynamics, and overall structure. As I discuss in detail below, godnas' meaning proved to be much more complex and heterogeneous than portrayed by the discourses that dominate popular culture and conversation today.

In this article, I do not focus on the narrative characteristics of the accounts produced on godna. They varied significantly according to linear, multilinear, and retrograde narrating techniques.³ Instead, I analyze the contestations of social hierarchy and negotiations of power relations in the interactional production of tattoo narratives. I discuss how the corporeality of bodies and the sensory memory of tattoos influence the construction of life narratives and how social relations and asymmetrical dependencies are inscribed, (re-)created, and contested via bodily marks and related narratives. In the first part of this article, I suggest that godna narratives may be considered a particular life stage narrative. While discussing the concepts of tattoos and life narratives, I illustrate that when explaining a godna's meaning, senior Hindu women linked their tattoos to marriage and the particular life stage of wifehood, describing their gendered experiences of suffering and structural violence. In the second part, I propose that godna narratives are linked to womanhood and suffering because of godnas' relatedness to marriage. Moreover, godnas result from sensory and painful tattooing experiences; thus, they are embodied marks and sensory memories of physical and emotional pain endured in the past. Finally, I argue that by framing their narratives of suffering retrospectively and from the position of a widow who has endured this suffering, they may claim high(er) status positions in this and/or their next life. They may narrate their painful experiences to demonstrate their high morals and socio-religious obedience, actively claiming the roles of 'good woman' and 'good wife.'

³ Linear narration is characterized by the chronological order of narrated events. If a narrative comprises several lines of action, each of which follows a pattern of causality, the narration is multilinear. In retrograde narration, the temporal progression of events is reversed. See, for example, Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf, *Handbook of Autobiography / Autofiction* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110279818>; Mona Körte, ed., "Rückwärtsvorgänge: Retrogrades Erzählen in Literatur, Kunst und Wissenschaft," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 138 (2019).

2 Tattoo Narratives as Life Stage Narratives: Narrating Wifhood

Recent scholarly publications describe tattoo narratives as specific kinds of life narratives, particularly in studies that focus on Euro-American tattooing practices and ‘Western’ tattooees’ explanations of the meanings of their tattoos.⁴ For example, Atte Oksanen and Jussi Turtiainen define tattoo narratives as life stories told concerning tattoos, explaining that the narrating subject “tells his or her life story in relation to them, situates pain and charts life experiences” and construes these narratives as “powerful existential experiences, where life events are integrated into a narrative form via the body.”⁵ The tattooees’ bodies, they argue, influence the narrative form, as tattoos “function as points of reference or maps that enable life history, as well as an opportunity for subjective security.”⁶ Similarly, Mary Kosut refers to tattoos as “historical reference points or *aides-mémoire*” in her discussion of tattoo narratives, suggesting that they “permanently illustrate biographical stories.”⁷ Tattoos are often framed as lasting visual images and marks “inscribed onto the body for life,”⁸ which act as “visual memory aids”⁹ that anchor memory “to tangible pictures.”¹⁰ In this sense, tattoos are commonly contrasted with supposedly less permanent types of adornment. Most scholars acknowledge that the narrator’s memory and their acts of remembering (and forgetting) always influence these narratives. The social, temporal, and spatial context in which these narratives are constructed, and the narrator’s sensory experience of being tattooed, necessarily influence them. Therefore, a tattoo cannot be considered to have only one, but rather various contextual meanings, which may change when narrators reflexively negotiate their identities and selves over time.¹¹

Indeed, a tattoo narrative can be understood as a specific framing or structuring principle and as a kind of life narrative. I prefer the term life narrative to the some-

4 See, for example, Mary Kosut, “Tattoo Narratives: The Intersection of the Body, Self-Identity and Society,” *Visual Sociology* 15, no. 1 (2000), <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725860008583817>; Atte Oksanen, and Jussi Turtiainen, “A Life Told in Ink: Tattoo Narratives and the Problem of the Self in Late Modern Society,” *Auto/Biography* 13, no. 2 (2005); and Beverly Yuen Thompson, *Covered in Ink: Tattoos, Women, and the Politics of the Body*, Alternative Criminology Series (New York: New York University Press, 2015).

5 Oksanen and Turtiainen, “A Life Told in Ink”: 127.

6 Oksanen and Turtiainen, “A Life Told in Ink”: 112.

7 Kosut, “Tattoo Narratives”: 96.

8 Kosut, “Tattoo Narratives”: 82.

9 Hannah M.Y. Ho, “Negotiating a Personal Experience: Identity Affirmation of the Horimono Artist,” in *Tattoo Histories: Transcultural Perspectives on the Narratives, Practices, and Representations of Tattooing*, ed. Sinah T. Kloß, Routledge Studies in Cultural History 81 (New York: Routledge, 2020): 306.

10 Oksanen and Turtiainen, “A Life Told in Ink”: 126.

11 Kosut, “Tattoo Narratives”: 90.

times interchangeably used life history, as its inherent reference to narration emphasizes the interactional construction of ‘a life,’ memories thereof, and the narrator’s (re-)construction of identity, personhood, or subjective self in this process.¹² I also differentiate a life narrative from autobiography, which usually refers to a literary genre that “denotes a non-fictional, retrospective narration” seeking to “reconstruct an individual’s life course in terms of a formation of one’s unique personal self within a given historical, social and cultural framework.”¹³ Definitions of autobiography place a strong emphasis on writing, a process carried out by the narrating person. Furthermore, Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson define autobiography as a “particular practice of life narrative that emerged in the Enlightenment,”¹⁴ referring to various kinds of (historical) documentation to reconstruct and narrate a life. Conversely, life narratives usually rely predominantly on personal memories as “the primary archival source.”¹⁵ The godna narratives of my interviews relied only on my informants’ memories. They were supported by their sensory engagement with the tattooed marks themselves (such as looking at the tattoos and touching them).

There are various kinds of tattoo narratives; to define a single category would be to reproduce a too narrow and universalist approach to tattoo/ing. Asking about a tattoo or a tattooing experience may serve as a starting point of what may indeed be very different kinds of narratives that may rely on various narratological techniques. When using tattoos as a starting point or as a point of access to memory and narration, what follow may be narratives of specific or generalized events and routines, social relations, life stages, sensory experiences, and so on. The ways people talk about tattoos and tattooing may vary as much as how they narrate other events or, more generally, their lives.

Not all tattoo narratives are necessarily life narratives; they may focus only on a particular period in time or a phase in one’s life. To complicate this even further, we cannot assume that people from different socio-cultural and religious backgrounds necessarily share an understanding of what ‘a life’ is. ‘A life’ does not necessarily begin with birth and end with death. It does not have to be conceptualized as following a linear progression of events between the conditions of being born and dying. Life may be considered a mere snapshot or a phase in a longer transition of a being or soul traveling across and moving between different (human and nonhuman) bodies. For example,

12 This is certainly not to say that historiography does not make use of narratives. Indeed, historical narratives and the ways history is told are as much a part of history as the socio-cultural processes of the past that are talked about. See Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015).

13 Helga Schwalm, “3.9 Autobiography,” in *Handbook of Autobiography/Autofiction*, ed. Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019): 503.

14 Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001): 3.

15 Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*: 6.

in the context of Caribbean Hinduism, subtle bodies—sometimes referred to as ‘souls’—are transmigratory entities that reincarnate in different gross bodies over time due to the cycle of reincarnation. The phase in which a subtle body dwells in a gross body may be considered ‘a life,’ yet, at the same time, this life is only one stage in the wider context of many different ‘lives’ that an individual ‘soul’ is forced to experience until liberation. Furthermore, every individual human life is divided into several phases or stages. Humans transition from one ‘life stage’ to another by performing a *sanskara*, a Hindu rite of passage. Sanskaras contribute to a person’s gradual purification, perfection, and capacity to acquire knowledge, achieving salvation from the cycle of reincarnation. Although the number of *sanskaras* varies in the diverse Hindu traditions, most Caribbean Hindus consider the wedding *sanskara* (*vivaha*) to have the greatest significance for girls and women. The wedding *sanskara* is the rite of passage that transforms a girl into a woman and a wife. Womanhood and wifehood are thus intricately entwined social statuses in the Caribbean Hindu context; without being married, a girl is not considered a woman. Regardless of gender and age, all my informants related *godnas* to a girl’s wedding and transformation into a (married) woman. For example, during one of our first conversations in December 2011, then 74-year-old Dhanmattie,¹⁶ who lives in the Guyanese region of Berbice with part of her family, commented on her tattoo by stating that *godnas* were “like a tradition” in the past, “when you had been married.” My informants usually framed *godnas* as “stamp[s] of marriage”¹⁷ that highlight the irrevocability of Hindu marriages, emphasized by the tattoos’ aura of permanence.

When interviewing senior Hindu women and initiating our conversation via their *godnas*, they often began to narrate memories of their lives, particularly the life stage of wifehood, emphasizing the relevance of marriage and what is considered to ‘count’ as/in a woman’s life. By suggesting that senior Hindu women’s life narratives were often life stage narratives, I am not implying that Guyanese and Surinamese women considered their lives to have started only after marriage. However, this certainly is the way their lives are often discursively framed in local popular discourse. In linking *godna* narratives to this particular life stage, their way of narration has to be considered a specific narrative strategy. When making general inquiries about their lives, not addressing *godna*, the women often initiated their narratives with a reference and/or story linked to their parents, elder siblings, or the house and village where they were born. When eventually asked about their tattoos over the course of the interview, they often framed *godnas* as motherly gifts, as symbols of female bonding, and as signifiers of having acquired a specific ritualistic status.¹⁸ These general inquiries were not used as a prompt to frame the conversation about abusive marriages or

¹⁶ All names have been changed to ensure my informants’ anonymity.

¹⁷ Usharbudh Arya, *Ritual Songs and Folksongs of the Hindus of Surinam*, *Orientalia Rheno-Traiectina* 9 (Leiden: Brill, 1968): 27.

¹⁸ Kloß, “Embodying Dependency.”

experiences of suffering. However, whenever I initiated a conversation or interview by asking about a godna's meaning, the women framed the evolving narrative as an introduction to and regarding the specific life stage of a wife. As such, they used it as a bodily proof or trace and as a sensory access point to their memories of structural violence.

3 Tattoos as Sensory Memories

Tattoo narratives are often a specific kind of life narrative, frequently produced in conversations, interviews, and other interactions. As part of oral histories, they may differ from written narratives based on their performative-interactive character. Any representation may have a performative dimension, and written texts certainly have been influenced by people other than the author (such as editors, transcribers, and interviewers) and an intended audience.¹⁹ Yet I still consider contemporary tattoo narratives to be distinct due to their link to oral history practices and their modes of production. Tattoo narratives, often coproduced by direct social relations and through the interlocutors' interactions, are part of oral storytelling. An interviewer usually frames an interview topic, asks specific questions, responds to the interlocutor, gestures, interferes, and uses different kinds of methodological probing. As was the case in my research, tattoo narratives are co-constructed in these situations and do not necessarily exist apart from the interviews themselves. Where oral history is actively coproduced, these moments have to be understood as interactional junctures and processes that rely on nonverbal communication as they depend on the spatial, temporal, social, and sensory contexts in which oral history interviews occur. Oral histories have an active part in their construction, providing the possibility of analyzing inherent negotiations of power and status.

The various social roles of interviewer(s) and interviewee(s), and the intersectional identities with which the interlocutors identify and ascribe significantly impact the narration and, in general, the production of historical narratives.²⁰ Power relations and negotiations of socio-political status always influence them.²¹ Consequently, I consider the life stage narratives produced in my ethnographic interviews to be situational and contextual snapshots of extended conversations during longer stretches of fieldwork, which are necessarily influenced by the different social actors involved. The interactional dimension of tattoo narratives is seldom addressed in contemporary tattoo re-

¹⁹ Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*: 178.

²⁰ Sinah T. Kloß, "Talking History: Ethnographic Interviews, Intersectional Identities, and Power Negotiations in Research Encounters," in *Un-Mapping the Global South*, ed. Gero Bauer, Nicole Hirschfelder and Fernando Resende (Routledge, forthcoming).

²¹ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*.

search and public discourse, for example, in many Euro-American popular magazines. Here, narrators' explanations of their motivation for a tattoo are sometimes even assumed to be authentic. That a tattoo's 'original' meaning is constantly (re-)constructed in the narrative process often remains obscured. However, formulating and asking questions to investigate the 'meaning' of one or more tattoos are already part of constructing specific life narratives and identities. Seeking to understand 'the meaning' of a tattoo presupposes not only that a tattoo necessarily has to have (one or more) meaning(s) but may also label a specific body modification as potentially different from other practices of body and/or identity construction. Asking about tattoos may (re-)construct tattooed bodies as other and contrast them to non-tattooed bodies, producing, for example, specific (legitimizing) narratives. Contemporary discourse and a society's stance on tattooing, which may be appreciative, indifferent, or stigmatizing, also affect the answers provided in an interview. Therefore, questions of intentionality and the interview's power dynamics have to be addressed in tattoo research, especially when the researcher frames it as an investigation of life narratives.²² Additionally, questions regarding the process and practice of being and becoming tattooed and remembering the tattooing experience may provide different insights into and facilitate alternative productions of life narratives.

The transformational character and shifting interpretations of memories have long been reflected in methodological discussions of oral history and shall not be the focus of this discussion. Various socio-cultural influences and personal factors alter or adjust memories over time; memories' content is not only shaped by "the way people remember" but, similarly, also by "what is revealed to others, and how it is revealed."²³ Gender may be performed in narrations of 'life,' and expectations relating to gender roles usually influence how and what aspects of a life are narrated. Reflecting on the methodology of oral history as a feminist practice, Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack remind us:

A woman's discussion of her life may combine two separate, often conflicting perspectives: one framed in concepts and values that reflect men's dominant position in the culture, and one informed by the more immediate realities of a woman's personal experience. Where experience does not 'fit' dominant meanings, alternative concepts may not readily be available. Hence, inadvertently, women often mute their own thoughts and feelings when they try to describe their lives in the familiar and publicly acceptable terms of prevailing concepts and conventions.²⁴

22 Silke Schmidt, *(Re-)Framing the Arab/Muslim: Mediating Orientalism in Contemporary Arab American Life Writing* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2014): 64.

23 Mary Chamberlain, "Gender and Memory: Oral History and Women's History," in *Engendering History: Caribbean Women in Historical Perspective*, ed. Verene Shepherd, Bridget Brereton and Barbara Bailey (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1995): 106.

24 Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack, "Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses," in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, ed. Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (New York: Routledge, 1991): 11.

The authors rightfully caution oral historians to “listen in stereo, receiving both the dominant and muted channels”²⁵ during interviews to understand women’s perspectives more accurately. Expectations of gender, the construction of femininity, and more specifically, the notion of the ‘good wife’ as a marker of Hindu womanhood were of central concern in godna narratives, an aspect I address in the following section.

In this context, it is relevant to point out that my research and presence coproduced the life stage narratives interpreted in this article. These narratives were also influenced by the fact that my informants rightfully labeled me—their audience—as female, white, European, and, more specifically, as an ‘unmarried’ and ‘childless’ woman to whom they needed to serve as role models and to whom they could entrust their gendered stories of female suffering.²⁶ Often, they seemed pleased to be asked about their past, even though they did not narrate pleasant memories and sometimes cried during the interviews. Family members who were present were generally indifferent to listening to the stories (again). I got the sense that my elder interviewees seemed to appreciate me as an attentive, new, and potentially powerful audience, in the presence of whom they might be able to legitimate higher statuses and make specific claims to family members, especially if they overheard and witnessed the interview. Taking into account that “[s]torytellers benefit in terms of prestige and perhaps resources by earning the attention of audiences,”²⁷ I reflect on the agency of women in constructing their narratives and claiming high(er) status positions in the final section of this article.

When reflecting on the creative (co-)construction of tattoo narratives, and taking into account that tattoos have to be understood as experiences performatively reconstructed in narration, I argue that tattoos cannot be understood as mere mementos—as “reminder[s] of a past event or condition, of an absent person, or of something that once existed,” or as “an object kept in memory of some person or event, a souvenir.”²⁸ Indeed, we have to approach them as sites of sensory memories and experiences; tattoos interpreted this way actively construct and transform these experiences in the present and the narratives thereof. Narrators necessarily create, engage in, and perform embodied practices of remembering instead of simply repeating or conjuring up memories of a stored experience.²⁹ Tattoos become modes of “embodied knowing and

25 Anderson and Jack, “Learning to Listen”: 11.

26 I self-identify as a white, European, heterosexual, able-bodied woman with a working-class background, who was in her early 30s at the time the interviews were conducted.

27 Brian Boyd, “Narrative and Storytelling,” in *The International Encyclopedia of Anthropology* (2018), <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781118924396.wbiea1900.4> [accessed 07.09.2023].

28 “Oxford English Dictionary Online”, www.oed.com [accessed 07.09.2023].

29 Constantina Nadia Seremetakis, “The Memory of the Senses, Part I: Marks of the Transitory,” in *The Senses Still: Perception and Memory as Material Culture in Modernity*, ed. Constantina Nadia Seremetakis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996): 7.

remembering,”³⁰ especially in sensory engagements with and conversations about them. Consequently, tattoos and their related narratives may be considered modes of embodied memory-making and as “emplaced memory processes”³¹ that are constituted and continuously reconstituted through practice.

Godna narratives are linked to wifhood and suffering because of godnas’ relatedness to marriage and because godnas result from painful tattooing processes and experiences. They are embodied marks and sensory memories of physical and emotional pain and suffering experienced in the past, which had to be endured. They are one example that highlights how “material culture functions as an apparatus for the production of social and historical reflexivity,”³² provided by sensory self-reflexivity. They link embodied experiences of pain and suffering during wifhood to the notion of endurance. Before I elaborate on the aspect of endurance, I shall analyze how my informants performed gender and (re-)created the notion of the ‘good woman’ in these processes of narration and embodied remembering.

4 Performing ‘Good Wifhood’: Narratives of Suffering

When I initiated interviews on the topic of godna, the vast majority of senior Hindu women recounted their life stage of wifhood, linking it to oppressive patriarchs, husbands, and mothers-in-law, and to gender-based violence and other experiences of ‘physical’ and ‘spiritual’ suffering. For example, a Guyanese informant—Aunty Betty—dismissed my interest in her godna when I inquired about its meaning in our first informal conversation. She rolled up her sleeves, lifted her skirt, and pointed to the numerous scars on her arms and legs, explaining: “This [godna] is only one of the marks he gave me.” With this statement, she recounted her husband’s abusive behavior and went on to list and narrate in detail some of her memories of gender-based violence. At the time of our meetings, Aunty Betty was in her early 80s. She lived as a widow with her unmarried, unemployed son, who was addicted to alcohol, in a decaying house in the Berbice region of Guyana. During our informal conversations and formal interview in September 2017, she related that she received no financial support from her family and that her only source of income was a small state pension she received monthly, which provided her with, at most, a two-week supply of the most basic groceries. Rather than elaborating on her godna, Aunty Betty preferred to tell me about some of her scars and her continuing ‘punishment.’ She remembered

30 Sarah Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2009): 44.

31 Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography*: 44.

32 Seremetakis, “The Memory of the Senses, Part I: Marks of the Transitory”: 7.

and recounted the details of an incident of her married life: one evening, while fleeing from her drunk and violent husband, she had to jump off her balcony with her baby in her arms, and was forced to sleep under the mango tree in the yard.

Aunty Betty and others used *godnas* as starting points and framing, principles to elaborate on how they were ‘prapa punish’ (‘being severely punished,’ ‘have suffered a lot’; Guyana) or how their lives were ‘pinaren’ (‘full of suffering’; Suriname). Senior Surinamese women addressed the condition and experiences caused by structural violence using the noun and verb *pinaren* (‘suffering,’ ‘to suffer’), a term I adopt in the remainder of this article to address this type of suffering. *Pinaren* denotes suffering related to (female) experiences of subordination, poverty, and asymmetrical dependencies between men and women, deities and humans. The term is commonly known among Surinamese Dutch speakers, while to most other Dutch speakers, it seems to be unknown and is not listed in contemporary dictionaries. Its link to the former Dutch colony of Suriname has been documented in the 1914 publication of the *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch West-Indië* (*Encyclopedia of the Dutch West Indies*). The authors translate *pinaren* as ‘poverty, suffering, and struggling,’ further suggesting that the Surinamese term is “[p]robably related to the customary *penarie* in the Netherlands, to be in trouble (‘in de penarie zitten’)” or may be derived “from the Spanish *penar*.”³³ One of the few publications that prominently make use of the term is Daniel Koning’s photobook *Pinaren in Het Paradijs: Suriname Na De Onafhankelijkheid* (*Suffering in Paradise: Suriname after Independence*), published in 1991.³⁴ Here, Koning applies *pinaren* once, in addition to its prominent use on the book’s cover, directly relating it to poverty and (female) begging practices.³⁵

I argue that from my informants’ perspective, *pinaren* is caused by structural and symbolic violence.³⁶ In everyday conversations, most senior Guyanese and Surinamese Hindu women did not discuss suffering as an exception but rather as a rule in the present world. Often, they commented that living in *kali yuga* is the reason why everybody has to suffer today. *Yuga* refers to the Hindu concept of world stages, marked by the continuous decay of morals and living conditions. According to this cyclical concept, everyone lives in the fourth and last of all world stages, *kali yuga*. Suffering is the normal condition in this stage due to cosmological principles. At the end of this *yuga*, the world will eventually be destroyed, dissipated, and will then be renewed

33 Herman Daniël Benjamins and Johannes François Snelleman, eds., *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch West-Indië* (‘s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1914): 563 (author’s translation from Dutch).

34 Daniel Koning, *Pinaren in Het Paradijs: Suriname Na De Onafhankelijkheid* (Amsterdam: Fragment Uitgeverij, 1991): 8.

35 The sentence states: “On Graven Street, I am accosted by a woman with a child on her arm; she asks for money: ‘We suffer [pinaren], sir.’” Koning, *Pinaren in Het Paradijs*: 8 (author’s translation from Dutch).

36 Philippe Bourgois, “The Power of Violence in War and Peace: Post-Cold War Lessons from El Salvador,” *Ethnography* 2, no. 1 (2001), <https://doi.org/10.1177/14661380122230803>.

again, starting anew with a “golden age.”³⁷ Despite this naturalization of suffering in kali yuga, Surinamese and Guyanese women usually stressed in their life narratives that they personally have suffered *a lot* and disproportionately so, particularly in comparison to their husbands. The topic of suffering was discussed so extensively in these interviews that, in the remainder of this article, I shall refer to them as ‘narratives of suffering.’ In these narratives, my informants commonly explained how they had been expected to work, serve, and contribute in a multiplicity of contexts and concerning a seemingly endless number of social actors. They listed the tasks they were charged with, including different kinds of paid and unpaid labor: they worked on sugar plantations, in rice fields, or as market vendors; they worked in their in-laws’ households; they were responsible for acquiring religious merit for their extended families by organizing religious ceremonies and attending rituals; and they were occupied with caretaking and reproductive labor. Most of the women I talked to who were more than 70 years old reported having had between 7 and 14 living children, not counting those lost due to miscarriages or the high infant mortality in the past. Simultaneously, they implied or directly stated that they had to serve and suffer without expecting much in return, at least not in this life.

The upbringing of their children was often the central theme of their narratives of suffering. They had to carry out this duty unconditionally, which was often made more difficult, if not nearly impossible, by the lack of support from their husbands, aggravated by frequent psychological and physical abuse. For example, Sadvati, an 82-year-old retired widow living in Nickerie, Suriname, referred to *pinaren* as suffering in the following interview excerpt, directly relating her experiences of suffering to her husband’s violent behavior and alcoholism as well as to her struggle to feed and raise her children:

My husband, my husband was My mother-in-law had four children, but three died, the one was left. Who married me. And he [pause], his head was not so good. Light. Later, when we were married, he started drinking so much. [. . .] Then, I had, still I had four children with ‘em. [. . .] My husband did not want me to have to work! He did not want me to. When I said, ‘I am going to look for work. There’s no food in the house.’ The pinaren. He said, ‘No, I don’t want you to.’ He did not trust me to go to work. Outside work. [. . .] I was so . . . , all my children . . . , so pinares, so pinares, to raise the children. (Sadvati, 82, September 2018, Nieuw Nickerie/Suriname; author’s translation from Dutch)

Sadvati referred to *pinaren* as a noun and *pinares* as the condition of experiencing suffering and feeling “punished.” Most of my female informants expressed in similar ways that their husbands had been “useless.” They characterized them, for example, as addicted to “rum and drinking,” as reckless, lazy, not wanting to work, not earning but instead only wasting money, being abusive, immoral, and unfaithful. Frequently,

37 William John Johnson, *A Dictionary of Hinduism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010): 365.

they commented that their husbands had contributed neither to the family nor society, at least not to the extent the women themselves claimed to have.

The majority of these accounts reported various degrees and instances of gender-based violence, framed as a central feature of one's married life or mentioned as a side note. It remains a key aspect in almost all the life narratives told to me by Guyanese and Surinamese Hindu women in rural areas older than 40, exemplifying the structural and everyday violence directed at women.³⁸ In the past, gender-based violence seldom led to divorce or a permanent separation of husband and wife in the Hindu communities of Suriname and Guyana. Due to religious norms, a wife was always expected to endure the abuse and fulfill her life-long marital vows, as divorce was a religious and social impossibility. In this regard, *godnas* served as sensory and quasi-permanent reminders of wifhood inscribed on women's bodies. Women occasionally escaped the gender-based violence and their abusive husbands on a short-term basis, often with the help of their mothers. Sherry-Ann Singh refers to this "phenomenon of separation" concerning Hindu Trinidad, explaining that the "wife would leave the conjugal home, either with or without the children, to stay with immediate or distant relatives for an indefinite period of time" and that until "the 1970s, separation almost always occurred because of either excessive physical abuse or adultery."³⁹ Emphasizing the extent to which she had been *pinares*, Sadvati also included memories of separation in her narrative of suffering. In response to my question why her husband did not want her to find "outside work," she explained:

Sadvati: He does not want [me] to. Because he does not, does not . . . drinks *sopi* [alcohol], that is why he does not want [me] to. I have all the children . . . When he drinks *sopi* he comes, starts to . . . starts hitting me, starts throwing everything [around/away]. When he leaves, I take all my kids; I walk with those kids to my mother's. Do you know where my mother lived? Where Shell . . . , that road across the street [far away]. I will look to the back, see if he comes. I run with the kids, I run run run. Until mother's. Go to my mother. [Pause] My mother knows exactly that the man hit me. I stay there. When he comes home, he sees the house and so on, this. He knows exactly that [I] went to my mother's. Not today, *tomorrow* he is going to come. When the *sopi* is done, *then* he is gonna come. My mother says, 'Look, he's coming by bike.' He is coming. He is sitting down. He's gonna tell my mother, 'I'm coming to get my wife, and my children.' My mother says, 'No, I am not going to send my daughter. You hit my daughter. You have *pinaren* my daughter.' He says, 'What do you say, she is my wife. I have the right.' He says it like that, 'I have the right. [*quiet*] I'll come [back and] get my brother.' [Pause]

38 Johan Galtung, *Peace: Research, Education, Action*, Prio Monographs 4 (Copenhagen: Ejlers, 1975): 24. Nancy Scheper-Hughes, "Small Wars and Invisible Genocides," *Social Science & Medicine* 43, no. 5 (1996), [https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536\(96\)00152-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536(96)00152-9).

39 Sherry-Ann Singh, *The Ramayana Tradition and Socio-Religious Change in Trinidad, 1917–1990* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2012): 177.

Sinah: And then you had to go back?

Sadvati: My mother says, my mother starts telling me, ‘Go back. If you’re gonna take another man, if that man is going to hit your kid[s], you’re not going to like it.’

Sinah: Hmm. [Silent probe]

Sadvati: ‘You married that man, and that man does what he does. We don’t want to hear.’ When he comes back home, two days he is going to be alright.

Sinah: Two days?

Sadvati: Two, three days, he is going to drink *sopi* again. [Pause] [. . .] I was, [with] all my children, so *pinare*s, and so *pinare*s to raise the children. Yeah.

(Sadvati, 82, September 2018, Nieuw Nickerie/Suriname; author’s translation from Dutch)

Sadvati described how she had run away from her abusive husband, seeking refuge at her mother’s. When her husband came to take her and the children home, her mother first scolded him for his abuse, but when he threatened to return with his brother to enforce his rights, her mother started insisting that Sadvati should return to him. It could be worse, she indicated, stating that although he might be mistreating *her* now, another man would surely also extend these abuses to her children. As this narrative implies, a mother’s self-sacrifice for her children is expected. This is a common theme emphasized in the women’s life narratives and descriptions of ‘good womanhood.’ Sadvati later emphasized the irreversibility of a Hindu marriage; while acknowledging that today, “modern” women sometimes leave abusive husbands, she repeated that “old-time people” used to tell their ill-treated daughters that they had the moral and religious obligation to stay and endure the abuse. Similarly, Radica, an 81-year-old widow living with one of her daughters and some grandchildren in Guyana, in tears narrated how she ran away from her husband, emphasizing that she had to “mind me chirren” (mind my children):

[I lived at my father-in-law’s.] There were 21 of us in the house. I had to cook. You had to *cook*, you had to *wash*, you had to *scrub* [clean the house]. There was *no* money, well . . . I worked; I bought a few things for my children. [. . .] My man drank rum, beat me. I went away, left, and went away. Go back, come back, the kids were small. [. . .] I left for a *loooooong* time. [. . .] No money. Seven children.

Later in the interview, she added:

Sometimes I did not earn the money to buy my ration [basic food items]. I minded my children. The children. Before that, before I left my husband, [. . .] my mother said I would get scared to leave my husband, but I did not get scared. I worked [at the market] in New Amsterdam. [. . .] I walked there; sometimes I took the donkey cart. [. . .] And, I worked; I got my 15 hundred [Guyana] dollars. But what could 15 hundred dollars buy you with seven children? The family did not take care of you in those times. And they could have. When I took out eight plates for food, for my children [starts to cry] . . . I did not get anything to eat. [cries] (Radica, 81, Berbice, Guyana, September 2017; author’s translation from Guyanese)

It is not my intention to capitalize on my interviewees' narratives of suffering by reproducing every detail. Instead, my objective is not to silence their accounts, which I find emotionally challenging, even when only transcribing and analyzing them. Indeed, our conversations and interviews were seldom cheerful; they required energy and strength, particularly on the part of the narrators. For this reason and other ethical implications, the number of godna narratives produced in my research remains limited yet representative. I am indebted to my informants, who told me about and trusted me with their intimate experiences. To not further accentuate the power asymmetries already inherent in this (and most) research, I think it necessary to include several illustrative parts of their narratives in this article, especially when analyzing them regarding their subversive potential in the following section. However, the subversive aspect of narration has to remain but one way to think through my informants' traumatizing experiences, pain, and memories.

5 Retrospective Narratives of Endurance

My female informants unequivocally commented that suffering—being *pinares* or *prapa punish*—is a general and unavoidable condition of human existence in kali yuga, as mentioned above. They referred to *pinaren* as cosmologically justified structural suffering, which varied in intensity among humans according to gender. They focused their narratives not on the reasons for suffering or on possible ways to avoid hardship but rather on the methods and strategies to bear it. In religious contexts, the endurance of pain and suffering is often framed as an issue of morality and righteousness.⁴⁰ Accordingly, my informants' narratives of suffering did not so much highlight the different causes of their suffering (e.g., the lack of food and/or money and abusive husbands) as stressing how they dealt with this adversity practically (e.g., working, earning money, and temporarily leaving husbands). Central to these explanations was the principal reason why they tolerated the abuse: their children. All the women I interviewed confirmed that raising and taking good care of one's children was necessary to be and be considered a 'good woman.' Only a wife who fulfills her 'motherly duties' met the social norms and religious obligations expected of women. By this means, they contributed to society and would, they explained, ultimately be rewarded with religious merit and, hence, better their *karma*.⁴¹ They would experience the benefits of their contributions and moral endurance in future rebirths and lives.

⁴⁰ Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, ed. Clifford Geertz (London: Fontana Press, 1993): 104.

⁴¹ Karma refers to the structural principle that influences the future and rebirth of a person based on their intent and actions.

Consequently, narratives of suffering have to be considered a mode of narrating life and life stages to negotiate status positions both in the present and future lives. Narratives of suffering as a discursive strategy have to be contextualized in local historical narratives, which use and apply the notion of contribution and suffering to contest group status and power relations on the national level. For example, Guyanese often use historical narratives of nation-building to negotiate and contest power relations among different ‘ethnic groups.’ In such narratives, a group’s past contribution to the nation is emphasized to contest or legitimize dominant positions in the present social hierarchy.⁴² Negotiations of status may similarly be implied in women’s construction of life stage narratives: experiences of suffering are reframed in terms of endurance, based on a woman’s effort and contribution to the family and, hence, to society at large. This allows them to legitimize a high(er) social status and better living conditions in the life stage of the widow.

With this hypothesis, I do not seek to trivialize the very real experiences of pain and suffering experienced by my informants. However, I believe it is necessary to not gloss over the extent of women’s agency but instead to reflect on aspects that allow further insight into the meanings of godnas and their related narratives of female suffering. This is necessary to avoid reproducing a narrow perspective on Indo-Caribbean women as simply victimized and repressed, a perspective replicated all too often.⁴³ While such approaches have been challenged more recently in the academic context, the trope of the suffering Indo-Caribbean woman has proven to be persistent, particularly in popular discourse and cultural representations, affecting, to some extent, the godna narratives produced.⁴⁴ Alternatively, it is necessary to “listen in stereo,”⁴⁵ as addressed earlier, and to acknowledge Guyanese and Surinamese women’s agency in constructing and narrating their lives. Without obscuring the pain and suffering their experiences have caused and continue to cause, I believe the women should not be considered mere victims in weaving their narratives.

From this perspective, my interlocutors may have also narrated their experiences to (un-)consciously claim the status of ‘good wife’ and ‘good woman’ to legitimize or demand an enhanced living standard and social status in the present. As “storytellers have incentives to skew stories in their own favor or in support of those with power or prestige,”⁴⁶ and it is not exceptional in life narratives that narrators seek to address

42 Sinah T. Kloß, “Giving and Development: Ethno-Religious Identities and ‘Holistic Development’ in Guyana,” in *Faith-Based Organizations in Development Discourses and Practice*, ed. Jens Köhrsen and Andreas Heuser, Routledge Studies in Religion and Politics (London: Routledge, 2019).

43 Marina Carter, and Khal Torabully, *Coolitude: An Anthology of the Indian Labour Diaspora*, Anthem South Asian Studies (London: Anthem Press, 2002).

44 Kloß, “Embodying Dependency.”

45 Anderson and Jack, “Learning to Listen”: 11.

46 Boyd, “Narrative and Storytelling”: 4.

audiences “whom they want to persuade of their version of experience,”⁴⁷ we may want to hypothesize that my informants also claimed and legitimized their high(er) social status concerning other family members in their current old age, having transitioned to the life stage of widowhood. I do not believe, for example, that Radica consciously manipulated her narrative of endurance and suffering simply as a means of claiming higher social status. During our interview, the presence of her younger family members however formed an audience that she addressed while she answered my interview question, which influenced her narrative strategies. For example, during the interview and after relating her narrative of misery as a wife, Radica directly addressed her fear of “ending up in the dharamsala,” the socially ostracized old age home, despite having “minded her children.” She constantly complained in informal conversations that her family does not or cannot take sufficient care of her. Her daughters, who were in the same room and heard Radica’s laments, were indirectly addressed, being called out on their supposedly low morals. In my presence, that of a white European researcher, her claims gained in determination.

Through narratives of suffering, often initiated when I asked a woman about her godna, a female narrator could claim a survivor’s role and to have endured wifehood in dignity and with high morals. Indeed, most of the women who did not hesitate to characterize their husbands in the discussed ways and in the presence of their (adult) children were widows. Widows, or no-longer wives, self-confidently dismissed their husbands, having outlived them and not fearing their wrath and continued abuse. However, wives whose husbands were still alive voiced their criticism and frustrations more quietly, and sometimes indirectly, in our informal conversations. Widowed narrators frequently indicated that their current life situation had improved and that they were supported by (some of) their children, enabling them to (finally) live a “comfortable” and “humble” life. For example, Dhanmattie, introduced earlier, explained that she had been a widow for a while now, commenting: “I may be a poor woman, and I am a widow for 22 years now, this month. I was a widow since then, but before that, I was even *poorer!* Because he was bad! If he worked, not a dollar he would bring home” (January 2012; author’s translation from Guyanese). She considered her current social and economic situation to be an improvement already, although she still considered herself “poor.” Widows who faced loneliness due to their children’s death, neglect, or emigration, whose lives were dominated by illness, or, in rare cases, whose deceased husbands were considered attentive and caring, were not so positive about their current situation.

With this discursive strategy, widows could increase their social status and position today and in the future. Having contributed to the family and society in this life as a moral and virtuous wife, they could hope to be reborn as a (more powerful) man in their next life. Dhanmattie’s account exemplifies the narrative’s interweaving of gen-

47 Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiography*: 6.

der-based violence and (female) religious duties, suggesting that it is important for a woman to endure suffering, which has implications for her next life. Initiating her response by highlighting that she was not telling me idle gossip, but instead telling me the truth (“me talk me own story”)—an expression she commonly used to create narrative authority—she referred to her virtue and modesty as a Hindu woman. A virtuous Hindu woman, according to Dhanmattie, had to respect her husband unconditionally before she could (claim to) love god. She then stated:

You know, when a man falls, he is sick, and you have seen him in lots of wrong things [before]. Well, our kind of bible tells us, like this, says: ‘If that is not for this birth, we hope for the next birth.’ So we go away quick, like that. And that is left for the next birth, when we come [back]. So, when you see one-body coming, just now, our book tells us that . . . that it is not rubbed out. Because if you do five [*inaudible*], the five are there. If you do 20 good [things], the 20 good things are there, so with this now; it does not correspond equally, so you cannot suffer so much. But how much more [could I have suffered]? [. . .] I was not able to pay [for a better house], because the man was so *bad*. Before I tell anybody else’s story, I tell my own story. And it is never done. And god cannot be mad at me for this, because I told god, I said, said, I must have done something wrong, to make me punish. I would not even see my man, and he [would] bust my head. (Dhanmattie, 73, Guyana, February 2012; author’s translation from Guyanese)

Dhanmattie addressed a multiplicity of topics and entangled discourses in this revelatory fragment from our interviews. On a general level, she linked a husband’s misconduct (“you have seen him in lots of wrong things”) to a wife’s obligation to hope for betterment in her next life. She explained how, if good deeds outweigh one’s bad actions, karma will make one suffer less in future births. Linking this statement to the rhetorical question, “But how much more [could I have suffered]?” she then provided her example of suffering and shifted to her personal experience. Describing poverty, the condition of being ‘punished,’ and gender-based violence, she concluded that “god cannot be mad at me for this”—that is, for narrating her own story (truthfully) and for having dutifully endured all sorts of suffering and ‘punishment.’ Narrating these experiences, she simultaneously claimed the status of having been a ‘good’ and ‘dutiful’ wife, legitimizing what “little comfort” she had now as a widow and what she was hoping for in her next life.

6 Conclusion

Godnas can be interpreted as marks representing, embodying, symbolizing, and actively (re-)constructing experiences of gender-based suffering in Suriname and Guyana. They are inherently linked to male domination and female subordination, representing asymmetrical dependencies and, thus, structural and symbolic violence. As I have demonstrated in this article, godnas—sensory memories and embodied marks—initiate and become framing principles of narratives of suffering, which (re-)

create gender roles and social norms of (good) wife- and womanhood. By claiming the status of ‘good wife’ and contributing to society by ‘raising their children’ despite the hardships suffered during the life stage of wife, widowed narrators used their narratives, on the one hand, to share their painful experiences and memories. On the other hand, such narratives were also wielded to claim high(er) social status in their current life stage of a widow and their anticipated next lives. Having dutifully and obediently endured the *pinaren*, the cosmologically justified yet still disproportionate suffering, women may now hope for better living conditions and less suffering in future lives. Stressing female endurance, the tattooed marks—as outcomes of a painful tattooing experience—also materialized and visualized the twofold processes of suffering and endurance related to both marriage *and* tattooing. In this sense, godnas served as framing principles or initiatory triggers to life stage narratives and sensory memories that impacted the ways these narratives were constructed. Future research should compare the possibly different narratives that may evolve when asking a woman about a godna’s meaning compared to asking about the tattooing process. Preliminary results indicate that memories of the tattooing process less often evoke narratives of suffering than prompt discussions of (female) relationships and relational narratives of those involved in the tattooing process.

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Index

- abduction / abducted 7, 65, 236, 247, 263, 271, 274, 276
- abolition 1, 3, 10, 11, 67, 213, 214, 216, 220–225, 228–231, 239–245, 274, 277, 301, 304, 322
- abolitionism 222, 224, 225, 227, 229, 231
- abolitionist 10, 67, 213–231, 271, 304
- abuse 336, 357–360, 362
- advice 55, 74, 90, 96, 277, 335
- advice giving 83, 87
 - advisor 79
 - advisory practice 100
- agency 48, 127, 128, 142, 164, 200, 210, 230, 231, 250, 251, 255, 266, 319, 339, 354, 361
- betrayal 8, 79–81, 83, 87, 89, 90, 94–98, 100, 101
- biogram 106–108, 121, 122, 124–126, 128
- biographical dictionary 106, 107, 112, 114, 116, 118
- biographical encyclopaedia 115, 116
- biographical sketch 107, 112, 113, 115–120, 227
- body markers 280, 281
- captive 5, 9, 10, 68, 71, 73, 74, 161, 163–166, 168, 171, 174–176, 188, 199–210
- captivity 1, 3, 7, 9, 65–71, 75, 161–168, 175–176, 179, 183–188, 192–196, 199–203, 208–210
- captivity narrative 9, 68, 161, 164–167, 175, 176
- captor / capturer 204–206
- capture 10, 38, 199, 200–206, 209, 210, 262
- Circassian concubine / odalisque / slave 314, 315, 320
- coartación* 249, 251, 256, 264, 265
- coercion 196, 200, 203, 209, 210
- commodification / commodity 147, 149, 206, 230, 231, 264–269
- concealed dependency (structures) 8, 80, 101
- concubine / concubinage 11, 109, 122, 125, 304, 308, 312, 314, 315, 319, 320
- corporal markers / markings / marks 240, 248, 281
- counsel / counseling 87–89, 100
- council 25, 82, 84, 87, 88, 91, 95, 99, 253
- counter-narrative 42, 44, 45
- court records 2, 8, 9, 141–158
- crusade 80–82, 84, 85
- crusade epic 8, 81
- denture mutilation 280
- dermograph 240, 281
- diaspora 7, 48, 53, 58, 61, 226, 291
- editor / editorial preface / editorial work 210, 213–252
- elite household 11, 306, 309, 310, 317, 322
- emancipado* 242, 244, 258, 271–273
- endurance 355, 360–362, 364
- Esclavitud* 239, 241, 251–253, 257, 258
- eunuch 8, 105, 106, 108, 110, 113, 117, 118, 120, 127–133, 313
- experientiality 4
- freedom 1, 11, 48, 59–62, 67–75, 147–156, 161, 209, 227, 228, 231, 240, 243, 253, 254, 265, 266, 279, 308, 311, 312, 315, 318, 322
- gender / gendered 11, 12, 70, 74, 105, 117, 120, 128, 325, 326, 328–330, 332–336, 344, 345, 353, 354, 360, 364
- gift book 10, 213–233
- godna* 12, 347, 348, 351–358, 361–364
- godna* narrative 348, 350, 351, 354, 355, 360, 361
- harem 11, 306–314, 319–322
- Hebrew Bible 7, 34, 36, 38, 45
- historical narratology 6, 7, 47–50, 61
- historiographic/-al 9, 37, 45, 54, 111, 114–116, 118, 168, 171
- historiography 4, 7, 8, 34, 35, 37, 38, 42, 44, 45, 51, 113–116, 119, 162, 164, 240, 303, 350
- hostage 9, 182, 186, 188, 190–193, 195
- imprisonment 3, 11, 60, 62, 126, 179, 184–194, 325, 339
- kidnapping. See abduction
- legal texts 52, 142, 145, 152, 157
- letter 10, 22, 175, 185, 214, 216, 217, 222–231, 241, 245, 256, 263, 266, 287, 307
- letter writing. See letter
- liberation 7, 8, 48, 55, 59–61, 68, 69, 71, 75, 192, 241, 264, 351
- liberty. See freedom
- life (stage) narrative 11, 12, 228, 348–354, 357–359, 361, 364
- life writing 1–3

- Mamluk, *mamlūk* 8, 105–139
- manumission 8–10, 110, 112, 122, 123, 126, 130, 133, 142, 147–152, 156, 243, 247, 264
- manumission document / manumission deed.
See manumission
- memoirs 9, 11, 161–166, 175, 183, 241, 325, 329, 330, 337, 339, 344
- narrative perspective 35, 51, 154
- narrative of dependency / dependencies 1–6, 12, 132, 133, 195, 210, 325
- narrativity 2–4, 142, 143, 145, 164, 168
- narrator 8–10, 34, 48, 50, 51, 57, 60, 70, 80, 83, 88, 91, 92, 94, 99, 100, 116, 131, 132, 152, 154, 168, 171, 173, 175, 185–188, 191–194, 204, 206–209, 310, 331, 337, 338, 341, 344, 349, 350, 353, 354, 360, 361, 362, 364
- normative texts 142, 145
- notarial records 242, 247, 248
- novel 4, 7, 8, 65–67, 69–75, 195, 228
- obituary 10, 115, 214, 216–218, 220–222, 229, 231
- objectification 206, 230, 231
- odalik / odali(s)que 312, 314, 315
- oral history 239, 240, 352, 353
- ownership 129, 130, 132, 248, 347
- pain / painful 12, 182, 199, 208, 315, 348, 349, 355, 360, 361, 364
- papel de almacén* 244, 246
- Pesach / Pesach Haggadah 47, 48, 59, 61
- prison 11, 325, 326, 331–334, 337
- prisoner. See captive
- property 72, 106, 141, 151, 155, 158, 163, 213, 248, 255, 315, 317
- prostitution / prostitute 69–71, 75, 172
- pseudepigraphy 7, 51
- Quejas* 10, 239, 241, 251–253, 255–258, 272
- race 105, 120, 132, 220, 227–229, 231, 313
- raid / raider / raiding 202, 204–206, 209, 280
- rape 68, 74, 264, 277, 336
- re-enslavement 130, 264
- reform movements 225, 227, 229
- romance 7, 51, 54, 66, 310
- sanskara 351
- scarification 280, 281
- Second Temple Narratives 52
- self-(re-)presentation 6, 11, 16–20, 22–30, 210, 235, 238, 240, 248, 257, 258, 264, 271, 278, 280, 283, 331
- self-devaluation 337, 344
- self-ransom 245, 251
- serf / serfdom 167, 171, 172, 224
- skin color 105, 312, 313, 321
- slave market 309, 319, 320, 322
- slave markings 347
- slave narrative 1, 67, 68, 228, 240
- slave ship 239, 240, 244, 246, 258–263, 269, 271–273, 275
- slave society 108, 109, 111, 236
- slave trade / slave trader 10, 11, 67, 69, 75, 107, 117, 121, 124, 141, 155, 199–202, 206, 207, 209, 210, 235, 236, 239, 240, 243, 248, 258, 259, 261, 262, 264, 266, 268, 269, 274, 275, 277, 280, 281, 283, 304
- slave voices 142, 146–148, 151, 152, 157
- slave vessel / slaving vessel. See slave ship
- stereotype / stereotypical 8, 11, 69, 72–74, 107, 118–120, 122, 124, 128, 129, 131, 132, 194
- storytelling 143, 215, 352
- suffering 2, 12, 179, 183, 195, 199, 208, 210, 230, 235, 331, 347, 348, 352, 354–358, 360–364
- Sufi / Sufism 111, 114, 338, 339, 343
- tattoo 12, 240, 280, 281, 347–355, 364
- tattoo narrative 348–350, 352, 354
- testimony / testimonial 10, 68, 195, 200, 202–204, 209, 210, 240, 246, 250, 267, 274, 275, 318
- tomb ‘biography’ / tomb inscription 6, 15–17, 21–24
- travel writing / travel account / travel book / travel literature / travel report / travelogue 11, 34, 36, 37, 42, 44, 68, 190, 195, 199, 217, 223, 301, 305–308, 322, 337
- treachery / treason / traitor 8, 79, 80, 83, 84, 86, 88, 90, 92, 95, 98, 100, 176, 187, 188
- veil 310, 311, 317–319
- victim 5, 10, 11, 199, 203, 336, 361
- violence 9, 12, 69, 86, 99, 100, 111, 118, 120, 126, 179, 184, 186, 190, 193–195, 252, 262, 264, 331, 334, 336, 337, 347, 348, 352, 355, 356, 358, 363
- ‘voluntary’ enslavement 264, 321