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## **Disciplines**

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# *Luxury, Status, and the Importance of Slavery in the Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century Northern Sudan*

Heather J. Sharkey  
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Almost immediately after the official abolition of slavery in 1899, the Condominium administration began to worry about the exodus of slaves from the farmlands of their owners and the corresponding slump in the northern Sudan's overall agricultural output.<sup>1</sup> In an influential article entitled "Economic Development and the Heritage of Slavery in the Sudan Republic," McLoughlin comments on this period's labor shortage and the hardship that it created. He explains that the pains of social and economic adjustment were not surprising, since "the Sudan has been a slave-based economy for at least three millennia."<sup>2</sup>

McLoughlin's portrayal of slavery in the Sudan is open to question on two grounds: he suggests that slaves had indeed been the cornerstone of the Sudanese economy for millennia, and implies that the demand for slaves over that time span had primarily reflected a demand for their productive labor. Both conclusions, though containing some truth, are essentially flawed.

It is true that the territories of the Sudan had exported slaves for millennia. One of the earliest extant written sources, dating from the fourth millennium B.C., indicates that Egyptians under the Pharaoh Seneferu penetrated Nubia up to the fourth cataract and collected slaves from the area between Abu Hamad and Khartoum. Later Ptolemaic records mention the Sudanese ivory and slave eunuchs which were subject to duty at the port of Alexandria.<sup>3</sup> And so it continued, with the Sudan providing slaves and other exotic goods to the successive Pharaonic, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Early Islamic, Mamluke, Ot-

toman, and Turco-Egyptian empires of Egypt. In many ways one could argue that the current boundaries of the Democratic Republic of the Sudan represent the legacy of that southward push for slaves and other luxury goods.<sup>4</sup>

Nonetheless, the mere fact that slaves were a luxury item for external markets—on a par with ivory and ostrich feathers—in no way proves the existence of a widespread internal Sudanese demand for that same item. In fact, the passage of time has so thoroughly obscured internal slave-owning practices of the past few millennia that positing any theories on its overall social and economic impact becomes futile. Yet, where sufficiently detailed sources do begin to exist—namely, after the foundation of the Funj and Kayra sultanates in the early 16th and early 17th century respectively—it appears that slave-owning operated on a minor scale.

As O’Fahey and Spaulding have noted, slave-owning, by and large, remained a prerogative of the elite during the few centuries preceding the Turco-Egyptian conquest of 1820. The practice was limited to the sultans, petty chiefs, and feudal noblemen of the Funj and Kayra dynasties who settled slaves on entire villages to farm the royal lands, who made slaves a prominent part of court life and the administrative hierarchy, and who reserved the right to bestow the privilege of slave-owning on others.<sup>5</sup> O’Fahey speculates that the [Kayra] slave-owners were “the great, the rich, and the holy,” and indeed that slaves “were a symbol of power, wealth, or sanctity.”<sup>6</sup>

By the early 19th century, within the power vacuum that had been created by the slow but steady demise of the Funj dynasty, prosperous traders of the riverain areas began to acquire slaves.<sup>7</sup> But it was only with the Turco-Egyptian conquest of 1820 that a revolution in slave-owning occurred.

One of Muhammad Ali’s main reasons for launching the conquest was to obtain access to a cheap pool of slaves for his armies. And so, he initiated massive slave hunts on an unprecedented scale in the non-Muslim southern regions. Many slaves he incorporated into his armies, but countless others (including women and children) he sold in northern Sudanese markets for profit.<sup>8</sup> Independent slave-and ivory-traders followed in his path over the ensuing decades.<sup>9</sup> Soon the market was

flooded with slaves; cheap prices meant that almost all free northerners became slave-owners. Thus Holroyd was able to write of Sennar in 1839 that “[m]ost of the lower orders possess one or two slaves.”<sup>10</sup>

The German geologist, Eduard Ruppell, estimated the number of slaves between Wadi Halfa and the fourth cataract of the Nile at around 4,500, or four percent of the total population, by 1820.<sup>11</sup> Up to that point, free cultivators predominated. All of this changed quickly. Spaulding estimates that by the end of the 19th century, slaves comprised at least one-third of the population for that area and performed all of the agricultural work.<sup>12</sup>

Slave-owning on this scale was a new development in the Sudan. Owners, who now represented a wide socio-economic spectrum of the northern Sudanese populace, came to direct the labor of their slaves toward much more than just agriculture: slaves became cooks, grain-grinders, blacksmith apprentices, caravan assistants, waiters, well-diggers, weavers, and much more. Female slaves often bore the brunt of the heavy labor, for it was they who did such things as fetching supplies of water from long distances and lugging it back, building houses, and the like.<sup>13</sup>

The explosion in the number of slave-owners during the 19th century, and the concomitant diversification of slave labor, might lead one to infer that these slave-owning patterns represented a sharp break from those of the Funj and Kayra periods. One thing, however, apparently stayed the same in spite of all the change: a value system that underpinned slave-owning and that bridged the slavery of Funj and Kayra times to that of the early 20th century.

The Funj and Kayra elites had relied on some slaves to farm their lands, though they valued slaves as a whole for a loftier reason: the enhancement of status and proof of power that the possession of slaves could bring. The clearest manifestation of an owner’s status and power was the cultivation of leisure time and the shunning of physical labor that slave-owning permitted, as embodied in a practice which Thorstein Veblen called “conspicuous leisure”<sup>14</sup> and in a social value which this article calls an “idleness ethic.”

In this regard, the slave-owners of the post-conquest years were no different. Indeed, the greatest service that slaves may have provided to their owners in the 19th and early 20th century—through the eyes of

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Ostentation in the use of slaves was critical, as Junker suggests, to prove the exalted station of rich and powerful men and women. Hoarding one's wealth and projecting a modest front were not acceptable social avenues for the rich. Flagrant display, on the other hand, involving the use of slaves for luxury or prestige purposes, enabled an individual to gain social respect and honor. Even the ascetic holy man Shaykh Hasan ibn Hassuna had played the game by these rules, engaging in the ostentatious use of hundreds of slaves for hospitality displays as proof of his beneficence and charity, while just as flagrantly subsisting on crumbs to prove his own piety.

Not only mighty sultans and revered holy men sought to enhance their glory through slave-owning. Even during the 19th century, slave-owners exploited the prestige-enhancing use of slaves as much as their means allowed them.

### *Hair and Status*

One avenue to the luxury-use of slave labor involved hairdressing. The great appeal of this practice rested in the fact that after slaves lavished vast amounts of time on an owner's head of hair, the resultant coiffure stood as a symbol, indeed a beacon, announcing the bearer's access to the time-consuming and sumptuous application of slave labor.

The American G. B. English, who accompanied the conquering Turco-Egyptian troops as an artillery advisor in 1820–21, noted the social importance of the coiffure while traveling with a caravan near Berber. He observed two men bustling around the caravan guide. "They were a long time engaged in frizzing and plaiting his hair, and finished the operation by pouring over it a bowlful of melted mutton suet, which made his hair quite white. I asked for the meaning of this operation at this time; they told me that we should be at the river tomorrow morning, and that our guide was adorning himself to see and salute his friends there."<sup>25</sup>

About ten years later, someone informed the British archaeologist G. A. Hoskins that the elaborate coiffure of the Shendi mekk's (petty chief's) wife took nine hours for her slaves to arrange. (This lady was also the daughter of the former Shendi leader, Mekk Nimr, the man responsible for killing Isma'il Pasha, Muhammad 'Ali's son who had



headed the 1820 conquest.) Hoskins, too, saw 20 of this lady's slaves grinding spices for an ointment to rub into her hair and skin.<sup>26</sup>

The desirability of lavishing attention on hair, on the part of all able slave-owners, comes through in a comment by the German botanist, Georg Schweinfurth. He says of slavery in the Red Sea port town of Suakin, "Black female slaves, instead of asses, which in Suakin would cost too much to feed, are indispensable [to the free residents] for carrying water from the well to the town. Whoever possesses fifty dollars in his bag and has one slave besides his water-bearer, is quite a magnate, and spends much labour in the profuse adornment of his hair."<sup>27</sup> Although having a slave who could perform the critical but highly strenuous task of water-fetching was first priority, adorning hair came in as a close second—for the latter certainly proved how much of a "magnate" a particular slave-owner was.

The sheer decadence of slave-owning (that is, from the modern reader's perspective) comes across in the following detailed description of the toilette of a Baqqara Arab shaykh's wife, provided by the Bohemian traveler Ignatius Pallme in his 1844 account on Kordofan.

The lady sat on an angareb (bedstead), surrounded by a number of young and beautiful negro girls, upon each of which a particular duty was incumbent. The one fanned away the flies with a handful of the most beautiful ostrich feathers, whilst the others arranged her hair, an occupation requiring several hours for its performance; for it is no easy task to open all the various matted curls with a single pointed wooden peg. A third slave washed her feet, a fourth ground sulphur to a powder between two stones. Another slave held a gourd, filled with merissa, in her hand, to offer her mistress a cooling draught whenever she might demand it; while another girl held a cup, containing more than one pound of melted butter, which was poured over the lady's head as soon as the hair was undone. All the butter that dropped off her hair onto her back was rubbed in over her whole body by an additional attendant.<sup>28</sup>

Obviously, owning so many slaves to perform luxury services at this level must have been rather exceptional, even within northern Sudanese society. On however small or large a scale, though, elaborate hair

styling, the result of slave labor, no doubt served as a common symbol of leisure, luxury, and affluence in the northern Sudan.<sup>29</sup>

### *Striving for Idleness*

Ultimately, the quality for which most northern Sudanese slave-owners were striving may have been idleness. Personal idleness indicated that a man or woman was successful and affluent enough not to toil for subsistence. Thus the cultivation of idleness, perceived as a noble trait, became the aim of all who could afford it.

The famed Swiss traveler Jean Louis Burckhardt wrote of the Hadendowa who occupy the Red Sea hills: “The Hadendowa are very indolent; the business of the house is left to the wives and slaves, while the men pass the day either in paying an idle visit to some neighbouring encampment, or at home reclined upon the Angareyg (*angareb*, bedstead), smoking their pipes, and generally going to bed drunk in the evening.”<sup>30</sup>

Pallme had encountered these attitudes while visiting Kordofan. He wrote, “Every man, be his means ever so small, endeavours to purchase a slave, and this poor wretch must then do all the work, in order that his master may then lie all day in the shade, indulging in idleness.”<sup>31</sup> This same behavior exasperated the American (U.S. Civil War veteran), H. G. Prout, who visited Kordofan in 1877 on a mission for the Egyptian Army.<sup>32</sup>

Sonnini de Manoncourt, the French naturalist who had traveled in Egypt and Nubia in the 1760s, illustrated the great gap in social values between Europeans (and in this case, Egyptians) with wit. He said:

The Orientalists [sic], who are not under the necessity of labouring, remain almost always in a sitting posture...; they never walk, unless they are obliged to do so....They have no idea of taking a walk.... It is a great curiosity to observe their looks, as they contemplate an European walking backward and forward, in his chamber, or in the open air, re-treading continually the self-same steps which he had trodden before. It is impossible for them to comprehend the meaning of that coming and going, without any apparent object, and which they consider as an act of folly. The more sensible among them conceive it to be a prescription of our physicians that sets us a-walking about in this manner, in order to

take an exercise necessary to the cure of some disorder. The negroes in Africa, have a similar idea of this practice....<sup>33</sup>

From the idle man's point of view, suggests Sonnini, the hustle and bustle of the European was ludicrous, superfluous, and utterly baffling.

Owners valued slaves for their labor, and for the leisured lifestyle that slave labor allowed them to lead; thus economic and social-status motives for slave ownership thoroughly overlapped. Yet significantly, as many of the examples set forth above reveal, owners often aspired to idleness not only for themselves but for their slaves as well. Prestige accrued not simply from possessing a bare minimum of slaves who could fetch water and till fields, but from owning an excess, an abundance, of slaves—so many that even the slaves could pass their days in relative leisure. Indeed if the idle man was honorable, then the idle man who had idle slaves was much more so.

Northern Sudanese society's admiration for idleness was not an anomaly limited to that region. Many writers on slavery, covering a variety of cultures throughout the world, have discussed this resurfacing theme, emphasizing not only the appeal of idleness for slave-owners, but the appeal of relative idleness or unproductivity for slaves themselves. In a comparative study of Asian and African slavery systems, for example, Watson has written, "By supporting slaves who might be less productive than hired workers, the masters are, in effect, displaying their wealth for all to see."<sup>34</sup> What Siegel wrote about the kings of Dahomey, in one of the earliest anthropological treatments of slavery, applies to the elite circles of the northern Sudan as well. He said, "*Political* rank had constantly to be justified by concomitant renewal and increase of social prestige through the accumulation and regular display of articles of wealth."<sup>35</sup> In both societies, these articles of wealth were inevitably slaves.

Equally applicable to the Sudanese case is Shepherd's observation on idleness among owners and their slaves on the Comoros Islands, a trading outpost in the waters east of Madagascar, which like the Sudan, has a mixed Arab/African population. Shepherd writes, "Arabs, Swahilis, and Comorians concurred in finding a man who did no manual work (because he could afford slaves) superior to a man who did. What is more, the ideal was apparently to own so many slaves that they were

idle much of the time, too. One of the important ways of rating a man was to observe how many dependents—kin, clients, or slaves—he could afford to support....<sup>36</sup>

It would be wrong, however, to reject the prestige uses of slaves as forms of slave labor. Writing on “unproductive” labor, Watson says, “The coercive element is no less real in this form of slavery than it is in any ‘productive’ system; even slaves who are little more than status symbols are expected to perform some type of service, if only to stand in hallways. The exhibition of idleness may be the slaves only real duty but this has to be extracted like any other service.”<sup>37</sup> (No doubt Veblen would have agreed: he argued that the “performance of leisure” or of idleness on the part of servants was indeed a job or a service functioning to glorify the master.<sup>38</sup>) Hairdressers, eunuch bodyguards, and train-bearers sweated a lot less than water-carriers, well-diggers, and grain-grinders, but they were all equally slaves doing slave labor.

### *The Idleness Ethic and Post-Abolition Attitudes*

Only by understanding the importance of slaves as critical enhancers of social standing and as power indicators can one fathom the deep sense of loss which many northern Sudanese felt as abolition attempts jeopardized this human commodity. Slaves were virtually the only way to earn prestige. In the Kayra and Funj periods, as in the 19th and early 20th century, slaves provided the major route to social differentiation, pushing their owners up a few rungs on the social ladder in accordance with their numbers.<sup>39</sup>

Any suggestion that the post-abolition slave exodus single-handedly triggered the Sudan’s agricultural slump in the early Condominium period is both misleading and simplistic. Years of war during the Mahdiya, the result of both internal strife and external battles with British, Egyptian, Abyssinian, and even Italian forces, ravaged the population. Adding to the drop in numbers were a host of epidemics which left death and desolation in their trail. Men and women, slave and free, died by the thousands, making the task of post-Mahdiya reconstruction more difficult in the agricultural sector.<sup>40</sup> Labor shortages should have come as no surprise.

Concerns over labor shortages were genuine.<sup>41</sup> Yet what may have intensified these concerns was the difficulty that the former slave-owning

classes faced in adjusting to the new post-abolition milieu. Confronted with the prospect of slavelessness, they nonetheless remained reluctant to work the land themselves. There were thus a multiplicity of factors—Mahdiya-era fatalities, a slave exodus, and a repugnance to labor on the part of the old slave-owning classes—that exacerbated the labor shortages in this period.

For a while, at least, owners contrived to keep their slaves on the land and under their control, or managed to get hold of a few new slaves through the flourishing underground slave traffic.<sup>42</sup> Some were lucky enough to have access to the cheap labor of the West African migrants, who were called the Fellata. Many of these people had journeyed into the Sudan as pilgrims on their way to Mecca, though large numbers settled down permanently and formed a critical class of unskilled labor in the Sudan.<sup>43</sup>

Eventually, many families resorted to having their own children do the agricultural work—even if that meant pulling them out of school before they completed their studies.<sup>44</sup> This scenario prompted one official to note in 1907, “The new generation promises, so far as the riverain population is concerned, to be a better race than their fathers, as, whether the parents work or no, the whole of the children have to work,” starting around the age of four. He goes on to explain that many of the men in the region formerly owned from 20 to 200 slaves, but suffered badly when many of these slaves ran away after the 1898 Anglo-Egyptian “reconquest.” He continued, “Now they are better off; they decline to work, but they make their children work. On the estate of the Sudan Plantation syndicate there are generally at least 100 children working, while their fathers recline leisurely at home dressed in fine raiment. I have reproved them for turning their children into slaves, but without much result.”<sup>45</sup> As this excerpt shows, many tried to follow old customs of the leisure and idleness ethic in spite of the staggering social changes caused by abolition.

## ***Conclusion***

This study has briefly considered one small facet of domestic slavery in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century northern Sudan, by concentrating on the status-enhancing applications of slave labor. It has fo-

cused strongly, though not exclusively, on the slave-owning patterns of the elite, and has suggested a continuity in social values from Fung and Kayra times until the abolition era. It has postulated the existence of an “idleness ethic” involving both conspicuous leisure for owners and the conspicuous display of non-economically productive labor for their slaves, intended more to enhance prestige by the expenditure of wealth than to increase wealth itself.

It is by no means the intention of this study to minimize the importance of labor-intensive slavery in the Sudan, nor to deny the frequency with which slaves performed arduous tasks such as grain-grinding or construction work. What it does intend, rather, is to focus on social values, and on the efforts of slave-owners to project wealth and social stature through slave-owning as much as their means allowed them. The loss of slaves after abolition threatened the workings of this value system.

The reliance of the free northern Sudanese population, rich and humble alike, upon slaves for farming, tending livestock, cooking, child-minding, or even for arranging their hair and serving their guests was indeed great. Yet partially, too, their reliance was so heavy because the idea of doing “slave” work galled Sudanese slave-owners so thoroughly.<sup>46</sup> Baqqara Arab cattle nomads, Nile farmers, and urban Khartoum merchants alike undoubtedly felt a tremendous jolt at the mere thought of abolition. Picking up a hoe, herding some cattle, or fetching water—basically, doing any of the degrading, mundane work associated with slaves—would have symbolized a blot on their social prestige. What ultimately worried slave-owners about abolition was not only the prospect of labor shortages but also, and more significantly, the threat to personal honor that slavelessness would pose.

## Notes

1. Taj Hargey, “The Suppression of Slavery in the Sudan, 1898–1939” (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1981), 110.
2. Peter F. M. McLoughlin, “Economic Development and the Heritage of Slavery in the Sudan Republic,” *Africa* 32, no. 4 (October 1962): 368.
3. R. W. Beachey, *The Slave Trade of Eastern Africa* (London: Rex Collings, 1976), 2–3, 121.

4. On this theme see William Y. Adams, "North and South in Sudanese History," in *Second International Sudan Studies Conference Papers*, Vol. 1 (Durham, United Kingdom: University of Durham, 1991), 17–24.
5. R. S. O'Fahey, "Slavery and Society in Dar Fur," in *Slaves and Slavery in Muslim Africa*, ed. John Ralph Willis, vol. 2 (London: Frank Cass, 1985), 88–94; and Jay Spaulding, "Slavery, Land Tenure, and Social Class in the Northern Turkish Sudan," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 15, no. 1 (1982): 8–9. The great Scottish traveler James Bruce had commented on the high-ranking slaves of the Funj sultanate, saying that "the first title of nobility in this country is that of slave; indeed, there is no other.... All titles and dignities are undervalued, and precarious, unless they are in the hands of one who is a slave. Slavery in Sennaar [sic] is the only true nobility." James Bruce of Kinnaird, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, in the Years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1774*, vol. 4 (Edinburgh: J. Ruthven, 1790), 459.
6. O'Fahey, "Slavery and Society," 88.
7. R. S. O'Fahey and J. L. Spaulding, *Kingdoms of the Sudan* (London: Methuen, 197), 81–82.
8. Richard Hill, *Egypt in the Sudan: 1820–1881* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 7–12, 25, 27.
9. See, for example, Hill, *Egypt*, 49; and Richard Gray, *A History of the Southern Sudan, 1839–1889* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978), 50–54.
10. Arthur T. Holroyd, "Notes on a Journey to Kordofan, in 1836–7," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 9 (1839): 169.
11. Eduard Ruppell, *Reisen in Nubien, Kordofan und dem petraischen Arabien* (Frankfurt am Main: Friedrich Wilmans, 1829), 29.
12. Spaulding, "Slavery, Land Tenure," 9–11.
13. For a descriptive and analytical explanation of the types of slave labor, see Heather Jane Sharkey, "Domestic Slavery in the Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Sudan" (M.Phil. thesis, University of Durham, United Kingdom, 1992), 36–53.
14. Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Penguin Books, 1979), 35–67.

15. Regarding the value of European travel accounts for Sudanese history, and a discussion of the positive and negative prejudices therein, see Abbas Ibrahim Muhammad Ali, "Anglo-Saxon Teutonic Images of the Peoples of the Sudan, 1772–1881," *African Studies Seminar Paper No. 6* (Khartoum, Sudan: University of Khartoum, Sudan Research Unit, May 1969).
16. W. G. Browne, *Travels in Africa, Egypt, and Syria, from the Year 1792 to 1798* (London: T. Cadell Junior and W. Davies, 1799), 213, 350.
17. Note that the Kayra sultanate of Dar Fur did not fall to the Turco-Egyptians until 1874, in part because of its remoteness from Khartoum. Nachtigal visited the sultanate just prior to its collapse.
18. Gustav Nachtigal, *Sahara and Sudan*, vol. 4, trans. Allan G. B. Fisher and Humphrey J. Fisher, with Rex S. O'Fahey (1889; London: C. Hurst, 1971), 197.
19. Cited in Allan G. B. Fisher and Humphrey J. Fisher, *Slavery and Muslim Society in Africa* (London: C. Hurst, 1970), 163–64.
20. S. Hillelson, "Tabaqat Wad Dayf Allah: Studies in the Lives of the Scholars and Saints," *Sudan Notes and Records* 6, no. 2 (1923): 213, 229–30. So powerful was this shaykh, as indicated by his innumerable slaves, that one might consider him to have been a petty chief in his own right.
21. In trying to define *baraka* in the case of Moroccan Sufi holy men, Geertz has pointed not only to qualities of piety, charisma, and "spiritual electricity," but also to material wealth as an indication of God's blessing. The same definition of *baraka* could apply in Hasan wad Hassuna's case, since he combined piety and wealth in strong doses. See Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 44.
22. The American world traveler, writer, and later U.S. ambassador to Berlin, Bayard Taylor, described his own meeting with "Lady Nasra" in a roughly contemporary account. See Bayard Taylor, *Life and Landscapes from Egypt to the Negro Kingdoms of the White Nile, Being a Journey to Central Africa* (London: Sampson, Low, 1854), 295.
23. Richard Lepsius, *Letters from Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Peninsula of Sinai*, trans. Leonora and Joanna B. Horner (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853), 179.



24. Wilhelm Junker, *Travels in Africa during the Years 1875–1878*, trans. A. H. Keane (London: Chapman & Hall, 1890), 163.
25. G. B. English, *A Narrative of the Expedition to Dongola and Sennaar* (London: John Murray, 1822), 224.
26. G. A. Hoskins, *Travels in Ethiopia, above the Second Cataract of the Nile* (London: Longman, Rees, 1835), 124–25.
27. Georg Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa: Three Years' Travels and Adventures in the Unexplored Regions of Central Africa, from 1868 to 1871*, vol. 1, trans. Ellen E. Frewer (1873; London: Sampson, Low, 1969), 29.
28. Ignatius Pallme, *Travels in Kordofan* (London: J. Madden, 1844), 124–25.
29. An owner's ability to change elaborate hairstyles with some frequency may have further emphasized one's wealth.
30. John Lewis Burckhardt, *Travels in Nubia* (London: Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa, 1819), 62.
31. Pallme, *Travels*, 58–59.
32. [Major] H. G. Prout, *General Report on the Province of Kordofan, Submitted to General C. P. Stone, Chief of the General Staff Egyptian Army* (Cairo: Printing Office of the General Staff, 1877), 38–39.
33. Charles Nicolas Sigisbert Sonnini de Manoncourt, *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt: Undertaken by Order of the Old Government of France*, vol. 1, trans. Henry Hunter (London: J. Stockdale, 1799), 246–47.
34. James L. Watson, "Slavery as an Institution: Open and Closed Systems," in *Asian and African Systems of Slavery*, ed. James L. Watson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), 8.
35. Bernard J. Siegel, "Some Methodological Considerations for a Comparative Study of Slavery," *American Anthropologist* 47 (1945 {reprint 1975}): 374.
36. Gill Shepherd, "The Comorians and the East African Slave Trade," in *Asian and African Systems of Slavery*, ed. James L. Watson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), 84–85. Kopytoff and Miers have stressed the importance of African slavery systems as a means of enlarging the kin group and thereby enhancing the family leader's prestige. See Igor Kopytoff and Suzanne Miers, "African 'Slavery' as

- an Institution of Marginality,” *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 19–22, 67.
37. Watson, “Slavery as an Institution,” 8.
  38. Veblen, *Theory of Leisure*, 59–60.
  39. Patterson has made a similar point. “In many primitive societies where there was little differentiation in the possession of wealth, slaves were usually the major (sometimes the only) form of wealth that made such differentiation possible.” Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), 33. In a similar vein, see David Brion Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 28.
  40. Official British sources claimed that the population dipped from an estimated 8.5 million at the start of the Mahdiya in 1881 to 1.75 million by the end, in 1898. See Sudan Government, “Statistics of the Population in the Sudan,” in *Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan: 1903*, 12–13; Sudan Archive Durham 400/8/6: Ryder Memoirs, “Destruction under the Mahdists”; and Peter F.M. McLoughlin, “A Note on the Reliability of the Earliest Sudan Republic Population Estimates,” *Population Review* 7 (1963): 53–64. One must treat the British figures with great caution, since they may have been swelled in order to serve as anti-Mahdist propaganda.
  41. See Hargey, *Suppression of Slavery*, 107.
  42. *Ibid.*, 111. On the continuation of slavery and slave-trading beyond abolition, see Sudan Archive Durham 299/1/168: “Slave Raids in the Sudan: A Successful Patrol,” *Morning Post*, 28 September 1910; Sudan Archive Durham 300/1/63, 77, 78–79: (F. R. Wingate Papers) Letters from Wingate on the slave trade in Dar Fur, the French Congo, and the Bahr al-Ghazal Frontier, 1910–1911; Sudan Archive Durham 294/18/3-15: “The Bandit,” by A. S. Redfern, 1935 (on slave-raiding in the 1930s near the Sudanese-Ethiopian border).
  43. See “Memorandum from Lieutenant Sir R. Wingate to Sir Eldon Gorst,” in *Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan: 1909*, Sudan Government, 54–55.

44. McLoughlin, "Economic Development," 373. Roberts and Miers refer to the frequency of this practice throughout Africa. See Richard Roberts and Suzanne Miers, "The End of Slavery in Africa," in *The End of Slavery in Africa*, eds. Suzanne Miers and Richard Roberts (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 41.
45. "Annual Report, Berber Province," in *Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan: 1907*, Sudan Government, 190.
46. For a parallel with the attitudes of Ethiopian (Abyssinian) slave-owners toward manual labor, see Richard Pankhurst, "The Ethiopian Slave Trade in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: A Statistical Enquiry," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 9, no. 1 (1964): 220–21.

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