much about whether Marques is right as much as they elaborate on key points. They insist that slave flight accelerated the demise of slavery.

They also discuss shrinking criteria of who is eligible for enslavement and shifts in what is considered acceptable levels of cruelty. The question of who can be enslaved is important to our understanding of the emergence of racially defined slavery, but adds little to the debate on Marques. If Marques makes his argument successfully, it is largely that he has defined his target well. Olivier Petre-Grenouilleau points out that the views attacked here are not widely held by academic historians. They are more widely held by journalists, political leaders and non-academic intellectuals. There is a rich literature of slave resistance, but slave resistance does not necessarily involve systemic attack on the system. It did, however, shape the system and contribute to its demise. Marques cannot in a relatively short essay tackle the meaning of this literature. Some authors try to do so. Most historians are well aware that plantation slave systems depended on a high level of coercion. That is why African slave systems, which could be harsh, were forced to leave more space for slaves within the system.

In all systems, the effort of slaves to achieve space for themselves is as important as resistance because it is part of the way slaves shape the nature of slavery. There is another sub-text that runs through this volume, which is that conflict within the system or outside intervention often provide an opportunity for slaves to find space. For Peter Blanchard it was not resistance, but participation in the wars of independence in Spanish America that contributed to the decline of slavery. Slaves were recruited by both royalists and patriots and generally rewarded with freedom. Slave women filled the void their men vacated.

Geggus and Robin Blackburn argue that leaders were more willing to compromise with the established order than their followers. Blackburn insists that the actions of ordinary slaves made plans for gradualist reforms unworkable. The problem for plantation slave systems was that they depended heavily on coercion. That meant that those who held power were easily frightened by limited but violent slave risings. It also meant that the slave system could easily fall apart. In the American Revolution, large numbers of slaves crossed British lines to seek freedom. Marques points out that during the American Civil War the recruitment of ex-slave soldiers was a factor in the war, but more important was the number of slaves who crossed Union lines to seek freedom. This also happened in Brazil, Reunion and elsewhere. Resistance was important not because resisters wanted to end slavery, but because the measures required to control slaves made plantation slavery so repressive that it could not resist the strain of other conflicts.

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BEHNAZ A. MIRZAI, ISMAEL MUSAH MONTANA and PAUL E. LOVEJOY (eds), *Slavery, Islam and Diaspora*. Trenton NJ and Asmara: Africa World Press (pb £24.99 – 978 1 59221 705 2). 2009, 336 pp.

This book consists of fourteen studies of Muslim slavery in areas ranging from the Crimea to the Caribbean, from the Middle Ages to the early twentieth century. It is a very welcome addition to slavery studies because it opens up a hitherto little explored field. Paul Lovejoy stresses the need to inquire into how slaves in the Islamic world responded to their enslavement, and how Islam was used to justify slavery. Ehud Toledano attributes the paucity of research into

Muslim slavery to lack of interest among the descendants of slaves who have not been 'sensitized' to their slave heritage – the reasons for this are clearly worth further exploration.

Maryna Kravetls discusses the role of black eunuchs in the Crimean Khanate in the 'Golden Horde'. They were used in mosques and the harems of the rulers and the rich. The khanate supplied white slaves from eastern Europe to the Ottoman empire, while the Ottomans sent black slaves in the opposite direction to the khanate. By the seventeenth century eunuchs were in charge of harem routine there and were not 'voiceless and helpless victims'.

Thomas Venet discusses slaving on the eastern African coast and islands between 1500 and 1750, focusing on the French and Omani roles rather than the Swahili traffic. Bernaz A. Mirzai describes harem life in Iran from the only two sources – biographies of Persian courtiers and European accounts. These harems were not secluded. Eunuchs held government positions and protected the women and children in the harem. The shah's wives were paid and could become financially independent; they could also play a role in politics and the arts.

Mohammed Bashir Salau discusses slaves in nineteenth-century Kano, where they made up half the population. They were kept in line by the use of charms and amulets. Some nevertheless ran away. Others refused to work or worked slowly. The form of slavery in Kano was typical of that in the rest of the Sokoto Caliphate. Olatunji Ojo deals with West Africa in the same period but the discussion concerns Hausa 'Mamluks' in Yorubaland who became increasingly associated with crime after 1850. As a result many were expelled, while those who stayed had to carry passports and show they were legitimately employed – a surprisingly modern touch.

Jennifer Loftkrantz discusses the ransoming of captives in the Sokoto Caliphate. This was limited to the elite who could afford to pay. Although Islam sanctioned the ransoming of captives, the captors made their own rules. In late nineteenth-century Kano Muslim captives were usually ransomed or freed, while non-Muslims were killed. Alternatively, if labour was needed in the Caliphate, they were put to work.

Amal N. Ghazal in a very interesting chapter discusses the debate in the Arab Middle East in the early twentieth century on the rival merits of slavery and abolition. Reformist *ulama* favoured abolition but for conservative *ulama* questioning an institution recognized in the Qur'an was unthinkable.

Ismael Musah Montana describes the Bori cult in nineteenth-century Tunis. The Bori were Kanuri and Hausa slaves imported from 1738. They formed separate West African communities. They governed themselves, practised their own religion, and incorporated newcomers from West Africa. Montana describes their social organization. Benjamin Claude Brower writes on the 'servile' peoples of the Algerian Sahara between 1850 and 1900 under French rule. The French, fearful of arousing hostility, downplayed slavery in order not to arouse the opposition of slave owners, or upset existing trade and production. Since only the 'negroes' did manual work, emancipating them would lead to 'the ruin' of the country – an argument accepted by most French authorities. As the sources show, slaves were in fact better off than the unfortunate Haratin sharecroppers, who worked the oases and supplied labour for collective projects.

There follows a chapter on Bellah highwaymen in colonial northern Mali by Bruce Hall. Raiding and banditry were entrenched in the area and to some extent continue today. Banditry was originally practised by slaves for the benefit of their Arab and Tuareg elite owners, but shifted during colonial rule when the masters became the victims. By the 1950s the Bellah were demanding freedom and the issue had become one of race rather than slavery.

The two final chapters concern Muslims in the Caribbean. Islam was brought to the islands and to South America by slaves. They were only a small minority of the victims of the trans-Atlantic trade and few were literate. Surviving documents are mostly in Arabic although some are in African languages written in Arabic script. Much of the information here comes from Christian missionaries, some of whom entered into discussions with slaves about the rival merits of Islam and Christianity. Some Muslim slaves established free communities. One enterprising Islamic 'priest' bought his freedom, emancipated others as they arrived on a slave ship, and thus established a self-supporting free community.

This book, as with all collections of conference papers with a wide focus, opens many questions on a range of subjects. It is a very welcome addition to slavery studies particularly because it breaks new ground, makes all the use possible of sparse sources and, most importantly, points the way to further research.

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JAY SPAULDING and STEPHANIE BESWICK (eds), *African Systems of Slavery*. Trenton NJ and Asmara: Africa World Press (pb US$29.95 – 978 1 59221 725 0). 2009, 304 pp.

This book contributes some valuable empirical evidence and ideas to the study of African slavery. Yet, overall, it is a disappointment. The editors' introduction fails to acknowledge a good many other studies that have offered in-depth analyses of slavery in African societies. If this material had been considered, it would have nuanced the view that the study of African slavery 'should not be reduced to merely the abused hinterland of a hegemonic Black Atlantic system focused on the Americas' (p. 9). Following the lead of a recent paper by Thomas McCaskie, a critical genealogy of the peculiar problematization of Atlantic slavery produced by a 'tradition of scholarship generated by Afrocentrism and white guilt' (p. 2) would have been timely. But Spaulding and Beswick's introduction attributes to this school of thought a dominance that it has not achieved: 'The present study does not regard Africa as one shore of the Black Atlantic. It hopes to help reclaim Africa for Africans' (p. 2). In this ambitious effort, the editors could have considered Ibrahima Thioub's insight that African scholars and publics contributed to the silencing of the history of African slavery, thereby partly amplifying the distortions created by 'Black Atlantic' perspectives.

The notion of 'African systems of slavery' is used vaguely. Watson's influential *Asian and African Systems of Slavery*, which, for better or worse, applied the notion of 'system' consistently, is not mentioned. Why focus on 'systems', which suggests that the cases discussed in the volume are seen as components of integrated wholes, when the editors conclude that 'no simple formula suffices to explain the numerous and diverse forms of African servitude' (p. 9)? If this is a political stance ('The continent asks for consideration in its own right and on its own terms . . .', p. 9), it risks repeating the mistakes of the Afrocentric paradigms it criticizes. We are told that in African systems of slavery 'it is not always self-evident who should be considered a slave in the Western sense' (p. 3). Presumably 'slavery in the Western sense' is meant to correspond to the model of enslavement that dominated the trans-Atlantic trade, to which the introduction ascribes a generality that falls short of explaining forms of slavery as diverse as those found