

was formative for the political narratives. More important even was the state and empire formation in the Maghrib (which interacted with the Andalusí tradition) such as the Almoravid and Almohad empires (the latter famously introduced written Berber into government administration and proselytization). These are taken up in Part II, Genealogy and Homeland (Ch. 3: The Berber People and Ch. 4: The Maghrib and the Land of the Berbers), and includes the discussion on Ibn Khaldun. Part III, Modern Medieval Berbers (Ch. 5: Modern Origins and Ch. 6: Beacons, Guides, and Marked Paths) takes up the colonial production of Maghribi history, in which Berbers become recast as indigenous and in which Ibn Khaldūn's work becomes a central text of reference. The Conclusion argues for the value of understanding the historical evolution of the category or identity and its post-colonial aftermath and importance in contemporary political movements. "The invention of the Berbers is and has always been historical," Rouighi concludes.

This is a deeply historiographical book and its greatest contribution is providing a map of the development of a historiographical subject or category ("The Berbers") across historiographical, geographical, and legal text (among others). The organizing argument of a book that flows essayistically can be a bit distracting. That the people of the Maghrib had no sense of unified culture, history, and identity before the Arab conquests and that a sense of that history and identity evolved historically seems incontrovertible to me, and I would not imagine that historically-minded readers would disagree. At the same time, the discussion brings up a whole number of questions on indigeneity and national and regional cultures that, in one way or another, are shared by other cultures with similar patterns of evolution and paradoxes of identification. As the author points out, the process is paralleled in the creation of national European cultures out of disparate and diverse premodern and medieval ones. Such parallels and the broader theoretical questions they imply and elicit could have been given more attention. But generating questions is hardly a criticism for a book of such ambitious scope. Rouighi has given us a framework to further investigate a rich topic, and the production, including the use of subtitles identifying sections and the inclusion of a helpful index, make the text accessible to non-specialists.

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Hannah Barker, *That Most Precious Merchandise: The Mediterranean Trade in Black Sea Slaves, 1260–1500*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019. 328 pp. ISBN 9780812251548. \$79.95

Hannah Barker's book is a unique contribution to the study of medieval slavery. It combines the study of both Latin and Arabic sources to present the eastern Mediterranean as a space of shared social norms and commercial practices. These norms and practices facilitated the enslavement and export of slaves from the Black Sea region to Italy and the Near East. The study focuses on the Italian trading powers of Genoa and Venice as well as on the Mamluk sultanate, which controlled Egypt and the Levantine

coast. Working with a wide array of sources, the first half of the book presents a “common culture of slavery” in this diverse region. The second half of the book analyzes the regional slave trading system in the context of state involvement and the crusade movement.

The first chapter lays the groundwork for the ensuing argument. It defines slavery in this historic context from a predominantly legal perspective. Barker argues that religious difference was the most important element of the normative framework of slavery in late medieval Mediterranean societies. The chapter also includes a discussion of the Latin and Arabic terminology of slavery, which is an excellent starting point for any student of the corresponding primary sources. The second chapter introduces differences of language and race as secondary justifications for the enslavement of people in the eastern Mediterranean. This likewise includes a discussion of ethnic terminology and renaming practices, which should be immensely helpful for scholars working with slavery-related Arabic primary texts.

After analysing the factors which decided who was and who was not enslaved in this common Mediterranean culture of slavery, Barker moves on to discuss demography and commerce in chapters 3 and 4. She argues that rates of slave ownership, the functions of slaves in society, and market practices developed along similar lines in the societies under investigation. Much of her argument in these chapters is based on Genoese and Venetian archival sources, from which she draws an impressive amount of statistical data presented in several graphs throughout the book. In contrast to the rest of the book, chapter 3 goes beyond the commercial aspects of slavery to discuss the role of slaves in the societies under investigation. It analyzes slave labor and discusses the sexual exploitation of slaves in its legal and cultural context.

The second half of the book addresses the regional slave trading system and the individuals and state actors that acted within it. Chapter 5 focuses on the role of Genoese and Venetian colonies in the Black Sea region, foremost among them Caffa and Tana. Barker sets out the social, political, and economic conditions which influenced both practices of enslavement and the export of slaves from this region to Italian and Mamluk markets. Chapter 6 investigates the individual merchants who participated in the slave trade. Barker argues that Black Sea slaves were a high-value, low-volume commodity traded by non-specialised merchants who were constrained by the regulation of state actors. The theme of state involvement is further pursued in chapter 7, which focuses on the ideological debates surrounding the late medieval crusade movement. Since Mamluk military power relied on a continuous supply of slave recruits from the Black Sea region, Christian proponents of the crusades sought to impose an embargo on the slave trade to Mamluk lands, which was facilitated by Genoese shipping. This embargo policy was rendered ineffective by conflicting commercial and political interests of Christian actors. Barker concludes by emphasizing that slavery lay at the heart of Mediterranean society, politics, and religion.

The book’s paramount contribution to the study of slavery lies in its combination of two disparate bodies of sources. While most historians focus on either the Latin or the Arabic perspective of social and economic phenomena, Barker presents a culture of slavery which spans the eastern Mediterranean. She does this mainly by focusing on the similarities between Genoese, Venetian, and Mamluk societies regarding commercial, legal,

and social aspects of slavery. Unfortunately, this approach suffers from the unequal quality and quantity of sources across the societies under investigation. Crucially, there is no Mamluk equivalent to the Genoese and Venetian archival collections which provide extensive demographic and commercial information. To sustain the Mamluk side of her argument, Barker draws on literary sources and a rather scattered selection of Mamluk contracts of sale. Despite this limitation, Barker succeeds in presenting a cohesive picture from a diverse collection of primary material.

The book's main argument is the existence of a common culture of slavery in the late medieval Mediterranean. While it would certainly be possible to complicate this argument by drawing further evidence from a Greek, Turkic, Berber, or Iberian cultural context, the similarities between the Italian and Arabic-speaking societies under investigation are striking. Barker does not neglect to point out differences, such as the legal status of children born to slave mothers and the use of eunuchs in Mamluk households. Her argument is strongest where Genoese, Venetian, and Mamluk cultural spheres overlap, in the realm of commerce. The shared space of a regional trading system offered many opportunities and incentives for cooperation and imitation. The societies at the receiving end of the slave trade were influenced by similar changes in the quantity and ethnicity of imported slaves as well as by commercial and legal conventions which formed in an intercultural environment. It is more difficult to argue for a common culture of slavery beyond the realm of commerce, however. Barker demonstrates that there was parallel cultural development in late medieval Mediterranean societies, which resulted in shared cultural elements. This constituted a common culture of slavery, though it may have been more pronounced in its commercial dimension than in its social and legal dimensions.

Overall, Hannah Barker's book is an innovative and well-written study of the slave trade and of slavery in the late medieval eastern Mediterranean. It demonstrates a mastery of a wide range of primary sources and extracts an impressive amount of relevant demographic and commercial data from them. While it is for the most part a work of economic history, it follows its sources to social and political history and remains accessible for both specialist and non-specialist readers. ■

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Cord J. Whitaker, *Black Metaphors: How Modern Racism Emerged from Medieval Race-Thinking*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019. 256 pp. ISBN 9780812251586. \$49.95, £41.00.

In Cord Whitaker's magisterial volume *Black Metaphors*, he tackles a question that grips current politics across the world, and most especially in the United States: how, when, and where did racism embed itself so deeply within our social, literary, and theological institutions? Almost every short blurb about the book states that it traces "rhetorical and theological moves" across time. This is certainly true; however, it does so much more than that. Whitaker's book employs the central grammar of blackness (and, conversely,