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—Paul E. Lovejoy, *Canada Research Chair in African Diaspora History, York University*

Even though the history of slavery is a central topic for African, Atlantic world, and world history, most of the sources presenting research in this area are European in origin, forcast light on African perspectives, and on the point of view of enslaved men and women. this group of top Africanist scholars has examined both conventional historical sources (e.g., European travel accounts, colonial documents, court cases, and missionary records) and less explored sources of information (e.g., folklore, oral traditions, songs and proverbs, life histories collected by missionaries and colonial officials, correspondence in Arabic, and consular and admiralty interviews with runaway slave(s). Each source has a short introduction highlighting its significance and orienting the reader. This volume provides students and scholars with a trove of African sources for studying African slavery and the slave trade.

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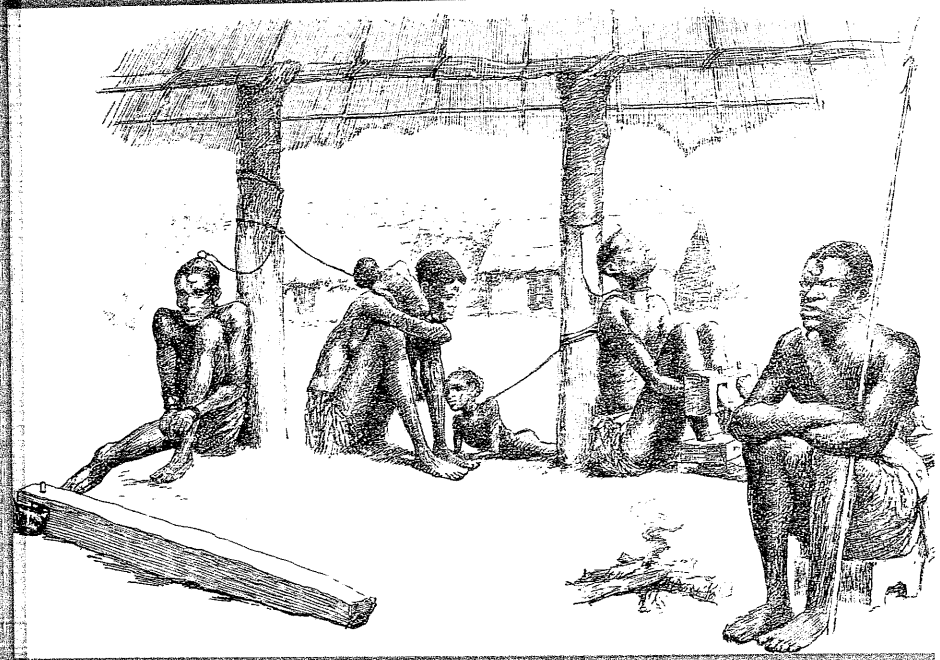

Edited by
Alice Bellagamba • Sandra E. Greene • Martin A. Klein

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AFRICAN VOICES ON SLAVERY AND THE SLAVE TRADE

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BENEDETTA ROSSI

This chapter makes available four testimonies of slave descendants focused on how slaves lived their lives in the second half of the nineteenth century in the Ader region of the Republic of Niger. Memories of slavery today vary across groups and individuals. This is partly because slaves did not have one social status, but many: the testimonies represent the perspectives of groups and individuals whose ancestors were positioned differently in Ader's society. It is also because memory is mediated by present circumstances. While today slavery has disappeared, discrimination on the basis of slave descent persists. The speakers' lives have been marked by slavery as an inherited status. Some did not cut ties with their former masters, and may owe to this the social mobility they were able to achieve. Others feel that although they severed relations with their masters' descendants, economic vulnerability forces them to accept new forms of dependence. Although these testimonies inevitably reflect the concerns of their authors, they provide a valuable complement to the texts of colonial administrators and the narratives of elites. They break the silence of the slave constituency, which has long been characterized as "without history." Their integration with other available records yields a more complete picture of regional history and the experience of enslavement. The four testimonies are preceded by sections introducing the regional context and discussing the methodological considerations that went into their collection and analysis.

TRANSFORMATIONS OF SLAVERY IN ADER

The Ader region lies at the boundary between the southern edge of the Sahara and the northern border of Hausaland. Its society is composed of Hausa and Tuareg groups that, in the second half of the nineteenth century, were integrated into two interethnic hierarchies headed by the warrior elites (*imajeghen*) of the Iwellemmedăn Kel Denneg in Northern Ader and the Kel Gress in Southern Ader.[1] Ader's social hierarchy followed the ranked divisions of Tuareg society, at the bottom of which were liberated slaves and slaves. The former were classified among the free, but carried the indelible mark of enslavement. Slaves were internally diversified and stratified. Tuareg hierarchies encompassed Hausa society, and the Hausa system of status and rank remained relevant to intra-Hausa relations. Free

[1] See F. Nicolas, *Tamesna: Les Ioullemeden de l'Est ou Tuareg Kel Dinnik* (Paris, 1950), 58.

Hausa households also owned slaves. Before 1900, slaves could be acquired in multiple ways. Not all free groups engaged in slave raiding. Religious specialists (Tuareg: *ineslemen*; Hausa: *malamai*; also generally known as *marabouts*) assisted particular warrior elites and were compensated in goods and slaves. As reported in the following quote, the accumulation of slaves at the top of social hierarchies was facilitated by established forms of gift giving to political elites.

> *Abzinawa*[2] youths would kidnap people also to prove that they were ready to get the turban [i.e., ready for transition into adulthood]. A youth may have had animals and slaves, already. He was given weapons and a horse or camel. He and his best friend, to prove that they could wear the turban, had to kidnap animals or people. When they sold them, they got married with the money they earned. Not all *imajeghen* kidnapped and raided. [Some] only bought slaves, or obtained them in several ways. After a war, they would receive them as a share of the booty. Or they got them from rich people in the area. They would call upon rich people they knew, saying that they had a youth who wished to get married, asking them to send something. Their rich friends sent one or two heads of cattle, or whatever else they could. This is how they found the money to arrange marriages. Slaves were not only taken in wars. They were also inherited from rich people. If a rich man died, he left an inheritance: lands, animals, slaves. Before parting his inheritance amongst his descendants, he had to give something to the chiefs of the region. For example, a certain man from a village around here ... when he died, he had more than 100 slaves. He left 60 slaves to the chief (*sarki*) – 30 males, 30 females. He collected his slaves thanks to his business in tobacco and cloth. He was a Bahaushe [sing m. for Hausa], so he did not raid, but had inherited and bought slaves. The Hausa also got Buzu[3] slaves because the Tuareg obliged rich Hausa people to buy slaves from them after raids, threatening to take their belongings if they refused.[4]

Slave labor maintained and transformed the productive property (herds, land) of slave owners and was used in the organization of caravan trade.[5] Some slaves lived attached to their master's family, women taking care of domestic chores and men primarily involved in herding and caravan trade.[6] Others lived in relatively autonomous hamlets scattered in areas controlled by their masters (see testimonies 1, 2, 4). These semiautonomous slave communities were particularly common at the desert's edge, where they functioned as outposts for their masters' operations and as reservoirs of labor and resources.[7] Their

[2] In Hausa, *Abzinawa* (sing. *Baabzine*) refers to people from the Air region (*Abzin*). But in Ader today this term is used broadly to translate the Tamasheq *imajeghen*, indicating the warrior elites of Tuareg society, irrespective of their provenance. In this and most other quotes, *Abzinawa* should be understood as referring to the warrior elites of the Kel Gress and Kel Denneg.

[3] The terms Buzu, Buzaye, or Bugaje refer to Tuareg slaves and slave descendants. It is sometimes applied to all Tuareg with derogatory connotations.

[4] Interview with Alhassan, Keita, September 25, 2005.

[5] See J. Nicolaisen, *Structures politiques et sociales des Touareg de l'Air et de l'Ahaggar* (Niamey, 1962), 102–103; P. Bonte, "Esclavage et relations de dépendance chez les Touareg Kel Gress," in C. Meillassoux (ed.), *L'esclavage en Afrique précoloniale* (Paris, 1975), 145.

[6] Yet, in Ader the sexual division of labor was not stringent for slaves.

[7] P. Lovejoy and S. Baier, "The Desert Side Economy of the Central Sudan," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 8, 4 (1975), 551–581; P. Lovejoy and S. Baier, "The Tuareg of the Central Sudan: Gradations in Servility at the Desert's Edge (Niger and Nigeria)," in I. Kopytoff and S. Miers (eds.), *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison, 1977), 391–411.

settlements were interspersed among villages of manumitted slaves and free Hausa villages. Unlike slaves living with their masters, slaves who lived in separate villages had to provide for their own subsistence. They held usufruct rights on the animals they herded and the lands they farmed.

The function of these slave villages at the desert's edge differs from the better-studied case of slave compounds working on plantations further south.[8] There were no plantations in the arid and rocky surroundings of northern Ader. Slaves here functioned as surplus labor that could be accessed when needed, and they also could be sold or exchanged for cereals or other goods. From the masters' perspective, these communities made possible the accumulation of wealth (herds, farming produce, and slaves themselves) while retaining a nomadic lifestyle. From the slaves' perspectives, they – and the resources they used – were protected from attacks of other warrior groups. Unlike domestic slaves, they were able to lead quasi-autonomous lifestyles. Rarity of interactions with masters resulted in greater freedom to manage one's time, but it also reduced the masters' obligations toward them and exposed them to rougher treatment, including the possibility of sale and forced family separation.

Slave revolts do not appear to have occurred (see testimony 4). Particularly harsh conditions of enslavement led to escape and/or institutionalized ways to change master.[9] Perhaps paradoxically, fear of enslavement by capture strengthened the voluntary acceptance of dependence from benign masters. Constant threat of enslavement did not result in struggles for autonomy, but in increased tolerance toward the security of dependence, ultimately reinforcing slavery as an institution. Even escape was limited, as the desert (or semi-desert) is a hostile environment for fugitives, particularly when moving away from a region controlled by one's masters and into areas controlled by enemies. Risk of recapture was high.[10] Slaves did not necessarily show solidarity toward each other: slave villages competed over access to resources, and loyalty to one's master constituted the main avenue of social mobility.

Social mobility, and eventually emancipation, tended to take different forms for female and male slaves. For females, it occurred primarily through concubinage and/or marriage. A female slave's offspring belonged to his/her mother's master and had free status. The genitor role of the male slave was downplayed culturally, reflecting his incapacity to assume legal fatherhood.[11] A free man wanting to take another person's slave as concubine was obliged to pay her ransom first. If she gave birth to his child, he would have to free her or marry her. Marriage with a female slave did not contradict endogamic principles that prevailed among Tuareg elites. Because the master had full rights over his slaves, this type of marriage reinforced the groom's patrilineage, as the offspring would belong exclusively to his lineage. By limiting the potential redistribution of the surplus extracted from different categories of dependents, endogamy was essential to the retention of privileges in the hands of few elite families.[12]

Male slaves could become free through ransom or manumission. Ransom took different forms, but before abolition it was rare for a slave to be able to accumulate the money necessary to buy back his own or his relatives' freedom. It was more common for free people to ransom members of their family who had been enslaved or buy them back:

> If the *Abzinawa* had taken your son away, and he was sold in some market, you could go to that market and find those who bought him, and try to buy him back. They would accept, because the same could happen to them one day. This is how we would find the child and come back with him.[13]

After colonial and national abolition, many people of slave descent have been choosing to ransom themselves and their dependents from the descendants of their former masters. This practice is particularly common among descendants of slaves of religious groups, ransom being sometimes presented as a religious obligation (see testimony 4). In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Kel Gress emancipated large slave constituencies and turned them into tributary farmers.[14] Retrospectively, it is difficult to discern the relative role played by internal change from the consequences of colonial conquest for the progressive emancipation of slaves.

In their first few years of rule following the occupation of Ader in 1900, French military officers did not oppose slavery and related practices. The first *Commandants de Cercle* commonly returned fugitive or stolen slaves to people whom they saw as rightful owners. In 1905, France abolished the legal status of slavery in its West African territories, but the position of local administrators remained ambivalent. Officially, the representatives of the French Republic condemned slavery. On the other hand, they feared the political instability that, in their view, could result from the sudden achievement of freedom by the part of ex-slaves and captives.[15] The main consequences of colonization for slave status in Ader followed not so much from legal abolition, which was not enforced in practice, but from the colonial repression of former rulers, particularly the Kel Denneg. The Kel Gress surrendered early, eager to resume the trade activities that were at the basis of their wealth and power. The Kel Denneg, on the other hand, resisted until most of them were killed in Tanout in 1917, at the height of the French repression of Tuareg resistance. Automatically, most of their former slaves acquired independence.

Throughout the 1920s, increasing numbers of former slaves started migrating seasonally to Northern Nigeria and earning cash with which they paid taxes back home and

[8] P. Lovejoy, "Plantations in the Economy of the Sokoto Caliphate," *Journal of African History*, 19, 3 (1978), 341–368; M. F. Smith, *Baba of Karo: A Woman of The Muslim Hausa* (New Haven, 1954).

[9] It was dishonorable for a master to mistreat his/her slave, and a mistreated slave could change master by scraping or cutting a small part of the ear of another free man's camel. This is a widely reported custom among different Tuareg groups. See, for example, Nicolaisen, *Structures politiques et sociales*, 101–102. In Hausa society a wronged slave could, apparently, return to the market and find a new owner; I. Hamza, "Slavery and Plantation Society at Dorayi in Kano Emirate," in P. Lovejoy (ed.), *Slavery on the Frontiers of Islam* (Princeton, 2004), 139.

[10] If found, fugitive slaves could be re-enslaved or returned to their masters. According to one testimony, Tuareg chiefs had a habit of returning fugitive slaves to each other: "The Tuareg of the Air and those of the Azawagh had agreed amongst themselves that if they found slaves they would bring them back to original patrons." Interview, group of elders, Seyte, March 9, 2005. The expressions "Tuareg of Air" and "Tuareg of Azawagh" refer, respectively, to the Kel Gress and Kel Denneg.

[11] E. Bernus and S. Bernus, "L'évolution de la condition servile chez les Touaregs saheliens," in C. Meillassoux (ed.), *L'esclavage en Afrique précoloniale* (Paris, 1972), 37.

[12] On the Kel Gress, see Bonte, "Esclavage," 53 and 69.

[13] Interview with anonymous speakers, June 10, 2005.

[14] P. Bonte, "Structure de classe et structures sociales chez les Kel Gress," *Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 21 (1976), 145; B. Rossi, "Tuareg Trajectories of Slavery: Preliminary Reflections on a Changing Field," in A. Fisher and I. Kohl (eds.), *Tuareg Society within a Globalized World: Saharan Life in Transition* (New York, 2010), 89–106.

[15] M. Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule in French West Africa* (Cambridge, 1998), 134.

met the needs of their families. Those who did not migrate could work for a new patron in the local economy, but conditions of labor did not differ substantially from what they had experienced as slaves. They were often paid in kind, and relations with new patrons hindered their freedom to move independently. Forced labor recruitment and military conscription hit servile and low-status groups harshly, as local elites charged with recruitment only mobilized the most vulnerable people. In these circumstances, those who could migrated permanently or seasonally. Departures expanded in years of heightened colonial recruitment and drought. This phenomenon attracted the attention of the French administration, which feared losing taxes and manpower. Eventually in the mid-1930s, central government in Dakar introduced incentives aimed at encouraging migrants to return or remain. But labor migration continued to be practiced in large numbers.[16]

At the *Cercle* level, colonial debates on the "slavery question" hinged on the classification of various forms of dependence. Until well into the 1940s, it was common to distinguish between the slave trade and domestic slavery, classifying the latter as a mild form of dependence that, it was argued, should be tolerated in order to safeguard the social order. The specter of anarchy was raised whenever measures that would facilitate emancipation were discussed. The moral corruption of slave populations, supposedly prone to theft and incapable of self-government, was invoked to defend the exceptional maintenance of the harshest disciplinary measures of the *Code de l'Indigénat* even after their abrogation in most regions of French West Africa. International pressure and enquiries into the conditions of labor and the resilience of slavery forced local administrators to pay constant attention to the evolution of the "slavery problem" in order to avoid scandals. In the late 1940s, following a series of studies that revealed the endurance of domestic slavery and unpaid labor, efforts were made to introduce contracts to regulate local labor relations between former masters and slaves. But the majority of works carried out by the poorest people continued to be remunerated casually and in kind: herders, guardians, occasional manual workers, poor women helping with food preparation and cleaning – all of these categories of workers did not receive a salary or fixed cash payment. This situation did not change substantially after independence. All money came into Ader from the outside, through trade and migrant earnings. People who could not travel far or support themselves through their own means or the help of relatives accepted to work for someone else in exchange for food and protection. For many slave descendants, legal abolition remained a dead letter.

The image of wealthier people feeding poorer villagers in exchange for work looked like a vestige of slavery to activists and researchers unfamiliar with the local economy. They blamed local mores, but overlooked the complex economic and environmental causes accounting for the slow pace of the evolution of a free labor market in Ader. Institutions governed by "modern" employment criteria (the colonial administration first, international development projects later) continued to fabricate ideological justifications for avoiding to pay standard wages to local labor. Economic vulnerability and exploitation still affect a large portion of Ader's population. While these conditions result in the reproduction of social dependence, it would be misleading to interpret them narrowly as vestiges of precolonial slavery.

[16] B. Rossi, "Slavery and Migration: Social and Physical Mobility in Ader (Niger)," in B. Rossi (ed.), *Reconfiguring Slavery: West African Trajectories* (Liverpool, 2009), 182–206.

WITHOUT HISTORY? SOME METHODOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS ON "SLAVE" TESTIMONIES AS SOURCES

I started working in northeastern Ader in 1995. Since then, I conducted a total of about three years of field-based research focused on contemporary social, economic, and political dynamics, before starting to work on oral history in 2005. The testimonies that follow are taken from 170 interviews made between January 2005 and December 2008 by myself, mostly together with my senior research assistant. These were semistructured discussions with one or more (usually no more than five) persons. My inquiries were never focused solely on slavery, but slavery turned out to be a major institution, frequently mentioned also when discussing other subjects. With key informants, I conducted repeated interviews. When possible, I allowed interviewee(s) to take the discussion in any direction they deemed relevant. In the absence of written records, my primary methods for validating information have been triangulation and integration with other types of data (e.g., genealogical information). Oral history testimonies are complex texts that contain mixed information. Their factual accuracy cannot always be established, but attempts to do so rest on accumulation (how many sources concur on a particular version), triangulation (comparison across different perspectives), and contextualization (how far different perspectives reflect their holders' positions in social fields governed by unequal power relations). Another research question consists of inquiring into why certain statements are generally held to be true, or why certain people are seen as "holders of historical truth" more than others. The deconstruction of "truth effects" should be a major concern when working on slave memory.

Slaves, and their descendants, are often considered liars. If they are seen as knowledgeable at all, such knowledge tends to be underrated as "second class." Biased perceptions of the intellectual status of slaves are as common among the subjects of research as they are among researchers. It is a widespread contention that slaves are "without history," or alternatively, that they internalize their masters' views of history, and therefore interpret the past through borrowed memories.[17] Ader is no exception to this. In a comparative article on Hausa and Tuareg conceptions of the past in Ader, Pierre Bonte and Nicole Echard – two of the main students of this region – write: "*les classes sociales dominées sont-elles réellement "sans histoire"? La réponse est clairement affirmative en ce qui concerne les iklan.*"[18]

Struggling with this perspective, I found that many slave descendants had distinctive memories of the past. But "slave memories" also exhibit considerable internal differences. In Ader, slave descendants do not hold a uniform view of their past. Moreover, like anywhere else, there are *different types* of historical discourse, access to which is dependent on social status. This means that certain historical registers and/or tropes are commonly associated with particular status groups. For example, when I started collecting oral testimonies, I noticed that some elders stated at the outset that they could only speak of events that went back to their grandfathers, and they did not know anything about earlier periods. I realized that these statements were made primarily by slave descendants. They could be

[17] For examples on African contexts, see M. Klein, "Studying the History of Those Who Would Rather Forget," *History in Africa*, 16 (1989), 211–212; M. De Bruijn and L. Pelckmans, "Facing Dilemmas: Former Fulbe Slaves in Modern Mali," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 39, 1 (2005), 72.

[18] P. Bonte and N. Echard, "Histoire et histoires. Conception du passé chez les Hausa et les Twareg Kel Gress de l'Ader (République du Niger)," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, 61–62, XVI (1976), 269.

interpreted quite literally as recognitions that their memories were truncated at a certain time, possibly corresponding to the moment when their forebears had been enslaved or forcibly separated from their (slave) parents. A kidnapped child often had no chance to learn the historical traditions of his/her society of origin, and thus would have been unable to transmit this information to his descendants.

In spite of their initial *recusatio*, the accounts of slave descendants did not differ substantially from those of elders of free descent. My oral history work suggests that memory retains some accuracy[19] over three generations: the interviewee's, his/her parents, and his/her grandparents. Informants who had lived with their parents or grandparents could remember details about the life of their relatives, which they themselves had witnessed or heard about directly from their elders. This finding set a chronological limit to my inquiries approximately at the end of the nineteenth century. Up to the end of the nineteenth century, memories differed across groups. Instead, testimonies on earlier periods fused into a shared repertoire of stereotyped traditions about ancient conquerors (e.g., Askia Mohamed, Sarkin Darei, the Kanta of Kebbi, Agabba) and distant origins (e.g., from Mecca, or from Instambul).[20] People of slave descent often knew the feats of ancient heroes believed to have ruled parts of Ader in "a very distant past," but this information is taught at school, broadcasted in vernacular languages on the radio, and circulated in the form of a popular genre of Hausa songs. It constitutes a regional folk-history that cuts across age and status, and positions Ader in national history and culture. This type of regional historical tradition unifies rather than divides Ader inhabitants of free and slave descent by creating a sense of shared regional identity.

Other types of historical discourse have the opposite function of establishing social distinctions between stratified social constituencies. Hence, a different historical register is used to convey the pedigree of particular elite families. I was sometimes explicitly directed to individual elite elders when I inquired into what is seen as "their" *tarihi*.[21] On some occasions, former dependents would be able to recite the *tarihi* of their masters, but their version usually differed from versions provided by the masters themselves.[22] People of liberated-slave status would sometimes appropriate their ex-masters' past and mold their

[19] By this I mean factual accuracy in the recollection of particular events, the occurrence of which could be confirmed through comparison with post-1900 colonial archives (especially *Rapports de Tournée* and the *Journal du Cercle*, where daily happenings at the *Cercle* level were recorded) and through extensive triangulation of interviews within a sample of roughly forty villages.

[20] In Ader, there is a relatively stable set of traditions of foreign origins that connect certain high-status groups to the history of Agadez, Istamboul, Ghat, Songhay, Mecca, and others. These traditions are presented and discussed in the work of Djibo Hamani and Nicole Echard; see D. Hamani, *Contribution à l'étude de l'histoire des états Hausa: l'Adar précolonial, République du Niger* (Niamey, 1975); N. Echard, *L'Expérience du passé. Histoire de la société paysanne Hausa de l'Ader.* Etudes Nigériennes no. 36 (Paris, 1975a); N. Echard, *Répertoire historique des communautés rurales de la région de Tawa, République du Niger* (Niamey, 1975b).

[21] In the Hausa of Ader, the word *tarihi* has two meanings. It refers to "history" in a generic sense, and to the traditions of origin of particular groups. While this latter sense tends to imply written Arabic form, if one asks elders of these groups for "their *tarihi*," they will recite orally a particular story that is broadly known in the region as the particular heritage of their lineage.

[22] Further triangulation and, when possible, confrontation with archival material suggested that slave memory of their masters' *tarihi* was almost invariably inaccurate about genealogical detail and succession to chiefly positions. On the other hand, slave testimonies were often more reliable on – for example, the nature of the interaction between their masters' group and French officials, whereas the masters' descendants tended to aggrandize the behavior of their forebears.

own history on their masters' *tarihi*, claiming that they had never been enslaved. These accounts are characterized by a brusque transition between relatively recent memories and a highly stereotyped *tarihi*. Claims to exclusive ownership of a *tarihi* or to the *tarihi* of higher-status groups constitute strategies in contemporary power struggles. They tell us less about the past than about the nature of today's power relations.

The notion that slaves are "without history" has no analytical coherence unless it is appropriately qualified in relation to different *types of knowledge* of the past. In Ader, and possibly elsewhere, symbolic capital is derived from possession of historical knowledge. Different narrative registers and types of discourses of the past have different potentials to accrue prestige to groups or individuals perceived as the rightful deployers of particular historical genres. This is altogether a different question from a historian's concern with how memory can be used to achieve a fuller insight into a past that, today, is primarily accessible through the colonial perspective alone. If we are concerned with recording a variety of experiences, the recollections of people of slave and free descent have equal importance, and even truncated memories constitute evidence of loss through violence that "bears witness to desubjectification."[23] But the majority of slave descendants today are often three generations (or more) removed from their ancestors' enslavement, and their recollections are not shallower than those of people of free descent. Indeed, those slave descendants who cannot attempt to pass as free lack a *tarihi* and the higher social status that goes with possessing one. But the analytical status of the *tarihi* of certain elite groups, like that of regional folk-histories, is questionable. In Ader, it is difficult to check the accuracy of these traditions. From a researcher's perspective, lacking a *tarihi* cannot be equated to "lacking history." The idea that slaves are "without history" belongs to the ideological denigration of slave status and exposes some historians' uncritical acceptance of the social construction of slave inferiority.

CONCLUSION

The four testimonies presented in this chapter have been collected from elderly descendants of slaves who lived in separate settlements characterized by homogenous "slave" status and attached to particular masters' families or individuals. This group has a collective history *as slaves*. Younger people across status respect them for their knowledge. However, this respect accrues to them as individuals, and contrasts with the generalized stigma placed on slave descent in Ader society. This stigma accounts for the fact that, generally, slave descendants do not wish to reveal their history. They are, in Martin Klein's words, "those who would rather forget."[24] In some West African societies, remembering slavery evokes a sense of shame for victims of past abuses. Slave intellectual production exists in a hegemonic context that devalues it. This devaluation results from the naturalization of hierarchy by those in power, who justify enslavement by turning it into a natural, and therefore indelible, flaw in the moral constitution of the slave person.[25] A common trait of these contexts is that they put a premium on silence and passing as a strategy of status mobility. Many slave descendants would rather avoid discrimination by attempting to pass

[23] G. Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz. The Witness and the Archive* (New York, 2002), 151.

[24] Klein, "Studying the History."

[25] R. Botte and J. Schmitz, "Paradoxes Identitaires," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, 34, 133–135 (1994), 9, 11.

as non-slave than by mobilizing politically. While this is not generally true of all slave societies, it applies to Ader and to other West African examples, where the ideology of hierarchy that underpinned social relations remained meaningful while the most brutal aspects of slavery vanished.

In recognition of the interviewees' efforts to bury a stigmatizing past, I have anonymized information that could connect the following testimonies to particular persons or groups. If integrated with other sources, these accounts can help us reconstruct the history of slavery in Ader. They reveal the perspectives of slave descendants, whose forebears' historical experience has been silenced because slave status marginalized them as producers of knowledge. In the first part of this introduction, I relied on these and similar sources for advancing a particular interpretation of Ader's past. Yet, these perspectives are positioned,[26] not in the sense that they give access to a supposedly unified "slave past," but that the present condition of speakers as well as the circumstances of the interview influence the narrative's content. The first testimony joins the accounts of a descendant of masters with that of a descendant of his father's slaves. The elderly slave descendant is also a village chief. His status is complex, for he partly owes his current authority to his past dependence, as it is his former master who facilitated his appointment as chief. The second testimony is by a Tuareg elder of slave descent who owes his prestige to his own achievements and recognized wisdom. Many people who know him ignore that he is the half-brother of a Hausa elder of free status. Kinship ties cutting across the slave-free divide raise questions on the conceptual compartmentalization between "slave" and "free" memories. The elder who gave me the third testimony, whose father had been a slave of an important Tuareg chief, derives a sense of pride from his past tie to the powerful warriors that other testimonies portray as cruel slavers. Finally, the last testimony conveys the contrasting experiences of two generations of slave descendants. Having started his life a slave, the father was able to ransom himself, travel independently, and make autonomous experiences (as a forced laborer and a seasonal migrant doing the humblest types of works). The son expresses a sense of powerlessness: in spite of his many achievements, his family is still too vulnerable to deny ongoing relations with former masters. Together, these four testimonies show that it is equally misleading to think that "slaves lack history"; that all slave descendants share a common memory of the past; or indeed that descendants of slaves and descendants of freeborn are separated by a sharp dividing line.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How do Ader slave descendants describe their relationship with former masters? Do they emphasize conflict or consensus?
2. The first testimony contains the statements of a descendant of slaves and a descendant of masters. Do their representations of the past differ? If so, why?
3. What criteria does the second testimony use to describe different types of slaves? Which type of slaves does the speaker descend from? How, in your opinion, does he relate to other descendants of slaves and freeborn today?
4. How does the third testimony characterize the Tuareg chiefs (*imajeghen*) of the past?

[26] D. Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies*, 14, 3 (1988), 575–599.

5. The fourth testimony contains the statements of two generations of slave descendants. Do father and son represent the past differently? Do you think their attitude toward the present also differs?
6. Why did Rossi choose to anonymize the testimonies? Do you agree with her choice? Why?

THE UNBROKEN TIE: CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN DEPENDENT RELATIONS (DESCENDANT OF SLAVES AND *INESLEMEN* MASTERS, APRIL 11, 2005)

Different groups of slave descendants are more or less open about their slave origins. The least secretive are the ones living in close proximity to former masters, because such proximity is a constant reminder of their status. In a region where all mention of slavery is taboo, the explicitness of these situations sheds light on the conditions of continued dependence. These conditions do not necessarily involve a denial of slave historical memory. An elderly dependent descended from the slaves of a particular family may assist his younger patron in recollecting the past. This knowledge is both a source of respect for the elder and, at the same time, a service that he finds hard to refuse. On one occasion, I had arranged a meeting with a descendant of slave owners to learn about the history of his family. I did not expect to discuss slavery. While I had not interviewed him formally before, I knew him and his family well, as I was a close friend of some of his relatives. Like other high-status Tuareg, he lived in a large compound at some distance from the closest village nearby. When I reached him, he informed me that he had invited the village chief to join us, because of the chief's old age (the chief was in his late seventies, while my host was in his late forties). The elder had been a slave of his family and had always lived next to them. The elder, my host said, might have helped us in our discussions, on aspects of the past that he ignored. When the elder reached us, the younger man introduced him to me as "village chief" (*hakimi*) and stated that, because of his old age, the chief's knowledge of the past was greater than his own. He then explained the relation between them, and how slavery functioned in the past. At the meeting, they both spoke.

Younger host:

When [my family] came to Ader from the north, they had some slaves with them, maybe ten men and ten women, not many. They mostly bought the rest of the slaves at markets, and slowly these slaves formed the villages around them. As today one can buy cows at a market, then one could buy slaves. My ancestors would also do religious work for the *imajeghen*, who gave them slaves in return.

Sometimes, masters and slaves lived in the same village. My ancestors were not nomads, they lived together with the slaves. The slaves would do herding, would pound cereals, and do a little farming for them.

The [*imajeghen*] would not touch them, their slaves, or their animals, for they were their *marabouts*. Even if one of their slaves was captured in war and told the [*imajeghen*] that he was [their slave], they would not touch him.

Because slaves were very numerous, they could not all be used as servants. Some left and formed their communities. The nobles were few. They married some of their female slaves, and that's how they grew, but at the same time they 'mixed'. Our social group would have died out if it did not marry female slaves. Now there are no more slaves, they are all free.

Elder:

When slaves went to live independently they paid a *zakat*, the 10% of the farming produce. Those who lived attached to their masters did not pay anything. It was like this: if one lives on his master's farm, he does not owe a zakat. But if he does not live with his master (*ubangiji*), he has his own things. For this to happen, he must part from the master, form his own farm (*gandu*), have his own animals, if what he has is enough to pay the zakat, he must put aside the sum requested for the zakat.

If a slave dies, all his property goes to his master. If he marries, the master pays his bridewealth. If there is a slave village and the master does not live in the village, the relation remains. Even if he is not there, he keeps an eye on what is going on. If his slaves need something, the master will give them, and vice-versa.

The discussion moved on to the relations between the villages that existed before the arrival of the French. My host said that the chief would be much better informed than he on this, as he was a lot older, and he left me alone with the elderly chief for a while. In this time, the elder distinguished between more recent villages and older 'mother villages'. This discussion was inseparable from an assessment of the relative status of villages founded by slave or free people, and mixed villages. He then mentioned two chiefs who, according to him, had been important at the beginning of colonialism. One was the chief of the group of the former masters, whom the French found at their arrival. Later, there was Abdo, the first man of slave status to have acquired the administrative role of village chief (in a nearby village). At this point we heard our host who was coming back, and the elder went on:

At the arrival of the French, the [masters] were chiefs everywhere in this area, there was no other chief but them in this land.

The discussion continued without further reference to slavery. I happened to interview descendants of slaves and masters (together) twice. On both occasions, the man of the masters' class spoke primarily about his family's origins, while the elderly slave descendant elucidated local history in early colonial times. "Slave memory" was respected and seen as particularly accurate for factual circumstances. In addition to the information they convey, these encounters attest to complex social dynamics. Today the aforementioned elder is a village chief. This position gives him authority in a village inhabited mainly by other slave descendants. It also gives him a role of responsibility in the local administration. Former masters are still attached to a past code of honor, which makes them scorn the lifestyle of villagers and the bureaucratic nature of contemporary power. They choose to keep status and relinquish a power that would constrain their freedom to dispose of their time as they please. Today, however, they cannot circumvent local administration entirely, and having a former dependent as village chief is a convenient arrangement. Thanks to the patronage of the descendants of the old masters class, the former slave is now a village chief. He acquired authority by embracing, rather than denying, dependence. Both parties straddle a line between past status and modern power, between hierarchy and citizenship. The ambivalence of this situation is apparent in the conversation. In contrast with the following texts, the language of obligation here is substituted by a language of accommodation and cooperation. For instance, there is no mention of ransom, which would suggest willingness to break the tie of dependence; and the elder refers to masters by the respectful term "ubangiji," meaning "master" or "owner" and an epithet of Allah. However, while the

host is away, Abdo is put at the same level as the chief of the former masters' family. Abdo, one of the first slaves to be recognized as village chief, is often quoted in the testimonies of slave descendants. The salience of Abdo's role in the imagination of slave descendants contrasts with his absence from colonial archives and the historical narratives of elites.

THE PERMEABLE BOUNDARY BETWEEN SLAVERY AND FREEDOM (DESCENDANT OF SLAVES OF *IMAJEGHEN*, OCTOBER 29, 2005)

The following testimony is from an elder of slave descent of unusual lucidity (hereafter Anafaran), whose intellectual qualities owed him region-wide reputation and respect. His first language is Tamasheq, but he can speak Hausa and Arabic, and apparently read the Quran. The way in which I was introduced to him vividly illustrates the fluidity of social relations in practice, as opposed to an ideology of hierarchy that portrays social strata as bounded and impermeable. I used to visit an elder who was one of my closest acquaintances in a village that I shall call Akaran. With him, I discussed the history of particular Hausa groups settled in Ader. One day, I asked him if he knew any elder as experienced as him in a nearby area that I intended to visit. Without hesitation, he recommended Anafaran in a village that I call Wallayan. I discovered later that these two elders were half-brothers, from different fathers and the same (slave) mother who married her second (Hausa, free) husband after parting from her first (Tuareg, slave) husband. Her two sons grew up with different statuses: one was a free man who belonged to one of the Hausa subgroups that until recently practiced traditional animist religion; the other, whose father had been a slave, grew up a slave descendant. The two elderly half-brothers' histories were so closely intertwined as to make the notion of a "slave history" untenable. Having said this, Anafaran's status gave him access to detailed information on slaves' past living conditions, rights, and obligations toward the masters. The testimony below contains some valuable details, most of which were confirmed by other sources.

Before the arrival of the White we lived in Akaran. I do not know where we came from before then. In Akaran we lived in three neighborhoods. In those times, in Akaran there were also two free Hausa groups. The chief of one of these groups was like a village chief (*hakimi*) and a representative at the same time, he was responsible for collecting the bags of cereals that were given as tribute to the *Abzinawa* in a number of villages. We worked for these Hausa, even though we were the slaves of certain Kel Denneg [...]. There were several Tuareg chiefs, but the most powerful of all was Mahaman Tambari. [...] When the *imajeghen* went to Akaran, they stayed at the house of the Hausa chief. Some slaves followed the *imajeghen*, who moved around all the time. But we stayed, we did not follow them.

Then, we moved to Wallayan, and went to Akaran as seasonal migrants. The *imajeghen* never lived in Wallayan. We were almost independent from them, we saw them rarely. We went to Akaran as seasonal migrants, and the *imajeghen* always knew where we were, but we did not have to ask them for permission to go. When we were in Akaran, we had our families and animals with us. Someone may have asked us to keep their animals, but herding other people's livestock was not our main activity there. The *imajeghen*'s animals were kept by the slaves who followed them around, not by us. The *imajeghen* had two types of slaves. Those who followed them around, and those who lived in villages. The latter were more independent, but were also poorer and had less to eat, they were more vulnerable. Those who

were with their masters [*bayun murfu*] had no freedom whatsoever, but were always taken in charge. We were the 'far ones'. This group does not have a generic name, slaves in this group are called their tribes' names, if they have one. Slaves in this group were in charge of themselves. They ate what their fields produced, and bought their clothes by selling their own animals, when they had to. They had few rights and obligations toward the *imajeghen*.

The condition of the '*bayun murfu*' was the following: their children did not inherit. They always lived attached to their masters. They married mostly with other slaves of their masters. When they married outside the group of their master's slaves, the bride's master was contacted, by her father if he was there. Then the bride's master would inform the master of the husband that one of his male slaves wanted to marry one of his female slaves. Then, they would agree on the arrangements. The master of the groom had to pay the bridewealth for his slave's future wife. The bridewealth went to the master, not the father. The husband, who was a slave, would spend the night at the camp of his wife's master, with his wife, and the day in the camp of his own master. But when the marriage was between two slaves of one master, usually there was no bridewealth involved. When bridewealth was paid, the amount was undetermined. When distant slaves wanted to get married, the *tambari* of the groom only had to give him his authorization, but would not contribute to the bridewealth. [...]

Our parents were the first generation to go on long distance migration [*bida*]. They started going to Agadez, Kaduna, Jos, Maradi ... they went on foot. Before our parents, we did not migrate, but we accompanied the animals toward In Gall at the beginning of the rains.

Our parents did not buy the land they cultivated. It was the land of their *imajeghen*, they could cultivate it without problem. The *imajeghen* did not want the land, but they wanted a part of the harvest. This part was not fixed. After the harvest they would come to our parents' village, and our parents gave them what they could. They did not give directly to the *imajeghen*. The Kel Denneg would send a blacksmith to collect part of the harvest from them. Now we do not give anything to the *imajeghen*. Since the White chased them away, we stopped giving. But when the White arrived we started giving to the *chef du canton*. The taxes paid to the *chef du canton* are more than what we used to give to the *imajeghen*. The *imajeghen* used to send a representative who was not tough, and took little. But the representatives of the *Chefs du Canton* were a lot firmer.

[...]

Not all slaves were treated in the same way and had the same status. The slaves captured in war, they had to pay ransom [*fansa*]. But the greatest part of the slaves were the so called 'slaves of famine' [or 'slaves of hunger', Hausa: *bayun yunwa*], people who put themselves under the protection of someone powerful after famines, because of need. The *imajeghen* did not take ransom from the 'slaves of famine', because they had not been captured in war, they were not domestic slaves [*bayun murfu*], and they had not been bought at the market. They were slaves of famine [*bayun yunwa*]. Ransom is only required from slaves captured in war and bought. [...] The *jajaye* had 'slaves of famine' [*bayun yunwa*], but they told their slaves that if they could they should ransom themselves, and they have a habit of taking ransom from them. [Anafaran recites words in Arabic, perhaps a Quranic surah, then adds:] In taking them in charge at the time of famine, the *jajaye* did something that deserves Allah's reward. But in asking them to pay ransom, they do something against Allah's will.[27]

[27] It is difficult to convey the strength of this authoritative judgment. What is implied by this statement and the way in which it was delivered is that it is only God's law that counts for Anafaran, and his age and experience put him above human hierarchies.

THE AMBIGUITY OF MEMORIES OF DEPENDENCE (DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES OF *IMAJEGHEN*, OCTOBER 4, 2005)

I traveled far into northern Ader to collect this testimony from a very old and sick man whom I shall call Imboukan, who lived in a small village that could not be reached by car. I had learned about this man from an acquaintance who originally came from a nearby village and worked as intermediary *(dillali)* in cattle markets. I only interviewed Imboukan once, under exceptional conditions. Both Imboukan and I could understand Hausa, but our social distance was replicated in the interview setting through the mediating role of my senior assistant and Imboukan's classificatory "grandson." I asked questions in French to my assistant, who translated them into Hausa to the younger man, who in turn translated them in Tamasheq to the elder. These "steps" gave Imboukan and myself time to reflect on what we would say and "study" one another. While these circumstances may appear extreme and therefore not likely to yield valuable results, our efforts to trace and reach Imboukan attested to our respect for his experience and encouraged him to collaborate with us. In what follows, I only reproduce those sections of the interview that concern slavery. Imboukan descended from slaves who lived close to some of the most famous Kel Denneg chiefs. His testimony conveys admiration for his former masters rather than resentment. Imboukan knows that we looked for him because of his proximity to some of the most powerful *imajeghen* of Ader, and he exhibits the pride characteristic of a servus caesaris.

I must be 98 years old. [...] I always lived here. Until the arrival of the White, this was the camp of the *imajeghen*. It is here that Al Fourer lived. My parents told me that these chiefs all used to come here, before they moved to their current residence. They were here with their slaves. They did not do anything, and the slaves did everything for them, except farming. The *imajeghen* had absolute power over the entire area. They had no representatives. They exacted no tributes. They took what they needed, at any time. You understand? They did not take anything in person. They sent their slaves to take bags of millet. Only the sight of one of their slaves gave fear to the villagers. As soon as a *baabzine* entered a village, the villagers would rush to find what they had of most valuable to give him. They feared them. The *imajeghen* didn't do anything, slaves did everything for them, and they just sat. The White abolished slavery, and it was particularly when Kountche came into power that everybody was equal, there was no more question of slavery. The Buzaye fear two things, after God: the *imajeghen* and the White.

The *imajeghen* stayed in tents. When they moved around, they would get off their camels, and people would build tents for them. They stayed as long as they wanted and were fed and served. [...] Slaves were sold in markets like animals. They could also be sold at home: someone could come to the place of a *baabzine* and ask him to buy slaves, and he would sell them. Everybody except a slave could buy slaves. I do not know the price. But the *imajeghen* were sometimes more pressed to sell quickly and leave the market than to bargain over the price. They obtained slaves for nothing, so the price was not stable, it varied a lot, it is impossible to quantify.

The *imajeghen* had groups of religious specialists always with them, who did religious work for them, gave them the authorization to make attacks on the basis of their religious knowledge, and received slaves in exchange.

[...]

The French had sent Amajalla to summon the *imajeghen*. Amajalla was a Black working for the White as interpreter and soldier. He was an ex slave of the Kel Denneg. Amajalla was killed in Fachi, close to Chimborien. The killing of Amajalla took place before the killing of Afadandan.

Amajalla was a soldier in the colonial army *(goumier)* who was killed in 1917 by *imajeghen* related to Al Fourer (or Elkhurer), a dissident chief, when Amajalla brought his former master a convocation from the District Officer. This event is mentioned in colonial archives, but there is no reference to Amajalla's slave status, which gives a different meaning to this episode. Amajalla was killed not just to insult the French, who in the eyes of the former Kel Denneg chiefs were illegitimate occupants; but also to punish him for having had the audacity, as a (former) slave, to bring an order to his masters. It is also noteworthy that the speaker mentions the killing of Amajalla alongside the killing of Afadandan, who was the Chef du Canton, and therefore the most important customary authority recognized by the colonial administration. As in the case of Abdo (testimony 1), the testimonies of slave descendants aggrandize the roles of slave historical figures, otherwise marginalized in colonial archives.

THE PRIDE AND FRUSTRATIONS OF FREEDOM: NEGOTIATING SLAVE DESCENT ACROSS GENERATIONS (DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES OF *INESLEMEN*, MARCH 3, MAY 4, OCTOBER 28, 2005)

I collected this long testimony from an elder (hereafter Mousa) and his son (hereafter Mohamed), both of whom I have known since my first trip to Ader in 1995. I worked in this village many times, often in close association with Mohamed and his wives. The friendship that ties me to the speakers explains the frankness of some statements, which openly describe the stigma of inherited slave status and resentment for past enslavement. This testimony (which includes passages from three separate interviews) exposes some particularly humiliating aspects of slave life: the denial of the slave family, the derogatory names given to slave children, the ongoing psychological pressure to ransom oneself and one's wife, the shame attached to slave descent, and the frustration of having to continue honoring relations with former masters because of economic vulnerability. These interviews were the first occasion when I asked Mousa if he could talk to me about how slavery functioned in the past. Our friendship made it a sensitive topic. They knew I was aware of their status, as Mohamed had been one of the few local persons to self-identify as a "Buzu" when talking to me, in a context that left no doubts that he implied slave descent. But we had not discussed slavery before. At the meetings, they gave me a vivid picture of their historical experience. Toward the end of the testimony, Mousa returns to the topics he most enjoys talking about: his work in colonial (forced labor) projects and his migrations. These memories convey the sense of pride that Mousa derives from his experiences away from slavery, when he used his ingenuity to learn new skills after the tie to his master had been formally severed. But the sense of accomplishment that concludes Mousa's speech contrasts with Mohamed's frustration in the face of continued, if muted, dependence and poverty.

Father:

In the past, we only ate milk and meat. We also collected wild herbs and grains. We ate what animals like monkeys eat on the trees. We did not know agriculture, and did not eat

cereals. In the rainy season, we stayed here. After the rains, we left with the animals, then we returned back here. This village was the camp from which people left and to which they returned. If someone died in transhumance, his corpse would be brought here on a camel, he would be buried here. In those times, there were few other villages around here. Even Tahoua was a village of a few straw huts and only *buzaye* lived there.

We lived with the masters, who weren't many, as their slaves. The masters didn't do anything, and we did everything for them, we kept the animals and gathered wild plants.

The *Abzinawa* and the [*malamai*] were together, they formed a united front. The *Abzinawa* would tell the [*malamai*] what they intended to do, and the *malamai* would pray for them and recite powerful verses. For example, if the Tuareg went to a foreign region, the *malamai* would arrange for them not to be seen, to be invisible. They could make special prayers and foretell the future.

We never paid a *zakat*, partly because there were no cereals, but primarily because we did not own anything, we could not give anything because we had no ownership over anything at all. We could not even marry. After the arrival of the French, if we wanted to become independent we could try to pay a sum to the master, and the master would have to free us. Money was rare, back then, so one would give animals. But before the French, ransom was not possible because we had nothing, we could not earn anything either. There were no marriages between the [masters] and us. But if the [masters] liked a woman, they could just take her, and her children would be free and of the masters' status. A freeborn woman could not marry a slave man.

Before the arrival of the French no one migrated. Life was different, and a slave had no independence. A slave was like one of the animals of his master. He could not move without his master's agreement. It was like this: every master family had a main camp. Next to this camp, all his people (relatives and slaves) were buried. Even if they died far away, their corpse would be transported back on a camel and buried here. It was the same place and the same ritual for masters and slaves. There were two main migratory circuits. Before leaving, the *Abzinawa* would beat the drum in different camps, as a sign of departure. The rhythm would be different from that of a war. At the beginning of the rains, masters and slaves went northwards, toward the Azawagh. Then they started returning southwards, and in the dry season they went toward the valleys [...], but they never went beyond Madaoua at the border of Hausaland. At any time, there were different groups in circulation, and some people (elders, children, and few youths who were tired of traveling around) who stayed in the main camp. At any time, some people could return, stay a few days, go back... But, before the arrival of the French, a slave could not move around – anyway, why would he move around? There were no markets, no need for money. People had animals, drank milk, did transhumance. Clothes and necessities were mostly provided by masters.

Slaves would not marry between them. The master would tell them to take this one or that one and that's it. A slave could disagree and eventually get with someone else.

Son: You see those heads of cattle on that field? A couple gets together and breeds, then they sort of hang together – that's how it was.

Father: This happened between the slaves of one master. They did not see the slaves of other masters often. Sometimes a slave woman would be pregnant, the master would give her to a male slave, just to find a father for the kid. Children born from slaves did not belong to their father. There may or may not be a naming ceremony, depending on the master's will. Anyway, it is masters who named slave children. Some named them real names, but most of them gave them names which were very different from their own. They named them after

plants or animals, or gave them funny Tamasheq names. Or the name of the day when he was born. Slaves would be called names like these:[28]

Akkozkoz: [imitating the cry of roosters]
Eggur: castrated animal
Aggaruf: small plant with thorns
Amajalla: can't be bothered, he is useless
Amatteya: the one who does not die
Anafaran: the chosen one
Imboran: good farmer

As surname they used the name of a maternal uncle, because the father was uncertain, marriages were promiscuous. A master could dispose of the children of his female slaves, and their [slave] father had no rights upon them. Slave couples got together almost secretly, without testimonies or formalities. It is after the arrival of the French, that some slaves started taking the courage to tell their masters that they would like to marry a certain woman. The master could agree or not. If he agreed, the master could help to arrange the marriage and find something as bridewealth. Because they were working for the master but were not paid, they expected the master to cover their needs. But if the master did not help, the slave could migrate to find some money to pay for his bridewealth. After the arrival of the White, he could leave without his master's authorization. That's because masters would be afraid to forbid their slaves to travel.

[I ask if slaves ever revolted]. In any case, I never heard that slaves revolted in this region. The *Abzinawa* were not many, but they were a lot stronger then us in war. Their weapons were superior, and Allah guided their blows – they never missed, they killed, they were strong and protected. When the *Abzinawa* went on a war, sometimes their dependents, slaves and freed slaves, fought next to them. [...]

Different types of slaves were treated differently. [...] The masters were a lot kinder with the slaves who were always with them, they treated them like relatives and looked after them. Those who lived detached got almost nothing, while at the same time they did not gain much more freedom. Not all the slaves who used to be close to their masters ransomed themselves. Some remained with their masters, as they gained protection and food and it was easier than being on their own. If they were well treated, they could have chosen to remain attached to their masters. An old master is obliged to feed his slaves. Even I, after my mother and father, the first person I prefer staying with is my master.

[I ask 'why?' He replies]: food.

I ransomed myself. I gave two oxen, and received a paper as guarantee. My son ransomed his second wife when he married her, because otherwise her children would belong to her master. I never heard that a master turned down ransom. When the development project came and people from this village got food for work to work on the worksites, many people, men and women, saved money so that they could ransom themselves. Today, if a male slave marries a free woman, the kids are free, only the father is slave. If a man marries a slave woman, her kids belong to her master, unless her husband ransoms her first. This is why my son ransomed his wife. [...]

[28] These translations were provided by the interviewees.

People still have to pay ransom because if someone wants to go to Mecca, he must have ransomed himself.[29] Religion demands the payment of ransom. And even if it is outlaw in the government, the laws of the Quran are more important than the government's laws. And if ransom has not been paid, a slave can expect from his master that he pay for his ceremonies. And his master will expect that his slave work for him.

Abdo was my grandfather. [...] He was the only one brave enough to talk to the White. The Tuareg feared them and escaped or hid when they came. Abdo asked the *imajeghen* and the *malamai* to see the White and accept to make peace with them, but they refused and left. Abdo went to see the White and made peace with them. [...] But before this, there were no markets for us, and no money. The White brought onions and sweet potatoes. We began to use a currency, which the White brought, called *'jamil'*, which consisted in small coins of bronze, that looked like the 25 fcfa coin. At the time of the White, we built the dam of Adouna. In the past there were lakes which did not dry even in the hot season, and that's where we brought the animals. People did not travel far until the arrival of the White. Only after they arrived, we started to move around. This is how we began to farm... two men from this village had traveled all the way to Kano, and observed farming practices. They saw millet and sorghum, and they took some back. They copied more or less what they had seen, but they were not skilled farmers and only produced five bundles[30]. As back then people were not used to eating cereals, the five bundles lasted them a whole year! They ate just a bit of cereals together with other things. They had no granaries either. So they dug a whole in the earth, washed it with water, put the cereals inside, and covered it with earth again, leaving a sign to mark the place. When they wanted to take cereals, they would dig them out.

I was very brave to remain in [this village]. Many times my old masters sent people to take me and bring me where they are now, because I was their slave. But I always refused. They wanted me to go with them, but I refused. [...]

I did the work for the French airport in Tahoua. It was like when the development project was here and worked with my son, directing him – something like that. I had many important friends in Tahoua, but I never learned French because I did not think, at the time, that it would become the language of power. Otherwise, I would have learned it and I, too, would have become someone important. Afterwards I even looked for the friends I had met in Tahoua, but they would not let me trace them. I also built the road between Niamey and Tahoua. They did not pay me. I was a great traveler! I went to Bilma to take salt, and to Zaria. My generation was the first generation which went *'en exode'*. I was amongst those who worked for the French to build the city of Tahoua. The French had African captains working for them, so I did not work directly with the French. The Afro-French chiefs I knew in Tahoua were: Anza, Tunne, Labo, Moga, Balgagi.... They spoke French, but not Hausa, so they had no common language with workers. The French would kill a bull and feed workers with that meat ...

I did limestone work, too. The French dug limestone toward the river, and people worked there to dig out limestone and roast it and turn it into 'dust' and put it in leather bags, which

[29] See interview with intellectual of free descent: "Today, most of the slaves are free. But they still try to redeem themselves, to pay *'fansa'* – which is a religious obligation if someone wants to go to Mecca. Because the pilgrimage of a slave who has not freed himself from his master is null, according to religion. Likewise, a rich man wanting to marry a slave woman would have to pay to free her first, because religiously that will make her children free." Interview with Ibrahim, Ibohamane, April 28, 2005.

[30] In Ader one 'bundle' (Fr. *botte*, Hausa: *damma*) yields roughly 8 kilograms of cereals.

the French collected. In those times, this was forced labor – they used force to bring people to the worksites.

Now many old masters are not powerful anymore. The sources of their wealth were animals and milk, which allowed them to support their dependents. But now it's the time of money and *tuwo*.[31] Now, the old masters are our younger brothers. We may even send each other reciprocal gifts to commemorate our past relation. Our old masters can remember about us and send us clothes or sugar. There is no more slavery. Thanks to the White, we have entered the market.

Son: Everybody today wants freedom. Not a single slave would rather remain a slave than be free. No-one wants to know that people look at you and whisper 'you know, *c'est un esclave*', that's why people still pay ransom.

[I say, but it seems that there are some benefits in the relations with the former masters].

Son (stretching his arms forward): I have two arms. Give me one job, any job that I can do, and I will not look for the former masters again. And even if an old woman cannot work, she can still go to her relatives, rather than her masters, if they have a job and can support her.

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL READINGS

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[31] *Tuwo* is a typical Hausa dish, a type of millet-based *polenta*.

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Note: All names associated with or listed in the primary sources in this volume appear in the index as they are found in those sources. Exceptions to this rule include the names of westerners, and those with western first, middle or surnames. Those names are listed by their surnames.