

SLAVERY AND BONDAGE IN CENTRAL ASIA AND RUSSIA FROM THE FOURTEENTH TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Introduction

Serfdom in Russia can hardly be understood when studied outside the context of the evolution of forms of bondage in Muscovy and Central Asia between the fourteenth and the early eighteenth century. As a whole, the history of bondage in Russia and Eurasia provides useful insights into the link between overall forms of bondage and war captives, on the one hand, and slavery, on the other. Two main sources of enslavement are usually mentioned in studies of ancient, medieval, and modern slavery: debt (widely conceived as a form of individual and/or social obligation) and capture by war parties or belligerent armies. Roughly speaking, the first source is specific to a given society, while the second is generated by a party transgressing territorial boundaries.¹

This taxonomy requires some important qualifications. For example, war captives may be offered for ransom, but they may also be sold as slaves. Sale of captives within the internal market of the victorious war party was quite widespread; however, this shift required the agreement of the leaders of the clan or state. The boundary between a war captive and a slave was therefore flexible and depended on the relative power of military commanders, political leaders, slave brokers, and slave owners in negotiating among themselves the disposition of war captives. In this respect, slaves and captives in ancient Rome or modern Africa are quite different phenomena.

In turn, debt and “obligated” slaves cover a much wider and debated category, extending from debt bondage to voluntary or involuntary submission, and finally to pawnship. Enslavement by consent occurred frequently in Africa, India, China, and Southeast Asia. Such slavery was usually indigenous, and while it was prohibited by Islam and Western Christianity, it was acceptable to the Greek Orthodox Church, Hinduism, Confucianism, or Buddhism.²

In this respect, Russia and Eurasia provide a stimulating historical environment through which to discuss the appropriateness of the terminology used above and by which to determine whether envisioning the phenomena encompassed by such wording is historically warranted.

On these topics, available historiographies provide answers that can be sketched as follows: Russia constituted a peculiar historical case in which slavery was practiced on Russians themselves. Russia’s backwardness in comparison to the West can be confirmed by the persistence of despotism and bondage. In turn, Oriental despotism went along with the long-term persistence of the nomadic powers in Central Asia, and ultimately, these features contributed to keeping Central Asia and Russia out of the world dynamics—namely the rise of capitalism in the West—and to the marginalization of these areas in the world economy.

Over the last several years, some aspects of these views have been revisited. Peculiar emphasis has been placed on the nomadic powers of Central Asia as long-term cultural, commercial, and political forces; to a certain extent, Eurasian history now has become a fresh topic, no longer necessarily associated with despotism, nomadic powers, and backwardness. In this view, war captives and domestic bondage are far from a symptom or source of backwardness and instability. Such a judgment is based upon the presumption of the superiority of free labor over bonded labor and of territorial states over pirates and nomads.³

A similar judgment orients the main interpretations of Russian forms of bondage resulting from capture in war. The existence of slavery in Russia is little known outside the circle of pre-Petrine Russia specialists, despite slavery’s importance not only for Russian but also for global history, e.g., the link between slavery and serfdom; the relationship between the lengthy Russian history of bondage (most prominently slavery and serfdom) to the Gulag; and last but not least, bondage as testimony to the Mongol influence on Russia or, vice versa, as a response to European world expansion. Answers to these questions require careful analysis of slavery in premodern Russia, and such investigation must focus on war captives, domestic slaves, and bonded people in their historical definitions and overlapping. So who were they?

A current historiography follows the main, if not sole, reference work in a Western language on Russian slavery, Richard Hellie's book *Slavery in Russia, 1450–1725*.⁴ Hellie considers the *kholopy* to have been slaves. He initially translated *kholopstvo* as bondage but later preferred the term slavery. Herbert Leventer objected to the latter translation, emphasizing that the status of Russian *kholopy* was not transferred to their children, that their servitude was temporary, and that they could accumulate and transfer property. He therefore thought that *kholop* corresponded instead to the English word servant. Hellie retorted that in Russian, *kholop* was a synonym for *rab* (slave), and that even if the conditions of the *kholopy* were different from those of slaves in the ancient world and in the Americas, they were perfectly compatible with those of other forms of slavery.⁵

This is actually quite a common problem met by everyone who has studied the forms of bondage and slavery: to what extent can we qualify different forms of bondage to different words and rules, among them “slavery”? The question has been raised for various forms of bondage in Africa, India, China, the Ottoman Empire, Latin America, Southeast Asia, etc. On the one hand, several scholars have stressed the existence of slavery in these various places, at different times.⁶ On the other hand, many other specialists on these areas have replied that local forms of bondage (and the related words to express them) cannot be translated as slavery insofar as these particular forms of bondage involved reciprocal obligations, voluntary submission, temporary bondage, and still other kindred phenomena that would seem to exclude them from being defined as slavery in a strict sense.⁷

One position minimizes the historical weight of transatlantic and Western colonial slavery in the Americas by lessening the perceived ubiquity of its oppressiveness, while the latter position stresses the historical specificity of forms of bondage and dependence and of the uniqueness of Western slavery. The stakes in these debates are high, as they possibly call for reparations from old European colonial countries and the United States to the countries from which slaves originated. Contemporary debates over the nature informal forced labor (i.e. Eastern European sex trade, African child soldiers, etc.) in the twenty-first century also grapple with historical definitions of slavery.⁸

Yet any general definition of slavery misses the point, that is, it does not acknowledge how different societies in different times identified legal status and labor conditions and assigned hierarchical duties, obligations, and, eventually, rights to the people in question. I prefer to adopt this last approach, which, in turn, does not avoid comparisons but, quite the

contrary, seeks to identify multiple criteria for comparing labor conditions and legal status in different historical contexts.

Our investigation starts by looking at Russian words that express forms of legal bondage and then by trying to understand their social and institutional role by comparing legal texts and social practices. This investigation shows that the Russian language generated one single word (*kholopstvo*) to express bondage; however, at the same time, within this rubric, different forms and gradations of dependence existed, from debt bondage and self-sale into bondage to indenture and chattel slavery. This taxonomy reflected the fact that *kholopstvo* was a much less precise category or invariant legal status (as the term slavery connotes in Western language) than a spectrum of bondage-related phenomena, each of which was addressed specifically by statutory definitions and regulations and/or by contracts.

This situation was not unique to Russia: in African *pawnship*, for example, the major difference from Western slavery and other forms of African bondage and slavery was that ownership and transfer concerned the contract and not people.⁹ The same sort of argument can be made for Russian *kholopstvo*. To parallel recent debates about slavery, the critical issue is not whether any system of bondage was harsh or mild, but rather which conditions were exceptional and which were typical.¹⁰ In Russia, hereditary slaves comprised barely 10 percent of the *kholopy* (who in turn comprised 10 percent of the population), and they were mostly recorded to have lived in Novgorod in the aftermath of the *oprichina* (1565–72, when the Tsar Ivan IV split the state in two and ravaged much of it) and during the Time of Troubles (1598–1613, which ended with the establishment of the Romanov dynasty in place of the 700-year Riudrikid dynasty). All other contracts, as we will see, were limited in time or lasted until the death of the master. This difference certainly mattered, although more detailed empirical analyses would be required to determine the percentage of renewed contracts that ended up erasing this difference. At the same time, two major features differentiated these relationships from hereditary *kholopstvo*: a contract remained part of the legal status and, therefore, the condition of *kholopstvo* did not automatically transfer to children (even if this issue was not de facto impossible).

The second part of this chapter focuses on war captives. Unlike a *kholop*, a war captive often entered permanent slavery. They constitute a historically important element of normative and unusual political activity and even turmoil. Over centuries, if not millennia, war captives, pirates, and nomadic powers were the rules and not the exceptions in geopolitical and economic equilibriums.¹¹ From the twelfth to the eighteenth century, captives and slaves were part of the common world for the Mongols,

Berbers, Ottomans, Chinese, and European powers. All of them took part in raids and the trade in captives, and all made use of slaves. This also implies that the Eurasian history of slavery cannot confirm the clear-cut opposition between slave and captive, on the one hand, and nomadic and territorial powers, on the other. Theorists of state-building¹² as well as economic historians¹³ persistently oppose predatory units to centralized states. The Mongols are placed in the first category, Europe the second. The history of war captives and slaves leads us to adopt a different approach, close to that of those who have recently revisited the history of the steppes and, more generally, the opposition between national states and nomadic and predatory powers.¹⁴

Sources for studying these problems are as numerous as they are scattered. Regarding *khology*, the Russian archives provide whole series of contracts, civil statuses, and other litigations. Partially exploited by Iakovlev, Paneiakh, and Hellie, these sources provide a complete picture of the phenomenon. The *kabal'nye knigi* (i.e., the *khology* registration books) are particularly valuable, as are the records of the *khology prikaz*, settled in 1571.¹⁵ Contracts are also available in the Saltikov-Shedrin library.

The sources for studying war captives raise distinct problems, since so much of the paperwork has been lost and what has survived is in Middle-Russian script. The *khology* registers introduced in the sixteenth century and diplomatic sources provide some information;¹⁶ however, despite official rules, war captives were not systematically recorded, and therefore their real number must be substantially greater than what extant records tell us. We also lack sources from the Central Asian powers.¹⁷

This lacuna does not apply to the other important powers in the area under study, namely the Byzantine Empire, Venice, Genoa, and, later on, the Ottoman Empire, for these polities left an important archival legacy on war captives and the Eurasian slave trade. Ottomanists have already provided important studies on the market for slaves between Crimea, Russia, Central Asia, and the Ottoman Empire, in particular in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries;¹⁸ historians of medieval and early modern Venice and Genoa have also provided some remarkable studies. Sources in Genoa and Venice include a few in Latin, but more in pre-modern Italian. Much of our knowledge about trade in Caffa, on the Crimean coast, is derived from the commercial deeds and contracts drawn up between 1128 and 1290 by the Genoese notary Lamberto di Sambuceto,¹⁹ although a precise date for the foundation of the Genoese colony there cannot be given. The first historical fact relating to Caffa in the Genoese chronicles is the dispatch of three vessels in 1289 by the consul of the port, Paolino Doria, to the aid of Tripoli.²⁰

Kholopy: Slaves, Serfs, or Indentured Servants?

We have already mentioned the debate between Hellie and Leventer about translating *kholop* as slave. Such a translation is partly justified by the fact that when Peter the Great abolished this status in 1725, documents associated the *kholop* with a slave (*rab*). This association of ideas dates from the early eighteenth century and occurred in the special context of the reforms of Peter the Great. At the time, insofar as slavery in the strict sense was prohibited, the word *rab* designated either a former slave, a slave mentioned in the Bible, or the symbolic relationship that the nobles maintained with the tsar.²¹ In fact, *kholop* meant “the subject of,” and could be used referring to the tsar or any superior Russian political authority; this word was used in particular for Muslims and Tatars.²² In turn, the meaning of *rab* changed over time. Iakovlev thinks it was of Turkish origin and was used to designate Mamluk slaves from Africa, who were distinct from slaves originating from Central Asia and Eastern Europe. At the same time, in the southern part of the future Rus’, the word *rab* referred to Cumans and Pechenegs. Notably, since the twelfth century, the word *raba* was used for a *kholop*’s wife in Russian legal and common language.²³ However, any free person who married a *kholop* was subject to the legal constraints applying to his or her spouse (“*po rabe kholop, po kholopu rabe*”).²⁴ Even more important, the relationship between a *kholop* and his wife was associated with that between the *kholop* and his master, the *rab* and his master, and a son and his father. In all these cases, a mutual although hierarchical relation (of dependence) was established. Children, wives, and *kholopy* had limited but existing rights in relation to their “masters” (this category being inclusive of husbands and fathers).²⁵

Let us try to grasp the meaning and content of the word *kholop*.²⁶ According to Iakovlev, the word *kholop* derived from a Polish word that was associated with war captives since the eleventh century, in common Eastern Slavic and later in Russian.²⁷ This is extremely important, as it testifies to the common origin of war captives and other bonded people. The word *kholop* then entered the *Russkaia Pravda*, a collection of legal acts that was first compiled in 1016 and put together in its near final version during the mid-twelfth century.²⁸ Three main origins of slavery were listed there: accepting work associated with a slave; marrying a slave; or selling oneself into slavery. In the twelfth-century version of the *Russkaia Pravda*, the general category of *kholopy* was already highly differentiated and ranged from full *kholopstvo* (*obelnyi kholop*)²⁹ to indentured servant (*zakup*).³⁰ All of these categories had legal personality and rights.³¹

Indeed, the word *kholop* appeared in quite disparate sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources: law collections, judicial cases, private transactions, contracts, memoranda, estate accounts, registrations with notaries, etc. Such documents never speak of *kholopstvo* in general, but qualify the word with adjectives: *starinnoe* (hereditary), *polnoe* (full), *dokladnoe* (registered), *dolgovoe* (obligated, indebted), *zhitoe* (limited to a period of time), *dobrovol'noe* (voluntary), *kabal'noe* (limited service contract). The latter was by far the most widespread term, found in 80 to 92 percent of the known contracts of *kholopstvo*, depending on the period.³² The multiplicity of qualifiers is significant, for it indicates a set of distinct kinds of contracts rather than a single formal personal status. Elite *kholopy* (mostly placed in the category of *dokladnoe kholopstvo*) served in the central government/palace administration and in the provincial administration until the mid-sixteenth century, in the cavalry until approximately the third decade of the seventeenth century, and as estate managers until the time of Peter the Great.³³ The institution seems to have arisen around the end of the fifteenth century, and the last extant registered slavery document is dated before the end of the sixteenth century. Some of the major factors in this decline were the evolution of the central government from a royal household to an administration run by lay bureaucrats. Next was the radical decline of the large patrimonial estates (*votchiny*), which had needed stewards to manage them, in favor of an increase in smaller service estates (*pomest'ia*) that were increasingly managed by members of the middle service class.

Let us now examine the most widespread of these classifications, the *kabal'noe kholopstvo*, which appears in legislation, disputes, contracts between private individuals, wills, and estate inventories.³⁴ All these documents mention the length of service and the possibility of transforming a six-month or one-year contract into a contract of unlimited service,³⁵ although the latter practice was prohibited in the early seventeenth century.³⁶ Before that, the code of 1550 already emphasized that the *kabal'nye* were not *dolgovye* (indebted). In subsequent years (1586 and 1597), new provisions confirmed that the *kabal'nye* could remain obligated only for the duration of the creditor's life, and that the creditor could not transfer the obligations to anyone, either in the form of a sale or inheritance. These same rules forbade the *kholop* to repay his debt.³⁷ The latter provision could be interpreted as the desire to maintain the *kholop* in a state close to slavery, but it is equally legitimate to interpret it as a provision aimed to exclude that form of dependence. The link with the previous provisions would seem to confirm the latter interpretation. This conclusion is bolstered by all the contracts that have been found,

which indicate the length of commitment, usually limited to one year.³⁸ The evolution in the rules concerning the *kabal'nye kholopy* between 1586 and 1597 was inspired by the previous evolution of rules on military captives, notably the law of 21 August 1556, which prescribed that a military captive was to be enslaved no longer than the period of his captor's life and could not be passed on as a slave to the captor's children.³⁹ From this standpoint, the change in the nature of limited service contract *kholopstvo* was instituted to safeguard the interest of the middle service class, whose members were at a disadvantage in competing with other members of the upper service class for *kholopy*.⁴⁰

What remains to examine is the most extreme forms of *kholopstvo*. The "full" (*pol'noe*) variety was already developed in the *Russkaia Pravda* during the twelfth century and had three main sources: First, the *kholop* himself or herself might ask to be included in this category, as a form of repayment of a debt to the authorities. Second, if a female *kholop* married a free man without the authorization of the person entitled to her service, her husband became a *pol'nyi* (full) *kholop*. The third source was a domestic service contract established for an unlimited length of time, however such contracts have been found only between 1430 and 1554, with none appearing after that date. The most widely accepted hypothesis is that this form of dependence tended to be transformed into other forms of *kholopstvo* of a temporary nature.

The hereditary variety (*starinnoe kholopstvo*) seems to come closest to slavery in the strict sense and expresses the condition of those whose parents were *kholopy*. Such *kholopy* could be transferred in wills or given as a dowry or gift. In the contracts of 1430–1598 examined by Hellie, there were 5,575 *kholopy*, 483 of whom were hereditary. The *kabal'nye knigi* (*kholopy* registration books) at the end of the seventeenth century mention 418 hereditary *kholopy* out of a total of 2,168 registered at the time. The available sources do not allow us to say whether this higher percentage testifies to the poor economic situation of the time or to a long-term trend, because this type of commitment was prohibited by the decrees of 1586 and 1593.

To be sure, Iakovlev and, more recently, Paneiakh have found disputes and contracts concerning *starinnye kholopy* in the middle of the seventeenth century, decades after this type of contract was officially prohibited.⁴¹ In other words, despite the official prohibition, several lords continued to impose forms of contractual servitude of a hereditary type. The authorities devoted much attention to what amounted to illegal slavery and attempted to penalize transgressors. By banning this kind of servitude, the government sought to limit the power of nobles over peasants and thereby strengthen state authority over the owners of large estates.

Furthermore, the *khology* were exempt from taxation, which reduced the revenue of the state. This was a measure intended to strengthen small landowners and encourage their alliance with the state. Among other things, the specialization of warfare in the early seventeenth century reduced the importance of cavalry while increasing the importance of an infantry wielding firearms. As a result, bureaucratic and military service continued to be meritocratic, but those possessing or developing merit were from outside the traditional service class.⁴² The evolution of kinds of *khology* and the people entitled to own *khology* enter these broader dynamics. In particular, measures to get rid of hereditary servitude had important consequences. Rather than exclude part of the population from all legal rights, as in the case of slavery, the solution consisted in assigning highly differentiated rights to the various strata of the population and dividing them into legally distinct groups. The peasants saw their rights severely restricted, while city dwellers were prohibited from subjecting themselves, even voluntarily, to any form of *kholopstvo*. Numerous provisions defined who was entitled to sign *kholopstvo* contracts as creditors or debtors. Thus, in 1641, all *tiaglye liudi* (people subject to *tiaglo*, i.e., the unit of taxation), including peasants and artisans, as well as other taxpayers, priests, artillerymen, and monastery servants, were excluded from the category of creditors entitled to demand labor service.⁴³ Conversely, starting in 1590, city dwellers subject to taxation (*posad*) were prohibited from offering these forms of labor service. In 1628, this prohibition was extended to include musketeers, soldiers, and all the intermediate ranks of the civil service and the military. The interpretation of these norms posed problems, because the categories were rather general. In the case of professions such as barbers, seamstresses, trappers, and small craftsmen, the question arose whether they could legitimately enter into *kholopstvo* contracts. The many petitions sent to the *kholop* chancellery concerning such individuals demonstrate their involvement in these contracts, their desire to be able to continue being taken on as *khology*, and their use of the law to challenge the claims of their counterparts.⁴⁴

From this point of view, the 119 articles of chapter 20 of the *Ulozhenie* of 1649, which were devoted to *khology*, in large part reproduced the provisions of earlier legislation. The text specified the amount of work required to repay a debt or to fulfill an obligation in general for those who failed to meet their legal obligations (debts, penalties, fines, theft, etc.). Once the work was completed, the creditor brought the debtor back before an official, who released the debtor from all obligations. Section 20 of the *Ulozhenie* also mentions other conditions for being released from a state of *kholopstvo*. Various articles speak of both debts and *krepost'*, with the latter viewed as justifying the debt.

The core provisions of section 20 depart from the rules found in many slaveholding systems (including those in ancient Roman and Western colonial codes), although they do not differ much from those of slavery systems in Islamic and Catholic areas. *Kholopy* were free to marry, and such an act was inviolable. The wife of a *kholop* was obliged to remain in residence until her husband's debt was repaid, but upon her husband's death, the *kholop's* wife's dowry passed to her family and not to the landowner-creditor.⁴⁵ The *kholop* could be called as a witness in a trial, which means that legal personality was acknowledged. Diverging most from systems of slavery elsewhere, a master of *kholopy* had no obligation to feed or care for elderly *kholopy*, whereas this obligation formed part of a master's commitment throughout the length of the contract itself.⁴⁶

The available contracts show that about 20 percent of the *kholopy* were children between five and fourteen years of age whose parents placed them under one-year service contracts, which were often renewable, although some contracts were for rather long periods of time. Such contracts were signed by the most disadvantaged among the city population, and their numbers rose at the turn of the seventeenth century, a time of serious economic crisis. In a way, placing children in service ensured survival. From this point of view, the *kholopstvo* contract for children sprang from the same motives as several contracts of this type that were widespread during the same period in France and England (servants in husbandry), albeit with different legal terms and institutional conditions.⁴⁷ The other *kholopstvo* contracts referred to adults working as servants. Loans were sometimes the formal reason for these contracts, but the terms of the loans often suggest that these were really servants' wages.

Taking these facts into account, we can conclude that especially following the decline of its hereditary forms, most of the aspects of *kholopstvo* resemble other types of indebtedness and limitation on mobility, such as forms of contractual servitude widely found in the same period among Hindu populations in India and in parts of China. Temporary servitude fell within the scope of contracts that were considered free and voluntary from a legal standpoint. Freedom of commitment did not exclude the renewal of contracts for up to several decades or even throughout the lifetime of the indebted person.⁴⁸ However, the Russian situation differed from the one prevalent in the Islamic world, where sharia law forbade all forms of bondage for debt, crimes, and indigence, even if they occurred in practice under customary or sultan law.⁴⁹

In virtually all the known Russian contracts, and increasingly so over time, the status of *kholopy* could not be transferred to descendants; this is essentially what distinguished this system from the slavery of antiquity and the Americas. In other words, by their very existence, forms

of voluntary bondage testify to the variety of labor commitments and to continuity rather than opposition between these forms, ranging from statutory and hereditary slavery to free labor. Fugitives from the ranks of apprentices, domestics, and the indentured were caught by the state's police forces and subjected to criminal proceedings. Such penal sanctions also applied to the Russian *kholopy*.

Two main tendencies can be identified in the disputes over *kholopy*. They either involved several claimants to title or were disputes between these claimants and *kholopy*. In the first case, the question arose when someone claimed to have established a *kholopstvo* contract in good faith and the other party had previously signed one with another master. Such an individual was legally a fugitive. In the early sixteenth century, the *Russkaia Pravda* (article 118) stated that the first claimant to rights could recover the fugitive but had to compensate a buyer who had acted in good faith. However, the *Sudebnik* of 1550 adopted the principle of *caveat emptor*: the buyer of a title over a *kholop* was no entitled to be compensated, especially if he had been negligent.⁵⁰ Finally, the *Ulozhenie* of 1649 returned to the previous principle. In every case, written documents were required to prove the validity of a plaintiff's claims.

There were also disputes between those who claimed rights over people and those in a situation of obligation who objected to the original obligation or to the terms of its cancellation. Such conflicts were so numerous that a *kholopii prikaz* (chancellery) was set up in 1571 to resolve issues of this kind.⁵¹ Some of the most frequent disputes concerned types of *kholopstvo*. Despite the prohibition against hereditary *kholopstvo* toward the end of the seventeenth century, the practice did not come to an end. Many cases were brought before the court at this time by *kholopy* themselves, often by the children of *kholopy*, or by new masters claiming their rights.⁵² The existence of these disputes confirms that it was possible for the *kholopy* to win a case, although the chances were slim compared with those of claimants to title. At the same time, this use of rights was possible because it intersected with the interests of other lords, other claimants over *kholopy*, or of the state itself, for the reasons mentioned above. It also explains why the few suits won by *kholopy* concerned the kind of *kholopstvo* and the *kholop*'s obligations and rights toward one lord rather than another. Brutality against *kholopy* was actually punishable by law, but such laws were rarely enforced. The solution to this problem, rather, was found in the strong, disloyal competition among estate owners—the *kholop* could easily find another master; flight was easy; and recovery was extremely difficult and costly. Masters were therefore obliged to treat their *kholop* with relative decency or they would run away.⁵³

Overall, by the time Peter the Great abolished the *kholopstvo* status in 1725, the status applied to 10 percent of the population.⁵⁴ Of the 2,500 contracts and documents that have been recovered, 92 percent originate from the Novgorod region, and 80 percent of the contracts were signed between 1581 and 1603. According to Hellie's calculations, 23 percent of the cases involved single men, and 60 percent, couples without children. The rest were couples with a minor child (1.6 percent), widowers (4 percent), widows (3.7 percent), married women (2.5 percent), or unmarried women (4.2 percent), while the status of the others was unknown. In the majority of cases, the *kholopy* were between ten and thirty-four years of age, but about 10 percent were between the ages of ten and fourteen, and another 10 percent between the ages of five and nine. Finally, throughout the period under study, from the sixteenth to the late seventeenth centuries, men made up at least two-thirds of the *kholopy* and often virtually all of them.⁵⁵ Nearly all the *kholopy* were domestic servants and were rarely assigned to farmwork.

The link between *kholopy* and debt bondage is clear when one relates the number of new contracts concerning *kholopy*—mostly *kabal'nye*—and the dynamics of harvest between the 1580s and 1610. In the province of Novgorod, the number of *kholopy* rose by a factor of 8 to 10 after bad harvests.⁵⁶

Yet the *kholopy* were seldom acquired for farmwork, at least in Muscovy and European Russia. One possible reason that slaves and *kholopy* were infrequently found in Russian agriculture could be that masses of serfs already performed such functions. *Kholopy* and serfs therefore appear to have been complementary, and this may have constituted one of the dominant features of Russian history.⁵⁷ *Kholopy* initially were domestic, elite, and/or urban bonded people in a still-unstable, although expanding, state; later, their dismissal was linked to the solidification of state power with its fiscal and military needs and the rise of clear legal differentiations between hereditary and service nobles, peasants, artisans, urban groups, etc. The merging of *kholopy* with peasants was linked to state fiscal and military needs—*kholopy*, and *delovye ludy* (domestic servants) could enlist in the army starting in the early eighteenth century. *Kholopy* were initially exempted from soul tax, but their transition into existing legal-social groups (*sostoianiiia*) corrected this situation. In other words, the long history of *kholopstvo* in Russia reflects the progressive formation of state power and the evolution in the relationship between various social groups and labor. In 1720, Peter replaced the household tax with the soul tax; this reform made it unacceptable to the public that *kholopy*, who were 10 percent of the population, were not submitted to the tax.

The *khology*'s conversion into "peasants," or lower urban groups, in 1725, solved this problem.

In the military realm, since the fourteenth century at least, *khology* (and fugitive *khology*) serving in the army were relieved of their "debt" and became free. This situation changed during the second half of the seventeenth century, when the authors of the *Ulozhenie* of 1649 quickly realized that freedmen were not likely to make good cavalymen, and thus they allowed members of the middle service class who had been *khology* to return to their original status if they found military service not to their liking.⁵⁸ In 1700, faced with the Northern War, Peter the Great ordered that manumitted limited-service *khology* be enlisted in the infantry. But by 1703 the order was repealed, as the nature of warfare had changed during the second half of the seventeenth century, and the old middle service class cavalry had been largely phased out. This was a crucial step toward the abolition of *kholopstvo*. To a certain extent, therefore, the transformation of *kholopstvo* in connection with domestic and internal affairs cannot be isolated from the evolution of Russia on the international chessboard. War captives and the slave trade are part of this wider dynamic. In the following pages, we will study warfare and the slave trade in Eurasia in detail.

War Captives at the Crossroads of Empires

Central Asian Slaves for the Mediterranean from the Thirteenth through the Fifteenth Century

The importance of captives and slaves on the expanding Russian territory reflected changing power constellations in Central Asia, the southern Balkans, the Crimea, and the Mediterranean. The history of war captives in Russia and Asia is linked to the main trade routes and changing geopolitical situations over the centuries. The first phase, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, was mostly connected to the Silk Road; the second, from the fourteenth into the sixteenth century, followed a Russian-Iranian-Indian path; and the third, from the sixteenth into the eighteenth century, was linked to the expansion of Russia and its integration of Mongol khanates. Each of these waves had commercial and geopolitical dimensions. Adding the captive-ransoming and slave markets to this picture sheds new light on the entire process.

The origin of the words *esclaves* and *sclavus*, which were used in medieval and early-modern Italy, expressed less the linguistic and legal heritage of ancient Rome than it did a link with the market for bound people

from the Slavic areas.⁵⁹ The slave trade had an economic boost in traffic from Central Asia to the Black Sea⁶⁰ and from the growing presence of Venetians and Genoese in this area.⁶¹ In both Venice and Genoa, traders sold Circassian and Abkhazian slaves, who had previously been bought mostly in Caspian and Black Sea ports. We have evidence from as early as 1246 that the Mongols sold Greeks, Bulgarians, Ruthenians, and Rumanians to merchants from Genoa, Pisa, and Venice, who in turn sold them to the Saracens. The Italians had purchased these slaves in the northern Black Sea ports of Maurocastro, at the mouth of the Dniester and Caffa in the Crimea; in 1266, the Genoese received permission from the Mongol khan to establish a colony in Caffa. The Genoese merchants there bought Circassians, Tatars, Russians, Iranians, Poles, etc. The other center of the slave trade in the Black Sea region during the fourteenth century was the Crimean port of Tana, which the Venetians had colonized in 1333. In spite of the unstable favor of the Mongol ruler of Tana and the resulting breaks in trading activities, Tana still remained a place of high strategic value, allowing for better access to the Oriental markets and the Far East than the Genoese had in Caffa. The potentially high profits to be expected from trips to the eastern Black Sea area can be seen in the increased revenues from the galleys bound for Romania in the first half of the fourteenth century and after the 1370s. The main trading goods were furs, wine, grain, and slaves, with the slaves becoming increasingly important in the late fourteenth century, when Venice needed slaves for its colony on Crete. As a consequence of the growing Ottoman menace, the Venetian trade shifted to the western Black Sea (Maurocastro and the Danube estuary), Egypt, and the Middle East, in the first half of the fifteenth century. At Kilia, Tatar subjects were sold by their compatriots to Genoese, Venetians, and Greeks from Constantinople.⁶² Genoa, Venice, and Catalonia were also competitors in the slave trade. In 1263, the Byzantine Empire had reopened the trade between Egypt and the Black Sea, and Genoa became the first supplier of slaves for both the armies and harems of the Mamluk sultans. Male slaves were also sent to the alum mines of Genoa at Focea and, of course, to Genoa and Spain. Women were particularly welcomed for domestic services, while men were valued for ship work or sold to Spain. In early 1400, almost 10 percent of Genoa's population was unfree—that is, between 4,000 and 5,000 people.⁶³ In Caffa, the revenue from the *gabella capitum* allows us to calculate the following numbers: in 1374 there were at least 3,285 slaves; in 1385–86, about 1,500; in 1387–88, about 1,600; and in 1381–82, at least 3,800. During the fifteenth century, the *gabella* was farmed out. For 1411 one can assume 2,900 sold slaves, and from the 1420s until 1477 there were 2,000 per year at most. The fall of Constantinople provoked

a massive decline (to about 400 or 600 slaves per year). Thus during a single century the numbers fell by around 80 percent, a decline that was already apparent before 1453; both the *gabella* incomes of February and June follow this trend.⁶⁴

War captives and people already enslaved in internal areas—the same type of people sold later in transatlantic slavery—were then sold to Genoa. But according to Genoese sources, “voluntary” enslavement was equally widespread, that is, Genoese enslavement of legally free people whom they seized in Caffa. However, neither Genoese nor Venetian traders organized expeditions with this specific aim in Central Asia, most likely because of the small scale and high transaction costs of the operations.⁶⁵ It was simply not worth extending to Central Asia the credit and commercial arrangements already in place on the Black Sea, and this was all the more true for slaves, a minor market compared to that of luxury items. The caravan trade, much too wide ranging for European powers, was solidly based on the interaction between nonpastoral nomadic activities and caravan merchants. Increasingly stable communities in Central Asia offered a reliable environment. Islamization of the area further drove this process but did not immediately marginalize Venice and Genoa; at first they even benefited from the decline of the Byzantine Empire, not only in terms of commercial trade but also of the captives’ market.⁶⁶ At the same time, the rivalry between Venice and Genoa prevented either one of them from controlling the Black Sea trade. In 1462, after the fall of Constantinople, Genoese Caffa placed itself under the protection of Poland. From 1466 to 1474, intervention by the Genoese became particularly marked. Ultimately Muhammad the Conqueror captured Caffa in 1475 and took control of the trade of goods and slaves from Central Asia. In 1459 the Venetian senate lamented the scarcity of slaves, as most of the Slavic and Tatar slaves were now being sent to the Near and Middle East, in particular to Egypt and Turkey.⁶⁷ Genoa therefore turned to other sources, that is, to Islamic Spain and North Africa, where it acquired slaves to sell in Seville and the Canary Islands. It was at this point that Genoa tried to enter the slave market in the New World, but it was quickly overtaken by Spanish, Portuguese, and finally British vessels.⁶⁸

At first glance, this outcome would seem to confirm the traditional historiographical view of a progressive shift from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic.⁶⁹ According to this view, the decline of Venice and the Italian republic was linked to the rising power of Spain and the Western European powers (Portugal, the Netherlands, Britain, and France) that resulted from the exploration and colonization of the Americas. While not totally incorrect, this view is nonetheless prejudiced insofar as it

ignores what was transpiring in Central Eurasia, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire at that time.

*The Indian Network from the
Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century*

Indeed, the traffic between Central Asia and Venice and Genoa intersected with the resurgence of the caravan trade; this development was linked to Mongol and Ming political stabilization, which was achieved from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries.⁷⁰ By the early sixteenth century, the Uzbeks, Kazakhs, and Kyrgyz dominated the steppes. Muscovite expansion and increasing division among Mongol groups and heirs to the Golden Horde strongly contributed to reshaping the caravan trade in Central Asia from the fourteenth century on, while the traffic in slaves increased.⁷¹ Caravan trade among China, Persia, Central Asia, the Ottoman Empire, and Russia accorded with the systematic traffic in slaves, as did similar trade among Russia, Central Asia, and India or the Ottoman Empire. The Indian-Central Asian caravan trade was, in large measure, a latter-day continuation of the enterprise that had led Indian Buddhists to move out along the same routes centuries earlier⁷²—Indian slaves had been exported from Central Asia since ancient times. Indian chroniclers mention slaves in the tens and even hundreds of thousands,⁷³ while Central Asian sources suggest that slaves were put to work in masonry, construction engineering, agricultural production, and other forms of skilled and unskilled labor. Even if slaves were drawn from a number of regions—including the nomadic steppes, Iran, Afghanistan, the Caucasus, and Russia—judicial sources from the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries show that Indians accounted for at least 58 percent of all slaves.⁷⁴

In the sixteenth century, Indian slaves, both Hindus and Muslims, were sold on the markets of Tashkent and Samarkand, along with other slaves from Lithuania, Russia, and the Caucasus.⁷⁵ Between the twelfth and seventeenth centuries there are indications of bonded people being part of the caravan trade from Central Asia to India and China and vice versa, i.e., from India to Central Asia.⁷⁶ This trade went along with the general trade in luxury items and horses that took place along the same axes.⁷⁷ The traffic had begun in ancient times but evolved dramatically during the medieval period, particularly in conjunction with the expansion of Islam in India during the early eleventh century and later, when the Indian merchant diasporas emerged in the sixteenth century.⁷⁸ The Indian merchant diasporas, and in particular the Indian community in Astrakhan, strongly supported this traffic; Persian merchants also contributed to it.⁷⁹

Samarkand was perhaps the quintessential caravan city— what would be the future political capital of Tamerlane (and the regional capital of earlier dynasties) was located close to where the east-west route intersected the north-south highway between India and Russia and was embedded in a fertile garden.⁸⁰ Indian slaves reached Central Asia in different ways; some were secured in exchange for Central Asian goods, for horses in particular; some were war captives; while many others were captured during raids on trading caravans.⁸¹ In 1014, the sultan of Gazna brought 200,000 Indian slaves into his town. In Turan, in the early fourteenth century, sultans owned between 50,000 and 180,000 slaves each. Indian slaves worked in agriculture and were employed in other domestic activities in Bukhara in the late fourteenth and the early fifteenth centuries.⁸² Skilled slaves were particularly valuable, which is why rival political powers commonly enslaved and relocated artisans in the wake of successful invasions. Indian slaves were also sold in Bukhara and Astrakhan. At the same time, the Safavid Iranians were also sold as slaves, particularly after wars between the Uzbeks and Safavids. Enslavement of Iranians lasted until the mid-nineteenth century, when Russian and British sources speak of about 10,000 Iranian slaves in Khiva and over 100,000 slaves in the Khivan, Bukharan, and Turkmen territories.⁸³ During the eighteenth century, most slaves at the markets of Bukhara, Khiva, and Kashgar came from Africa or from the mountains and desert fringes of Iran and Afghanistan.⁸⁴ Many owners manumitted their slaves, mostly when they were over fifty years old, whereupon they spent the rest of their life in extremely poor conditions. There are also a number of cases of young slaves manumitted at the death of their master, which was in conformity with Islamic law.⁸⁵

No less important, however, were the strong Islamic scholarly-scientific and cultural links that overlapped the trade routes, connecting Bukhara and Istanbul, the Ottoman capital, and extending across the Muslim Qazaq steppes all the way to Chawchak (i.e., Chuguchak, Tacheng) and beyond. India's Muslim and even Hindu merchants knew Farsi Persian, the main trading language, and some knew Turkic dialects, useful in Muscovy/Russia. Indian merchants developed some of the same techniques made famous in Renaissance Italy—palazzo-like trading houses (called *havelis*), kin networks, and credit—but they did *not* enjoy a corresponding Italian-style political organization of strong city-states to support them.⁸⁶

In the eighteenth century, however, Indian slaves were relatively scarce in the markets of Bukhara, Samarkand, Khiva, and Kashgar.⁸⁷ This was the case because, as usual, the traffic in slaves reflected the commercial trade and geopolitical equilibrium, and the strong links between Turkestan and South Asia appear to have suffered with the tsarist advance into the region. Tensions and rivalries between and within these political entities strongly

contributed to the advance of Russia in the north and that of the European powers in the south.⁸⁸ At the same time, Indian exports of slaves decreased, as the Mughal Empire reduced—but did not completely eliminate—the practice of enslavement in India. This process was concomitant with a progressive fragmentation of the Muslim world, which consisted of Central Asia and the Ottoman, Mughal, and Safavid Empires. By the seventeenth century, India had begun to manufacture enough textiles to clothe nearly the whole of Central Asia, as well as Iran, and thus there was no longer any need to exchange Central Asian horses and other goods for Indian slaves.⁸⁹ According to some scholars, the most important development in the eighteenth century was the emergence of Afghanistan, under Durrani rule, as a powerful polity with particularly close links to northern India.⁹⁰ To this one should add the progressive withdrawal of the Ottoman Empire from India and its general decentralization, which resulted in less slave traffic. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when Indian slaves almost disappeared in Central Asia, Indian goods entered the area; the Punjab in particular witnessed an unprecedented economic and demographic growth during this time, but this commerce later came to a halt with the rapid decay of the Safavid Empire and the Uzbek khanates, the Punjab's most important customers.⁹¹ India's communications with Central Asia were not only maintained, but even enhanced. Contrary to widely held beliefs, active bilateral trade between India and Central Asia continued between 1550 and 1750. In other words, recent historiographical trends do *not* see the decline of Indian slaves and certain Indian networks in Central Asia as indicative of a general decline of India, but as the result of its textiles being sold to new destinations and the emergence of new centers in Central Asia that were mostly dominated by Russians.

*Khanates, Nomads, and Russia from the
Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century*

The establishment of new trade boundaries between India and Central Asia paralleled the reconfiguration of the balance between Central Asia and Russia. This process is important to us because it links the historical dynamics of the Inner Asian slave trade to both the evolution of slavery in the Mediterranean and to the rise of serfdom in Russia. Without keeping in mind the long-standing tradition of trade in slaves and war captives, the peculiar link in Russia between territorial expansion, military concerns, fiscal problems, and serfdom cannot be understood. Ultimately, the geopolitical evolution of Russia and Inner Asia provides insights on the link between war, trade, and forced labor. The dissolution of the Golden Horde not only produced fully nomadic steppe societies such as

the Nogays (a confederation of Turkic and Mongol tribes), but city-states such as the Crimean and Kazan khanates, as well. Turkic Kazakhs, Bashkirs, and Tatars competed with Mongol Kalmyks. Thus Central Asian political formations cannot be lumped together simply on the basis of an allegedly common nomadic nature. Russian expansion in Central Asia continued for over three hundred years, from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries. In the late fifteenth century, the alliance between the Crimea and Muscovy continued to be based on their mutual interests against their respective foes, the Great Horde and Poland. With the disbandment of the Horde in 1506, Crimea, the Muscovy, the Nogays, and Lithuania remained the major players in the region. Moscow actually began its real expansion eastward by conquering the steppe state of Kazan in the mid-sixteenth century. This marked the end of Muscovy's active participation in steppe politics for over seventy years. Instead, during this period, Muscovy turned westward and expanded across Siberia, while fighting against Polish and Lithuanian states. In pursuing this strategy, Moscow was first allied with Crimea against Poland, and then it weakened its relations with Crimea while strengthening ties with the Ottoman sultan. At the same time, the nomadic Nogays, unable to withstand the predations of the Kazakhs, abandoned their pastures east of the Yaik River and moved west, crossing the Volga into the pastures of the Astrakhan khan. The new khan of Kazan ravaged the provinces of Novgorod and Vladimir and moved toward Moscow; however, a confrontation was avoided insofar as Moscow and the Nogays had similar interests in the area. For Moscow, the Nogays were a critical force capable of checking the Crimean raids and aiding Moscow in the conquest of Kazan.⁹²

In this same period—as a result of their action against the Genoese of the Crimea in 1475—the Ottomans made their presence more strongly felt among the Crimean Tatars and on the Pontic steppe in general, and by 1478 the Ottoman power established the right to appoint and dismiss the khans. Thus, with a single blow, Moldavian and Polish-Lithuanian access to Black Sea markets was brought to an end. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Black Sea had turned into an Ottoman lake.

Between 1555 and 1578, a number of events affected the Ottoman presence on the Black Sea: Muscovy took Astrakhan in 1556. Trade ties between Muscovy and Britain commenced about the same time, and soon the English Muscovy Company was sending its traders into Persia in quest of spices and silk, causing British woolens, hardware, and firearms to whet the appetite of the shahs. However, despite Istanbul's initial concerns over Moscow's conquest of Kazan and Astrakhan, it did not make containing Muscovite ambitions a priority, as it was engaged with the Habsburg power in the west and Persia in the east. By the early

1560s, the sultan had adopted a more aggressive attitude and laid claim to Astrakhan, but war was avoided because of the shared geopolitical and commercial interests of Moscow and Istanbul.

Finally, the Ottomans established their suzerainty over the Crimean khanate between 1575 and 1578. The long war that followed, from 1579 to 1590, resulted in the establishment of direct Ottoman rule over much of the Caucasus. This development was all the more important for Moscow in that it had already suffered two humiliating defeats by Poland-Lithuania and Sweden in the 1570s and early 1580s. From that time, the Nogays experienced increasing divisions and were ultimately debilitated by the arrival of the Kalmyks in the 1630s, although this did not prevent them from launching raids into Russia. Moscow thus undertook a new initiative: It began construction of fortification lines in the south. The construction went along with colonization of the region and explains the refusal of central and local authorities to return fugitive peasants from central Russian areas to their legitimate masters, which we discuss later on.

As in previous centuries, the captive-ransoming and slave trade followed the same paths as other commercial trade. Horse trade was particularly important for the local Muscovite economy and its military, like it had been for centuries in the north-south axes, but it acquired increasing commercial and political significance at this time. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the horse trade was strictly controlled by the Russian authorities and was transacted in several Russian towns along the Volga. The horses were sold to the Russians by the Nogays and Kalmyks, who also sold them to the Crimean khanate. From 1551 to 1564 the Nogays bought an average of 7,400 horses a year for selling purposes.⁹³ The Russian market also held enormous lure for the nomads; in the sixteenth century, the Nogays sought to obtain a wide variety of products (furs, woolens, armor, etc.) from Moscow, while in the seventeenth century the Kalmyks increasingly sold their horses to buy many of these items on the Russian markets.

The horse trade was important for the local Muscovite economy and its military, but it was the trade with the Muslim powers in Central Asia and with the rising Ottoman Empire that linked Muscovy to world markets.⁹⁴ Russians sold the horses they acquired from steppe powers to the Crimeans and Ottomans. Merchants from the Central Asian khanates—Crimea, Persia, and the Ottoman Empire—brought merchandise to Moscow, while Russian merchants traveled to the Crimea; the Ottoman cities of Istanbul, Bursa, Azov, and Kaffa were the most important trade centers along a well-established trade route.

Most important, exports of silk from Iran in the seventeenth century confirmed this new role of Russia. At that time raw silk produced in Iran was funneled into local Persian industry and was exported to India, the Ottoman Empire, and Europe. Historians have mostly studied exports from Iran to Aleppo and Venice, and the decline of these exports during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (because of the British East India Company's expansion and its traffic between China, India, and Europe) has thus been cited as confirmation of the "rise of the West," namely Britain and its industry.⁹⁵ But this conclusion does not take into account the considerable increase in the export of raw silk from Iran to Russia through Astrakhan, which varied from 20,000 to 100,000 kilograms per year at the turn of the eighteenth century.⁹⁶

In other words, Moscow entered routes already in place, running east to west, north to southeast (India), and north to south (the Ottoman Empire). At the same time, these routes and this traffic associated slaves with other goods in accordance with long-established practices and routes, a situation quite similar to that in the Mediterranean area. As Mikhail Khodarkovsky has put it, if the steppe was akin to the sea and the Russian towns to ports, the nomads were the seamen. Many of the seamen were pirates living off the "ports" or looting the passing ship convoys.⁹⁷ This indeed was the principal goal of the Russian government—to turn the pirates into merchants; and it was in this regard that the Russian authorities acted exactly as Ottoman and European powers had in the Mediterranean.⁹⁸ Pirates were alternately encouraged and stopped, coopted and fought against, in the competitive rise of territorial states. Nomadic economies and powers were still inseparable from those of the neighboring sedentary societies. It is on these grounds that Perdue correctly stresses the necessity of overcoming later historiographic constructions of both the Russians and Chinese and of seeing the rise of stable territorial powers (China and Russia) as having helped secure the area, putting a halt to long-term nomadic raids and stemming powers that were detrimental to development and growth. While accepting this argument, one may still wonder whether (as per Perdue's argument) political and military instability in Eurasia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—and not European expansion—reduced long-distance trade while benefitting the market for captives.⁹⁹ Moscow's expansion in the south and changes in regional geopolitics certainly brought the trade with Crimea and the Ottoman Empire to a halt, at least for commercial items, while the traffic in captives and slaves increased because of this instability. At the same time, Muscovy competed with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Tver', and with the successor khanates.¹⁰⁰ Kazan fell in 1552, but this did not

mark the beginning of Russian conquest of the steppe; Muscovite rulers sought first to expand westward at the expense of the Polish-Lithuanian state. During this effort they occasionally allied with different khanates to exploit the latter's internal divisions. In 1501, during the campaign in Lithuania, Crimean Tatars seized 50,000 Lithuanian captives.

Russia once again moved eastward, in the second half of the sixteenth century, expanding into Siberia and certain Cossack areas, namely the territory of the Iaik Cossacks.¹⁰¹ The resulting prisoners of war and captives held for ransom fed a consistent market for slaves. The Russian word for captive, *iasyr* or *esyrr*, was a direct transliteration of the Turkish and Arab equivalent as used in Central Asia and the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰²

In the fourteenth century, some 2,000 Slavic slaves a year were sold by Crimean Tatars to Ottomans, with that figure rising in the fifteenth century. The Tatars either bought them at Central Asian markets or captured them themselves.¹⁰³ Slave-raiding forays into Muscovy reached crisis proportions after 1475, when the Ottomans took over the Black Sea slave trade from the Genoese and the Crimeans began slave-raiding as a major industry, especially between 1514 and 1654. In 1529, half of the slaves in the Ottoman Crimea were identified as coming from Ukraine and Muscovy, and between 150,000 and 200,000 Russians were captured in the first half of the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁴

Peace treaties often led to the release of slaves. In 1618, for example, the Nogays signed a treaty with Moscow and released 15,000 Russian captives.¹⁰⁵ In 1661 the Kalmyks did the same with Russian captives they had previously acquired from the Tatars; in 1678, these same Kalmyks signed a treaty with Moscow and again returned Russian prisoners.¹⁰⁶ There were specific criteria for redeeming Russian captives, thus, in 1661 the Kalmyk Mongols agreed to free Russians whom they had acquired through Tatars, and in 1678 they agreed to return Russians whom they had taken captive themselves.¹⁰⁷ The Russians were redeeming slaves from Turkistan even as late as the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁰⁸

The *Ulozhenie* of 1649 devoted a whole section (number 8) to the issue of ransoming Russian captives,¹⁰⁹ and a ransom tax was introduced for this purpose in 1551 and remained in place until 1679. Ransom was stipulated in accordance with the captive's status. For example, the ransom for a high-ranking Russian boyar, B. V. Sheremetev, was estimated at 60,000 silver thaler. At the other extreme, peasants were ransomed at about 15 rubles per person.¹¹⁰ Those who were not ransomed became slaves and were assigned various duties. In the Crimea, some were employed in agriculture or used as interpreters and guides to lead war parties into Russian territory. Those sold on the slave markets of the Ottoman Empire or Central Asian khanates were employed as craftsmen, laborers, and

domestics.¹¹¹ Fugitives returning to Russia often gained the protection of local authorities, thereby provoking vehement protests from the Nogays leaders who laid claim to these fugitives as their property.¹¹²

Conversely, above all during the seventeenth century, Russians seized war prisoners and captives for ransom from both Muslim and Catholic areas. According to the *Sudebnik* of 1550, captives were intended to serve the elite as administrative assistants or servants. Their maximum term of service was supposed to be until the death of their master. They could also be redeemed by an agreement between the Russian state and their country of origin, and if they converted to Orthodox Christianity, they could also be emancipated, although this was not mandatory. Such a manumitting decree could also be issued by the state. This occurred in 1558 when the government ordered the freeing of any war slave who converted to Russian Orthodoxy, which allowed the former slave to enter the tsar's service.

If war captives were not redeemed or returned to their country of origin, they then entered the category of full or limited *kholopstvo*. Since the early seventeenth century, the state had tried to compile a register for military captives so that the central authorities could eventually return them to their home countries, in case of a diplomatic agreement. However, several sources note the problems the Moscow authorities encountered in ensuring compliance with these norms, and servitude for war captives persisted. After the conclusion of the Smolensk War, in October 1634, the government ordered the release of all Poles and Lithuanians who had been seized. However, the effect of this provision was quite limited, and in 1637–38 another decree was promulgated on foreign military captives, insisting that they had the right to choose whether to return home or stay in Muscovy.

After the Thirteen Years War (1654–67), Lithuanian and Polish captives were distributed to members of the upper and middle service classes but were not registered by the latter group, who tended, in practice, to treat them as genuine slaves.¹¹³ In 1655, Poles, Lithuanians, and miscellaneous others, both adults and children, were openly sold in the streets of Moscow.¹¹⁴ As a result of this war, many people were sold in Russia, at times becoming *kholopy*.¹¹⁵ The Nogays, who had joined the Muscovite forces, purchased German and Polish prisoners in Moscow.¹¹⁶ Muslims were frequently captured and occasionally sold, in violation of Islamic law; the Ottoman and Islamic authorities therefore sent injunctions to Moscow in order to redeem them without compensation.¹¹⁷

Thus in 1690 the Russian government returned to its position of 1556, decreeing that military captives were to be manumitted by the Slavery Chancellery upon the death of their owners. As in previous times,

this process went along with a renewal of trade routes. From the late sixteenth century on, delegations of traders had regularly traveled from Central Asia to Muscovy and—though less often—in the opposite direction. Bukharan interest in trade with Western Siberia also dates from the late sixteenth century. By the late seventeenth century, Muscovy was trading with China itself, often through the mediation of Bukharan traders who were familiar with all the major routes between Muscovy and China. Some of these routes followed traditional itineraries, leading down along the Volga to Central Asia and then on to Xinjiang and China.¹¹⁸

Fueled by this traffic, Siberian fairs emerged strongly during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; at Irbit, Russian traders, native Tartars, and Bashkir merchants exchanged horses and cattle from the southern Urals for Chinese goods (tea, cloth, silk). Persians, Bukharans, and Greeks also attended the fair, where servants and perhaps slaves were also sold.¹¹⁹ By the late eighteenth century, Orenburg had surpassed Astrakhan as the largest market on the steppe, a center for bartering horses and sheep and trading luxury items from the Far East. With the help of peddlers from Bukhara, Russians revived the caravan commerce.¹²⁰ This was the case not only for the northern Eurasian caravan routes but also for the Indo-Iranian routes, which continued operating during the eighteenth century.¹²¹ The establishment of the Orenburg line did much to advance Russia's Asian economic frontier and increase Russo–Central Asian trade. At the same time, the Orenburg line was also a fortified frontier and a welcoming gateway for newly created trade opportunities. Diplomatic archives show that the Russian administration made efforts to motivate Asian merchants to shift their trade from the Iran–Caspian–Astrakhan line to overland routes leading through Central Asia to Orenburg.¹²² Over time, Asian merchants began to favor Orenburg, Omsk, and Ufa, which in turn caused a shift in the relative importance of different areas in Central Asia. In particular, in the middle of the eighteenth century, one-third of the total Persian silk production was directed to Moscow.¹²³ Russians also expressed increasing interest in the Kokand khanate (in Uzbekistan) because of the role played by Kokandi merchants in the trade between Orenburg and Tien Shan, Yarkand, and other Xinjiang cities. The khanate became all the more important when cotton crops were developed in the Fergana Valley. Tashkent's role in international trade increased, along with the role of “colonial” Russian production of textile-substitute imports from Iran and India. At the same time, Russians used their influence in steppe politics to implement a rather successful strategy of divide and rule, in particular among the Kazakhs, which, in the short term, enhanced the market in captives. Russians could still be seized as captives or slaves in the early eighteenth century, though with less and

less frequency. In 1717, the Kalmyks, this time temporarily allied with the Kuban Nogays, brought back 12,000 captives seized in the middle Volga provinces. In 1742, the Karakalpaks captured 1,000 Russian women and children in Siberia, and between 3,000 and 4,000 Russians are estimated to have been captives in their hands.¹²⁴ This occurred at a moment in history when the Russian authorities were adopting an ambivalent attitude toward the Kazakhs, wishing as they did to dominate the area.¹²⁵

However, by the end of the eighteenth century the only slaves and ransom captives in the Russian Empire were Tatars or Circassians. The highest-volume traffic in slave chattel and captives was with the Ottoman Empire. The Russian Empire interacted with Islamic regions where chattel slavery was common and regarded as the only permissible form of coerced labor under Islamic law. Muslim Tatars of the Crimea raided widely for Russian subjects as well as other eastern Slavs, Poles, and Lithuanians, and they exported most of their captives to the Ottomans.¹²⁶ In 1529, half of all the slaves in the Ottoman Crimea were identified as coming from Ukraine and Muscovy; the other half was the Circassians.¹²⁷ From the 1570s on, about 20,000 slaves were sold annually in the port of Caffa on the Black Sea.¹²⁸ Until the early seventeenth century, Russians and above all Cossacks also sold captives to the Tatars or directly to the Ottomans.¹²⁹ The Ottoman rules on slave trade distinguished between slaves who were brought from the Tatar and Circassian areas and those from Ottoman territories such as Azov and Taman. The tax on the latter was half of that on the former group.¹³⁰

The Russian Empire also gradually incorporated areas in which local populations had long practiced various forms of servitude and slave trading.¹³¹ Many inhabitants of the Caucasus—especially Christian Georgians and Armenians, together with heterodox Muslim Circassians—were sent as slaves to the Ottoman Empire, whether overland or across the Black Sea. For the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century, the Ottomans imported between 16,000 and 18,000 such slaves every year.¹³² Some male slaves entered the servile administrative elite of the Ottoman Empire, while many women ended up in the harems of the rich and powerful. Circassian families at times sold their own children to intermediaries, who transported them to Ottoman territory. Under British pressure, the flow of slaves from the Caucasus was suspended in 1854, but it grew again after the end of the Crimean War. Moreover, the brutal Russian conquest of Circassia led to an influx of between half a million and a million refugees into the Ottoman domains between 1854 and 1865, of whom perhaps a tenth were of servile status.¹³³ These massive arrivals increased the number of agricultural slaves, which had been relatively small until then (except in Egypt and Oriental Anatolia).¹³⁴

In short, real slaves were present in Russia. As in other historical situations, they were typically taken in frontier raids, where boundaries were uncertain, or during military operations in the strictest sense. From a geopolitical standpoint, these forms of slavery were linked to conflicts within the Islamic world and between Russia and Central Asian powers, as well as to the conflicts that tore Europe apart in the seventeenth century.¹³⁵ At the same time, this phenomenon did not mean that this large geographical area was backward, for flourishing trade and vital markets developed despite raids and military expeditions. The market for slaves and the markets for products were complementary, underscoring the fact that nomadic powers and territorial states were much more integrated with one another than usually stated in the historiography. One cannot simply associate captives and slaves with political instability or, for that matter, with stable powers, insofar as bondage could enhance or burden either configuration.

Slavery in Central Eurasia: Its Estimation and Overall Interpretation

Over the long run, the history of bondage in Russia and Eurasia provides useful insights into a number of historical questions: the link between bondage and war captives and between slavery and other forms of bondage; the dimension of bondage in Central Asian history; and the long-term links between Central Asia, Russia, the Turkish-Ottoman powers, India, and the Mediterranean area.

On a more abstract level, these topics lead to a discussion of several interlinked perspectives, i.e., the historical relations between nomadic powers, pirates, and national territorial states, that is, the monopoly of violence and the emergency of legal rights; and the relations between bondage, coerced labor, and economic development.

Our main answers to these questions may be summarized as follows: Not all Russian *khology* can be identified as chattel slaves, as all but a small minority had no hereditary status; they benefited from limited legal rights; and they could inherit and marry. The term *kholopstvo* expressed a form of bondage, quite common in other contexts in Asia and Africa and linked to two major phenomena: tensions and competition among the elites for the control of labor and mutual and hierarchical forms of dependence within the society. *Khology* had far fewer rights than their masters, but they still had legal rights. The master had some obligations as defined in the contracts of *kholopstvo*. If we term these relations “slavery,” we miss the specificity of Russia in comparison with transatlantic or classical Roman slavery, and we compromise our understanding of

the dynamics of Russian society. Any multiplication of different forms of bondage and relations of dependence reflects the way social links are established. *Kholopstvo*, like forms of bondage in other Asian and African societies, often was a form of inclusion, not of exclusion, in society (as chattel slavery is). This explains why, as in these other societies, the *kholopstvo* form of bondage applied to people of the same ethnicity and religion as their masters. From this standpoint, Russia does not constitute an exception in the worldwide history of slavery and bondage. Chattel slavery was mostly imposed on non-Russians. According to Hellie, in 1725, when Peter the Great abolished *kholopstvo*, *kholopy* constituted around 10 percent of the Russian population. However, their importance changed over time and from area to area. For example, the Moscow military census of 1638 listed 7,672 households containing 10,787 adult males, of whom approximately 1,735, or 16.1 percent, were *kholopy*. About 15.1 percent of the households reported having *kholopy*.¹³⁶ In a broader census taken in 1678, in ninety-three central provinces, between 75,839 and 79,855 adult males were listed as *zadvornnye* and *delovye liudi* (domestic servants) out of a total rural population (excluding those on properties that belonged to the royal court) of between 1,988,622 and 2,041,277 males, for proportions of between 3.7 and 4.0 percent.¹³⁷

The evaluation of war captives and slaves in Inner Asia is more complicated than that of *kholopy*. Clearly, no definitive census of this trade is possible, since any research must depend upon suspect observations. Some of the observations are based upon custom reports, which represent the closest evidence we have to the working records and from which the best statistics are derived. However, unlike the accounts of merchants themselves, custom records only reflect the portion of a trade that is visible to government officials, and we are dealing here with regions where governments had only limited control over private-sector activities. Moreover, such records tell us only about the portion of trade that was legal. Even worse, external trade was a residual of local trades. Much of the slave trade was conducted by land, and in this case evidence is scanty. We may therefore only give some estimations, cautiously using sources that have already been exploited. On the basis of what we have seen in the previous pages, Genoa's imports of slaves from Caffa are estimated at around 250,000, between the 1370s and the 1470s; Venice is estimated to have imported another 100,000 slaves from Tana and the Balkans. Some of them were sold in Italy, but most in Egypt. However, current research suggests we must be skeptical of these figures; Caffa customs data did not make any distinction between slaves and other passengers, and the first detailed analyses of the archives of daily registers and ships confirm the suspicion that the number of slaves per boat and those declared at the

customs office were far fewer than usually stated (hundreds rather than thousands per year).¹³⁸

Quantitative information on the trade route between India, Persia, and Inner Asia is even scantier than for Genoa and Venice. As a whole, we can estimate that there were about 200,000 Indian slaves in Bukhara, to which we may add other 200,000 Iranian slaves.

Ottoman and Russian archives provide good data on third network, connecting inner Asia, Russia, and Crimea. Russians seized by Tatars between the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century are estimated at about 200,000. Many of them were sold to the Ottomans, but an undetermined portion was kept in Inner Asia and the Crimea. In particular, between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries, Crimean Tatars sold at least 2,000 slaves a year, or a total of 400,000, to the Ottomans.

A compilation of estimates indicates that Crimean Tatars seized about 1,750,000 Ukrainians, Poles, and Russians in the following centuries, from 1468 to 1695.¹³⁹ Crimean export statistics indicate that around 10,000 slaves a year, including Circassians, went to the Ottomans, suggesting a total of approximately 2,500,000 from 1450 to 1700.¹⁴⁰

From 1800 to 1909, the Ottomans imported some 200,000 slaves from the Caucasus, mainly Circassians, with another 100,000 or so arriving with their Circassian masters in the 1850s and 1860s.¹⁴¹ On average, between 1800 and 1875, the Ottomans imported 18,000 slaves per year from Caucasus and Crimea, for an overall figure of 1,350,000 slaves.

The available, but still-incomplete, data provide the following numbers for the exports of slaves from Inner Asia and Russia: 4,000,000 to the Ottoman Empire; 400,000 through Venice's and Genoa's ports on the Black Sea; and 700,000 Persians and Indians traded in Central Asia. We lack data on internal trade, caravan trade, and the number of people who died during transportation. If we want start from a lower hypothesis, we may affirm that the Inner Asian slave trade that escaped customs statistics might reach half of this latter trade. We therefore come to about 6,000,000–6,500,000 people traded as slaves in Central Asia between the eleventh and the nineteenth century. This figure surely underestimates reality; however, even our minimal estimates permit some conclusions. First, the slave trade in Central Asia and Russia was the most important in the premodern era, and it does not rank far below the importance of later slave trade in other areas: eleven million people were traded along the trans-Saharan, Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean routes between the seventh and the twentieth century, as were eleven million slaves on the transatlantic route, from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century.¹⁴²

From this standpoint, the history of slavery in Russia and Central Asia confirms what previous studies on Mediterranean slavery have already shown, that is, the importance of precolonial slavery, in particular outside the transatlantic route, and furthermore, the importance of these early routes in terms of the organization of labor, legal rules, and transnational powers. The slave trade in Russia and Central Asia was connected to the stabilization of territorial powers, the evolution of warfare, and the monopoly on violence. Indeed, the history of war captives and *kholopy* in Russia is linked to the incredible expansion of Muscovy and Russia and to the evolution of inner social relationships. Between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries, captives and slaves were commonly exchanged between the khanates, Safavid Persia, the Byzantine Empire, India, Genoa, and Venice. The slave trade accompanied general trade. Previous historiography estimated a decline of the caravan trade in Central Asia in connection with the development of the sea trade in the Mediterranean¹⁴³ and then in connection with European powers' penetration into the Indian Ocean.¹⁴⁴ A number of studies have recently reevaluated the efficiency of inland trade and confirmed that Central Eurasian trade did not decline after the seventeenth century but only shifted its objects, tools, leading groups, centers, and axes. The Mongols' power had guaranteed trade for centuries; their decline did not mean a decline of Central Asia, insofar as the Russians progressively took their place, while in the south, over all those centuries, the Safavids, Mughals, and the Ottoman Empire also ensured trade and economic growth.¹⁴⁵ The horse trade, mentioned previously, was central: between 60,000 and 100,000 horses were imported each year from Inner Asia to Kabul—and from there sent to India.¹⁴⁶ In the eighteenth century, this trade reached 400,000 to 800,000 horses per year.¹⁴⁷

Textiles were the other major item traded in Inner Asia. In the mid-seventeenth century, India sent 25–30,000 camel-loads of cotton to Iran. This trade did not disappear with the arrival of the British, because as the imports of Indian textile to Britain drastically increased in the eighteenth century, Indian production increased to meet British and Central Asian demand. The silk trade between India, Iran, and Russia was also important; as mentioned earlier, Iran sold about half its raw-silk exports to Russia and the other half to Britain, at the turn of the eighteenth century. However these figures are scattered and incomplete; most new evidence comes from archeology and is hard to quantify. More generally, statistics from the Western trading companies and non-Western merchants in Inner Asia leave out data from Russia and the Ottoman Empire. Even if the Ottoman Empire's economic decline in the face of the Western

expansion did not clearly materialize before the eighteenth century, in the seventeenth century real wages in Istanbul and other Ottoman towns were already lagging behind those of major Western European areas.¹⁴⁸ Pointing out that Inner Asian trade did not collapse with the “rise of the West” is not meant to encourage a debate on the great divergence and relative rates of growth between Western Europe and Asia. Even if, for example, the importance of the textile and horse trade between India and Inner Asia is relevant to the debate about the impact of British expansion on India, and, eventually, on the Ottoman Empire, such topics lie beyond the scope of this book. Instead, I have stressed the persisting vitality of the Inner Asian trade in its connection with geopolitical dynamics and the slave trade in order to understand the main features of the expansion of the Muscovy and the rise of the Russian Empire. Starting from this, we are ready to face the main issues directly related to our investigation: the relationship between the slave trade and general trade in Inner Asia with the rise of serfdom in Russia, and the temporality and rhythm of the ensuing Russian growth as compared to that of the West. Indeed, Russian expansion in the steppes went along with the increasing importance of war captives (in institutional and economic terms, as we have shown) and, then, with the end of *khology* and the generalization of new forms of bondage, namely serfdom, in the Russian Empire.

Notes

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1. Some references on this topic from a bibliography: Claude Meillassoux, *Anthropologie de l'esclavage* (Paris: PUF, 1986); Moses Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (New York: Viking Press, 1980); Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, eds., *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977); Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University Of North Carolina Press, 1944); Bush, *Serfdom and Slavery*; Engerman, *Terms of Labor*; Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Paul Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). On the translation of Islamic institutions with slavery: Ehud Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1998).
2. Martin Klein, ed., *Breaking the Chains: Slavery, Bondage, and Emancipation in Modern Africa and Asia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).
3. For further discussion of this topic see Jack Goldstone, “The Rise of the West or Not? A Revision to Socio-economic History,” *Sociological Theory* 18, 2 (2000): 175–94.
4. Hellie, *Slavery in Russia in Russia*.
5. Richard Hellie, “Recent Soviet Historiography on Medieval and Early Modern Russian Slavery,” *Russian Review* 35, 1 (1976): 1–36; Herbert Leventer, “Comments on Richard

- Hellie's "Recent Soviet . . ." *Russian Review* 36, 1 (1977): 64–67; Richard Hellie, "Reply," *Russian Review* 36, 1 (1977): 68–75.
6. Meillassoux, *Anthropologie*; Finley, *Esclavage*; Miers and Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa*; Engerman, *Terms of Labor*.
 7. Among the scholars who have defended this argument: on India: Gyan Prakash, *Bonded Histories: Genealogies of Labor Servitude in Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); on Africa: Paul Lovejoy, *The Ideology of Slavery in Africa* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1981); Paul Lovejoy, Toyin Fayola, *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism in Africa* (Asmara: Africa World Press, 2003). On China: Anders Hansson, *Chinese Outcast: Discrimination and Emancipation in Late Imperial China* (Leiden: Brill, 1996); Harriet Zurndorfer, *Change and Continuity in Chinese Local History* (Leiden: Brill, 1989); Chris M. Wilbur, *Slavery in China During the Former Han Dynasty* (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1943).
 8. UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); ILO, *International Labor Conference, Papers and Proceedings* (Geneva, 2001); IPEC, *Every Child Counts: New Global Estimates on Child Labor* (Geneva: BIT, 2002); Suzanne Miers, "Contemporary Forms of Slavery," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 34, 3 (2000): 714–47, special issue: *On Slavery and Islam in African History: A Tribute to Martin Klein*.
 9. Fayola and Lovejoy, *Pawnship*.
 10. Engerman, *Terms of Labor*; Northrup, *Indentured Labor*.
 11. Peter Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005); Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500–1800* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002); T. J. Barfield, *The Nomadic Alternative* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993); Nicolas di Cosmo, "Ancient Inner Asian Nomads: Their Economic Basis and Its Significance in Chinese History," *Journal of Asian Studies* 53 (1993): 1092–126; Nicolas di Cosmo, "State Formation and Periodization in Inner Asian History," *Journal of World History* 10 (1999): 1–40; David Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia* (Malden: Blackwell, 1998); Samuel Adrien Adshhead, *Central Asia in World History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993); André Gunder Frank, *The Centrality of Central Asia* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1992); Gary Seaman and Daniel Marks, eds., *Rulers from the Steppe: State Formation on the Eurasian Periphery* (Los Angeles: Ethnographics Press, 1991).
 12. Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1992* (Cambridge: Blackwell 1990).
 13. Douglass North, *Structure and Change in Economic History* (New York: Norton 1981); Eric Jones, *Growth Recurring: Economic Change in World History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988).
 14. Jane Burbank, Fred Cooper, *Empires in World History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2010).
 15. Rossiiskii Gosudastvennyi Arkhiv Drevnikh Aktov (henceforth RGADA), *Kholopii prikaz*, fond 210 (Razriadnyi prikaz), fond 396 (*archiv oruzhennoi palaty*, opis'1, chasty 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 11, 24, 26–33, 35, 36, opis'2, ch. 2).
 16. RGADA, fond 210 and 141, opis'1, Dokumenty tsarskogo arkhiva i posol'skogo prikaza; fond 109 (snosheniia Rossii s Bukharoi), opis'1, 1643; fond 123 (Snosheniia Rossii s Krymom), opis'2 in particular; fond 127 (Snosheniia Rossii s Nogaikimi Tatarami).
 17. At the same time, as we will see, even in Perdue's case the problem is that the exclusive accent put on Russian and Chinese sources led scholars to underestimate the importance of the Safavid and Persian power in the area. This constitutes a major distortion of present-day historiography, due mostly to the over attention devoted to China and to the quasi-disappearance of specialists on ancient Safavids and Persian powers (and languages).

18. Halil Inalcik, *Sources and Studies on the Ottoman Black Sea: The Customs Register of Caffa, 1487–1990* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).
19. Archivio di stato di Genova (henceforth ASG), Massaria Caffae, 1374, fol. 1–354. See G. Bratianu, *Actes des notaires genois de Pira et de Caffa de la fin du XIIIe siècle (1281–1290)* (Bucharest: Académie Roumaine, Etudes et Recherches, ii, 1927); Michel Balard, *Gênes et L'Outre-Mer, I: Les Actes de Caffa du notaire Lamberto di Sambuceto 1289–1290* (Paris and The Hague: Mouton, 1973). For later testimony, see Giorgio Balbi, “Atti rogati a Caffa da Nicolo’ Beltrame (1343–44),” in Giorgio Balbi, Stefano Raiteri, *Notai genovesi in Oltremare: Atti rogati a Caffà e a Licostomo (sec. XIV)*, (Genoa: Collana Storica di Fonti e Studi, 14, 1973),
20. Giorgio Pistarino, *Notai genovesi in Oltremare. Atti rogati a Chilia da Antonio di Ponzo (1362–69)* (Genoa: Collana Storica di Fonti e Studi, I 3, 1971).
21. Marshall Poe, “What did Russians Mean when They Called Themselves Slaves of the Tsar?” *Slavic Review* 57, 3 (1998): 585–608.
22. For example, *Russko-dagenstanskii otnosheniia XVII-pervoi chetverti XVIII vv: Dokumenty i materialy* [Russian-Daghestan relations during the seventeenth and the first quarter of the eighteenth century, documents and materials] (Makhachkala: Dagenstanskoe kn. Izd. 1958, vol. 79, p. 174), quoted in Khodarkovsky, *Russia’s Steppe Frontier*, 37.
23. Aleksandr’ I. Iakovlev, *Kholopstvo i kholopy v moskovskom gosudarstve XVII v.* [Kholopstvo and kholopy in the Russian state, seventeenth century] (Moscow: Nauka, 1943), 16–17.
24. This expression has usually been translated as “Any free person marrying a slave becomes a slave” (Hellie, *Slavery in Russia*, 93). This translation takes for granted that *kholop* meant slave and that *rab* was synonymous with *kholop*. But we have seen that the meaning of *rab* changed over time; also, if both *rab* and *kholop* meant slave, then why does the quoted expression contain no reference to a free person and the proposed interpretation assume such a reference (except if one argues that a *kholop* was a free person)? On the contrary, one overcomes these difficulties by accepting the argument that *kholop* signified a form of bondage, that *rab* expressed a particular bondage, and that, in the case of marriage between a *kholop* and a *rab*, they were jointly responsible for each other’s obligation.
25. “Ole strashno ciudo I divno, brat’e, poidosha synove na ottsa, a ottsy na deti, brat nab rata, raby na gospodinu, a gospodin na raby,” *Lavrente’skaia letopis’ pod 1216*, izd 1897, p. 419, quoted in Iakovlev, *Kholopstvo*, 29.
26. Mikhail F. Vladimirkii-Budanov, *Obzor istorii russkogo prava* [Summary of the history of Russian law], 6th ed. (Kiev: Izdanie knigoprodstva N. Ia. Oglobina, 1909); *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar’ Brokgauz-Efron* [Encyclopaedia Brokgauz-Efron], vol. XVI (Saint Petersburg: Brokgauz, 1895), see entry for *krest’ianie* (peasant), 681. See also *Slovar’ russkogo iazika XVIII veka* [Dictionary of the Russian language of the eighteenth century] (Saint Petersburg: Sorokin, 1998), vol. 10, entry for *krepostnoi*; Hellie, *Slavery in Russia*; Evgeniia I. Kolycheva, *Kholopstvo i krepostnichestvo, konets XV-XVI vek* [The *kholopy* and enslavement, end of the fifteenth century to sixteenth century] (Moscow: Nauka, 1971); Viktor M. Paneiakh, *Kholopstvo v pervoi polovine XVII veke* [Kholopstvo in the first half of the seventeenth century] (Leningrad: Nauka, 1984).
27. Iakovlev, *Kholopy*, 15.
28. Daniel Kaiser, trans. and ed., *The Russkaia Pravda: The Expanded Redaction in the Laws of Russia*. Series I: *The Laws of Rus’, Tenth to Fifteenth Centuries* (Salt Lake City: Charles Schlacks, 1992), 31–32.
29. Kaiser, *Russkaia Pravda*, article 110.
30. *Ibid.*, articles 117, 119, 120.
31. Nancy Kollmann, *By Honor Bound: State and Society in Early Modern Russia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999).
32. Out of 2,499 documents containing the word *kholop* or *kholopstvo*, 2,116 refer to the *kabal’noe* variety (Hellie, *Slavery in Russia*, 33). Examples of contracts are in the manuscript

- section of the Saltykov-Shchedrin Library in Saint Petersburg, *Obsbchee sobranie gramot*, n. 1727, 1937, 1941, 2017, 2019, 2348, 2406, 2635, 2672, 3026, 3081, 3392, 3475, 3486.
33. Hellie, *Slavery in Russia*, 15.
 34. *Dokumenty i dogorovnye gramoty velikikh i udel'nykh kniazei XIV-XVI vv.* [Documents and acts decreed by princes, fourteenth to sixteenth century], ed. L. V. Cherepnin and S. V. Bakhrushin (Moscow: Nauka, 1950), 409, document n. 98.
 35. Paneiakh, *Kholopstvo*; Viktor Paneiakh, "Ulozhenie 1597 g. o kholopstve" [*Ulozhenie of 1597 on kholopstvo*], *Istoricheskie Zapiski* 77 (1955): 154–89.
 36. In 1609, this was reduced from six to five months, and was further reduced to three months in 1649: *Akty istoricheskie, sobrannye i izdannye arkhograficheskoiu kommissieiu* [Historical documents, collected and published by the Archeographical Commission], 5 vols. (Saint Petersburg, 1841–43), vol. 2, n. 85.
 37. Paneiakh, "Ulozhenie 1597," 161.
 38. Paneiakh, *Kholopstvo*.
 39. Hellie, *Slavery in Russia*, 59.
 40. Hellie, *Enserfment and Military Change*.
 41. Paneiakh, *Kabal'noe*; Iakovlev, *Kholopstvo*.
 42. Hellie, *Slavery in Russia*, 9–11.
 43. Iakovlev, *Kholopstvo*, 316.
 44. *Opisanie dokumentov i bumag, khraniashchikhsia v moskovskom arkhive ministerstva iustitsii* [Inventory of documents and papers kept in the Moscow archives of the Ministry of Justice], vol. 15 (Saint Petersburg, 1908).
 45. Arkadii Man'kov, *Ulozhenie 1649. Kodeks feodal'nogo prava Rossii* [The legal code of 1649: the code of feudal law in Russia] (Leningrad: Nauka, 1980), 113–14; Petr Ivanovich Ivanov, *Alfavitnyi ukazatel' familii i lits, upominaemykh v boiarkikh knigach, khraniashchikhsia v I-m otdelenii moskovskogo arkhiva ministerstva iustitsii* [Alphabetical index of families and persons named in the *boyari* books, conserved in the first section of Moscow's Archives of the Ministry of Justice] (Moscow: Ministerstvo Iustitsii, 1853); Iakovlev, *Kholopstvo*: 496–513.
 46. Hellie, *Slavery in Russia*, 211.
 47. Anne Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
 48. Gyan Prakash, "Terms of Servitude: The Colonial Discourse on Slavery and Bondage in India," in *Breaking the Chains: Slavery, Bondage and Emancipation in Modern Africa and Asia*, ed. Martin Klein (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 131–49; Zurndorfer, *Change and Continuity*, notably, chapter 5.
 49. Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition*.
 50. Hellie, *Slavery in Russia*, 194–98.
 51. Aleksei K. Leont'ev, *Obrazovanie prikaznoi sistemy upravleniia v russkom gosudarstve. Iz istorii sozdaniia tsentralizovannogo gosudarstvennogo apparata v kontse XV-pervoi polovine XVI v.* [The formation of chancellery system in the Russian state: history of the formation of the centralized state, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries] (Moscow: Moskovskii Universitet, 1961), 179–92. *Priказы* were settled since 1475; they were primarily branches of the army, but many of them had judicial function. Several dozen *priказы* existed in the 1680s. Peter the Great revitalized, rationalized, and renamed the *priказы* "colleges."
 52. A number of law cases are discussed and fully transcribed in Hellie, *Slavery in Russia*, and in Iakovlev, *Kholopstvo*. Archives of the so-called *kabal'nye* and the *kabal'nye knigi* are in RGADA, *Kholopii prikaz*, fond 210 (Razriadnyi prikaz), fonds 396 (archiv oruzhenoi palaty, opis'1), chasty 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 11, 24, 26–33, 35, 36, opis'2, ch. 2.
 53. Hellie, *Slavery in Russia*, 506.
 54. Kolycheva, *Kholopstvo*; Paneiakh, *Kholopstvo*.
 55. Hellie, *Slavery in Russia*, 423–24.
 56. Iakovlev, *Kholopstvo*, 35.

57. Helle, *Enserfment and Military Change*.
58. Helle, *Slavery in Russia*, 84.
59. Jacques Heers, *Esclaves et domestiques au Moyen Age dans le monde méditerranéen* (Paris: Hachette, 1996), 67; Verlinden, "L'origine de slavus," 97–128; Verlinden, "L'esclavage du sud-est," 18–29; Verlinden, *L'esclavage*; Epstein, *Speaking of Slavery*.
60. Herman Van der Wee, "Structural changes in European Long-distance trade, and particularly in the re-export trade from south to the north, 1350–1750," in *The Rise of Merchant Empires. Long Distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350–1750*, ed. James Tracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 14–33.
61. Roberto Sabatino Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950–1350* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 92.
62. Dennis Deletant, "Genoese, Tatars, and Rumanians at the Mouth of the Danube in the Fourteenth Century," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 62, 4 (1984): 511–30.
63. Epstein, *Speaking of Slavery*; Domenico Gioffré, *Il mercato degli schiavi a Genova nel secolo XV* (Genoa : Bozzi, 1971); Robert Delort, "Quelques précisions sur le commerce des esclaves à Gênes vers la fin du XIVe siècle," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 78, 1 (1966): 215–50.
64. Michel Balard, "Esclavage en Crimée et sources fiscales génoises au XVe siècle," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 22 (1996): 9–17, reprinted in Henri Bresc, ed., *Figures de l'esclave au Moyen-Age et dans le monde moderne. Actes de la table ronde organisée les 27 et 28 octobre 1992 par le Centre d'Histoire sociale et culturelle de l'Occident de l'Université de Paris-X Nanterre* (Paris: Université Paris X 1996), 77–87.
65. Gioffré, *Il mercato*; Francesco Pancero, *Schiavi, servi e villani nell'Italia medievale* (Turin: Paravia, 1999).
66. Gioffré, *Il mercato*.
67. Mikhail V. Kirilov, "Slave Trade in Early Modern Crimea from the Perspective of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources," *Journal of Early Modern History* 11, 1 (2007): 1–32.
68. Geoffrey Vaughan Scammell, *The World Encompassed: The First European Maritime Empires, c. 800–1650* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).
69. Some classical references: Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme*, 3 vols. (Paris: Colin, 1977–79); Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*.
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