

THE CAMBRIDGE WORLD HISTORY
OF SLAVERY

Volume 4: AD 1804–AD 2016

Slavery and coerced labor have been among the most ubiquitous of human institutions both in time – from ancient times to the present – and in place – having existed in virtually all geographic areas and societies. This volume covers the period from the independence of Haiti to modern perceptions of slavery by assembling twenty-eight original essays each written by scholars acknowledged as leaders in their respective fields. Issues discussed include the sources of slaves, the slave trade, the social and economic functioning of slave societies, the responses of slaves to enslavement, efforts to abolish slavery continuing to the present day, the flow of contract labor and other forms of labor control in the aftermath of abolition, and the various forms of coerced labor that emerged in the twentieth century under totalitarian regimes and colonialism.

David Eltis is an Emeritus Professor of History at Emory University and a Research Associate at the Hutchins Center, Harvard University and at the University of British Columbia. His publications include *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (co-authored with David Richardson), *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas*, and *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*.

Stanley L. Engerman is Professor Emeritus at the University of Rochester and a Research Associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research. Among his books are *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (co-authored with Robert William Fogel), *Slavery, Emancipation, and Freedom: Comparative Perspectives*, and *Economic Development in the Americas since 1500: Endowments and Institutions* (co-authored with Kenneth L. Sokoloff).

Seymour Drescher is Distinguished University Professor Emeritus of History and Sociology at the University of Pittsburgh. His numerous publications include: *From Slavery to Freedom: Comparative Studies in the Rise and Fall of Atlantic Slavery*, *The Mighty Experiment: Free Labor vs. Slavery in British Emancipation*, and *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery*.

David Richardson is Professor of Economic History at the University of Hull, and the former Director of the Wilberforce Institute for the study of Slavery and Emancipation. He is co-author (with David Eltis) of the *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, and co-editor of *Routes to Slavery: Direction, Ethnicity and Mortality in the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, *Extending the Frontiers: Essays on the New Transatlantic Slave Trade Database*, and *Networks of Transcultural Exchange: Essays on the Slave Trade in the South Atlantic*.

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VOLUME 4
AD 1804—AD 2016

DAVID ELTIS

Emory University

STANLEY L. ENGERMAN

University of Rochester

SEYMOUR DRESCHER

University of Pittsburgh

DAVID RICHARDSON

University of Hull



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CONTRIBUTORS

Gareth Austin, Professor of Economic History, University of Cambridge

Kevin Bales, Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation

Alan Barenberg, Department of History, Texas Tech University

Laird W. Bergad, Department of Latin American and Puerto Rican Studies, Lehman College, City University of New York

Alex Borucki, Department of History, University of California, Irvine

Gwyn Campbell, Department of History, McGill University

Celso Thomas Castilho, Department of History, Vanderbilt University

Indrani Chatterjee, Department of History, University of Texas, Austin

Peter A. Coclanis, Department of History, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Pamela Crossley, Department of History, Dartmouth College

Seymour Drescher, Department of History, University of Pittsburgh

David Eltis, Department of History, Emory University and the University of British Columbia

Pieter C. Emmer, Department of History, University of Leiden

Stanley L. Engerman, Department of Economics, University of Rochester

Michael Ferguson, Department of Sociology, The New School for Social Research

David Geggus, Department of History, University of Florida

B. W. Higman, School of History, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University

Rosemarijn Hoefte, Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies

Jessica Millward, Department of History, University of California, Irvine

David Northrup, Department of History, Boston College

Shane O'Rourke, Department of History, York University

Robert L. Paquette, Executive Director, Alexander Hamilton Institute

João José Reis, Departamento de História, Universidade de Federal da Bahia

David Richardson, Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation

Richard Roberts, Department of History, Stanford University

Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, Department of History, Tufts University (deceased)

Pamela Scully, Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Emory University

Alessandro Stanziani, Department of Sociology, École des hautes études en sciences sociales

James Brewer Stewart, Department of History, Macalester College

Ehud R. Toledano, Department of Middle Eastern and African History, Tel Aviv University

Kerry Ward, Department of History, Rice University

Rudolph T. Ware III, Department of History, University of Michigan

SERIES EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth volume of *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, exploring the various manifestations of coerced labor in Africa, Asia, and the Americas between the formal creation of the new nation of Haiti and the end of the twentieth century. Slavery has been among the most ubiquitous of all human institutions, across time and place, from earliest history until, some would argue, the present day. Yet its durability and ubiquity are not widely recognized and, where they are, they seem poorly understood by the general public and scholars alike. A central aim of these volumes, which cover many different times and places, is to help to place the existence and nature of slavery against the backdrop of the broader human social condition.

Slavery has appeared in many different forms and is not always easy to separate from other forms of coerced labor. Nevertheless, there are basic similarities that emerge from the contributions that follow. Most critical of these is the ownership of one human by another, and the ability to buy and sell the human chattel such ownership creates. A second common characteristic is the fact that chattel status is a heritable condition passed down through the mother. Such characteristics are not to be found in the more general category of “coerced labor” as normally practiced. The latter typically involves a general loss of citizenship rights, but does not necessarily mean ownership of one person by another and inherited status. Some scholars regard slavery as part of a spectrum of coerced labor and dependency, but the institution has maintained a distinctive legal existence in almost all societies.