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Introduction

AFRICA AND SLAVERY

SLAVERY IS notorious as a system of economic exploitation. Yet how slavery has underpinned political rule is much less well-known. More than any other part of the world, Africa's history shows how slavery provided a path to power via ties of war and trade. Africa was distinctive because from much earlier than elsewhere, political developments inside the continent were crucially shaped by outside relations. The most important of these were the ties of slavery. Rather than being passive victims of the slave trades, in the four centuries preceding colonization, African rulers and traders dominated as well as profited from their dealings with the European and Muslim worlds. Selling people as property became first an advantage and then an imperative for political survival in Africa. By the late nineteenth century, however, this brutal trade had fostered a cycle of self-destruction that paved the way for the conquest of the continent.

There is a growing realization that telling the history of Europe and the Americas depends on acknowledging Africans' place within this story. So far, though, this has not led back to Africa itself as often as it should. Without some knowledge of



MAP 1. The African continent

this history of Africa in context, and lacking a recognition of the tight links between power and slavery in Africa, it is difficult to understand many current controversies over colonialism and slavery. Now there is no shortage of public interest and contention about slavery along with its legacies. Yet in these controversies, we have frequently missed the degree to which slavery is fundamentally *political* and *relational*, as shown most starkly in Africa. Explaining how this is so is the major goal of this book.

Slavery is political in that it has been central to rule—to building and holding political power. The sale of people as property, of those ripped away from their distant homes and families, formed the currency of power, used to buy off subordinates or traded for goods and guns. In a grim irony, other captives were kept and schooled to become their masters' most faithful soldiers and servants.

But slavery is inherently about politics *between* societies at least as much as within them. A whole range of societies maintained the deep conviction that only outsiders could be enslaved, not those from one's own group. The dividing line between outsiders and insiders might be race, but it has also been religion or more local distinctions. This imperative to enslave outsiders meant that acquiring slaves tied different groups together; slavery in a given society has rarely been self-contained. Instead, more often slavery has been formed and maintained by a web of outside relations, whether it was warring for slaves, trading for them, or both. Over the centuries, these webs of slaving relations extended from Africa to span whole continents and oceans. My aim is to explore as well as explain the interplay of political power and ties of slavery centered on Africa.

Why, then, do these two topics, Africa and slavery, belong together? Why can't we understand one without the other? Although the link between Africa and slavery may seem obvious,

the answer is definitely not because all slaves were African. Despite stereotypes according to which slaves were either building monuments like the pyramids in the ancient world or working on plantations in the pre-Civil War US South, in fact slavery was near ubiquitous across the world up to the end of the nineteenth century. Slavery existed in most societies at most times, including within Africa. No race had a monopoly as superior or subordinate. While millions of Africans lived and died as slaves, many did so in Africa, as slave laborers and slave soldiers. Many slave masters were African. There were probably more White slaves in Europe and Africa than Black slaves in the Americas until the end of the seventeenth century.¹ In the nineteenth century, more Asians were enslaved than Africans.² Slavery in Africa actually expanded after the end of the transatlantic slave trade, almost up to the European imperial conquest at the dawn of the twentieth century.³ But despite slavery being a global phenomenon, it is in Africa that the political and relational nature of slavery is most striking.

Africa epitomizes the rule and relational aspects of slavery. It does so in the way that different parts of the continent became enmeshed in different networks of slavery, and how these relations then shaped political power in Africa. These slave networks were bigger and longer lasting than their equivalents in any other part of the world. They are more modern too, both in the sense of their recency and the legacies they leave for us today. These slave networks were not just the transatlantic trade from Africa to the Americas but also the slave trades established centuries earlier that stretched eastward across the Indian Ocean and Sahara Desert. Africa and Africans were at the center of these networks politically as well as geographically as both beneficiaries and victims. Slavery was more often a sign of African power than weakness. In their political, military, and

commercial dealings with Europeans, African rulers and traders operated from a position of strength.⁴ Though the more than twenty million victims of the slave trades were wretched, vulnerable, and oppressed, when African rulers dealt with outsiders in slaving networks, it was usually on a basis of parity or superiority. Directly and indirectly, right up to the twentieth century, the slave trades provided African rulers and would-be rulers with the means to seize, hold, and expand their power. Yet ultimately the scramble for slaves helped to bring African leaders into increasingly violent competition with each other. As the political and economic returns to slaving increased, many rulers were caught up in something akin to an arms race: whereas before they took and sold slaves to get ahead, increasingly they had to do so just to survive. The result was widespread destruction, instability, and fragmentation, which eventually helped pave the way for European colonial conquest.⁵

Slaving Networks and Relations

The networks of slavery that spanned the continent, and tied European and Islamic outsiders to Africa, were shaped by very different forces. Most obviously, a ruthless desire for profit among foreign and local merchants and rulers sustained the slave trades. But ideas and identities determined who could be enslaved, and under what conditions. Finally, slavery was founded and maintained on a basis of violence, from local kidnapping, to brutal wars, to institutionalized state repression. The combination of these commercial, cultural, and coercive factors together created international slaving networks.

As repugnant and alien as the sale of people as property is to us now, slavery was big business across the world. The long-distance slave trade was the most important international trade

before the Industrial Revolution. Slaving networks were in large part slave trades, made up of buyers and sellers, and shaped by supply and demand. Aside from their labor, slaves were frequently the most important form of property, and sometimes even the currency of exchange. In some cases, whole economies were based on slave labor, especially in cultivating plantation crops. Yet even when slavery was business, it was politics too. Often the revenue from slaves (and slave-produced commodities) provided the most significant source of money and weapons for rulers as well as aspiring rulers.

Who could be rightfully enslaved? For Europeans, the answer became a question of race. For Muslims, it was mainly a matter of religion. For many other African groups, the dividing lines were more local. These divisions and rules were often contested, and sometimes brazenly flouted. Nevertheless, they mattered in determining who was enslaved, and the conditions of their capture and later treatment. Why didn't the English simply send French prisoners of war to work on Caribbean plantations as slaves, or vice versa? Europeans did not enslave other Europeans because of fundamental judgments about right and wrong—judgments that were made quite differently when it came to those of other races and Africans in particular.

If slaving systems were shaped by the play of supply and demand, but also by ideas about insiders and outsiders, slavery was perhaps most of all the result of violence. Within Africa itself, on the Indian Ocean, and in the Americas and elsewhere, slaves were kept in place through violence and the threat of violence. Though there were different paths into slavery, war was the most important. In many parts of Africa, war was primarily fought for plunder, and the main form of this was people. Raiders swept through and “harvested” captives. Sometimes whole societies were oriented around predatory slave raiding to supply

distant foreign markets. The normative imperative to only enslave outsiders, reinforced by economic incentives, brought groups into conflict. As slavery became essential to rulers' power, such conflicts became a matter of political survival. Perhaps surprisingly, slaves were not only the ends of such struggles but also frequently the perpetrators. A recurrent theme of the book is the significance of slave soldiers and slave armies.

It was above all the combination of these incentives, ideas, and violent practices that made slaving networks. Take the Middle Passage, the slave trade from Africa to the Americas through which around 11.5 million Africans were trafficked over a period of around 350 years.⁶ That it was African victims rather than Europeans reflected judgments about outsiders and insiders. Slaves were acquired for Europeans and American colonists through trade with African slavers. These African sellers generally controlled supply and drove hard bargains, especially after the explosion in demand with the rise of plantation crops in the Americas such as sugar, cotton, and tobacco from the mid-1600s. That it was the transatlantic slave *trade*, however, was due to military factors. Europeans lacked the military power to forcibly take African slaves, despite popular misconceptions about the “we came, we saw, we conquered” nature of European presence in Africa before the late nineteenth century. The supply of slaves was dependent on war and raiding, but it was overwhelmingly Africans who were responsible. Without African wars, Europeans would have had far fewer slaves to buy.

The same combination of factors applied in the other, much less well-known great slaving system centered on Africa: that of the Islamic world. Here it was religion as opposed to race that determined who could be enslaved. At first, expanding Islamic polities could mostly supply their own slaves (usually Europeans) through raiding and wars of conquest. But as the

balance of power tilted against them, the Islamic powers were less and less able to enslave Europeans. The demand for new slaves outran supply, especially as (unlike their European counterparts) Muslim masters often freed their slaves. African victims increasingly made up the slave deficit in the Islamic world.⁷ This insatiable demand for slaves thus gave rise to long-distance slave trades, in some cases lasting well into the twentieth century, with African slaves held in the Persian Gulf even after World War II.

Slavery and Political Power in Africa

Because of the commonness of the prohibition against enslaving one's own, from Israelites to Mesoamericans, Mongols to Persians as well as Europeans, there was a recurrent tendency for large-scale slavery to rely on systems of war and long-distance trade. Yet the effects of such systems were distinctive and particularly pronounced in Africa. These networks provided African rulers with wealth and power. The particular importance of slaving systems in Africa compared with other regions was twofold.

First, as noted, African-centered slave trades were larger, more enduring, more recent, and more lucrative. But second, because African rulers faced higher hurdles in amassing resources for rule locally, they were more dependent on external resources. It was this combination of external and internal factors that explains the intimate linkage between political power and slavery in Africa. Historically, Africa has been different from Asia and Europe because of its extreme political fragmentation. Whereas Asia has had giant empires, and Europe has been organized into dozens of sovereign states, until European

conquest, Africa was divided into hundreds or thousands of self-governing communities.

Why has political power been so fragmented in Africa? Africa is an especially difficult area in which to govern; states have been hard to build, and things have fallen apart easily. Though there have of course been variations across the continent, this difficulty reflected above all a scarcity of people relative to land, which in turn was the result of a threatening disease environment and often poor soil.⁸ Given that land was abundant, people who didn't like their rulers could move elsewhere, unlike in crowded parts of Europe and Asia, where land was scarce and hence tightly held. This problem of mobility (a problem for the ruler, if not the ruled) was exacerbated since African agriculture seldom involved much fixed investment in land. People could vote with their feet and abandon a particular polity because they were not leaving much behind. Thus attempts to tax or conscript people tended to fail; the intended targets simply moved out of reach.

As a result, African states tended to be composites made up of smaller political communities, perhaps clans or other kinship groups.⁹ Because first loyalties were owed to the smaller group rather than the overlord, his (almost always his) grip over his erstwhile subjects was tenuous. In times of political stress or pressure, such composite polities frequently split or fell apart. Composite polities usually had composite armies too, composed of the armed retainers of local subrulers and nobles, which were similarly fractious. In times of war, these local rulers might stay loyal to their overlord, throw their lot in with the enemy, or sit on the fence until the winner became clear. Even in peacetime, subordinate rulers and nobles might intrigue, rebel, secede, or bid for power themselves. The combination of

scarce and mobile populations, and composite states and armies, meant that for African rulers, the greatest threats to their power came from within instead of externally.

This primacy of internal threats in Africa is in contrast to Europe (the presumed norm and universal model). In Europe, foreign invasion and conquest have historically been seen as the biggest dangers. One particularly influential argument is that it is precisely these external security threats that made European states what they became: wars between rulers made the state. As the conventional story has it, a Darwinian survival of the fittest logic meant that those rulers who failed to build strong modern states were conquered and eliminated.¹⁰ Because of this fierce military competition, after the end of the Middle Ages, European rulers were forced to reach deeper and deeper into society to extract resources from their populations to fight foreign wars as well as deter foreign threats. These resources were most commonly taxes, to pay for armies and navies, and people, to fight the ruler's wars. Therefore in Europe the story of building political power centers on using internal resources to combat external threats.

In Africa, by contrast, territorial conquest was less of a threat since territory was less valuable. The main dangers were internal, especially disintegration. African rulers' best chance of mobilizing resources was often externally, through trade, and especially the slave trade. So if European rulers built their states by mobilizing internal resources to face mainly external threats, in contrast African rulers frequently built their states by mobilizing external resources to counter predominantly internal threats. And this is why, rather than Africa being somehow isolated, the situation is exactly the opposite: Africa was distinctive because it was more affected by relations with the outside world.

Building the State with Slaves

If African rulers were often dependent on trade networks, and in particular slaving systems, slavery also played another, even more direct role in bolstering their power. This was the use of slave soldiers and slave administrators. To modern minds the idea of powerful, armed slaves seems like a contradiction in terms. Yet many of the strongest kingdoms and empires in Africa had at their core a slave military and administration. Once again, the logic lies in the specific circumstances faced by African leaders. Because people were scarce and land plentiful, controlling the former was more important than controlling the latter. People as property, slaves, were more important than land as property. Especially in the nineteenth century, a growing number of African states became dependent on slave labor, often to produce agricultural goods for export to Europe and the Americas. The revenue from these exports was crucial for funding the state.

But the political significance of slavery was even more direct in responding to the difficulties of ruling composite states. The major challenge was that most of the population and soldiers were loyal to nobles rather than to the king. These nobles were often at best fair-weather friends, and could be the ruler's most dangerous enemies. Slaves owned by the ruler, on the other hand, were socially isolated from other ties of loyalty, having been forcibly ripped away from their original social context and family. The only remaining tie was with their owner. Capitalizing on this isolation and dependence, many rulers across the continent used a slave retinue as their crack troops, praetorian guard, and secret police to counteract the centrifugal political forces that threatened the stability of their domains.¹¹ As outsiders, these elite slaves were in some ways equivalent to a

foreign legion.¹² Sometimes slave armies were turned outward as potent instruments of expansion, sent to raid for yet more slaves to sustain their numbers. In this manner, for the slaving states that arose first in West and then East Africa, slaves were both the means and end of rulership.

The Shape of the Book

Though the book paints on a big canvas, selecting examples from across sub-Saharan Africa beginning in the 1400s and extending to the early twentieth century, the argument is anchored by a few key claims.

The starting point is to establish the political and relational nature of African slavery. Even though slavery was common across history and around the world, it mattered more and differently in Africa than elsewhere. Because of the common rule about only enslaving outsiders, however defined, slavery led to ties between different groups. Sometimes these were ties of commercial exchange, the slave trade, and sometimes they were ties of violence, raiding and warring for slaves. Together, ideas about who could be enslaved, and ties of trade and war, formed international slaving systems.

These international systems were so important for African rulers because they had a harder time extracting money and labor from those they ruled, compared with their counterparts in Asia and Europe. Relatively speaking and as a general rule, in Africa mobilizing the resources for political power was more easily achieved through tapping into external flows than through mobilizing internal resources. The most crucial of these external flows was the slave trade. Furthermore, because African rulers were often in the precarious position of depending on unreliable subordinates, they often built their armies and

administrations from socially isolated slaves who had no other ties but with the ruler.

The reason it makes sense to tell the story of Africa's relations with the wider world, including Europe, from an African perspective is because African rulers and traders usually determined how these relations played out. This perspective helps to correct the problem that when Africa has been included in studies of international politics (which is rarely), it has usually been portrayed as a passive victim.¹³ The tragic irony, however, was that ultimately the very factors that strengthened rulers individually weakened them collectively. Rulers became locked into increasingly destructive competition with each other, eventually undermining their ability to resist European imperial conquest at the end of the nineteenth century.

Part I (Chapters 1–5): Slavery, Power, and Networks

Contacts between Europeans and Africans south of the Sahara emerged around the same time as those with the Americas and Asia, in the later 1400s and early 1500s. There were vital contrasts in how relations with Europeans played out across the different continents—infamously, in the Americas that Europeans conquered or at least destroyed. In Asia, by contrast, with some exceptions, Europeans were generally forced into a position of subordination. This was especially true vis-à-vis empires with equivalent technology in current-day China, Japan, and South Asia. From their first contacts in the late Middle Ages, African-European relations were more like those in Asia than those in the Americas, with Europeans often being forced into a subordinate position.

From the first European ventures along the Atlantic Coast south of the Sahara until well into the 1800s, European

interlopers were far more dependent on the locals than the other way around. Whether it was in terms of diplomacy, trade, or military relations, exchanges were largely carried out on African terms. African rulers and other local interests along the Atlantic and Indian Ocean coasts eagerly seized the opportunities outsiders provided to advance their own interests and agendas. Where the two sides came into conflict, Europeans were usually taught harsh lessons in the limits of their power. Institutionally, Europeans in Africa over the centuries were far more Africanized than vice versa. African rulers frequently looked to the Islamic world for models instead of toward Europe.

In tracing the emergence of these ties with outsiders, part I introduces the earliest West and East African encounters with the Portuguese, and Islamic interventions south of the Sahara and in Ethiopia, and then examines relations between Africans along the Atlantic coast and European chartered companies.

The first of these, discussed in chapter 2, is a surprisingly positive story of initial encounters. When the Portuguese reached the Kingdom of Kongo at the end of the 1400s, there was a flowering of friendship along with religious and commercial exchange. The Portuguese and Kongolese kings struck up a warm correspondence, referring to each other as brothers. The Kongolese monarch and nobility converted to Christianity, and welcomed European missionaries and merchants. Yet the amity did not last, with slavery the main cause of friction. Portuguese slaving from their outpost of Angola broke Kongolese law and led to war, drawing in other African and European players. Although Portuguese designs on Kongo were thwarted, the kingdom fell into disarray and civil war.

On the other side of the continent at around the same time, the Portuguese were bombarding the small, maritime sultanates of the East African Swahili coast into submission

(chapter 3). This rare example of European military success against Africans reflected Europeans' superiority at sea. If this was the exception, the subsequent frustrations and defeats the Portuguese experienced ashore were more the rule. After expeditions into the interior met with disastrous failure, the Portuguese set about trying to create feudal estates along the Zambezi River valley. Rather than outposts of Europe in Africa, though, the estate holders progressively acculturated as Africans, building slave armies, marrying into local nobility, and reigning as African chiefs.

Africans' ties with the wider world were by no means limited to Europe and Europeans. Whether across the Sahara or the Indian Ocean, Africa was shaped by relations with the Islamic world—most importantly, as Islam itself spread west and south across the continent. It was Islamic as opposed to European armies that carried out the most significant interventions in early modern Africa. Chapter 4 first describes how in 1591, a Moroccan expedition crossed the Sahara to conquer Songhay, a powerful kingdom that had grown rich on the desert trade in gold and slaves. Yet conquest did not mean control. As the conquerors fell out among themselves, the region was plunged into internecine conflict and slave raiding. Fifty years earlier as part of an intercontinental struggle between them, dueling Ottoman and Portuguese expeditions fought in support of their respective Muslim and Christian allies in Ethiopia. Though the latter prevailed, the victory was somewhat pyrrhic, as the Ethiopian kingdom was later afflicted by a long period of decline and disunity.

Chapter 5 looks at the early stages of the Atlantic slave trade. It does so through the lens of relations between African societies along the northern Atlantic coast and a clutch of European "company-states."¹⁴ Closely mimicking the design as well as logic of the English and Dutch East India Companies, the

various European company-states were both private capitalist trading ventures and armed sovereign proxies of their respective states. The various English, Dutch, French, and Danish ventures set up a string of coastal trading outposts. With their men usually sick, drunk, or dying, and hence highly dependent on their African hosts and suppliers, the European company-states were a story of unheroic failure. Yet despite their failure, they nevertheless contributed to the massive enlargement of the transatlantic slave trade that dispatched millions of Africans to misery and death in the Americas—a development that had profound consequences for Africa itself.

*Part II (Chapters 6–9): Atlantic Africa
and the Rise and Fall of the Slave Trade*

Part II focuses on Atlantic Africa in the period from the massive expansion in demand for slaves for plantations in the Americas in the mid-1600s through to immediately before European conquest at the end of the nineteenth century. The surge in the demand for slaves presented African rulers with unprecedented opportunities to amass wealth and power by trading with Europeans. A new type of “slaving state,” for which slaves were often both the means and end of conquest and reproduction, arose and multiplied. The political economy of these predatory states revolved around war and slavery. Not only did they war for slaves, who were either sold or put to work locally, but sometimes their armies were made up of slaves. As more and more of these states arose, vast tracts of Africa were ravaged as slave-hunting grounds, with many societies pulled apart by the endemic violence.

Even the abolition and decline of the transatlantic slave trade in the first half of the nineteenth century didn’t halt the growth

of slaving states. The slave population of West Africa rose rather than fell in the mid-1800s as more and more captives were put to work for African rulers as laborers or soldiers. Globally, the slave population is estimated to have peaked in the mid-nineteenth century, with the end of African slavery brought about by European colonialists only in the early twentieth century.

Three examples illustrate the violent logic of slaving states (covered in chapters 6–8). The first of these is Dahomey, home of the mythologized Amazons, who fought their way to the Gulf of Guinea coast (then known as the “Slave Coast”) from the 1700s on. In its day spoken of by Europeans as a “black Prussia,” Dahomey fought fierce battles to control the slave trade from the interior to the coast before and after the transatlantic trade, building a strong militarized kingdom that lasted until it was conquered by the French in the 1890s.

The second slaving state, Segu, arose in the bend of the Niger River in the Sahel region just south of the Sahara. The foundation of Segu was an increasingly common story of bandits turned kings. A group fought its way to power by using violence to get slaves (some of whom themselves became slavers), and then exchanged these slaves for more weapons to engage in further slaving and ultimately secure political power. But because the kingdom was sustained only by constant raiding, slaving, and plunder, anytime it stopped fighting or suffered defeat on the battlefield, Segu tended to fragment and devour itself, as subordinates fought each other to survive.

The Sokoto Caliphate, centered in the north of what is now Nigeria, was nineteenth-century Africa’s largest realm. It exemplified a wave of Islamic revolutions across West Africa motivated in part by opposition to the enslavement of Muslims for sale to Europeans, but that ended up depending on and actually

expanding slavery. With between one and two million captives organized into slave villages with slave overseers, Sokoto was a loose collection of emirates that dominated the region in the 1800s, but ultimately unraveled in the face of European colonial forces at the start of the twentieth century.

Chapter 9 brings out the general patterns of slaving states and shows how a range of evidence from archaeologists, historians, and economists suggests that the violence associated with slaving had a transformative impact on West Africa.

*Part III (Chapters 10–13): Power, Violence,
and Slavery in Nineteenth-Century East Africa*

Part III shifts the story to East Africa, from Madagascar to the Nile. While Indian Ocean Africa also saw a sharp rise in the demand for slaves, this only occurred toward the end of the eighteenth century, more than a century later than along the Atlantic coast. Furthermore, even after the end of the Atlantic slave trade, outside demand for East African slaves remained strong because of demand from the Islamic Middle East and because African rulers themselves became more dependent on slaves. Politically the results were similar to West Africa, with the rise of slaving states, but in a more compressed period. Militarized predation for slaves tore some polities apart while enabling others to build themselves up. These latter once again did so through the direct employment of slaves as well as through buying guns and supporters with the proceeds of the slave trade and slave production.

I begin with Madagascar in the late 1700s (chapter 10). At this time, politics in the California-size island started to be transformed by a growing demand for slaves from the new French plantations of the Indian Ocean. Rulers faced an

equation familiar throughout Africa: supplying slaves to the outsiders meant new flows of guns, money, and trade goods that could be parlayed into greater political and military power, which could then be used to take even more slaves. As neighbors began to benefit from this brutal feedback loop, choice was replaced by necessity; those not profiting from the slave trade risked becoming its victims. Uniquely, however, the kingdom of Madagascar tried autarky as a solution to the threat of European imperialism. It came to resemble something of a nineteenth-century North Korea, shutting itself off from the outside world, and building its army, economy, and drive for island-wide conquest on a vast apparatus of slavery and forced labor.

Taking a leaf from the European book, the sultans of Oman and Zanzibar set up their own maritime trading and slaving empires along the Swahili coast of East Africa, covered in chapter 11. After ejecting the Portuguese, the sultans made a fortune on spices, ivory, and slaves. As the nineteenth century wore on, these profits helped extend their influence farther and farther into the African interior. Yet the sultans were vulnerable to the naval might of the British Empire, expanding its influence West from the Indian Raj, and their mainland possessions ultimately fell victim to what became known as the Scramble for Africa.

Ethiopia was the only African country to maintain its independence in the era of European colonization. Why did things turn out differently? Chapter 12 provides the answer. Before the mid-1800s, what is now Ethiopia was a patchwork of independent Christian, Muslim, and animist domains, some of them squabbling for primacy inside the shell of the medieval Solomonic Ethiopian kingdom. In a now-familiar fashion, modern Ethiopia's first emperor made the transition from bandit to monarch thanks in no small part to the slave trade. For the next

crucial half century, Ethiopia's rulers carried out their own program of imperial expansion based on terror and mass enslavement, while simultaneously fending off Islamic African and European invasions. By the 1920s, Ethiopia had shed most of its dependence on slavery and joined the Western international order as a recognized sovereign state.

Chapter 13 examines the patterns in violence and slaving in East Africa. It returns to the Africanized feudal estates introduced earlier in connection with the Portuguese around the Zambezi River, with a focus on their slave enforcers, the *chikunda*. These were a caste apart, kidnapped and socialized into a new identity, responsible for defending their creole masters and disciplining other slaves. But the pressures of the expanded slave trade that pulled apart African societies elsewhere brought about collapse here too. Increasingly the *chikunda* went rogue, abandoning the estates to their fate, rampaging across the countryside, and building mini-kingdoms based on plunder and slaving. The chapter then considers the disintegration of other societies along with the rise of a new breed of slaving warlords.

Slavery and colonial empires are, thankfully, consigned to the past. But their legacies live on, and in some ways are more controversial now than ever before. For centuries, slaves and ties of slavery were routes to political power in Africa. These illustrate the closeness and importance of connections between political forces in the world at large and those at home. The comingling of the two is often seen as only a recent development, with globalization as a sign of fundamentally changed times. In different yet linked ways, Africa and slavery show otherwise.

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