

SEEING SLAVES IN SYRIAC SOURCES

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Slavery was an active social institution during every significant period of Syriac literary production. Although argument continues about the extent to which slavery declined in western Europe after the 5th century, it remained an integral part of society in the eastern Mediterranean, whether that of the Byzantine Empire, the Sasanian Empire, the Islamic Caliphate, or their successor states. It was accepted and practised by Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religious authorities and communities in all periods. Slavery was only formally abolished in Turkey in 1926 – although earlier partial anti-slavery edicts had been issued in the Ottoman Empire in 1830, 1854, 1857, and 1890 – and in Iran in 1927, and in Saudi Arabia as late as 1962¹. Slavery was also a major institution in the states that preceded Kerala in India, where it was abolished in regions under British rule in 1861, and in Portuguese colonies in 1876². In all these regions *de facto* slavery often survived long after *de jure* slavery was abolished, and in the Middle East it saw a revival during the period of Islamic State (Daesh) rule in northern Iraq and parts of Syria.

One consequence of this prolonged existence of slavery in regions where Syriac writers lived is that the state laws relating to slavery, the sources and ethnicities of slaves, and the ways in which slaves were used, varied with time and region, and should not be presumed to be unchanging. Nor should models of slavery derived from the colonial Caribbean or the pre-1865 southern United States be thought always to apply to slavery institutions and practices in the eastern Mediterranean (or in south India). The ethnicities of slaves varied greatly in different times (as suggested by the derivation of ‘slave’ from ‘Slav’), as did the

1. See CLARENCE-SMITH 2006.

2. See RAMACHANDRAN NAIR 1986; MOHAN 2015.

expected duration of an individual's servitude, and their treatment and living conditions. But slaves were always considered as property, and they usually had no legal-personhood. They could not testify in court, they could not bring legal charges, and harm done to a slave was often treated as damage done to property, though murder of slaves by owners was usually illegal. In some periods they were accorded some legal protection, but this was always heavily restricted.

However shocking it may be to us today, pre-modern Christian leaders and writers, including those writing in Syriac, almost never condemned slavery as a social institution, or as an abuse of fellow human beings. (No doubt future generations will be equally appalled by our unthinking treatment of fellow creatures and our planet.) In this they were not just products of their own societies, accepting the social status quo, but they were also following the models provided by both the Old and the New Testaments, and echoing the acceptance of the institution voiced by Christ, Paul, and the other apostles and church fathers. Syriac writers are thus witnesses to the changing institutions of slavery, they codified laws relating to slavery, some were themselves owners of slaves, they often worked with religious metaphors based on slavery, but they were never opponents of it.

When academics write prefaces to their monographs thanking those who have assisted them, these are nearly always influential patrons, or academic colleagues who have shared publications or discussed ideas with them, or close family members who provided support. They are never the cleaning staff who have vacuumed their offices and removed their trash each evening, nor the catering staff who have fed or caffeinated them each day in the faculty canteen, nor the grounds staff who mow their campus lawns or remove the snow, or the childminders looking after their children. In our publications these staff are invisible and unnamed. In Syriac texts too, those carrying out similar functions in the past are rarely mentioned as existing, let alone mentioned by name. Slaves were omnipresent, but universally overlooked. The purpose of this article is not to provide new historical analysis of slavery, but to provide readers of Syriac texts with some tools and resources to enable them – us – to see slaves in the texts being read, and to enable a reassessment of the role of slavery and slaves in the development of Syriac literature and the life of Syriac-using Christian communities³.

3. This article draws primarily on lexical and documentary sources, legal texts, and historiographic texts. Hagiographic, exegetical, theological, and liturgical texts are largely left for others to investigate.

The terminology of slavery in Syriac

As a first step towards seeing slaves it is important to be able to recognise them in the Syriac texts that we read, and that requires an analysis of the Syriac vocabulary that relates to slaves and slavery⁴.

The generic Syriac term for ‘slaves’ in the plural is ‘*abde*’ (ܐܒܕܝܢ), whether all male, or some male and some female⁵. The singular form ‘*abda*’ (ܐܒܕܐ) can also be used to indicate one who is of the category ‘slave’, ‘unfree’, when gender is not relevant. In most contexts, however, it refers to a ‘male slave’, a man owned as property, similar in usage to Greek *doulos*, Latin *servus*. The word itself is a common Semitic term which has cognates in Hebrew (‘*ebed*’) and Arabic (‘*abd*’), as well as in Ugaritic, Phoenician, and Old South Arabian (all written ‘*bd*’). In Akkadian it only occurs as a loanword (*abdu*), since the native word is (*w*)*ardu*. In rhetorical contexts ‘*abda*’ can also be used by (or about) non-slaves as a hyperbolic marker of subservience to a human ruler (‘I am your devoted slave’), or as a token of devotion to God. In Syriac texts ‘*abde*’, ‘slaves’, are regularly distinguished from hired workers, ‘*agire*’ (ܐܓܝܪܝܢ)⁶. So ‘*abda*’ does not mean ‘servant’, a hired free man or free woman in service, and should not be translated ‘servant’, even though this has long been the practice in vernacular European Bible translations, which have heavily influenced subsequent translations of religious texts. Translating ‘*abda*’ as ‘slave’ can seem jarring in some contexts, because it is culturally unfamiliar to us, but not to do so is to remove the slaves from sight, and to misrepresent the original cultural meaning of the text. From ‘*abda*’ is formed the abstract noun ‘*abduta*’ (ܐܒܕܘܬܐ), ‘slavery’⁷, the key term for the condition of being a slave, whether male or female, and for the social institution.

The main term for a ‘female slave’ is ‘*amta*’ (ܐܡܬܐ), plural ‘*amhata*’ (ܐܡܬܐܝܬܐ)⁸, similar in usage to Greek *doulē*, Latin *ancilla*. This too is a common Semitic term, which has cognates in Hebrew (‘*āmāh*’) and Arabic (‘*amat*’), as well as in Akkadian (*amtu*), and Ugaritic, Phoenician, and Old

4. To the best of my knowledge this is the first full survey of Syriac terminology relating to slavery, and so will no doubt need refinement. For Greek and Latin terminologies of slavery see ZELNICK-ABRAMOVITZ 2018 and the literature cited there. For Arabic terms see BRUNSCHVIG 1986.

5. See TS col. 2772-2773.

6. See TS col. 30.

7. See TS col. 2774.

8. See TS col. 248. The 17th-c. Maronite lexicographer George Karmsedinoyo, writing in 1619, includes a feminine form of ‘*abda*’, namely ‘*abda*’ (ܐܒܕܐܬܐ), plural ‘*abdata*’ (ܐܒܕܐܬܐܝܬܐ); see TS col. 2773. But this word is not included in other lexica, and is not attested, to the best of my knowledge, in classical Syriac texts of any period.

South Arabian (all written *ʿmt*). Again, this refers to a woman owned as property, and should not be translated as ‘servant’, ‘maidservant’, ‘or handmaid’, all of which renderings avoid the harsh realities of life as a woman slave, in which the slave at most periods of history had no rights over any aspect of her life, including the use to which her body was put. The abstract condition of female slavery is *ʿamhuta* (ܐܡܗܘܬܐ) ⁹.

One way of emphasising the slave’s lack of status and their legal dependence on their owners was to refer to them as children, regardless of their actual age. In Syriac this is most commonly done by referring to them as *ṭalya* (ܬܠܝܬܐ), ‘boy’, plural *ṭlaye* (ܬܠܝܬܝܢ), and *ṭlita* (ܬܠܝܬܐ), ‘girl’, plural *ṭalyata* (ܬܠܝܬܝܬܐ) ¹⁰. This usage corresponds to the Greek use of *pais*, ‘boy’, and *korē*, ‘girl’, for slaves. (Greek also used various diminutive forms for slaves, such as *paidion*, *paidarion*, and *paidiskos* for males, and *paidiskē* and *korasion* for females, but while Syriac possesses similar diminutive forms for children ¹¹, they do not appear to be used of slaves. In translated Greek texts the Greek diminutives are often translated by *ṭalya* and *ṭlita* ¹².) These terms are thus clearly ambiguous, and their true meaning – ‘(free-born) child’ or ‘slave’ – can only be determined from context, as also the approximate age of the person to whom reference is made: a *ṭalya* may well be an adult male slave, and not a boy slave. Bar Hebraeus tells a tale of actual child slaves playing boisterously in the presence of Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn who was sitting with his nobles, and when one of them threw a sandal at his friend, and missed, it landed next to Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn, but he graciously ignored it. Here the term used is *ʿabde zʿore* (ܐܒܕܝܢܐ ܙܥܘܪܐ), ‘young slaves’ ¹³.

Other terms for slaves which repurpose words used for non-adults include *ʿlayma* (ܐܠܝܡܐ), ‘lad’, and *ʿlaymta* (ܐܠܝܡܬܐ), ‘lass’ ¹⁴, a usage which corresponds to the use of *naʿar* and *naʿarāh* in Hebrew ¹⁵. In other contexts these terms indicate unmarried youths or adolescents. The feminine form is already used for female slaves in the Peshitta Old Testament, but the masculine seems to be more common in the medieval period, perhaps due to influence from the Arabic cognate *ḡulām*, ‘boy’, which is also used of male slaves. (For female slaves Arabic uses *jāriyat*, ‘girl’.) Another Syriac

9. See TS col. 248.

10. See TS col. 1472-1473; TSSupp p. 144b; Bar Hebraeus, *Grammar*, I.5.4, p. 34.16-17 (Syr.), p. 73.15-18 (trans.). The plural feminine form given here is more common when used for ‘female slaves’ than the alternative form *ṭlayata* (ܬܠܝܬܝܬܐ), ‘girls’, and it is the form mandated by Bar Hebraeus for female slaves.

11. For example *ṭalyona* (ܬܠܝܬܘܢܐ), *ṭalyosa* (ܬܠܝܬܘܣܐ), and *ṭalyosta* (ܬܠܝܬܘܫܐ); see LS3 p. 531.

12. See TS col. 1472.

13. See Bar Hebraeus, *World Chronicle*, p. 396 (syr.), p. 342 (trans.).

14. See TS col. 2897-2898.

15. See HALOT p. 707-708.

term applied to male slaves is *garʿuna* (ܩܪܘܢܐ), ‘lad’¹⁶, which is found in 8th and 9th c. texts, and derives from the verb *g-r-ʿ*, ‘to shave (hair)’. Another noun formed from this verbal root, *grīʿa* (ܩܪܘܢܐ), ‘shaved one’ also appears to be used of male slaves in the medieval period¹⁷.

The medieval Syriac-Arabic lexica occasionally contain Syriac terms for slaves that have not yet been recorded in Syriac texts, and whose precise nuance is not known. Bar Bahlul, for example, preserves the pairing *ḥtama* (ܫܬܡܐ), ‘male slave’, and *ḥtamta* (ܫܬܡܬܐ), ‘female slave’¹⁸, which may well be derived from the Arabic words *ḥādīm* and *ḥādimat*, from the verb *ḥ-d-m* ‘to serve’¹⁹. It is possible that these terms were dialectal, or possibly they are evidence that Syriac literary texts do not always reflect the changing terminology applied to slaves and their condition within the writers’ communities.

Many slave-owning societies distinguish between slaves born into slavery, and those bought at market, and a common presumption is that the former may be more reliable and less troublesome, and have the added advantage of being able to speak the household language(s) fluently, but the latter can be selected for greater functional specialisation, whether strength and physical resilience, or trained skills, or for appearance or sexual use. At some periods and in some regions, laws also varied in relation to the two categories of slaves, with those bought often having less protection.

Slaves who have been bought are usually referred to in Syriac as ‘*abda zbin kespā* (ܐܒܕܐ ܙܒܝܢ ܩܥܦܐ), ‘male slave bought with money / silver’, and ‘*ʿamta zbinat kespā* (ܐܡܬܐ ܙܒܝܢܬ ܩܥܦܐ), ‘female slave bought with money / silver’²⁰. (Variants ending *b-kespā*, with no change of meaning, are also found.) This terminology corresponds closely to the Hebrew *miqnat kesef*²¹ and the Greek *argyrōnētos*, and the Latin equivalent is *empticius* (‘bought slave’). In the medieval period Bar Hebraeus also uses the term *wasqa* (ܘܫܩܐ), which the medieval lexicon of Bar ʿAlī explains as a dialect word used in ‘Aramaic’ (ܘܫܩܐ ܕܐܪܡܝܐ) and glosses it as ‘*abda zbin kespā*²². It is

16. See LS3 p. 263a; TSSupp p. 81a.

17. See TS col. 787; TSSupp p. 80b.

18. See TS col. 1247; BB col. 741. The vocalisation is uncertain, with *ḥetma* and *ḥetmta* also attested.

19. See Lane p. 712-713.

20. See TS col. 1075, col. 248.

21. See HALOT p. 628.

22. See TS col. 1064; LS3 p. 358b.

probably, but uncertainly, derived from Persian (see MP *wāzak*)²³, and it also gave rise to a rare abstract noun *wasquta* (ܘܫܩܘܬܐ), ‘slavery’²⁴.

When a slave was purchased under Byzantine law, the contract or agreement, *qṣuṣa* (ܩܨܘܨܐ)²⁵, between the seller, *mzabnana* (ܡܙܒܢܢܐ), and the buyer *zabona* (ܙܒܢܐ), could be ‘without warranty’, (ܘܠܘ ܘܘܪܘܩܐ), from the Greek *haplē ōnē*²⁶, a contract otherwise known as *qaqē erasis* (ܩܩܐܝܪܐܣܝܫܐ), from Greek *kakēi hairesis*²⁷, and glossed in Syriac as *tanway bišta* (ܬܢܘܘܝܐ ܒܝܫܬܐ), ‘bad contract’. This allowed no later return of the slave, or refund. Alternatively, the contract could come with a warranty, allowing the slave to be returned within six months, and the sale price refunded, if the slave proved unsuitable or sick. This was termed *qale erasis* (ܩܩܐܝܪܐܣܝܫܐ ܩܠܐ), from Greek *kalēi hairesis*, and was glossed as *tanway šapirta* (ܬܢܘܘܝܐ ܫܦܝܪܬܐ), ‘good contract’. In the 13th-century *Nomocanon* of Bar Hebraeus, a variant of this is the *tanway da-gbīta* (ܬܢܘܘܝܐ ܕܘܓܒܝܬܐ), ‘contract with choice’, which allows both the seller and buyer of a slave up to three days in which to decide to complete the contract, and to check that the slave has no defects²⁸.

At every period of history slaves have attempted to escape slavery through flight. In Syriac legal codes the fugitive slave is usually designated as ‘*abda* ‘*aroqa* (ܐܒܕܐ ܐܪܘܩܐ), ‘a fugitive slave’, ‘*aroqa* (ܐܪܘܩܐ), ‘fugitive’, or ‘*arīqa* (ܐܪܝܩܐ), ‘fugitive’, with associated verbs also from the root ‘*r-q*’²⁹. But since a purchaser did not want to buy a slave with a history of flight, a slave who was sold with the warranty of not being a runaway was technically termed ‘a good slave’, ‘*abda ṭaba* (ܐܒܕܐ ܬܒܐ)³⁰. The 12th c. compilation of medical and divination texts known as the *Syriac Book of Medicines* is so concerned with the issue of fugitive slaves that it describes two divination practices intended to determine whether a runaway would

23. See the discussion in CIANCAGLINI 2008, p. 167.

24. See TS col. 1065; LS3 p. 359a.

25. See TS col. 3701; LS3 p. 1396.

26. See *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, I, p. 179, 186, and II, §101; *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.27, 40. Bar Hebraeus reports a case of singers and musicians, male and female, being driven out of a palace and sold ‘without a contract’, because of their profession, which was presumably considered immoral; see *World Chronicle*, ad AH 322 / 933 CE, p. 177 (Syr.), p. 160 (trans).

27. The vocalisation of the second Syriac word is uncertain. Vööbus derived the Syriac term from Greek *kakē prasis* (and the term below from *kalē prasis*), see *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.39, 40; but on the basis of better manuscripts Selb and Kaufhold suggested this superior derivation; see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, I, p. 179, 191, and II, §101. Neither term is in the standard Syriac lexica.

28. See Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, XI.2, p. 118 (Syr.), p. 98 (trans).

29. See TS col. 2997-2979.

30. See *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, §35.

be recovered or not³¹. In a separate section it lists each day of the month and describes which are auspicious or inauspicious for certain actions³². Of the thirty days of the month, only four do not refer to slaves³³, the seventh day is said to be good for buying slaves, and the fifth day bad, but the entries for twenty-six days refer to whether or not a fugitive slave will be recovered.

Slaves born into slavery were usually born into a ‘household’, *bayta* (ܒܝܬܐ), comparable to the Latin *familia*, a unit that could include both free-born and freed adults and children, as well as slaves, and which was run by a *mare bayta* (ܡܪܝܬܐ ܒܝܬܐ, or ܡܪܝܬܐ), ‘master of the household’ (see Greek *oikodespotēs*), and / or a *marat bayta* (ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ), ‘mistress of the household’³⁴. In the Iranian legal system the head of the household was named in Middle Persian *dūdāg sālārīh*, (𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥), ‘household authority’, which is calqued in Išoʿbokt (late 8th c.) with the Syriac equivalents, *rešanut bayta* (ܪܫܢܘܬ ܒܝܬܐ)³⁵. The Syriac terms for the dominant male, *mara* (ܡܪܐ), plural *maraya* (ܡܪܝܬܐ) and *marawata* (ܡܪܘܘܬܐ)³⁶, and the dominant female, *marta* (ܡܪܝܬܐ), plural *marata* (ܡܪܝܬܐ)³⁷, can be translated in context as ‘lord, master, or owner’, and ‘lady, mistress, or owner’. A male ‘slave owner’ is thus a *mare ʿabde* (ܡܪܝܬܐ ܥܒܕܐ)³⁸, but may often just be referred to as *mara* (ܡܪܐ), ‘the master’, ‘owner’. Ownership of slaves was widespread, even in households of very modest income, and so the use of these terms does not necessarily, and overwhelmingly does not, indicate aristocratic or elite ownership, even though the same terms can be used in different contexts to identify members of social elites.

A slave born into slavery could thus be labelled on the basis of ancestry, or, more frequently, in relation to the household. The former is expressed by *ʿabda bar ʿabde* (ܥܒܕܐ ܒܝ ܥܒܕܐ)³⁹, indicating descent from a line of slave ancestors, rather than from two slave parents. (One born a slave was deemed such due to birth from a slave mother.) The medieval lexica also

31. See *Book of Medicines*, I.456 (Syr.), II.535 (trans.); I.461 (Syr.), II.541 (trans.).

32. See *Book of Medicines*, I.476-480 (Syr.), II.560-565 (trans.).

33. Days 1, 8, 22, 24.

34. See TS col. 478, 2206, 2208.

35. See Išoʿbokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 126.1; CIANCAGLINI 2008, p. 148-149; LS3 p. 278b, 1466a.

36. See TS col. 2204-2208. For the use of this word as a gloss for Arabic *mawālī*, ‘patrons’, ‘clients’, see below.

37. See TS col. 2208.

38. See TS col. 2207; TSSupp p. 199a.

39. See TS col. 2773.

provide a further term glossed as ‘the son of slaves’, which is *qurpa* (ܩܘܪܦܐ), whose etymology is unclear⁴⁰.

Birth into a household is indicated in several ways, including the following expressions: *ilid bayta* (ܐܝܠܝܕ ܒܝܬܐ), ‘male born into a household’, *ilidat bayta* (ܐܝܠܝܕܐ ܒܝܬܐ), ‘female born into a household’, and the common plural *iliday bayta* (ܐܝܠܝܕܝܐ ܒܝܬܐ)⁴¹. Another related set of terms is *bar bayta* (ܒܪ ܒܝܬܐ), ‘son / member of the household’, *bat bayta* (ܒܬܐ ܒܝܬܐ), ‘daughter / member of the household’, plural *bnay bayta* (ܒܢܝ ܒܝܬܐ)⁴². These terms do not explicitly indicate slaves, but in practice that is what these phrases usually mean. By contrast the common adjectival nouns *baytaya* (ܒܝܬܝܐ), and *baytayta* (ܒܝܬܝܬܐ), ‘household member’, seem not to be used of slaves⁴³. These Syriac slave epithets are the formal equivalents of Akkadian (*w*)*ilid bitim*, Hebrew *y^elīd bayyit*⁴⁴, and the Greek *oikogenēs* (pl. *oikogeneis*), and also correspond in usage to Greek *oiketēs* (pl. *oiketai*), and Latin *famulus*, *famula*, and *verna*. *Famulus* actually appears as a loanword once in Syriac – *pemlaya* (ܦܥܡܠܝܐ) – in the poetry of Isaac of Antioch (5th c.)⁴⁵. It should be emphasised that these terms do not necessarily indicate ‘domestic slaves’, but could also indicate field hands or labourers born as slaves into the household. A slave belonging to a different household can be referred to as an ‘alien slave’, ‘*abda nukraya* (ܐܒܕܐ ܢܘܩܪܝܐ), and this is mentioned in legal codes in relation to someone misusing (sexually, for example) someone else’s slave⁴⁶. It should be noted that the term does not indicate a slave of foreign or ethnically diverse origin.

Although terms for these different categories of slaves existed in Syriac from an early date, it appears that when translating from Greek some translators preferred to use ‘*abda* (ܐܒܕܐ) as a catch-all term. Thus in the 7th-c. Syrohexapla, famed for its literal translation technique, ‘*abda* renders not only *doulos*, ‘slave’ (2 Kings 4.1, *et passim*), but also *pais*, ‘boy’ (2 Kings 2.16, 5.13 etc), *oiketēs*, ‘slave of the household’ (Gen 50.18), and *therapōn*, ‘serving slave’ (Prov. 18.14)⁴⁷. In a Syriac translation of Galen it also renders Greek *andrapodon*, ‘human-footed’, ‘slave’, ‘captive’⁴⁸.

40. See TS col. 3755; BB col. 1756.

41. See TS col. 1594.

42. See TS col. 583; LS3 p. 179a.

43. See TS col. 499-500. They are often, but not only, used in theological contexts indicating membership of the household, *baytayuta* (ܒܝܬܝܬܐܘܬܐ), of God.

44. See HALOT p. 413.

45. Isaac of Antioch, *Homilies*, vol. 1, p. 286.3; see TS col. 1365; LS3 p. 1204a.

46. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXVIII.58,

47. See TS col. 2772.

48. See TS col. 2998.

Two further specialised categories of slaves also need to be mentioned, eunuchs and concubines. Eunuchs were castrated men who were usually slaves, even if they could rise to influential positions in the royal courts of the Mesopotamian, Achaemenid, Byzantine, and Ottoman empires, where their physical condition excluded them legally from direct rule, and prevented them from producing heirs⁴⁹. Where they were used for work with wives, concubines, or female slaves, their condition was also seen as advantageous⁵⁰. The practice of castrating male slaves continued well into the 20th century in Ottoman territories, and they were also used in all periods far beyond the main centres of power. Syriac has several words for eunuchs, and related verbs for castration. A term also found in Imperial Aramaic⁵¹ is *srisa* (ܣܪܝܫܐ),⁵² and it has cognates in Hebrew (*saris*) and Arabic (*sarîs*)⁵³. Derived from this there is a D stem denominative verb *sarres* (ܣܪܝܫܐ), ‘to castrate’, which produced a secondary nominal form *msarsa* (ܡܫܪܫܐ), ‘eunuch’⁵⁴. The most common Syriac term for eunuch, already used in the Peshitta Old Testament, is *mhaymna* (ܡܗܝܡܢܐ)⁵⁵, which presumably had the original sense ‘one who could be trusted’, and hence the confusing fact that the same word means ‘male believer’, ‘one of faith’, in which sense it is widely used in Christian texts. From the noun a specialised meaning of the verb *haymen* (usually ‘to believe’, ‘to entrust’) emerged by the 5th century, ‘to castrate’⁵⁶. The Greek term *eunouchos* was borrowed as a loanword from the 7th century on as *ewnuksa* (ܐܘܢܘܟܫܐ)⁵⁷. Other terms for eunuch include *gwaya* (ܓܘܝܐ), with the denominative Dt stem verb *etgawwi* (ܐܬܓܘܘܝܐ)⁵⁸, and *psiqa* (ܦܫܝܩܐ), ‘cut’, ‘castrated’, and the verb *passeq* (ܦܫܩܐ)⁵⁹. A rather exalted rank of eunuch at the Byzantine imperial court was the *cubicularius*, or chamberlain, which in Syriac (from Greek *koubikouarios*) became *qbuqlara* (ܩܒܘܩܠܪܐ) and *qublara* (ܩܒܠܪܐ)⁶⁰.

49. See RINGROSE 2003; TOUGHER 2008.

50. See Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, XXXIII.2, where it is noted that castrating a male slave increases his value, even when done maliciously.

51. See SCHWIDERSKI 2008, p. 615a, DNWSI p. 803-804.

52. See TS col. 2743.

53. See HALOT p. 769-770.

54. See TS col. 2743-2744.

55. See Gen 37.36, 1 Kgs 22.9, etc.; TS col. 234.

56. See *Synodicon Orientale*, (Synod of 410 CE), p. 24.1 (Syr.); LS3 p. 341b.

57. See TS col. 72. This loanword is frequently used in the Syrohexapla.

58. See TS col. 667-668; LS3 p. 214a-b; BB col. 463.

59. See TS col. 3194-3195.

60. See TS col. 3512; LS3 p. 1309a, 1323a. A woman courtier was called *qubuqlarta* (ܩܒܘܩܠܪܐܬܐ).

A concubine was a woman, potentially free born but usually a slave (potentially to be freed on the birth of a male son, depending on the operative legal system), in a formal personal and sexual relationship with a man or male owner, but a relationship that did not have the legal status of marriage. It could therefore range, depending on circumstances, from enforced involuntary sexual slavery and rape to quasi-marriage. A concubine was not legally a ‘wife’, Syriac *atta* (ܐܬܬܐ), nor, in polygynous marriages, a ‘co-wife’, ‘*yarta* (ܝܪܬܐ)⁶¹, or ‘*arta* (ܐܪܬܐ)⁶². Syriac has three main words for ‘concubine’. The first is *drukta* (ܕܪܘܟܬܐ), plural *drukata* (ܕܪܘܟܬܐܝܢ)⁶³, which Bar Bahlul defines as ‘a man’s female slave whom he took among (his) women as his woman bought with his money’ (ܡܬܠܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐܝܢܐ ܡܬܠܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐܝܢܐ ܕܡܢܐܝܢܐ ܕܡܢܐܝܢܐ ܕܡܢܐܝܢܐ)⁶⁴. A homographic form means ‘(vine) shoot’, ‘propagated-shoot’, which may relate to its use for a concubine. From the same root there is a G stem verb *drak* (ܕܪܐܟ), ‘to take a concubine’, ‘to propagate a shoot’⁶⁵. The second term is the Greek loanword *palaqi* (ܦܠܩܝ), from the Greek *pallakē*⁶⁶. The third word is ‘*amorta* (ܐܡܘܪܬܐ), plural ‘*amoryata* (ܐܡܘܪܝܬܐ), which approximates in meaning to ‘cohabitee’, and seems to be frequently used of women living illicitly with clergy⁶⁷. Unsurprisingly, there is not much discussion of the ‘harem’, or women’s apartments, in households with concubines, in Syriac sources (where concubinage and polygynous marriages were anathema), but in biblical translation the relevant term is *bet neše* (ܒܝܬ ܢܝܫܐ), ‘the house of women’⁶⁸.

None of these terms for slave are explicitly linked to race or ethnicity, nor are such concepts mentioned by the medieval lexica in definitions related to slavery. Slaves of African origin were of course included in the slave populations of the near east from antiquity to the 19th century, and

61. See TS col. 2844.

62. See TS col. 2844; LS3 p. 1144. It is possible that at some periods co-wives were regarded as synonymous with concubines in Syriac sources, given that they are non-polygynous, even though the terms were originally distinct.

63. See TS col. 950; TSSupp p. 94b; LS3 p. 321.

64. See BB col. 592; TS col. 950. This citation also demonstrates the ambiguity of the Syriac word *atta*, ‘woman’, ‘wife’.

65. See TS col. 949; LS3 p. 323. The same root letters *d-r-k* are more frequently used with the sense ‘to step’, ‘to tread’, and according to TS in this sense it is vocalised *drek* (ܕܪܐܟ), *nedrok* (ܢܕܪܐܟ), whereas when it has the meaning ‘to take a concubine’, or ‘to propagate (a shoot)’, it is vocalised *drak* (ܕܪܐܟ), *nedrak* (ܢܕܪܐܟ).

66. See TS col. 3162; LS3 p. 1203a. It is used in the *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, and in the epistles of Catholicos Timothy.

67. See TS col. 2920; LS3 p. 1110.

68. See TS col. 491; found in Esther 2.3 (translating *bēt hanāšīm*). For polygyny in the law of the Church of the East, see WEITZ 2015.

causative stem of the verb, a *šapʿel*, ‘to cause to be a slave’. It can be used of individuals, or of entire countries in its broader sense. The second verb is *ʿabded* (ܥܒܕܝܢ), a *paʿlel* form, which is restricted to literal or metaphorical enslavement⁷³. From these verbal stems are formed two further nouns, *šuʿbada* (ܫܘܥܒܕܐ) and *ʿubdada* (ܘܒܕܐܕܐ), which both mean ‘slavery’, ‘servitude’, and are regularly used in Syriac texts. Less frequently used in relation to slaves, rather than to other forms of subordination or subjection, are the near synonyms *mšaʿbduta* (ܡܫܥܒܕܘܬܐ) ⁷⁴, *mšaʿbdanuta* (ܡܫܥܒܕܢܘܬܐ) ⁷⁵, and *meštaʿbdanuta* (ܡܫܬܥܒܕܢܘܬܐ) ⁷⁶. Already found in the Peshiṭta Old Testament is the term *mšaʿbdana* (ܡܫܥܒܕܢܐ) ⁷⁷, ‘one who enslaves’, ‘slaver’, ‘oppressor’ ⁷⁸.

From the passive participle of *šaʿbed* is formed the adjectival noun *mšaʿbda* (ܡܫܥܒܕܐ) ⁷⁹, ‘a subdued, subjected person’, ‘a slave’. This term can be used quite broadly of ‘federate’ allies, and conquered individuals, but it seems to be used particularly frequently of slaves associated with monasteries, a theme that will be discussed below. The English of Sokoloff’s revised edition of Brockelmann’s *Lexicon Syriacum* offers the glosses ‘serf’, ‘servant’ ⁸⁰. These are the free translations of Brockelmann’s more technical Latin glosses ‘*colonus glebae adscriptus*’, ‘*servus (coenobii)*’ ⁸¹. In the 6th century and later the *colonus adscripticius* (in Greek *enapografos*) was a tied labourer (often agricultural) who technically had the social status of a free man, but was on the tax register of his master, and thus counted as a dependant within the master’s *familia*, within which his status was analogous to that of a slave ⁸². The *colonus* could not leave the land to which he was tied, and he could not be sold away from the land, nor could he be freed though manumission, but he could be sold with the land. The Greek term occurs as a loanword in the *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, *enupagraba* (ܐܢܘܦܒܪܐܒܐ) ⁸³. But in relation to certain Syriac monasteries, such as that of Mar Barṣawma, the *mšaʿbde* were not agricultural tied

73. See TS col. 2771.

74. See TS col. 2777.

75. See TS col. 2777.

76. See TS col. 2777.

77. See TS col. 2777.

78. See TS col. 2777.

79. See TS col. 2271-2272; LS3 p. 851b.

80. See LS3 p. 851b.

81. See LS2 p. 506a.

82. See SARRIS 2006, p. 154; SIRKS 2008.

83. See TS col. 252; LS3 p. 58b-59a; *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, I, p. 189, II, § 45b; *West Syrian Synodicon*, § LXIX.30.

labourers, but enslaved labourers and workers belonging to the monastery⁸⁴.

Enslavement is sometimes indicated by more metaphorical means. For example passive forms of the verb *k-d-n*, ‘to yoke’, especially with modifying nouns, are often used of enslavement: *kdin l-ʿabduta* (ܕܝܢ ܠܥܒܕܘܬܐ), ‘yoked to slavery’; *kdin b-šūʿbada* (ܕܝܢ ܒܫܘܥܒܐܕܐ), ‘yoked in enslavement’; *ʿetkden b-nira d-ʿabduta* (ܐܬܟܕܢ ܒܢܝܪܐ ܕܥܒܕܘܬܐ), ‘yoked by the yoke of slavery’⁸⁵.

More ambiguous is the semantic field of captivity, such as *šabya* (ܫܒܝܐ), ‘captive’, *ʿeštbi* (ܐܫܬܒܝ), ‘to be taken captive’, from the root *š-b-y*⁸⁶. There is no explicit reference to enslavement here, and yet to be taken captive in war in the pre-modern age meant either execution, or enslavement, unless the captive was fortunate or important enough to be ransomed. War captives were a major source of slaves for Romans, Greeks, Iranians, Arabs, and Ottomans alike, and so ‘captivity’, *šabya* (ܫܒܝܐ) and *šbita* (ܫܒܝܬܐ), could be a simple euphemism for enslavement⁸⁷. As late as 1501/2 CE enslavement through captivity was still a concern to the Syrian Orthodox villagers of Bēt Svīrīnā in the Ṭūr ʿAbdin, who prayed: ‘May God deliver them from the sword and from slavery (*šabya*) and from famine and from plague, by the prayer of the Mother of God, Mary, and of all the saints, amen and amen!’⁸⁸. Another verb with similar meaning, the quadriliteral stem *galwi* (ܓܠܘܝܐ), ‘to capture’, ‘to exile’⁸⁹, is used, for example, in the passive form, *ʿetgalwi* (ܐܬܓܠܘܝܐ), by Barhebraeus of a man’s wife who has been taken captive and so enslaved, and whom he therefore needs to find and buy, in order to liberate her⁹⁰. As odd as it may sound, taking people captive and enslaving them in war was considered both legal and normal in most ancient law codes. When Syriac writers wish to indicate illegal capture and enslavement, by bandits for example, they usually use verbal and nominal forms from the root *h-ṭ-p* (ܫܦܘܢܐ), ‘to abduct’, ‘to snatch’. This was treated as a category of theft, and must have been sufficiently common that Bar Hebraeus (or his source) devoted a whole chapter of his *Nomocanon* to regulating the penalties for this crime⁹¹.

84. See below for further details

85. See TS col. 1679.

86. See TS col. 4019.

87. See TS col. 4020. See LENSKI 2011; URBAN 2020.

88. *Book of Life of Bet Svirina*, narrative § 33 (AG 1813), F. p. 21 (Syr.), H. p. 14 (trans.).

89. See TS col. 719; LS3 p. 233a.

90. See Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, VIII.3, p. 80a (Syr.), p. 69a (trans.).

91. See Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, XXXIII, ‘Concerning abduction’ (ܫܦܘܢܐ ܕܥܒܕܘܬܐ).

Syriac has several verbs which can express the meaning ‘to serve’, and while ‘service’ is not by any means limited to slaves, the use of these verbs may frequently indicate the presence of slaves rather than hired servants, especially when used outside of religious or rhetorical contexts. That will always have to be determined on a case by case basis, but it would perhaps be advisable to begin with a presumption of slavery, unless the contrary can be demonstrated.

The two most frequently used verbs for service are *šammeš* (ܫܡܫܐ), D stem, ‘to serve’⁹², and *plah* (ܩܠܗ), G stem, ‘to serve’⁹³. The first root, *š-m-š*, is largely restricted to ‘service’, understood in the context of various activities, and by various individuals, free and non-free. The same is true of the various nouns formed from this root, such as *šamaša* (ܫܡܫܐܢܐ), ‘male slave or servant’, *šamašta* (ܫܡܫܐܢܐܬܐ), ‘female slave or servant’⁹⁴; *mšamšana* (ܡܫܡܫܐܢܐ), ‘male slave or servant’, ‘deacon’, and *mšamšanita* (ܡܫܡܫܐܢܐܬܐ), ‘female slave or servant’, ‘deaconess’⁹⁵; and *tešmešta* (ܬܫܡܫܐܬܐ), ‘service’⁹⁶, which has a wide range of uses that can include the service of a slave to an owner⁹⁷.

The latter verb, *p-l-ḥ*, is a complicated verbal root, with diverse meanings, including ‘to plough’, ‘to cultivate’, ‘to labour’, ‘to honour (a god)’, ‘to soldier’, as well as ‘to serve’. Phrases such as *plah* ‘*abduta*’ (ܩܠܗ ܥܒܘܬܐ), ‘to serve in slavery’⁹⁸, indicate that it can certainly be applied to enslavement. Related nouns also have wide ranges of meanings, but among these *pulḥana* (ܩܠܗܢܐ) can mean both ‘service’ and ‘slaves’ as a group⁹⁹, *palḥa* (ܩܠܗܐ) and *palaha* (ܩܠܗܐ) can mean ‘labourers’, ‘slaves’¹⁰⁰, and *palhuta* (ܩܠܗܘܬܐ) can mean ‘slaves’ as a group, or ‘service’, ‘servitude’¹⁰¹, with *bnay palhuta* (ܒܢܝ ܩܠܗܘܬܐ) used for the group of slaves owned by an individual¹⁰². In the *Julian Romance* (5th or 6th c.) the soon to be martyred Maximus, a wealthy man of noble birth, grants manumission

92. See TS col. 4225-4227; LS3 p. 1576a-b.

93. See TS col. 3147-3150; LS3 p. 1196a-1197b.

94. See TS col. 4227.

95. See TS col. 4227-4228. Note one lexical definition of *ʾamtā* (TS col. 248) as: ‘a serving woman bought with money, that is, a slave-girl’, *mšamšanita zbinat kespi awkit ḥlita* (ܡܫܡܫܐܢܐܬܐ ܙܒܝܢܐܬܐ ܩܫܝܐܐ ܐܘܟܝܬ ܫܠܝܬܐ).

96. See TS col. 4228-4229.

97. See TS col. 4229, citing Isaac of Antioch: ‘he sold him a man-slave for his service’, *zabben leh gabra* ‘*abda l-tešmešteḥ*’ (ܙܒܒܢ ܠܗ ܓܒܪܐ ܥܒܘܬܐ ܠܬܫܡܫܐܬܗ).

98. See TS col. 3148; examples are given where the two Syriac words render the Greek *douleuein*.

99. See TS col. 3150; note *pulḥan* ‘*abduta*’ (ܩܠܗܢܐ ܥܒܘܬܐ).

100. See TS col. 3151.

101. See TS col. 3151-3152; note *b-palḥut* ‘*abduta plah*’ (ܩܠܗܘܬܐ ܥܒܘܬܐ ܩܠܗ).

102. See col. TS 594, 3152.

to his male and female slaves, *l-ʿabdaw(hy) wa-l-ʿamhateh*, and also to the *palaḥe* (ܩܠܬܝܗ) who were in his villages¹⁰³. The term here appears to be used of agricultural slaves, distinguished from his other (urban?) slaves.

Two less frequently used verbs meaning ‘to serve’ are *dayyel* (ܕܝܝܠ), D stem of *d-w-l*¹⁰⁴, and *ʿaniḥ* (ܥܢܝܚ), C stem of *n-w-ḥ*¹⁰⁵. The former verb is also found in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic with this sense, and gives rise to the nouns: *duyala* (ܕܘܝܠܐ), ‘service’¹⁰⁶; *mdaylana* (ܡܕܝܠܢܐ), ‘male servant / slave’, *mdaylanita* (ܡܕܝܠܢܝܬܐ), ‘female servant / slave’¹⁰⁷; and *mdaylanuta* (ܡܕܝܠܢܘܬܐ), ‘service’¹⁰⁸. The second verb, *ʿaniḥ* (ܥܢܝܚ), has a primary sense ‘to make rest’, but can also be used as the equivalent of Greek *therapeuō*, ‘to wait upon’, ‘to serve’. So in the 7th c. Syrohexapla, for example, Greek *therapōn*, ‘servant’, ‘attendant’, is translated *mniḥana* (ܡܢܝܚܢܐ), feminine *mniḥanita* (ܡܢܝܚܢܝܬܐ), ‘servant’, and the medieval lexica gloss the former as *ʿabda*, ‘slave’, and the feminine as *zbinat kespa*, (Arabic) *jāriyat*, *ʿamat*, ‘bought slave’¹⁰⁹; the abstract noun is *mniḥanuta* (ܡܢܝܚܢܘܬܐ), ‘service’¹¹⁰. So, at the risk of repetition, this service and these servants need not be slaves, but the initial presumption should be that they were until it is shown otherwise.

Given that Syriac writers were always working in multilingual contexts, it is unsurprising that Syriac also acquired names for ‘slaves’ or ‘servants’ from other languages with which they were in contact. Apart from those already mentioned, from Greek there came *ʿapriṭa* (ܥܦܪܝܬܐ) and *hupriṭa* (ܠܦܪܝܬܐ)¹¹¹, variants for Greek *hupēretēs*, ‘slave’, ‘servant’, ‘attendant’. It is used by John of Ephesus (6th c.) of a figure who is also described as both *ṭalya* and *ʿlayma*, and so was presumably thought to be a slave in this context¹¹².

103. *Julian Romance*, p. 195 (Syr.), p. 194 (trans.).

104. See col. TS 837-838; LS3 p. 282 (3# ܕܘܠܐ). The verb is cited from, among others, John of Ephesus (6th c). Despite superficial appearances, it does not derive from Greek *douleuein*, ‘to be a slave’, ‘to serve’; Sokoloff suggests a link to Akkadian *dayālu*, ‘inspector’.

105. See TS col. 2312-2314.

106. See TS col. 838; LS3 p. 280. Bar Hebraeus, *World Chronicle*, p. 108.12 (Syr.), uses the phrase: ‘enslaved / servile service’, *duyala ʿabdanaya* (ܕܘܝܠܐ ܥܒܕܢܝܐ).

107. See TS col. 839.

108. See TS col. 839.

109. See TS col. 2317-2318.

110. See TS col. 2318.

111. See TS col. 351. 998; LS3 p. 89b, 338a-b. In the *Didascalia*, p.105.21 (Syr.), the word is glossed: *hupriṭe hanaw den mšamšane* (ܠܦܪܝܬܐ ܗܢܘܘܢ ܕܢܘܢ ܡܫܡܫܢܐ), ‘*hupēretai*, that is, servants’.

112. John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History* Part III, p. 61.23, 64.2, 3, 13, 20, 29.

From the Iranian sphere of influence comes the noun *prastawita* / *pristwayta* (?) (ܦܪܫܬܘܘܬܐ), ‘personal female slave’, ‘female servant’¹¹³, which is a borrowing from OP **paristāva*-¹¹⁴. The word is attested in Judith 8.10¹¹⁵, and the spelling in the edition of Lagarde is *prastayuta* (ܦܪܫܬܘܘܬܐ)¹¹⁶, and so this is the spelling in the modern Syriac lexica. Ciancaglini argued that given the form of the Iranian word being borrowed, the original Syriac form would have ended *-wyt*?, and that this was later changed by metathesis to the more common Syriac *-ywt*? ending¹¹⁷. This suggestion is now confirmed by the readings found in early Syriac biblical manuscripts – 7a1 reads *prstwyth* (ܦܪܫܬܘܘܬܐ), ‘her female slave’, 8a1 reads *prstwyth* (ܦܪܫܬܘܘܬܐ)¹¹⁸ – and the Targum to Judges 5.29 refers to the slaves / servants of Sisera’s mother as *p^eristwāyātahā* (ܦܪܫܬܘܘܬܐܗܘܢ), ‘her servants’, using the same Iranian loanword¹¹⁹.

From Latin *galearius*, via Greek *galiarios*, comes *gelyara* (ܦܪܫܬܘܘܬܐ), ‘*galearius*’, ‘military slave’, and the abstract noun *galyaruta* (ܦܪܫܬܘܘܬܐ), ‘a group of *galearii*’¹²⁰. These slaves appear to have been attached to individual legions to transport equipment and to carry out manual and other labour, with perhaps one slave for every three or four legionaries. In the case of the *galearii* they were issued with a helmet (*galea*, hence their name), and probably a spear, although the latter was for defensive rather than offensive use¹²¹. As a group they seem to have been well known to late antique Syriac writers.

In his study of Roman slavery, Bradley provides fascinating tables containing long lists of slave occupations both in rural settings and in

113. See TS col. 3281; LS3 p. 601b.

114. See CIANCAGLINI 2008, p. 239-240.

115. Where it translates Greek *habra*, ‘slave’, itself said to be a possible loan from the Aramaic *ḥabrā*, ‘companion’. In Judith 8.33 where the same Greek word is used, the Peshitta translates as *ṭlit(y)* (ܬܠܝܬܐ), ‘my slave girl / woman’. A further degraded form, *prastanta* (?) (ܦܪܫܬܘܘܬܐ) is attested in BB col. 1630, see TS col. 3283, where the plural form is glossed as *’amhata* (ܦܪܫܬܘܘܬܐ), ‘female slaves’.

116. *Syriac Apocrypha*, p. 114.

117. See CIANCAGLINI 2008, p. 239-240.

118. The first number of the manuscript sigla indicates the century, so 7a1 (Milan, Bibl. Ambrosiana B.21.Inf) is of the 7th century, and 8a1 (Paris BnF syr. 341) is of the 8th century.

119. See *Targum Jonathan*, p. 57. The Aramaic vocalisation might suggest that the Syriac loanword was similarly vocalised, as *pristwāytā*. The Peshitta at Judges 5.29 reads *’laymatah* (ܦܪܫܬܘܘܬܐ), ‘her slaves / servants’.

120. See LS3 p. 237b-238a. In Syriac the term seems later to have devolved into meaning ‘a person or mob of vile condition’; see TS col. 730-731.

121. See ROTH 1994, p. 354-357.

various elite households¹²². Not every household in Syria or Mesopotamia will have found themselves in need of a pearl setter (*margaritarius*), a servant in charge of statues (*a statuis*), or a comedian (*comoedus*), but doorkeepers, storekeepers, stewards, tutors, poultry-keepers, herdsman, ploughmen, vine-pruners, kitchen staff, sweepers, and so on, there must have been in abundance. Equivalent terms exist of course in Syriac, and lists could be made of them, but most of these occupations or jobs are not explicitly marked as slave or non-slave occupations in Syriac, and so the reader of Syriac texts needs to keep an open mind to the possibility that such individuals when mentioned may indeed be slaves, rather than the free hired labourers or servants familiar to us from 19th-century European literature¹²³. Only a few functions appear to be marked as slave functions. For example, Barhebraeus mentions a *ṭalya d-magirse* (ܬܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܓܝܪܫܐ), ‘a pot boy’, ‘kitchen slave’¹²⁴; and *šušana* (ܫܘܫܢܐ), ‘stable slave’, ‘animal wrangler’, although it too can be used figuratively as a term of servile self-deprecation, as in the Ahiqar story¹²⁵.

One final loanword that should be mentioned is the Latin *peculium*, which in Greek became *pekoulion*, and was borrowed into Syriac as *paqulin* (ܩܘܠܝܢ)¹²⁶. This was the standard Roman term for property which belonged personally to a slave, and which a slave owner could choose to free with a slave, or not. In other words, ‘the property of my property is my property’. The concept is familiar in slavery legislation preserved in Syriac, but it is often indicated by phrases such as *medem d-qane ‘abda* (ܡܕܡ ܕܩܢܐ ܐܒܕܐ), ‘that which a slave owns’, or *medem d-’it leh* (ܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ), ‘that which he possesses’.

Slaves are to be distinguished from non-slaves, and the latter are of two kinds, the free-born (Greek *eleutheroi*, Latin *ingenui*), and the freed former slaves (Greek *apeleutheroi*, Latin *libertini*). In Byzantine Greek this slave terminology continued to develop, and confusingly it often used *eugenēs*, ‘well-born’, ‘noble’, and *eleutheros* for freed slaves rather than free-born¹²⁷. In Syriac a free-born male is usually termed *bar here* (ܒܪ ܗܪܐ), ‘son of free people’, a free-born female is *bat here* (ܒܬ ܗܪܐ), ‘daughter of free people’, and the plural for ‘free-born people’ is *bnay here* (ܒܢܝ ܗܪܐ). A complication

122. BRADLEY 1994, tables 1-4, p. 59-63.

123. Bar Hebraeus (13th c.), *Nomocanon* XI.2, refers, for example, to a male slave being sold as a baker or as a scribe, and in XIV.2 to a slave trained as a miller or fuller.

124. See TS col. 1472

125. See TS col. 4108; LS3 p. 1539a; *Ahiqar*, p. 59.9, 11 (Syr.).

126. See TS col. 3219; LS3 1221b; SRRechtsb 44.4.

127. See LENSKI 2021, p. 458. On rare occasions the same phenomenon can be seen in Syriac. John bar Abgare, *Lawbook*, uses *bat here* of a slave’s sister, who from context must be a fully freed woman, rather than a free-born woman; see § 169, p. 194-195.

with these terms is that in many early Syriac texts the same expressions are used primarily to indicate ‘nobles’, ‘aristocrats’, members of the social elites. As de Blois has shown, this latter usage is a calque of the Middle Persian and Parthian *āzād* which meant both ‘noble’ and ‘free’, from an original meaning ‘agnate’, ‘born into a clan’¹²⁸. (In fact, just as *azatē* and *azatai* appear as loan words in Greek lexica¹²⁹, so *azad* occurs as a rare loanword in Syriac, *ʾazda* (?) (ܐܙܕܐ), and it is glossed in the lexicon of Bar Bahlul as *bar here*¹³⁰.) The same dual usage is found in other Semitic languages which had been in contact with Iranian speakers, most notably biblical Hebrew where *ḥōrīm* usually indicates ‘nobles’, but *ben ḥōrīm* in Eccl. 10.17 is used of a ‘freeman’¹³¹, and in Imperial Aramaic documents from Egypt, where the plural *ḥry* (in construct state) is used of ‘nobles’, and the one clear usage of *brḥrn*, ‘son of free people’, in the Ahiqar tale, is in a broken context, where it could mean ‘noble’ or ‘free’¹³². In Syriac the singular masculine form *ḥera* (ܚܝܪܐ), ‘free’, does not appear to exist in late antique Syriac texts (although it is used by Barhebraeus in the 13th c.), but only the plural masculine form, usually in the constructions given above, and also the feminine *ḥerta* (ܚܝܪܬܐ), in singular and plural, which is used, for example, by Paul of the matriarch Sarah¹³³, and is also used to identify noble women¹³⁴. Curiously, the same distribution of these adjectival nouns is also found in Mandaic¹³⁵. The adjectival noun *ḥeraya* (ܚܝܪܝܐ) is also used of the free-born, particularly, but not only, in translation texts where it renders Greek *eleutheros* and related forms¹³⁶. The abstract noun *ḥeruta* (ܚܝܪܘܬܐ), ‘freedom’, is derived from these forms¹³⁷.

The Greek term *eugenēs* also gave rise to another Syriac calque, *šapir tuhma*, (ܫܦܝܪܬܘܡܗܐ), which literally means ‘of good family’, but from context is being used for ‘free-born’, not ‘noble’¹³⁸.

128. See DE BLOIS 1985; and CIANCAGLINI 2008, p. 104-105.

129. See DE BLOIS 1985, p. 5.

130. See BB col. 99; TS col. 105 (only as a personal name); LS3 p. 24b; CIANCAGLINI 2008, p. 104-105.

131. See DE BLOIS 1985, p. 9; HALOT p. 348.

132. See SCHWIDERSKI 2008, p. 331; DNWSI p. 401-402.

133. See Gal 4.23, 26.

134. See TS col. 1356-1357, where *ḥerta* (ܚܝܪܬܐ) is listed erroneously as the feminine form of *ḥeraya* (ܚܝܪܝܐ), though it may well be the complementary form.

135. See DE BLOIS 1985, p. 9; DROWER & MACUCH 1963, p. 69, 127.

136. See TS col. 1356-1357; LS3 p. 403.

137. See TS col. 1357; LS3 p. 403.

138. See TS col. 4277 (citing Cyril); *šapir* in the construct before another noun is a standard calque for Greek compounds starting with *eu-*, ‘good’, ‘well’. In the legal texts see: *Sententiae syriacae*, § 16, p. 38 (Syr.), p. 39 (trans.); this is repeated in *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXVIII.15.

The medieval lexica also contain the loan word *elutria* (ܠܘܬܪܝܐ), ‘freedom’, from Greek *eleutheria*¹³⁹. Bar Bahlul further cites Gregory of Nazianzen as using a word with the same letters but with the sense ‘free man’ (*bar here*), so presumably a translator used a form of the word that was vocalised as *elutraya*, a Syriac adaptation of *eleutheros*¹⁴⁰.

Slaves could be simultaneously owned by multiple owners, each of whom owned a stated part or share in the slave, perhaps a third, or a quarter, or a tenth, and this ‘part’ was named *mnata* (ܡܢܬܐ), plural *mnawata* (ܡܢܘܬܐ). As a result, a slave might have a third, or a tenth part of themselves freed, and this partial freed status could in some contexts be transmitted to their children. The freed part could potentially labour for that proportion of the available work time for its own financial benefit, and could also potentially inherit (or bequeath) a proportional part of a legacy.

The main verb used for describing the manumission or freeing of individual slaves is the D stem form *harrar* (ܠܘܠܘܐ), ‘to set free’¹⁴¹. From the passive participle of this verb is formed the noun *mharra* (ܡܚܪܐ), feminine *mhararta* (ܡܚܪܐܪܬܐ), ‘freed former slave’, the equivalents of Greek *apeleutheroi*¹⁴². The Greek word *apeleutheros* itself occurs as a loanword, *apalutra* (?) (ܐܦܠܘܬܪܐ), in a single mid-2nd-century Syriac inscription where it is used of a freedman of Antoninus Caesar (probably Marcus Aurelius) who rose to local prominence in Edessa¹⁴³. The Greek loan word does not appear to be used in any later Syriac texts. From the same verbal root *h-r-r* a number of other relevant terms are formed: *hurara* (ܠܘܪܐ)¹⁴⁴, and *hrura* (ܠܘܪܐܘܐ), which is often in the plural *hrure* (ܠܘܪܐܘܐܘܐ)¹⁴⁵, both of which can mean both ‘manumission’, and ‘deed of manumission’, and so can be used with verbs of giving such as *yahb* (ܐܘܒܐ), as expressions of manumission; and *mharra* (ܡܚܪܐ), ‘one who manumits, sets free’¹⁴⁶. Another name for a ‘deed of manumission’ is *ktaba d-heruta* (ܟܬܒܐ ܕܚܪܘܬܐ)¹⁴⁷.

Under the influence of the Islamic legal sources he was using, Bar Hebraeus distinguishes several different types of manumission. ‘Simple

139. See TS col. 202; BB col. 169.

140. See TS col. 202, give BB col. 169.

141. See TS col. 1356; LS3 p. 495.

142. See TS col. 1356. See 1 Cor 7.22, where *apeleutheros* is translated by *mharra*, and *eleutheros* by *bar here*.

143. See TSSupp p. 31b; DRIJVERS & HEALEY 1999, As49, p. 132-133.

144. See TS col. 1358; LS3 p. 434-435.

145. See TS col. 1358; LS3 p. 488.

146. See TS col. 1359.

147. See Ḥnanišo^c, *Juridical Decisions*, V, p. 12.12 (Syr.).

manumission', *ḥurara pšīta* (ܚܘܪܐܪܐ ܦܫܝܬܐ), occurs when an owner during their lifetime decides to free a slave¹⁴⁸. According to Bar Hebraeus he simply needs to address his male slave with the words 'O free man!', 'o *ḥera* (ܚܝܪܐ ܐܪ), or his female slave with 'O free woman!' 'o *ḥerta* (ܚܝܪܬܐ ܐܪ), and they are free and cannot be re-enslaved. A second type is 'contractual manumission', *ḥurara mtanwya* (ܚܘܪܐܪܐ ܡܬܢܘܘܝܐ), which applies when a person says to his slave, 'when I die you will be free'. But this often came with conditions that the slave had to fulfil¹⁴⁹. A third type is the 'conferral of manumission through the labour of the slave', *maš'lmūt ḥurara b-pulḥan 'abda* (ܡܫܠܡܘܬ ܚܘܪܐܪܐ ܒܦܘܠܚܢ ܥܒܕܐ). In this case the owner fixes an amount of money that the slave needs to pay him in exchange for his freedom, or alternately a fixed amount of labour plus one coin¹⁵⁰. Bar Hebraeus is uneasy about the integrity of the legal thinking behind this, since not only the slave but the slave's labour already belongs to the master, and so the master appears to be buying property from himself with his own money. But he can see that it might still have benefits for the owner.

A series of other less technical verbs and idioms are also used to express the broad concept of manumission or liberation from slavery: 'awšar (ܐܘܫܐܪ), C stem 'š-r, 'to be emancipated'¹⁵¹; *mrād* (ܡܪܐܕ), 'to be emancipated', 'to escape'¹⁵²; *nḥaq* (ܢܚܩ), 'to be emancipated', 'to leave (slavery)'¹⁵³; 'etpreq (ܐܬܦܪܩ), Gt stem, 'to be emancipated', 'to be redeemed'¹⁵⁴; and *šbaq* (ܫܒܩ) 'to manumit', 'to release'¹⁵⁵.

A freed slave continued to have an important legal relationship with the person who freed them, who was now known in Latin as *patronus* (male) or *patrona* (female), and the male form entered Greek as *patrōnos*, and Syriac as *patron* (ܦܬܪܘܢ) or *patrona* (ܦܬܪܘܢܐ)¹⁵⁶. The medieval lexica also preserve a feminine form, *patronisa* (ܦܬܪܘܢܝܐ), from the Greek *patrōnissa*¹⁵⁷. The abstract noun for patronage is *patronuta* (ܦܬܪܘܢܘܬܐ)¹⁵⁸, but Išo'bokt (late 8th c. Iran)¹⁵⁹, for example, prefers the term *rešanuta*

148. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, XXXII.1.

149. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, XXXII.2.

150. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, XXXII.3.

151. See TS col. 355; BB col. 85.

152. See TS col. 2216.

153. See TS col. 2419.

154. See TS col. 3294; LS3 p. 1251.

155. See TS col. 4039.

156. See TS col. 3095; LS3 p. 1183b.

157. See TS col. 3095.

158. See TS col. 3095; LS3 p. 1184a.

159. See Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 176.29.

(ܩܘܘܘܝܐ), ‘headship’, ‘authority’¹⁶⁰. In many cases the freed slave might be expected to continue to work for the *patrōnos* and his heirs, and this could be explicitly required in the manumission document. If the freed slave died intestate and without children, the *patrōnos* inherited his entire estate. From this it should be clearly understood that ‘freed’ was really not the same as ‘free’.

In the Islamicate period new laws began to apply to slaves and to manumission, and some of these were translated into Syriac. As a result the complex Arabic legal term *mawlā*, plural *mawālī*, entered Syriac in the plural form *mawali* (*mawaliye* ?) (ܡܘܠܝܐ)¹⁶¹. This can be used to indicate both sides of a patronal relationship, both the former slave owners now patrons – and so it can be glossed in Syriac as *maraw(hy)* (ܡܪܘܗܝܐ), ‘his masters’¹⁶² – and the former slaves and their children, now clients of the patrons¹⁶³. It is possible that the ambiguity of the Arabic term led to a similar ambiguity in the use of the Syriac term *maraye* (ܡܪܝܐ), ‘masters’, ‘patrons’, because in addition to being used as a gloss for *mawālī* with the contextual sense of ‘patrons’, it is also used of a freed slave and his free-born wife and children in a 13th c. manuscript where the context (and the other recension) suggests that they must be clients¹⁶⁴.

One final complication in the life of a slave was having a master who was in financial difficulty and needed to borrow money. In this case the slave (or alternatively a beast of burden, or other goods) could be transferred or pledged to the creditor as a form of security that could be appropriated in the case of non-payment. In the meantime, the slave had the status of a usufruct; they lived with the creditor and were under their authority and control, and so worked for them, but legally their owner remained the debtor. Any income they generated was considered as the equivalent of interest on the loan and did not reduce the total of the principal borrowed. Since they were acting as security for a loan, until they were redeemed (i.e. the loan was paid off), their owner could not sell them, nor give them as a gift, nor hire them, betroth them, or free them. If a female slave gave birth after being pledged, her child belonged to the first master, the debtor. If she was pregnant when pledged, then her child could be reckoned as part of the pledge. It was a precarious situation to be

160. See TS col. 3909; LS3 p. 1466a.

161. Apparently not in the standard Syriac lexica. For examples, see *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIV.9, 11, LXIVa.20, 21. On the use of these terms in Arabic, see PIPES 1980.

162. *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIV.9.

163. *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIVa.20, 21.

164. See John bar Abgare, *Lawbook*, p. 194-195, § 170, ms. C. Alternatively, it could be a simple translation error from Arabic, but this seems contextually less likely.

in for a slave. Unsurprisingly, Bar Hebraeus has an entire chapter dealing with the pledging of securities for loans, *meškanuta* (ܡܫܟܢܘܬܐ), and the various issues that could arise¹⁶⁵. That which is pledged as security (for example a slave) is the *meškana* (ܡܫܟܢܐ)¹⁶⁶. From this noun is derived a quadrilateral verb form *mašken* (ܡܫܟܢܐ), ‘to pledge (as security for a loan)’ which is commonly used, for example in the *Syro-Roman Lawbook* and sometimes by Bar Hebraeus¹⁶⁷. On other occasions he uses the C stem, or *ʿapʿel*, of the root š-k-n, so *ʿašken* (ܥܫܟܢ)¹⁶⁸. The verb for repaying the loan, and so for redeeming the security (such as the slave), is *p-r-ʿ* (ܦܪܥ).

Documentary sources for slavery in Syriac

There are very few documentary sources (as opposed to literary manuscripts) of any kind or from any period that survive in Syriac. Syriac scholars can only look with envy at the wealth of evidence related to slavery available, for example, on Greek and Arabic papyri from Egypt¹⁶⁹, or from the Cairo Genizah¹⁷⁰. Whereas thousands of papyri survive from the Egyptian desert, a 1995 survey identified a total of 167 surviving documents in any language from Syria and Mesopotamia¹⁷¹. Among these however are 21 documents collectively known as the ‘middle Euphrates archive’, 3 of which are written in Syriac, 18 in Greek, of which 7 have Syriac subscriptions or signatures¹⁷². They are dated between 232 CE to 256 CE, and are of unknown provenance (except for one, *P. Dura* 28, which was found in Dura Europos in 1933). The documents refer to villages on the west bank of the Euphrates just north of Dura Europos, but they have strong links to cities further north, especially Zeugma, Harran, Edessa, and Nisibis. Of these documents 5 are contracts for the sale of slaves, although 2 are duplicates of the same contract. None of the parties involved were, as far as we can tell, Christians. Here are the summary details of these contracts:

165. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, XIII.

166. See TS col. 4157; LS3 p. 848a.

167. See TS col. 4153; LS3 p. 847b.

168. See TS col. 4153.

169. For the latter see RAGIB 2002, 2006.

170. See for example GOITEIN 1962; PERRY 2014; FRENKEL 2017; PERRY 2020.

171. COTTON, COCKLE, & MILLAR 1995.

172. For an overview, see FEISSEL & GASCOU 1989; GNOLI 2000; HEALEY 2021. For the slave contracts in particular see REDUZZI MEROLA 2015, ZOULIS 2023. The two other Syriac documents deal with transfer of a debt, and the lease of repossessed property; see DRIJVERS & HEALEY 1999.

1. *P. Dura* 28¹⁷³: Date: 9 May 243. Language: Syriac, with a Greek subscription. Material: parchment. Place: Edessa. Seller: Marcia Aurelia Matar^ˆata (f.) d. of Šamnay. Buyer: Tiro (m.) s. of Barba^ˆša. Slave: Amatsin / Matsin (f.). Age: 28. Price: 700 denarii. Origin of slave: purchased from captivity¹⁷⁴. Description of slave: none. Scribe: Marcus Aurelius Belshu s. of Muqimu, the scribe.
2. *P. Euphr.* 6, 7 (duplicates)¹⁷⁵: Date: 6 November 249. Language: Greek, with Syriac summary and subscriptions. Material: parchment. Place: Marcopolis. Seller: Maththabeine (f.) d. of Abbas s. of Goras (assisted by her brother Kozas / Aurelius Quza), of Marcopolis. Buyer: Aurelia Mathaathe / Mat^ˆate (f.) d. of Gomaimos / Gumaymū, of Marcopolis. Slave: Apsalmas / ^ˆAbšalma (m.) s. of Mathseine / Matsin (mother). Age: 13. Price: 600 denarii. Origin of slave: born in the household. Description of slave: ‘has dark skin, straight nose, almost joined eyebrows, pierced ears, goat-like eyes (?), healthy and not subject to legal seizure’. Scribe: Balesos the notary.
3. *P. Euphr.* 8¹⁷⁶: Date: 27 January 251. Language: Greek. Material: parchment. Place: Bet Fouraya. Seller: Absalmas (m.) s. of Abidrodakos, from village of Beathagae of the Abourene. Buyer: Samsaios (m.) s. of Teias, from village of Banathsamsa of the Abourene. Slave: Immedabou (f.). Age: 13. Price: 700 denarii. Origin of slave: bought in Nisibis, 27 April 250, from Septimius Saturnilus (m.) s. of Proculus. Description of slave: ‘pale complexion, round face, full eyebrows, good eyes, straight nose’. Scribe: [lacuna].
4. *P. Euphr.* 9¹⁷⁷: Date: 13 June 252. Language: Greek, with a Syriac subscription. Material: parchment. Place: Bēt Fouraya. Seller: Aulaeias

173. For the text see *P. Dura* 28 in the bibliography, and DRIJVERS & HEALEY 1999, p. 232-236; HEALEY 2009, § 63, p. 264-275; for studies see BELLINGER & WELLES 1935; TORREY 1935; WELLES, FINK, & GILLIAM 1959, p. 142-149, pls. lxix, lxxi.; GOLDSTEIN 1966; ZOULIS 2023.

174. HEALEY 2021, p. 271 notes that *zbyn*? ... *mn šby*? in line 10 could mean either ‘bought from captivity’, *šebya*, as in DRIJVERS & HEALEY 1999, or ‘from the captors’, *šabaye*, as he translates here. Both are possible, but I prefer the rendering ‘from captivity’, partly because of references to ‘captivity’ in other slave-related contexts, and partly because the word ‘captors’ in such a syntactic context would normally have a possessive pronominal suffix, ‘her captors’.

175. *P. Euphr.* 6 – 10, p. 6-26.

176. *P. Euphr.* 6 – 10, p. 26-38.

177. *P. Euphr.* 6 – 10, p. 38-45.

(m.) s. of Abdilaios, from village of Bonasamsa, now in Bet Fouraya. Buyer: Abisauta (m.) s. of Abidiardas, of Bet Fouraya. Slave: Wardanaya, known as Diane (f.), of the Ortene people (of Anzitene). Age: [lacuna]. Price: 550 denarii. Origin of slave: bought in Nisibis, from Aurelia Victorina (f.) d. of Anthi[...], assisted by her husband Aurelius Oua[...], (centurion) *primipilus* of the Legio I Parthica. Description of slave: ‘white skin, round face, good eyes ... healthy and not subject to legal seizure’. Scribe: [Metolbes]umenos, *librarios*.

So here, from a nine-year period, we have contracts for the sale of four slaves, three of whom were female and one male. Two of the sellers were female, and two male, all have Aramaic names, and all of them seem to have been slave owners rather than professional slave dealers, although the female slave Immedabou of *P. Euphr.* 8 was only with her male owner for nine months before being sold on. One of the slaves was said to have been born into the household (and so his slave mother’s name is given), one was bought from captivity, and two were bought previously in Nisibis, a frontier town with the Iranian empire, and so a major trading centre. Notably one of the Nisibene sellers (Aurelia Victorina) is the wife of a legionary *primus pilus*, and the other (Septimius Saturnilus son of Proculus) has a Roman rather than an Aramaic name. Were these Romans using their positions in or around Nisibis to deal in captured slaves, or did they simply take them to a major provincial market in order to find a buyer? This cannot be determined one way or another, but it does seem likely that Nisibis remained a good place for Romans to buy slaves until it was lost to the Iranians in 363, and Christians like Ephrem, and no doubt the slave traders too, had to abandon it for other cities like Edessa. The sale prices of the slaves – two at 700 silver denarii, one at 600, and one at 550 – seem to be considerably lower than would be expected in more central regions of the empire¹⁷⁸. It is also noteworthy that the horse sold in *P. Euphr.* 10 (26 May 250) fetched a price of 750 denarii, more than any of the slaves¹⁷⁹.

Three of the four contracts have key participants signing in Syriac, even though three of the contracts are written in Greek and only one, that from Edessa, is written in Syriac. This is interesting for various reasons, not least that it indicates that in this region contracts written or witnessed

178. See the price tables in LENSKI 2021, and HARPER 2010; for prices in the later Byzantine period see MORRISSON & CHEYNET 2002.

179. See *P. Euphr.* 6 – 10, p. 45-53. The fact that a slave could cost less than a horse was remarked upon by Augustine in his *De sermone Domini in monte secundum Matthaeum* I.19.59, PL 34, p. 1260.

in Syriac were considered legally binding, but also because it underlines how problematic is the common academic practice of separating documentary sources on the basis of their language. Even though Syriac remained a major literary language in Syro-Mesopotamia, and it was the language of choice for many of the legal codes produced for and by local Christian bishops, the day to day trade in slaves took place in languages which were used locally for trade or for legal contracts, even when buyers or sellers were possibly unable to read them. So when talking about Syriac sources for slavery we have to be aware that the contracts themselves may well have been written in Greek, Middle Persian, or Arabic in many cases, rather than Syriac, whose use in legal contracts one imagines died out by the early Islamic period, if not centuries before.

Informed comparative legal analysis of these contracts can be found elsewhere¹⁸⁰, but here attention simply needs to be drawn to some of the provisions found within them. These contracts demonstrate just what it means to be sold as property, without any say in the decision to sell, or the process of selling. In both *P. Euphr.* 8 and 9, the slave is said to be called PN, 'or any other name which the buyer calls or will call them', and Wardanaya, with her name of Iranian origin, has already been given a more manageable name for the locals, Diane. Slaves had no more ownership of their names than do dogs or cats. And the contracts are clear that the buyer has absolute control over the slaves, once payment was made: 'The seller hands over the said slave to him so that he may possess and own her, use her, sell her, manage her in the manner he wishes' (so *P. Euphr.* 8). The 13 year old Immedabou, being passed from one male owner to another, all alone and out in the wilds, was entirely dependent upon the benevolence of Samsaios and his household. The contracts all end with formal guarantees from the sellers that they will defend the buyer's valid ownership of the slave if anyone else claims the slave or a part of the slave, and that they will refund the price if the slave falls ill within the immediate future. The slave receives no guarantees, and has no defenders.

At the same time that these sale contracts were being drafted by the Euphrates, a sale contract was being registered in Oxyrhynchus to the west of the Nile. The papyrus *P. Oxy.* 3053, dated 28 October / 26 November 252, records the registration by one Marcus Aurelius Marcianus of his purchase of a female slave named Balsamea, 'by race Osrhoenian Mesopotamian, age about 17, scars on the upper lip to the left and on the right knee', whom he had bought from another Osrhoenian named Marcus

180. REDUZZI MEROLA 2015, ZOULIS 2023.

Aurelius Silvanus in Tripoli in Phoenicia¹⁸¹. Why he thought she was valuable enough to import to Egypt by ship, as the registration states, is not known, but this papyrus restores a name, and part of a face, to one more slave from the region of Edessa, who now found herself in an entirely alien environment.

For later periods no formal documentary sources related to slaves survive in Syriac. There are, however, some surviving legal *responsa* issued by Syriac writers when called upon to adjudicate on issues involving slaves. Within the *West Syrian Synodicon* there are two such replies of Jacob of Edessa (d. 708), given in response to questions put to him by John the stylite. They are stripped of details that would provide information about names or places, and so while interesting they lose the specificity of a true document¹⁸². From the same era, however, there survives a collection of juridical decisions made by Catholicos Ḥnanišoʿ I (d. 700) of the Church of the East¹⁸³. Some of these are brief decontextualised legal pronouncements, but others take the form of letters outlining specific legal questions or cases that have been put to him, combined with his judgements upon them, and his instructions to those with local authority on how to enforce them. Five of his decisions involve slaves, and in four of these it is because they form part of contested inheritances¹⁸⁴. Two of these are of particular interest, and so I will briefly outline their details. In the first¹⁸⁵, he relates that a ‘youth’, *layma*, named Yoḥannan had come to see him and declared that he was the former slave of the priest Narsai, but that his master had freed him in his will. In support of this he produced a manumission document. He complains that the priest’s son Mari is now attempting to re-enslave him. Ḥnanišoʿ rules in his favour and writes to ‘the priest and judge’, *qašiša w-dayana* Daniel, and the honourable Mar Sargis (in a city that is not named)¹⁸⁶, and instructs them to speak to the son and persuade him to produce a written confirmation of the manumission, and to agree in writing not to harass the freedman through taxation or any other means. If he will not be persuaded, he is to be excommunicated. This letter is excellent evidence that priests could and did own slaves, and it provides a concrete example of the struggle that

181. See *P. Oxy.* 3053 in the bibliography.

182. *West Syrian Synodicon*, XLVIII.20, 21. The former is discussed below.

183. See Ḥnanišoʿ, *Juridical Decisions*, in the bibliography; see also TAMKE 2008.

184. Ḥnanišoʿ, *Juridical Decisions*, V, VII, XII, XXIII, XXIV.

185. Ḥnanišoʿ, *Juridical Decisions*, V.

186. It is curious that it is the priest Daniel who is described as being a judge, since normally that role would be taken by a bishop, and he is also mentioned before Mar Sargis. So was the latter a distinguished layman, and in the absence of a bishop it was Daniel who acted as judge for the local Christians?

faced freed slaves wishing to stay free when heirs resented their manumission. This is an issue regularly dealt with in Syriac law codes.

A second case is also intriguing¹⁸⁷. The sons of Suren bar Berona are in dispute over a male slave of their deceased father. Sefrai claims that the slave was left to them, but that two of his brothers, Mihrnarse and Mihran freed him because he was their ‘milk father’ (*maynqana*, the husband of their wet-nurse). The two claim that their father freed him. Ḥnanišoʿ asks for the matter to be investigated. If Suren freed the slave, he is freed. If the two brothers freed him, all other siblings, if they do not wish to free him, are entitled to receive their part share of him. Here, as Sachau pointed out, the two brothers are following a precept found in Islamic law that kinship was produced not only through blood and marriage, but also through shared milk, and so they freed him¹⁸⁸. Ḥnanišoʿ clearly disagrees, and upholds an older understanding of kinship. It is an interesting example of the ways in which the interaction of multiple legal systems affected individuals, including slaves, within the Christian communities of the Islamicate world.

The legislation of slavery in Syriac

Wherever Syriac writers or communities were located, they were always subject to the local state laws, and those were written in the main legal or governmental languages of the state, which was never Syriac. Each regional legal system was distinctive and had its own legal principles and traditions, and while they could often tolerate some minor adaptations to the sensibilities of religious, ethnic, or regional groups, such as the Syriac-using Christians, in the end all groups had to abide by the state laws. No Christian patriarch or bishop could countermand a state law. So to understand Syriac regulations and laws relating to slavery in any particular period or region, it is always necessary to read them in the light of the dominant regional legal principles, and in consultation with the state codes, such as, for example, the *Theodosian Code* and *Justinianic Code* in the Byzantine empire¹⁸⁹, the *Book of a Thousand Judgements* in the

187. Ḥnanišoʿ, *Juridical Decisions*, VII.

188. Ḥnanišoʿ, *Juridical Decisions*, (SACHAU 1908), p. 184-185.

189. See *Theodosian Code* and *Justinianic Code* in the bibliography.

Sasanian empire¹⁹⁰, and the various schools of legal thought in the Islamic caliphate¹⁹¹.

The earliest Christian legal materials were all concerned with issues of internal church governance, organisation, discipline, and creed, and took the form either of canonical literature attributed to the Apostles¹⁹², or, later, synodical canons produced at the various church councils, whether in the Roman or Sasanian empires¹⁹³, or smaller collections of ascetic or monastic rules¹⁹⁴. In the Roman empire, however, bishops came to exercise legal functions that paralleled those of state judges, and in 318 CE, during the reign of Constantine, the episcopal courts, or *episcopalis audientia*, were formally recognised¹⁹⁵. Constantine granted the bishops sweeping powers to act as judges, and forbade their decisions from being appealed or referred to secular courts, but during the late 4th and 5th centuries their jurisdiction was restricted to those who agreed to be judged before them, and the powers and status of the secular courts were strengthened. Nevertheless they continued to play an important legal role, at least within the Roman imperial church. But it seems that the non-imperial churches such as the miaphysites and the Church of the East had not established their own independent judiciary or courts before the rise of Islam, as has been shown by Selb for the Syrian Orthodox¹⁹⁶. Sachau's contention, frequently repeated by others, that such courts did exist in the pre-Islamic Church of the East was convincingly refuted by Payne¹⁹⁷. But under Islamic rule this changed, as can be seen from the fact that all the legal codes and lawbooks that survive in Syriac postdate the 7th c., even when drawing on earlier sources. Syriac-using bishops needed these law codes because the new Islamic authorities were willing to allow the Christians (and other non-Muslim religious communities) the necessary legal autonomy to govern their own internal affairs, especially in the area

190. For the *Book of a Thousand Judgements*, see the edition of PERIKHANIAN listed in the bibliography. For Sasanian legal theory see MACUCH 2009b; for slaves in Sasanian legal texts see MACUCH 1988, and SCHEUNCHEN 2019. For an overview of Sasanian lawbooks see MACUCH 2009a, p. 185-190.

191. For Islamic law and slaves, see BRUNDSCHVIG 1986.

192. See KAUFHOLD 2005.

193. For the Synodical canons in Syriac of Roman origin see *Synodical Canons* in the bibliography, and for those of Sasanian origin see *Synodicon Orientale*. For a clear guide, see KAUFHOLD 2012, and SELB 1981, 1989.

194. See *Monastic Rules* in the bibliography.

195. On the *episcopalis audientia* see: VISMARA 1937; SELB 1967; LAMOREAUX 1995; HARRIES 1999, ch. 10; SIMONSOHN 2011.

196. SELB 1989, p. 80.

197. See SACHAU 1907, and PAYNE 2015a, 2015b.

of personal law¹⁹⁸. Criminal law, by contrast, remained in the hands of the state, and thus was administered by Muslim judges and Islamic law. Non-Muslims were allowed to take their civil cases before Islamic courts, and on occasion did¹⁹⁹, but there must have been a considerable amount of communal and ecclesiastical pressure to abide by the rulings of their own bishops sitting as judges.

To meet these new needs civil law codes were sourced and translated into Syriac, the official religious language of the senior clergy. This was not only a practical method of sourcing detailed codes on complex civil law matters such as inheritance and contracts, but it was also essential that church law and state law did not differ significantly over financial issues if episcopal decisions were going to be acceptable to the Christian litigants who also had the possibility of turning to state courts if unhappy. From the Roman law tradition these included the *Syro-Roman Lawbook* of ca. 468 CE, which was translated from Greek into Syriac before the 8th c., presumably within the former Roman territory, and was introduced to the Church of the East in the mid-8th c.²⁰⁰ A separate legal source in Greek was that now known due to its translation as the *Sententiae syriacae*, which was produced in Greek before 529 CE, and again was translated into Syriac before the 8th c.²⁰¹ (The Greek originals of both of these works are lost, and their translators are unknown.) In the Iranian sphere Išoʿbokt of Rēvardašīr, the metropolitan of Fars (ca. 775-779 CE), produced a Middle Persian law code (though only the Syriac translation survives) that drew heavily on contemporary Zoroastrian legal texts, and bears many similarities to the *Book of a Thousand Judgements*, without being a direct translation of it or of any other surviving code²⁰². Only those elements unacceptable to Christian sensibilities, such as laws relating to consanguineous marriages, were modified or removed. The largest of all the surviving Syriac legal codes, Bar Hebraeus' *Nomocanon* from the 1270s²⁰³, depends for large parts of its civil law sections on Al-Ghazālī's (c.1058 -1111) abridgement of the legal thinking (or *fiqh*) of the Šāfiʿī

198. See FATTAL 1951, 1958; KAUFHOLD 1984.

199. See SIMONSOHN 2011.

200. In addition to the text and translation in Selb and Kaufhold's edition of the *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, see their detailed introductions and commentaries. See also KAUFHOLD 1994.

201. See *Sententiae Syriacae* in the bibliography.

202. For the text and translation see Išoʿbokt of Rēvardašīr, *Book of Judgements*; see also PAYNE 2015a. For its close links to Zoroastrian concepts and texts see MENASCE 1964, MACUCH 1989.

203. See TAKAHASHI 2005, p. 93.

school, his *Kitāb al-wajīz fī fiqh al-imām aš-Šāfiʿī*²⁰⁴. By his time it was essential that Syriac civil law fully complied with that being practised in his social and legal context by Islamic judges. It is noteworthy that all of the non-anonymous Syriac legal codes that survive are attributed to senior metropolitan bishops or patriarchs, and not to junior clergy or laymen who specialised in canon or secular law. Were they themselves sourcing the legal materials they needed so that they could carry out this aspect of their episcopal work, or were law codes promulgated under their names in order to reinforce their authority and encourage their adoption and use?

Once translated into Syriac these law codes could travel throughout the Syriac-using churches, and so regulations from different legal systems began to accumulate in manuscript compendia, or otherwise become known to interested parties. Since they sometimes contradicted local laws they are occasionally commented upon. Išoʿbukt does this on several occasions in relation to slaves: he notes for example that according to Roman law a person could only free a third of their slaves in his will, in order not to cause financial harm to his wife and children, whereas, he says, ‘In our country (Iran), we hold that a man can free whoever he wants, ... because no one loves a man’s wife and children more than the one to whom they belong’²⁰⁵. He also notes that in some regions the former masters have patronage over a freed slave, but this, he says, is not the law²⁰⁶; and he comments that in some countries if a slave is freed in a half part or a third, the remaining parts must also be freed, but again, he says, this is not the law²⁰⁷.

It is rather ironic that churches famed for their strong ascetic and monastic traditions suddenly found themselves in the position of needing episcopal judges who would primarily have to concern themselves with law related to property; inheritance laws, contracts of sale and purchase, the appointment of financial agents, financial loans, and debt management²⁰⁸. To these were added marriage and divorce law, although this too had a significant financial element relating to the transfer and subsequent control of dowries from bride to husband, and marriage prices from husband to bride’s family. All of these areas of law could involve

204. For the *Nomocanon*’s dependence on this work see NALLINO 1922-1923, p. 566-568 (NALLINO 1942, p. 274-277); TAKAHASHI 2005, p. 97.

205. Išoʿbukt, *Book of Judgements*, V.13.1. The substance of this is repeated by ‘Abdišoʿ bar Brika, *Order of Ecclesiastical Decisions*, 2.4.18.

206. Išoʿbukt, *Book of Judgements*, V.13.2.

207. Išoʿbukt, *Book of Judgements*, V.13.7.

208. On inheritance law see KAUFHOLD 1975; on marriage law and slaves SCHEUNCHEN 2019

slaves, as can be seen from the Appendix to this article in which I have provided summaries of a large proportion of the extant Syriac regulations relating to slaves. As property each individual slave represented an item of significant financial value, who could be sold to raise money, or could be pledged and transferred to another as security for a loan (with the creditor controlling, using, and profiting from the slave, but with the debtor retaining ownership). But to give a slave away as a gift, or to free a slave, was to deprive one's heirs of a valuable part of their inheritance, and so this was a heavily regulated part of the law, and was frequently subject to legal challenge. Slaves were also regarded as livestock, and so female slaves in particular are regularly listed and legislated for alongside farm and herd animals capable of producing young, and since their marriage and breeding was a key to growing their owners' wealth it was carefully controlled. Slaves were also human members of a household, they had relations with the free-born and the freed around them, and so could be selected as financial agents, or as future legal guardians of orphaned children, or as potential recipients of inheritances, or as potential spouses or sexual partners.

In general, as stated above, these regulations match those to be found in the dominant local legal codes, and while they are preserved in Syriac manuscripts and legal compendia (and sometimes not in their original languages), they reflect practice that was common to all parts of the society or state in which members of the Syriac-using churches found themselves, and was not unique to them. In what follows, then, I will not attempt to explore the technicalities of inheritance or contract law, however interesting this may be for economic historians, but I will look at a selection of issues that seem particular to the Syriac churches, or which arise from their history or theology.

At this point it should come as no surprise that in none of the Syriac legal codes is the institution or practice of slavery challenged. In most cases it is just tacitly accepted as a given. The Synod of Dadišo' of 424 CE affirms this given order explicitly, stating:

'In accordance with the just laws which the Creator God has placed in human nature ... slaves cannot deprive their masters of their freedom, but masters can deprive slaves of theirs; women cannot deprive their husbands' of their authority over them, but women should be subservient to men, and men should exercise authority over their women'²⁰⁹.

209. *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 23-24 (Syr.), p. 263-264 (trans.).

In the 14th c., however, bishop ‘Abdišo‘ bar Brika (d. 1318) added his own comment to a series of regulations concerning slaves:

‘Humans are naturally equal in freedom from the roots of nature. But because of greed, and war, oppression, and deceit, it has happened that some are called slaves and others masters’²¹⁰.

For ‘Abdišo‘, at least, slavery was not a part of a divine plan, but it was rather a consequence of human weaknesses and social failings.

The basis of much Christian belief and practice is the Bible, but biblical texts play a minimal, almost non-existent, role in the Syriac slave legislation. This is despite the fact that the Old Testament has much to say on the subject²¹¹, as does Paul in particular in the New Testament²¹². Biblical texts are very rarely cited. ‘Abdišo‘ again is an exception, citing Paul both to tell slaves to obey their masters (Eph.6.4-5), but also to remind the slave owners to treat their slaves well (Eph 6.9)²¹³. Given that Syriac legal codes had to comply with state law, and that those states were often not governed by Christians, it is clear that state law had to trump scriptural law in every instance. Nevertheless, some of the Syriac legislators were uneasy about the contrasts or contradictions between their own rules on slavery, and those of biblical texts. Simeon of Revardašir (mid-7th c.), for example, devotes an entire chapter to explaining why Christians do not judge on the basis of the Law of Moses. He is aware, for example, that the biblical laws of jubilee allowed for the release of slaves after six years’ service, whereas there was no time limit on servitude in his days:

‘There are many laws and commandments in (the Law of Moses) which were not suitable for all people or for every time, but only for that time and for that People. ... ‘If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve you six years, but in the seventh he shall go away from you free’ (Ex 21.1-2). Is it not clear that this is said only about a Hebrew?’²¹⁴.

210. ‘Abdišo‘ bar Brika, *Order of Ecclesiastical Decisions*, 2.4.15, p. 408-409.

211. See for example: TSAI 2014; KRIGER 2011; for later developments see: HEZSER 2005.

212. For Paul on slavery see GARNSEY 1996, p. 173-188; GLANCY 2002; GRENOUILLEAU 2021, p. 22-37. For the account of Jesus selling Thomas into slavery in the Acts of Thomas, see GLANCY 2012; KARTZOW 2018.

213. ‘Abdišo‘ bar Brika, *Order of Ecclesiastical Decisions*, 1.2.16, p. 116-117. This is in the context of his presentation of a large collection of biblical verses relevant to his law code. See also 2.3.22, p. 364-365, where ‘Abdišo‘ reminds human masters that they should act justly with their slaves since they too have a Master in heaven.

214. Simeon of Revardašir, *Law Code*, p. 218-219, 221; on Simeon see also RÜCKER 1908.

Heaven forbid that anyone should apply this biblical verse to slaves owned by Christians. Again, the various churches did not look kindly on men with second wives or concubines, and a number of regulations seek to modify this behaviour. Awkwardly, of course, several of the biblical patriarchs, such as Abraham, Jacob, and Isaac, did have concubines by whom important biblical figures were born. Išoʿbokt of Revardašir addresses this by arguing that the patriarchs were faithful to their wives until the wives themselves persuaded them to take concubines²¹⁵. Išoʿbokt also devotes an early chapter to discussing why Christ and the Apostles did not make any pronouncements about human regulations. He replies that all authority is given to Christ to judge the living and the dead, and he told his disciples to sell all their possessions, and to store up treasure in heaven, and said that anyone who did not abandon homes, and brothers and sisters, and wives and children, was not worthy of him. So, he says:

‘Was it appropriate for him to teach us how to collect capital and interest? Or about the dowry and the property of women? Or about male and female slaves? Or about money and other earthly possessions?’²¹⁶

For Išoʿbokt this was not why Christ came into the world, and so other sources of social regulation needed to be found, namely state law codes.

Another surprising omission for anyone who approaches these regulations from an ecclesiological or theological background, as opposed to a specialisation in social or economic history, is how few of them address the slave within the church, as opposed to the slave within civic society, or the household. The earliest mentions of slaves in church councils and synods had two main concerns of this kind. The first can be seen in the first canon of Nicaea, which sought to exclude from the priesthood anyone who had castrated themselves, and in this it picked up on similar Old Testament prohibitions (see Lev 21.20, Deut 23.2), no doubt reinforced by an objection to self-castration due to extreme encratism, or in imitation of the cult of Atargatis in Syria and Mesopotamia whose devotees in Edessa used to castrate themselves in her honour, until stopped by king Abgar²¹⁷. Since eunuch slaves were widespread in eastern Mediterranean societies, already at Nicaea the canon was qualified (unlike the biblical precepts) to permit those castrated by others to become priests. The second common concern was that slaves would seek to escape

215. Išoʿbokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 54-55.

216. Išoʿbokt, *Book of Judgements*, I.10, p. 16-17.

217. See Bardaisan, *Book of the Laws of the Countries*, p. 58 (Syr.), p. 59 (trans.); on the passage see DRIJVERS 1980, p. 76-78.

their enslavement by becoming priests or by entering a monastery, and the former is already banned by Rabbula of Edessa (d. 435), and the latter by canon 4 of the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE). (Although the doctrinal declarations of Chalcedon were rejected by the miaphysites, the canons were accepted and cited by them.) No doubt the churches feared that Christian slave owners would be antagonised by losing their slaves to the church, or would demand financial compensation. So regulations of this kind, usually specifying that the owner's permission was needed in writing, continue to be repeated in legal codes over the centuries.

Išoʿbarnun (d. 828) offers a different solution, that takes the financial question by the horns. If a slave runs away to join a monastery, and is then found by his master, he says that it would be an act of great piety for the master to allow it, and so, implicitly, to bear the financial loss as though it were a donation. But if he is unwilling to do this, then either the monastery must pay the slave's sale price, or the fugitive slave must himself pay, in monthly instalments if necessary²¹⁸.

Beyond these issues of slaves entering the priesthood or monasteries, some regulations, as in the *Pseudo-Clementine Octateuch* (Greek text post 5th c., Syriac translation by Jacob of Edessa, late 7th c.)²¹⁹, also address the fact that slaves were not allowed to be baptised without their owners' permission, plus a good reference. In all cases this was an issue of not infringing on the slave-owners' rights to run their household and deal with their property as they wished. Beyond this it is never stated in Syriac texts why Christian owners might not want their slaves baptised, but in Ethiopia in the 1930s, when slavery was still common there, one reason that was given was that a baptised slave would acquire a god-parent who might object to a future sale of the slave, or otherwise interfere²²⁰. For non-Christian owners the reasons for not wanting a Christian slave in the household are more obvious, whether they worshipped the Greco-Roman gods, or were Jewish or Zoroastrian, or at a later period Muslims. Most religious communities also objected to slaves of their own religion being sold to buyers from other religions, but they could usually only try to enforce this on slave dealers from their own religious community²²¹.

218. Išoʿbarnun, *Law Code*, § 71. On Išoʿbarnun see WEITZ 2016.

219. *Clementine Octateuch*, II.1.5 and VI.D.10, repeated in the *West Syrian Synodicon* at the same references.

220. See WALKER 1933, p. 11 (and 4).

221. For Syriac regulations objecting to the sale of Christian slaves to non-Christians see Timothy (d. 823), *Law Code*, § 77; Išoʿbarnun (d. 828), *Law Code*, § 65; Bar Hebraeus (d.1286), *Nomocanon*, VIII.3, XI.1, cf. XIII.1 (pledging as security for a debt); ʿAbdišoʿ bar Brika (d. 1318) *Order of Ecclesiastical Decisions*, 2.4.6.

Išoʿbarnun (d. 828) rules that Christian slave dealers should be excommunicated from the church, but his is a lone voice²²². It is clear from the regulations and from the chronicles that many Christian slaves were owned by Muslims, especially in periods of war when entire urban or village populations were taken captive and thus enslaved²²³. But problems would arise if a slave belonging to a Muslim decided to become a Christian. Just such a case was put to Jacob of Edessa (d. 708) by John the Stylite, who described a situation in which a slave who belonged to Muslim owners had been refused permission to be baptised, but claimed that he thought he was dying and so baptised himself, but he actually survived his illness, thereby putting the church authorities into a difficult situation²²⁴. Jacob managed to avoid the political issue in his response, by stating that this clearly happened through divine grace, and so he instead addresses the sacramental question of whether the slave's self-baptism was valid.

But how were slaves managed within Christian churches? Here there is very little detail. Did the male and female slaves stand in church alongside the free male and female believers? Were slave babies of Christian parents or households baptised alongside free-born babies, and if so, who stood as their sponsors or god-parents?²²⁵ Were they buried with the same rites as the free? For the present I think this is not known from Syriac legal sources. The *Pseudo-Clementine Octateuch* states that slaves in Christian households should cease work on Saturdays and Sundays and attend church, and so also during the major Christian seasons which are listed²²⁶. Išoʿbukt in the late 8th c. limits the cessation of slaves' work to Sundays²²⁷. In both cases, despite the pious intentions, it seems

222. Išoʿbarnun, *Law Code*, § 105.

223. In the regulations see John bar Abgare (r. 900-905), *Lawbook*, § 159; *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIVa.16; Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, XI.1. From the chronicles see Bar Hebraeus' account in his *World Chronicle*, of the Franks taking Christian slaves from the Muslims of Damascus without paying; p. 289 (Syr.), p. 254 (trans.). Examples of entire populations being enslaved in times of war are a commonplace, but from Bar Hebraeus, *World Chronicle*, again, see for example his account of Bishop Timothy of Tella of Arsanyas being enslaved with 1500 of his people, p. 308 (Syr.), p. 270 (trans.); the Greek monks of Deir Siman being enslaved by Nur al-Din, p. 330 (Syr.), p. 288 (trans.); twenty-six thousand Armenians being enslaved by the Turkmen, p. 370 (Syr.), p. 321 (trans.).

224. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, XLVIII.20.

225. In 1930s Ethiopia we are told that adult slaves wishing to be baptised had to wait until a free-born baby boy or girl was presented for baptism, and in the meanwhile undergo washing rites of purification; see WALKER 1933, 4.

226. *Clementine Octateuch*, VI.4.1-9 (repeated in *West Syrian Synodicon*, VI.4.1-9).

227. Išoʿbukt, *Book of Judgements*, II.7.

likely that some slaves were still expected to prepare meals and attend to their owners' needs.

It is tempting to imagine that slaves were only owned by the rich elites, and so did not affect the majority of Christians in the Syriac-using churches, but it is clear from the available evidence that ownership was very widespread. As Augustine wrote in Roman north Africa in the early 5th c.: 'The primary and everyday instance of man's power over man is the master's power over his slave. Nearly all households have this type of power'²²⁸. The Syriac materials seem to confirm that the same was true in Syro-Mesopotamia well into the medieval period, with slaves owned by everyone from great rulers to simple artisans, and there is no evidence of this pattern of ownership ending at any time soon after that. At the wealthiest social extreme, the eighth Abbasid caliph, al-Mu'taṣim bi'llāh (d. 842), a son of Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 786-809), is said by Bar Hebraeus to have freed 8,000 slaves at his death, and to have left 40,000 horses, 20,000 mules, and 30,000 slaves for the stables²²⁹. Among the elites, the wealthy Syrian Orthodox tax collector Athanasius bar Gumoye of Edessa, who was employed in Egypt in the late 7th c. by the fifth Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik (r. 685-705), is reported by Dionysius of Tell-Maḥre to have owned 4,000 slaves, and he is praised for using his wealth to build churches in Egypt and Edessa (which suggests that no opprobrium attached to his slave ownership)²³⁰. John of Ephesus also describes wealthy provincial slave owners, but without ever providing precise numbers for their slave holdings, for example Thomas of Armenia IV who inherited large estates and many slaves²³¹, and the anonymous magistrate of a village in the region of Ingila who was known to John personally²³². Turning to the slave legislation, while it clearly does not name specific individuals, many of its provisions clearly anticipate some households having small numbers of slaves. That could, of course, reflect a legislator's desire to anticipate all possible situations, but I think it also reflects the social reality. Regulation concerning how many slaves could be freed on the death of the owner – the maximum cited is 100, but it also raises the possibility of the owner having 2 or 3, or 5, or 10. Another raises the possibility that someone might

228. Augustine, commentary on Psalm 124.7; cited from HARPER 2011, 50.

229. Bar Hebraeus, *World Chronicle*, p. 153 (Syr.), p. 140 (trans.).

230. Dionysius is cited by Michael the Great, *Chronicle* and the *Chronicle to 1234*: Michael the Great, *Chronicle*, XI.16, vol. 4, p. 447–48 (Syr.), vol. 2, p. 475 (trans.); *Chronicle to 1234*, I, p. 229–30 (Syr.), p. 294–295 (trans.). For Athanasius, and a discussion of this passage, see DEBIÉ 2016.

231. John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, § 21, p. 284.

232. John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, § 4, p. 72. For the role of slaves and slavery in John's *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, see DE WET 2017.

own a single slave, and have no other financial assets, leading to only a third of the slave being freed. Two of the regulations in Bar Hebraeus' *Nomocanon* give examples of slaves who have acquired skills, one referring to a slave trained as a baker or as a scribe²³³, and another to a slave trained as a miller or as a fuller²³⁴. Whilst it might be argued that the first two could have been trained within a large household among many other slaves, the last two seem much more plausible as potential apprentices and assistants to artisans, and thus prosperous professionals, but far from being part of the elites²³⁵. Another of Bar Hebraeus' regulations, taken over from his Arabic source, outlines the actions to be taken if a slave owner can no longer afford to feed and maintain his slaves (or his domestic animals), and requires the local bishop to intervene on welfare grounds²³⁶.

The evidence is also clear that Christian clergy, both great and small, were often slave owners. Starting at the highest levels, the *Zuqnin Chronicle* reports that when Severus of Antioch (d. 538) moved into his new patriarchal residence he removed the kitchen slaves and pot-boys ('*abday bušale w-magirse*) that he found working there, as well as the private baths, in order to be able to live more austere²³⁷. This is presumably reported as atypical behaviour for a senior bishop. John of Ephesus (d. ca. 588), the great Syrian Orthodox historian, describes the sufferings of the miaphysite bishops when persecuted by the emperor Justin II, and the patriarch of Constantinople John Scholasticus (565-577), and he states that they were imprisoned in the palace dungeons in Constantinople along with their households and slaves (*ṭlaye*)²³⁸. In another account John refers to his own imprisonment in a cell in the hospital of Euboulos for just over a year. He suffered terribly from gout and from infestations of vermin which led to fever and inflammation. In his distress he received visitations over eight days from an angelic being, whom he took to be a hospital servant or slave (*hupēretēs*), who cared for him. Later, when the patriarch's *synkellos* visited him, he complained bitterly that even though his own slaves (*ṭlaye*) were also imprisoned, he was not allowed even one of them to wait upon him. The angry *synkellos* brought him one of his slaves, and

233. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, XI.2; see also XI.5.

234. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, XIV.2.

235. On artisan slaves in Byzantine Greek sources see ROTMAN 2009, p. 95-102.

236. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, VIII.8.

237. *Zuqnin Chronicle*, part III, ad AG 823 (511-512 CE), p. 13 (Syr.), p. 14 (Witakowski), p. 47 (Harrak).

238. John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History* Part III, I.23, p. 30.13 (Syr.).

from that point on the angelic slave no longer served him²³⁹. Elsewhere, John refers to Eustochius the former bishop of Jerusalem who was murdered in Constantinople by ‘one of his slaves’ (‘*abde*) with a silver candlestick and a spit²⁴⁰, and mentions another John, Bishop of Hephæstopolis, who settled in the imperial city with his slave (*ṭalya*)²⁴¹. Within the Syriac law codes the *Pseudo-Clementine Octateuch* insists that a bishop must keep his personal property and that of the church clearly separate, and that he may leave his own property in his will as he wishes, because, it states, he may well have a wife, children, relatives, and slaves to provide for²⁴². Turning to priests, while some canons state simply that clergy of all ranks may not live with a concubine²⁴³, Simeon, metropolitan of Revardašir (mid-7th c.), decrees that a priest may not marry his slave woman unless he has first set her free²⁴⁴. More specific evidence is provided by the letter of Catholicos Ḥnanišo‘ I (d. 700), discussed above, concerning the former slave Yōḥannan who had been freed by his master, the priest Narsai, in his will²⁴⁵. Since we have so little documentary evidence from Syro-Mesopotamia and Iran, it is hard to determine whether it was normal or exceptional for bishops and priests to own slaves, but it was clearly possible, and not limited to either the Roman or Iranian cultural spheres.

It seems that slaves were also involved in monasticism, and by this I mean not just those who left their masters and entered monastic life (with or without permission), but those who either continued to serve their masters when they became monks, or who were given as slaves to monasteries, and became part of their workforce and their financial holdings. Accounts of ascetics in Egypt who had taken their slaves with them into the desert are familiar from texts such as Palladius’ (368-431 CE) *Historia Lausiaca*, where we are told that Melania, for example, ‘arranged to do some of the manual work of her slave women, whom she made her

239. John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History* Part III, II.6, p. 61-65 (Syr.), especially p. 63.24-30.

240. John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History* Part III, III.35, p. 168 (Syr.). The slave’s punishment was gruesome: ‘The slave was thrown to the wild beasts, and after he had been savaged and torn by them, both of his hands and his feet were cut off. And his trunk, together with his hands and feet, were then put into a boat, which was set on fire and sunk in the sea’; p. 168.24-27.

241. John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, § 25, p. 329.

242. *Clementine Octateuch*, VIII.38 (39); this is repeated in the *West Syrian Synodicon*, V.39.

243. For example, *Clementine Octateuch*, VIII.15 (16); *West Syrian Synodicon*, IV.14, V.16.

244. Simeon of Rēvardašir, *Canons*, § 11.

245. Ḥnanišo‘, *Juridical decisions*, V.

associates in her ascetic practices’²⁴⁶. Among documentary sources, *P. Köln III.157*, written in 589 CE, is a Greek deed of manumission produced by a monk for (remarkably) his female slave²⁴⁷. I have found no exact parallels in Syriac sources, but John of Ephesus tells of a rich noble named Thomas who sold his estates and built two monasteries, one for himself and for his free-men and slaves, and one for his wife and her women. But there is no mention here that the slaves continued to wait upon their former master²⁴⁸. John also refers to lay ascetics who were joined in their devotions by their slaves. The first of these is the *comes* Tribunus who had acted as the blessed Z‘ura’s translator, but who on the latter’s death spent his time in either Z‘ura’s or John’s monasteries in Constantinople, where he practised handicrafts to earn his living, and where he was accompanied by his two slaves, who joined him in vigils and fasting and prayer²⁴⁹. John also mentions the brother and sister of a monk named Peter who learnt the psalms with their slaves and ‘kept hours of prayers and service as though in a monastery of recluses’²⁵⁰.

Much clearer evidence is available of slaves serving whole monasteries rather than individual monks. It is perhaps inevitable given the ubiquity of slavery in the region, and the significant amount of labour required to run a large monastery, that Christians would start to give or bequeath slaves to monasteries. This was already discussed in the Church of the East at the Synod of Catholicos Ezekiel (576 CE), where an anathema was pronounced against heirs who took for themselves the goods and slaves of those believers who in their wills had ordered that their male and female slaves be freed, or had given them to churches, monasteries, and hospices in order to serve them²⁵¹. In the late 8th c., Išo‘bokt of Revardašir decreed that if a female slave and her children were given to a monastery, or for charitable purposes, she and future generations from her should to be treated in the same way as female slaves given to any other person²⁵². In the 14th c. ‘Abdišo‘ bar Brika is still legislating for male or female slaves given to ‘God’s houses’, which presumably included monasteries, and

246. Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca*, 61. The translation is cited here from LARSEN 2020, p. 141, who provides other examples of slave-owning monks in Egypt, and monks who were slaves; see also ELM 1994, p. 84-87. For the use of slavery as an ideological model for asceticism, see DE WET 2020.

247. See *P. Köln III.157* in the bibliography.

248. John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, § 21, p. 290.

249. John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, § 41, p. 463.

250. John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, § 56, p. 544.

251. *Synodicon Orientale*, Synod of Catholicos Ezekiel, XI, p. 119 (Syr.), p. 378-379 (trans.).

252. Išo‘bokt, *Book of Judgements*, V.12.4, p. 176-177.

notes that while they should serve as instructed, their children would be treated in accordance with standard slave laws²⁵³.

I am not aware of similar canons in the Syrian Orthodox tradition, but there is evidence in the chronicles that some of their monasteries also owned slaves. In the *Chronicle* of Michael the Great (1126-1199), who was a monk then abbot of the monastery of Mar Barṣawma in Mytilene, and from 1166 patriarch, there are frequent mentions of people labelled *mšaʿbde* (ܡܫܐܒܕܐ) who are associated with two monasteries, most frequently with Michael's own home, the monastic fortress of Mar Barṣawma perched on its mountainous crag, but also with the monastery of Bet Ḥaniš²⁵⁴. Michael mentions the association of the *mšaʿbde* with Mar Barṣawma for a period running from AG 1378 (1067 CE) to AG 1494 (1183 CE)²⁵⁵, but Bar Hebraeus also mentions them there in approximately AG 1568 (1257 CE)²⁵⁶. Chabot always translates *mšaʿbde* as 'serfs', but this is misleading, since these do not appear to be tied agricultural labourers. When the monastery was damaged by fire in 1183 CE Michael tells us that it destroyed all the cells and houses of the monks, but also those of the *mšaʿbde*, which were clearly in the same complex, not in nearby villages²⁵⁷, and were apparently located higher up the rock (*qatarā*) on which the monastery was built, according to an account of the pillaging of the monastery and the houses of the *mšaʿbde* in 1148 CE²⁵⁸. Michael therefore groups monks and *mšaʿbde* together as members of the monastery (*bnay ʿumra*)²⁵⁹. They frequently accompanied the monks as guards when they had to travel through bandit country, sometimes fighting and dying in the process, and on occasion acted as guards for the monastery itself²⁶⁰. Bar Hebraeus was unambiguous in identifying them as slaves in a later episode (ca. 1257 CE), when some went rogue. Having just mentioned how Melitene had been ravaged by the raids of the Turkmen, and that as a

253. 'Abdišo' bar Brika, *Order of Ecclesiastical Decisions*, 2.4.21.

254. Michael, *Chronicle*, XVII.14, ad AG 1463, p. 655 (Syr.), 3.305 (trans.). For the monastery of Mar Barṣawmā see HONIGMANN 1954, and KAUFHOLD 2000, though these do not discuss the *mšaʿbdē*.

255. See Michael, *Chronicle*, XV.1, ad AG 1378, p. 575 (Syr.), 3.164 (trans.), and XXI.2, ad AG 1494, p. 726 (Syr.), 3.392 (trans.).

256. Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical Chronicle*, I.95, ad AG 1568, p. 731 (Syr.), p. 262 (trans., Wilmshurst).

257. Michael, *Chronicle*, XXI.2, ad AG 1494, p. 726 (Syr.), 3.392 (trans.).

258. Michael, *Chronicle*, XVII.9, ad AG 1459, p. 644 (Syr.), 3.288 (trans.).

259. See Michael, *Chronicle*, XXI.2, ad AG 1494, 727 (Syr.), 3.392 (trans.).

260. See for example, Michael, *Chronicle*, XV.1, ad AG 1378, p. 575 (Syr.), 3.164 (trans.); XVII.9, ad AG 1459, p. 642 (Syr.), 3.284 (trans.), and p. 643 (Syr.), 3.285 (trans.), p. 644 (Syr.), 3.286 (trans.); XVII.10, ad AG 1460, p. 647 (Syr.), 3.290 (trans.); XVIII.9, ad AG 1474, p. 678 (Syr.), 3.322 (trans.).

result male and female Christian slaves filled the whole of Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, he immediately discussed a group of slaves based in Mar Barṣawma whom he describes as ‘enslaved slave-youths, members of the monastery’, *layme mšaʿbde bnay ʿumra* (ܠܝܡܝܡܫܐ ܒܢܝܝ ܐܘܡܪܐ), who dressed in ‘Hagarene clothes’ and took vengeance on Kurdish enemies, but also killed some of their fellow Christians, even within the monastery itself²⁶¹. It seems unlikely that just two Syrian Orthodox monasteries would own slaves, but this is yet another area which will require further research.

The legal codes provide material on many other aspects of social life relating to the time in which they were produced, and often include details not to be found in other genres of Syriac literature. For example, female slaves and female slave-owners are regularly discussed in the lawbooks, and deserve a major study of their own. Slave contracts emphasised that they were totally at the mercy of their owners, as has already been discussed above, and legal regulations regularly presume that if pledged to another owner they would likely become pregnant, and so the ownership of their children is subject to legislation. In other rules they are listed alongside animal livestock, because of their breeding, and thus wealth-creation, potential. In the laws promulgated by Bar Hebraeus it is stated that a slave owner can marry off a female slave against her will (but not a male slave)²⁶².

This institutionalised violence against women is present everywhere in the slave regulations, but it is almost always taken for granted. There are some extremes of behaviour which the bishops cannot accept: both the Synod of Catholicos Ezekiel (576 CE), and Bar Hebraeus, forbid Christians from prostituting out their female slaves and living off the proceeds²⁶³. For Ezekiel this seems to be a genuine contemporary concern, and it is interesting to note that the Qur’an contains the same prohibition (Q 24:33): ‘Do not force your female slaves into prostitution for your own worldly gains while they wish to remain chaste’, a precept that was of course written into Islamic law. Another regulation in Bar Hebraeus’ *Nomocanon* restricts the amount of a female slave’s body a potential buyer can ask to see, contrary to what is implied in contemporary Arabic guidebooks to purchasing slaves²⁶⁴. The issue of male gaze and the female

261. Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical Chronicle*, I.95, ad AG 1568, p. 731 (Syr.), p. 262 (trans., Wilmshurst).

262. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, VIII.2.

263. *Synodicon Orientale*, Synod of Catholicos Ezekiel, IX, p. 118-119 (Syr.), p. 378 (trans.); Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, XXII.1.

264. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, XI.1. On the guidebooks see below.

body also arises in Bar Hebraeus' comment in passing that a female slave-owner does not need to veil her face in the presence of her male slave, nor a female slave in the presence of her master²⁶⁵.

The ethnicity or race of slaves is rarely discussed in these sources. It arises just twice, in Bar Hebraeus' *Nomocanon*, in the context of a discussion of the necessity to draw up clear and explicit contracts when paying in advance for goods such as slaves. He writes:

‘He who pays in advance for slaves must mention in the contract the race (or kind), and colour, and age, and male or female gender, and should say (for example) a Chinese, or Hun, or Nubian male slave, seven or ten years old’²⁶⁶.

He goes on to state:

‘He who has made advanced payment for an Indian slave is not required to pay for a Hun slave, even if this is also good’²⁶⁷.

This range of ethnicities may well have been taken over from his Arabic source, but it presumably remained plausible in his time and context²⁶⁸. Nor is there much other geographically specific data in the regulations, although in a discussion of fugitive slaves and rewards for their recovery, an example is given of a slave who has fled from Edessa to Sarug²⁶⁹.

Given the horror of all that was afflicted on slaves, the violence that they had to bear, and the chilling calm and normality with which this is described and regulated in the Syriac law codes, it is something of a relief to discover that at least some actions were unacceptable. In a curious passage Bar Hebraeus discusses cannibalism. ‘Even in an emergency’, he says, ‘when one is on the point of dying, one cannot kill and eat a human, even if he is not a Christian, nor if he is one’s slave, or one’s child. ... It is not true, as some say, that in an emergency a master may cut off a part of his slave’s thigh, so long as he knows that he will not die from this’²⁷⁰.

265. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, VIII.1.

266. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, XII.2.

267. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, XII.3.

268. For further information on the ethnicity of slaves, and attitudes towards it, see the discussion of guidebooks for the purchase of slaves below.

269. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, XXIX.5.

270. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, XXXV.3. This is a free rendering, but adds no details.

Guides to buying slaves by writers from Syriac-using churches

Since members of the Syriac-using churches in the early medieval period were fully committed members of the slave-owning society of the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East, it should perhaps not come as a surprise that two of their scholars chose to write guides to help their co-religionists and others purchase slaves. These guides were written in Arabic, not Syriac, which was not only the language of scholarship in Iraq, from where they both came, but it was also the language of the local slave trade, and of their intended readers.

The first of these guides is to be found in the writings of Ḥasan ibn al-Bahlul, a 10th c. scholar of the Church of the East who is best known to posterity as the author of the most important medieval Syriac-Arabic lexicon, which is still widely used today by readers of Syriac²⁷¹. He was born in Awana, in the diocese of Ṭirhan, 60 kilometres north of Baghdad. He studied in Baghdad, and became a bishop. He translated the abridged medical compendium (*al-kunnāsh al-ṣaḡhir*) of Yuḥanna (Yaḥya) ibn Sarabiyun (9th c.) from Syriac into Arabic, and wrote a book on the interpretation of natural and astronomical signs²⁷². He also wrote an encyclopaedia entitled *The Book of Signs* (*Kitāb al-dalā'il*), which describes the religious festivals of the various religions known to him, as well as dream divinations, and physiognomy, and poisons, and more²⁷³. Chapter 46 is a treatise on the purchase of slaves and the indications of their physical health. An examination of this chapter by Müller revealed that it was taken by Bar Bahlul, with no significant changes or an attribution, from an earlier medical handbook of the great Persian scholar Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 925 or 935 CE), his *Kitāb al-ṭibb al-Manṣūrī*²⁷⁴. This section in al-Rāzī's handbook is the oldest known Arabic slave-buying guide, which describes in brief the appropriate medical examination of slaves offered for sale, before focussing on the use of physiognomy as a diagnostic tool²⁷⁵. So Bar Bahlul cannot be credited (if that is the correct term) as the author of this guide to buying slaves, but the very fact that he appropriated it and included it in his practical encyclopaedia is deeply significant, and it was clearly linked to his other medical interests.

A far more significant contribution was made by Abū 'l-Ḥasan ibn Buṭlān (d. 1066), another priest scholar who originated in the Church of

271. See VAN ROMPAY 2011.

272. See Sotheby's (London), Arts of the Islamic World & India, 26 October 2022, lot 12.

273. See bibliography for Bar Bahlul, *Book of Signs*. For a summary of its contents see HABBI 1984.

274. MÜLLER 1980, p. 37-38.

275. See MÜLLER 1980, p. 33-36, which includes a summary of its contents.

the East in Baghdad, who studied philosophy and medicine there with Ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. 1043), but left in 1049 and travelled to Syria, Egypt, and Constantinople, before retiring to a Melkite monastery near Antioch in 1054, where he eventually died. (His religious affiliation at this time is much discussed²⁷⁶.) He produced a series of key medical texts (one was translated into Latin as *Tacuinum sanitatis*, and was widely read in Europe), as well as a treatise on the eucharist, and two satirical texts entitled ‘The Banquet of the Physicians’, and ‘The Banquet of the Priests’. It is less well known that he also produced the first large Arabic guidebook to the purchase of slaves, the *Risāla fī-širā’ al-raḡīq wa taqlīb al-‘abīd* (*Epistle on the purchase and inspection of slaves*), which had a major influence on all subsequent guides²⁷⁷. Ibn Buṭlān’s guide drew not only on his medical knowledge, which allowed him to describe exactly which physical features of the slave should be examined by the buyer (and no body part was off limits), but also incorporated related fields such as the study of the climatic zones of the world and their influence on ethnic and racial characteristics, as well as physiognomy, and practical knowledge about the various tricks and deceptions practised by slave dealers on unwary buyers. He ends with a discussion of how the buyer should train the new slave, create an appropriate working relationship, and assess their capabilities and deficiencies.

The discussions of ethnic and racial characteristics are, needless to say, highly problematic by modern standards, but fascinating for the insight they provide into the ideology of Ibn Buṭlān’s day. In his introduction he provides a summary which gives a sense of his approach:

‘Whoever is looking for a female slave for sexual pleasure should take a Berber, for taking care of money a Byzantine woman, for offspring a Persian, for breast-feeding a Bantu, for singing a Meccan. Whoever wants male slaves for protection of his goods and person should buy Indians or Nubians. If he is looking for slaves for hard disagreeable work he should take Bantus and Armenians. If he wants courageous men at arms he will choose Turks and Slavs’²⁷⁸.

For whatever reasons, Ibn Buṭlān seems to have a particular animus against the Armenians, to whom he attributes all manner of vices, and he

276. For a clear overview of Ibn Buṭlān’s life, and publications, see OLTEAN 2021

277. See Ibn Buṭlān, *Risāla*, in the bibliography for details of the edition and available translations. I am reliant upon the translation of SANAGUSTIN 2010, which also has an excellent analysis of the text. See also MÜLLER 1980, p. 45-80; SWAIN 2013, ch. 4; HAGEDORN 2020.

278. See SANAGUSTIN 2010, p. 206-207.

warns that they require constant watching and regular beating to keep them in line. In short, he says, ‘the Armenians are the worst of the white slaves’.

Equally intriguing is his long list of tricks to beware of with slave dealers, especially those who sold slaves at fairs²⁷⁹. He warns that cosmetics and dyes may be applied to enhance their looks, perfume will be used to cover odours, hair will be washed and artfully dressed, excess hair removed, clothing will be worn that complements skin colour. But cosmetics can also be used to cover unsightly blemishes and scars, and to conceal the signs of disease, and drugs and medicines may be used to temporarily overcome afflictions or physical defects. (Curiously, Ibn Buṭlān regularly provides recipes for the cosmetics or drugs he discusses, thus allowing his book to be used to perpetuate the frauds described, and not just to see through them. He even describes how to simulate female virginity when it has been lost, and how to conceal the early stages of pregnancy.) He finally warns against slaves who are trained to flatter, seduce, or cajole potential clients.

The guidebooks to purchasing slaves produced or circulated by Bar Bahlul and Ibn Buṭlān are particularly shocking for modern readers because the writers were both priests, and it is hard for us to reconcile their religious vocation with their endorsement and encouragement of the slave trade. The fact that they were both trained in medicine goes some way towards helping us understand why they might have thought that that knowledge could be usefully applied to aiding contemporaries run efficient and healthy households, with well-chosen slaves as part of them, or even because it offered them an opportunity to practise learned medical skills such as physiognomy in a practical context. But ultimately we have to accept that for these authors, and their churches, and their society, slaves were an ordinary, necessary, unremarkable part of their world and had been for thousands of years. They were present at every period of Syriac literary production. As we have seen, one of the earliest surviving documents written in Syriac, *P. Dura* 28 from 243 CE, was a contract for the sale of a slave written in Edessa, and the arrival and spread of Christianity in the region seems to have had a minimal impact on slave-ownership, however much one might hope that the treatment of slaves may sometimes have improved because of the churches’ oversight of their members, both slaves and slave-owners. Islam too emphasised the importance of humane treatment of slaves, and encouraged manumission as a charitable and noble act, and it was during the early period of Islamic rule that Syriac legal texts started to be produced that regulated the lives

279. Ibn Buṭlān, *Risāla*, V.

and treatment of slaves within Syriac Christian communities – not because Islam encouraged slavery more than previous state systems, but because they encouraged bishops within the Syriac-using churches to govern their own communities in matters of civil law, including the ownership of slaves, and for that they needed law codes. Slaves were an omnipresent feature in the lives of Syriac Christians, and in those of all the great Syriac writers and theologians. They were so present that they were often not remarked upon, and we have thus come to forget that they were there, sweeping the floors around the great scholars and producing their food. It is time for us modern scholars to start seeing the slaves in Syriac sources.

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Appendix: Slaves in Syriac legal texts

Listed below is a large collection of regulations relating to slaves in Syriac legal codes and texts. The texts are listed in approximate chronological order rather than by geo-political context. For each text cited all relevant regulations are cited, but limitations of time means that some legal texts are not included, most notably Ibn al-Ṭayyib's (d. 1043) major compilation of canon law in Arabic, and 'Abdišo' bar Brika's (d. 1318) *Nomocanon*, although his larger *Order of Ecclesiastical Decisions* is included. It must be emphasised that these are summaries of the regulations, sometimes with necessary contextual information added, rather than formal translations. References are given to existing editions and translations, but in many cases I have attempted to correct imprecise or erroneous renderings in these translations. Some regulations only deal with slaves, some include them in lists of other items of property, or categories of people, and in the latter cases the given summaries concentrate on the slaves. If in any doubt, consult the original texts! Many of the regulations and legal scenarios refer to behaviours and attitudes that are deeply distressing for modern readers, but the summaries seek to use the dispassionate language of the originals, reflecting its choice of vocabulary wherever possible, and eschewing any ethical commentary.

Synodical Canons: translated into Syriac 501 CE.²⁸⁰

- | | | |
|----|---------|---|
| | | Nicaea (325 CE) |
| 1. | Canon 1 | If anyone has castrated themselves, they shall cease to be part of the clergy, nor shall a layperson be ordained. But if castrated by surgeons due to illness, or by barbarians, or by their masters, these are accepted ²⁸¹ . |
| | | Gangra (340 CE) |
| 2. | Canon 3 | If anyone under pretence of religion teaches a slave to despise his master, and to run away (retire) from his service, and not rather to serve his master with good will and all honour, let him be anathema ²⁸² . |
| | | Chalcedon (451 CE) |
| 3. | Canon 4 | No slave be received into the monasteries to live as a monk against the will of his master ²⁸³ . |

280. See *Synodical Canons* in the bibliography. A second translation was made by Jacob of Edessa at the end of the 7th c., adapting the earlier translation. See KAUFHOLD 2012, p. 244-245.

281. *Synodical Canons*, p. 14.

282. *Synodical Canons*, p. 56.

283. *Synodical Canons*, p. 123.

Rabbula of Edessa (d. 435): *Monastic Rules* ²⁸⁴.

4. § 13 The periodeutae shall not offer for the rank of the priesthood ... those who are under the yoke of slavery and have not been freed, but (he shall act) as the apostle has commanded ²⁸⁵.

Syro-Roman Lawbook: Greek 468 CE; Syriac pre-8th c. ²⁸⁶

5. § 4 How many slaves can a man free in his will? If 1 or 2 owned, they can be freed; if 3, then 2; if 5-10, half; if 10-30, a third; if 30-100, a quarter. If more freed, then the excess remain as slaves to the heirs. If all freed in the will, all shall remain slaves.
6. § 8 A woman receives *jus liberorum* after 3 children if she is free born, after four children if she is a freed woman.
7. § 19.2 It is best if a man sets free his male or female slaves before the bishops and priests, and before the periodeutes and priests in the country, by command of the emperor Constantine ²⁸⁷.
8. § 19.3 If a man writes that he frees his slave with his *peculium*, it is free; but if not, when the former owner dies, his heirs receive the former slave's *peculium* ²⁸⁸.
9. § 21 A freed slave can be re-enslaved if the master declares that he was dishonoured by the slave ²⁸⁹.
10. § 23 Slaves cannot accuse masters, unless masters possess purple robes or precious stones restricted to emperors. Slaves cannot accuse free men in court, or other slaves. The law gives no voice to the slave ²⁹⁰.
11. § 24 If a man has children by a slave woman, he may leave them a legacy ²⁹¹.
12. § 28a A man may give his slave the power of attorney over his property and any other matters he wishes.
13. § 30 If a man has no children, but has a slave born in the house or bought for money, he may free him and make him an heir.
14. § 31 A man with small children may release a slave in his will to act as their guardian. He can appoint him as a guardian, even if he does not free him.
15. § 34 If an agreement to buy houses, property, slaves, exists between a seller and a buyer, it is binding, even if no deposit or payment is made, unless the buyer says he will not buy of his free will.

284. See *Monastic Rules* in the bibliography.

285. *Monastic Rules*, p. 39.

286. See *Syro-Roman Lawbook* in the bibliography. The numbering of sections in the edition is clear, and so page references are not given for this text.

287. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.22, 42.

288. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, XIII.3, LXIX.23.

289. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.24.

290. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.69.

291. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.25.

16. § 35 If a man buys a slave as a 'good slave', who is not a runaway, he can keep him on trial for 6 months; if he does not like him, he can return him to former owner and be refunded. If the slave runs away, he must first be found by the new owner, before the refund²⁹².
17. § 35.4 A slave bought without warranty (*haplē ōnē*) cannot be returned, unless he has a devil in him²⁹³.
18. § 37 A master cannot order a slave to go to law (with another free man), because a slave and a free man are not of equal honour²⁹⁴.
19. § 39a If a man buys a thing, whether a field or a slave, in the name of his wife, does it belong to her? If bought from his property, no. If bought with a gift to her from her family, after the dowry, then it is hers²⁹⁵.
20. § 44 If a free woman marries a slave and lives in his master's house, she becomes a slave, and her children also. If she does not agree in writing, she can leave, but her children remain slaves²⁹⁶.
21. § 44.3 If a free woman receives a slave as a lover in her house, and he lives with her, the slave's owner should send warnings; if she does not release the slave, the owner can enslave her²⁹⁷.
22. § 45a If a man knowingly accepts a slave who does not belong to him, he shall himself be enslaved²⁹⁸.
23. § 45b If a man knowingly accepts a labourer, a *colonus*, who belongs to another, he shall himself be made a labourer²⁹⁹.
24. § 48 A slave can buy an object for it belongs to his master³⁰⁰.
25. § 56c A man cannot kill his slave; if a capital crime is committed, the slave must be handed to the authorities for punishment; otherwise he himself shall be killed³⁰¹.
26. § 58 A man can free a slave with the condition that he should work for his son or heirs for a certain number of years. A slave can be freed with conditions before the church, or before a judge, or through a will. The condition can be written in the deed of manumission³⁰².

292. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.26.

293. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.27.

294. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.28.

295. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.59.

296. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.73.

297. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.74.

298. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.29.

299. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.30.

300. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.32.

301. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.33.

302. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.34, 35.

27. § 74a If a free man of twenty years or more claims to be a slave and agrees to be sold, he shall remain a slave, especially if he has shared the price with the man who sold him ³⁰³.
28. § 74b If a free woman of twenty years or more claims to be a slave, and is sold or included in a dowry, she shall remain a slave; if younger, she may be freed ³⁰⁴.
29. § 76c Those who abduct humans, slaves or free, deserve death ³⁰⁵.
30. § 76e Anyone who accepts stolen goods from slaves must repay the slaves' owners fourfold ³⁰⁶.
31. § 86 If a man takes an unwanted child – from a church or from a bathhouse – and raises them, they are free if he raised them free, and slaves if he raised them as slaves. If he died and left them slaves, they are slaves, if free, they are free ³⁰⁷.
32. § 88a If a male or female slave is set free in a will, they should receive a copy of the will as confirmation.
33. § 91.4-5 If a debtor lends a female slave to a creditor, her labour is reckoned as the interest on the loan. If she produces children in this time, they belong to her owner, the debtor. For a woman is not like a field ³⁰⁸.
34. § 95 If a woman brings a female slave or sheep or oxen as part of her dowry, after a divorce she is entitled to the dowry plus half of the offspring of slaves and livestock ³⁰⁹.
35. § 98b Among the women a man can not marry is his father's concubine.
36. § 101.1-3 If a man buys a male or female slave with a 'good contract' (*kalēi hairesis*), he can return them for a refund if a hidden sickness or demon is found in them before 6 months ³¹⁰.
37. § 101.4-5 If a man buys a male or female slave with a 'bad contract' (*kakēi hairesis*), or 'without warranty' (*haplē ōnē*), he cannot return them unless a demon is found in them ³¹¹.
38. § 101.6 If a male or female slave runs back to their former masters, or is a thief, the slave can be returned and the price of the stolen goods can be demanded, but only if they were bought with a 'good contract' (*kalēi hairesis*) ³¹².
39. § 108 If a woman brings male or female slaves in her dowry, after divorce she may take them; if sold, the husband shall pay the

303. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.36.

304. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.37.

305. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.118.

306. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.38.

307. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.130.

308. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.134.

309. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.84.

310. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.39.

311. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.40.

312. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.40b.

- price received; if the male or female slaves produced children, the woman shall take half; if a slave has died, nothing is owed ³¹³.
40. § 113 If a freed male slave then marries a female slave, his children shall not inherit from him, but his masters shall ³¹⁴.
41. § 114 A man shall free a slave in town before a bishop and 6 priests; in a village before the periodeutes and priests; if in a village where there is no chorepiscopus, before the village priests and 5 other priests and the inhabitants; so that they may witness and sign the deed of emancipation. Otherwise, the manumission is not valid ³¹⁵.
42. § 119 If a woman brings male or female slaves in her dowry, after divorce she may take them; if sold, the husband shall pay the price received; if the female slave produced children, the woman shall take half; if a slave has died, nothing is owed ³¹⁶.
43. § 120b Among conditions under which a woman may divorce her husband without agreement of husband and father-in-law: if he has practised sorcery, robbery, adultery, has taken a prostitute into the house, or taken a concubine; if he has beaten her with a rod or kick or whip like a slave, or raised an iron instrument against her ³¹⁷.

Sententiae syriacae: Greek pre 529 CE; Syriac pre 8th c. ³¹⁸

44. 16 If a mother should buy her son when is being sold in a public place after being taken captive, he immediately returns to the state of being free, and as a free-born man (*šapīr tūhmā*, = *eugenēs*) let him be taken away for (caring) ministrations ³¹⁹.
45. 55 A slave, after being set free, is not enslaved for any changed circumstance or matter ³²⁰.
46. 58 A (free) woman who has partnered with a male slave of a different household (*‘abdā nūkrāyā*) is herself enslaved if she does not leave him after three warnings ³²¹.
47. 59 No one aged less than 20 may be enslaved for any cause ³²².
48. 65 A father who sells his son has no possible financial liability for him, since he sells him into slavery (?) ³²³.

313. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.84.

314. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.41.

315. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.42.

316. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.84.

317. See *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIX.85.

318. See *Sententiae Syriacae* in the bibliography.

319. *Sententiae Syriacae*, p. 38 (Syr.), p. 39 (trans.).

320. *Sententiae Syriacae*, p. 50 (Syr.), p. 51 (trans.).

321. *Sententiae Syriacae*, p. 50 (Syr.), p. 51 (trans.).

322. *Sententiae Syriacae*, p. 50 (Syr.), p. 51 (trans.).

323. *Sententiae Syriacae*, p. 52 (Syr.), p. 52 (trans.); uncertain translation; see *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXVIII.65.

49. 96 A freed slave who dies childless and intestate, his patron (former master) takes all his estate. If testate and childless, the patron takes half. If testate and he has a son, the patron takes nothing³²⁴.
50. 98 A foundling child works as a slave for 20 years, if not registered. If registered as a slave in writing before a registrar (*tabularius*), he is a slave for life³²⁵.
51. 99 With slaves the offspring or generation is traced to the mother, with free people it is the father³²⁶.

Clementine Octateuch: Greek post 5th c.; Syriac by Jacob of Edessa (late 7th c.)³²⁷.

52. II.1.5 If one wishes to be baptised, ask if he is slave or free. If he is a slave and his master permits, he may be instructed. If his master is not a Christian, and does not permit him, he should be asked to permit him. If he says that the slave wants to be a Christian because he hates his masters, he shall be driven away. If no evidence of this is produced, he shall be accepted. If his master is Christian and does not give him a good testimony, he shall be driven away³²⁸.
53. II.2.7 If a slave concubine wants to be a catechumen, she must educate her children (as Christians), and separate from or marry her master³²⁹.
54. II.2.10 If someone has a concubine he must repudiate her and marry in the law³³⁰.
55. VI.3.2 The pious man and woman shall treat their slaves gently³³¹.
56. VI.4.1-9 Slaves shall cease from work on Saturday and Sunday, and shall attend church; they shall do no work during Passion week and Easter week; nor on Ascension day; Pentecost; Christmas; Epiphany; days of the Apostles; St Stephen, 'and the rest of the holy martyrs'³³².
57. VI.5.5 A male or female Christian who marries a slave shall be rejected³³³.
58. VI.D.2 Applicants for catechumenate to be asked if slaves or free; a slave of a Christian or of a non-Christian; if a slave of a Christian

324. *Sententiae Syriacae*, p. 64 (Syr.), p. 65 (trans.).

325. *Sententiae Syriacae*, p. 64 (Syr.), p. 65 (trans.).

326. *Sententiae Syriacae*, p. 64 (Syr.), p. 65 (trans.).

327. See *Clementine Octateuch* in the bibliography. There is as yet no critical edition of this text, but one is being prepared by Hubert Kaufhold. These translations are based on the French translation of NAU 1913.

328. *Clementine Octateuch*, p. 62.

329. *Clementine Octateuch*, p. 63.

330. *Clementine Octateuch*, p. 63.

331. *Clementine Octateuch*, p. 101.

332. *Clementine Octateuch*, p. 101.

333. *Clementine Octateuch*, p. 103.

- receives a good testimony, he is accepted; if the slave of a pagan, he must learn to please his master ³³⁴.
59. VI.D.2 If a male or female slave has a partner, they should marry legally. If a Christian master knows the male slave is a fornicator and will not give him the wife, he shall not be married, but excommunicated ³³⁵.
60. VI.D.10 The slave concubine of a non-Christian shall be received if she keeps to him alone ³³⁶.
61. VI.D.11 If a male Christian has a concubine, if she is a slave he must separate and marry legally; if she is free, he must marry her legally ³³⁷.
62. VIII.15 (16) A man who has been married twice after baptism, or who has a concubine, may not be a bishop, priest, or deacon ³³⁸.
63. VIII.19 (20) Someone who has been made a eunuch through violence or persecution, or by birth, may be a bishop ³³⁹.
64. VIII.20 (21) One who has castrated himself may not be a cleric, for he is a homicide ³⁴⁰.
65. VIII.21 (22) A cleric who has castrated himself shall be deposed ³⁴¹.
66. VIII.22 (23) A layman who has castrated himself shall be separated for three years ³⁴².
67. VIII.38 (39) A bishop can leave his own goods as inheritance as he wishes – he may have a wife, children, relatives, slaves ³⁴³.
68. VIII.79 (81) Slaves may not be ordained as clergy without the permission of their masters ³⁴⁴.

Maruta of Maipherqaṭ: *Canons* ³⁴⁵.

69. Nicaea,
Canon I If anyone has castrated themselves, they shall cease to be part of the clergy, nor shall a layperson be ordained. But if castrated by surgeons due to illness, or by barbarians, or by their masters, these are accepted ³⁴⁶.

334. *Clementine Octateuch*, p. 108.

335. *Clementine Octateuch*, p. 108.

336. *Clementine Octateuch*, p. 109.

337. *Clementine Octateuch*, p. 109.

338. *Clementine Octateuch*, p. 119.

339. *Clementine Octateuch*, p. 119.

340. *Clementine Octateuch*, p. 119.

341. *Clementine Octateuch*, p. 119.

342. *Clementine Octateuch*, p. 119.

343. *Clementine Octateuch*, p. 121.

344. *Clementine Octateuch*, p. 127.

345. See Maruta of Maipherqaṭ, *Canons*, in the bibliography.

346. Maruta, *Canons*, p. 47 (Syr.), p. 41 (trans.).

70. Canon 54 Examination of an applicant to be a monk; if he is a slave and his master is a Christian, the abbot shall not receive him unless his master permits him (to do so)³⁴⁷.

Synodicon Orientale (476 – 776 CE): Church of the East³⁴⁸.

- Synod of Catholicos Isaac (410 CE)
71. II Following the Synod (Nicaea, canon I), if anyone has castrated themselves, he shall not be accepted in (the clergy of) the church. But if he was castrated in his youth by force, or by his masters, or by barbarians, or by surgeons due to illness, he can be accepted in the clergy³⁴⁹.
- Synod of Catholicos Dadišoʿ (424 CE)
72. – In accordance with the just laws which the Creator God has placed in human nature ... slaves cannot deprive their masters of their freedom, but masters can (deprive) slaves of theirs³⁵⁰.
- Synod of Catholicos Mar Aba I (544 CE)
73. XX Following the Synod (Nicaea, canon I), if anyone has castrated themselves, he shall not be accepted in (the clergy of) the church. But if he was castrated in his youth by force, or by his masters, or by barbarians, or by surgeons due to illness, he can be accepted in the clergy³⁵¹.
- Synod of Catholicos Ezekiel (576 CE)
74. II Concerning self-castrated eunuchs: if they do this when they have no clerical orders, they may receive no clerical orders, but after penitence they can receive the mysteries of the Saviour. If they self castrate after receiving clerical orders, they are dismissed from the clergy and become ordinary faithful. But those castrated by enemies, or accident, or sickness may receive orders³⁵².
75. IX The faithful must not make their female slaves prostitute themselves and live off the proceeds. Some are forcing them to do this by depriving them of food and other necessities until they submit. Anyone convicted of this will be excommunicated³⁵³.
76. XI Some pious believers near death order that their male and female slaves be freed, or give them to churches, monasteries, hospices and others in order to serve them, or leave other goods to these institutions. But after death, their heirs take these

347. Maruta, *Canons*, p. 99 (Syr.), p. 83 (trans.).

348. See *Synodicon Orientale* in the bibliography.

349. *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 23-24 (Syr.), p. 263-264 (trans.).

350. *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 47 (Syr.), p. 291 (trans.).

351. *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 548 (Syr.), p. 558 (trans.).

352. *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 116 (Syr.), p. 375 (trans.).

353. *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 118-119 (Syr.), p. 378 (trans.).

- goods and slaves for themselves, as their own slaves. These heirs are to be anathematised until they fulfil the original bequests³⁵⁴.
77. XII Some slaves use religion as an excuse to rebel against their owners and are ordained as clergy. But when their masters reclaim them, they are either enslaved again, or they flee. So slaves can only be ordained if they have obtained manumission, and receive a good testimony³⁵⁵.
78. VII Synod of Catholicos Mar Išo'yahb I (585 CE)
Whoever re-enslaves freed slaves is separated and rejected by the church, like him who steals away free men to sell them³⁵⁶.
79. XVI Synod of Catholicos George I (676 CE)
Those who in addition to their legitimate wife take a second woman, free or slave, calling them concubines, or otherwise, if they have been warned and do not obey, they lose all Christian honour³⁵⁷.
- Simeon, metropolitan of Revardašir (mid-7th c.): *Law Code: Church of the East*³⁵⁸.
80. II There are many laws and commandments in (the Law of Moses) which were not suitable for all people or for every time, but only for that time and for that People. ... 'If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve you six years, but in the seventh he shall go away from you free' (Ex 21.1-2). Is it not clear that this is said only about a Hebrew?³⁵⁹
81. § 11 A cleric may not marry his slave woman unless he has first set her free³⁶⁰.
82. § 11 A slave may not become a cleric unless his master gives him a document of manumission³⁶¹.
83. § 12 If a man has a lawful wife and children, and the wife dies, and he has children with a woman slave, and then dies intestate, the children of the slave have no rights of inheritance, as, without a document of manumission, they are slaves³⁶².
84. § 22 If a man with a mother, brother, or sister dies, and he has no wife, and his only children are from a slave woman, unless he has recognised them as his children, they have no inheritance. If they are small, or are disabled, they shall be supported from their father's estate³⁶³.

354. *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 119 (Syr.), p. 378-379 (trans.).

355. *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 119 (Syr.), p. 379 (trans.).

356. *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 144 (Syr.), 406 (trans.).

357. *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 224 (Syr.), 489 (trans.).

358. See Simeon of Revardašir, *Law Code*, in the bibliography.

359. Simeon, *Law Code*, p. 218-219, 221.

360. Simeon, *Law Code*, p. 243-244.

361. Simeon, *Law Code*, p. 244-245.

362. Simeon, *Law Code*, p. 244-245.

363. Simeon, *Law Code*, p. 250-253.

Išo'bokt of Revardašir, metropolitan of Fars (ca. 775 CE): *Book of Judgements*: Church of the East.³⁶⁴

85. I.10 Why did neither our Lord nor his Apostles proclaim anything about civil law? ... Was it appropriate for him to teach us how to collect capital and interest? Or about the dowry and the property of women? Or about male and female slaves? Or about money and other earthly possessions?³⁶⁵
86. II.7 After all, there are many things in the home of each one of us that are not for eating, drinking, or clothing, such as the thong and the whip, which serve only to deter and warn children and slaves³⁶⁶.
87. II.7 On Sundays we also give our slaves and slave-boys rest, but not under compulsion like the Jews³⁶⁷.
88. II.9 On monogamy. The biblical Patriarchs stayed true to their wives, until their wives persuaded them to take a concubine³⁶⁸.
89. III.1.4 If a man keeps a female slave or another woman in his bed, and when challenged by priests he declares she is his wife, if she is a slave she should be freed and married, or (if free) married³⁶⁹.
90. III.1.5 An unmarried woman may not partner with one of her slaves, or the slave of another. When a free woman joins with a slave, the children born from her are slave children. And even though in the fear of God slaves and freeborn are equal, yet the divine law does not command (anyone) to disturb the order of this world which the law has brought into being³⁷⁰.
91. III.10.Title On the marriage of the male and female slaves of the Christians³⁷¹.
92. III.10.1 The rule for betrothal is the same for slaves as for free people. Priests may act as intermediaries, with permission of their masters. Male and female slaves may not enter into legal marriages without the permission of their masters³⁷².
93. III.10.2 If married with the permission of their masters, their masters may no longer separate them. If one is sold, neither the buyer nor the seller may separate them. But if one travels abroad, and

364. See Išo'bokt of Revardašir, *Book of Judgements*, in the bibliography. This was written in Middle Persian, and translated into Syriac at the request of Catholicos Timothy I.

365. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 16-17.

366. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 47-48.

367. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 49-50.

368. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 54-55.

369. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 74-75.

370. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 76-77.

371. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 84-85.

372. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 84-85.

- does not return for a long time, the master may order the remaining slave to remarry³⁷³.
94. III.10.3 Masters should exercise equity and justice towards their male and female slaves, knowing that they too have a Lord in heaven³⁷⁴.
95. III.10.4 Many Christians who buy slaves married to freed woman by former owners, break up that marriage and marry them to others. This is not right³⁷⁵.
96. IV.4.4 If a man has children with a slave or other woman before entering a legal marriage he may not adopt them as his children, unless the former wife is dead, in which case he may. Otherwise the children are illegitimate³⁷⁶.
97. IV.4.6 If a lawfully married man has a child by a slave or other woman he may raise them and give them any property he wishes, so long as he does not (financially) harm his lawful wife and children, but he may not make the illegitimate children his heirs³⁷⁷.
98. IV.4.7 If a man has no legal wife, but has children from a slave or other woman, are the children his heirs? If they are publicly acknowledged by him during his lifetime, yes. If not, but are generally known to be his wife and children, then: if the children were born to a slave, she and the children will be free, and cannot be re-enslaved, and the children if small will be supported from the man's estate, but they are not heirs; if they were born to free mothers, the children will be supported while small, but they are not heirs³⁷⁸.
99. V.3.16 If a man gives his male or female slave a house or field, etc, they are allowed to do with it what they wish during their life, and on their death by means of a will. But if they do not sell or give it away, when they die it reverts to the donor³⁷⁹.
100. V.3.18 If a man gives his slave a house or field, etc, and then sells the slave along with what belongs to him, that slave may give it to whom he wishes during his life or at his death. But if he does not sell or give it away, when he dies it belongs to his second owner³⁸⁰.
101. V.3.22 If a man disposes of property in his will and bequeaths a slave, a house, etc, to different heirs, if one heir suffers a loss, due to the

373. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 84-85.

374. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 86-87.

375. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 86-87.

376. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 114-115.

377. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 116-117.

378. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 116-117.

379. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 138-139.

380. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 140-141.

- death of the slave, or the collapse of the house, the other heirs are not liable³⁸¹.
102. V.7.10 If a debtor pledges to a creditor a female slave, or a herd-animal, or a goat, or a sheep, if any of these gives birth, because what is born is not fruit but root³⁸², it belongs to the debtor. If the creditor raises the offspring of the slave, or animal, or sheep, the debtor must pay all associated costs³⁸³.
103. V.10.5 If a man entrusts a slave or a herd-animal, to another, and it dies or flees, not due to any ill-treatment or carelessness, the recipient is not liable. But if due to ill-treatment or carelessness, the recipient must compensate the owner³⁸⁴.
104. V.12.4 If a woman slave and her children are given to a monastery, or for charitable purposes, she and future generations from her are to be treated in the same way as women slaves given to any other person³⁸⁵.
105. V.13.Title On the manumission of male and female slaves³⁸⁶.
106. V.13.1 According to Roman law, a man may free one third of his slaves, but not the third that belongs to his wife, nor the third that belongs to his children.
In our country (Iran), a man can free whoever he wants, because no one loves his wife and children more than him³⁸⁷.
107. V.13.2 After manumission, freed slaves may not be re-enslaved.
In some regions the former masters have patronage over the freed slave, but not everywhere. Nor is this the law³⁸⁸.
108. V.13.3 If a man frees his male or female slave but does not free that which belongs to them (their *peculium*), it is not theirs³⁸⁹.
109. V.13.4 If a man frees his woman slave, whether pregnant or not, even if he does not specify this, any children she produces are free³⁹⁰.
110. V.13.5 If a man frees a woman slave in whom he owns a one tenth share, any children born to her are also one tenth free³⁹¹.
111. V.13.6 If male and female slaves are owned by partners, if one partner says my part in these slaves is freed, then each of the slaves is free in that part. But if he says all the male and female slaves in which I have a part are free, then they will determine the

381. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 140-141.

382. For these technical terms, see SCHEUNCHEN 2019, p. 100-101.

383. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 158-159.

384. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 170-171.

385. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 176-177.

386. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 176-177.

387. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 176-177.

388. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 176-177.

389. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 178-179; see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 19.3.

390. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 178-179.

391. Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 178-179.

- proportion of them that belong to him and cast lots, and those who fall into his lot will be entirely free ³⁹².
112. V.13.7 A male or female slave who is free in one or more parts may work for themselves in that part and acquire property for themselves ³⁹³.
113. V.13.7 There are countries in which a male or female slave if freed in a half or in a third part, the owners of the remaining parts are required to be compensated and to liberate those parts too. But this is a legal relaxation, not the law ³⁹⁴.
114. VI.4.7 The ownership of male or female slaves is not considered legitimate if one does not possess documentation or credible witnesses ³⁹⁵.
115. VI.4.8 If the ownership of a slave is challenged, and the current possessor does not have documentation or reliable witnesses, the slave is returned to the former owner, but the current possessor can appeal ³⁹⁶.
116. VI.5.4 If a master says he will give a slave something, but then changes his mind, this is allowed ³⁹⁷.

Catholicos Ḥnanišoʿ I (d. 700): *Juridical Decisions*: Church of the East ³⁹⁸.

117. V A 'youth', 'laymā, named Yōḥannān, freed by his former master, the priest Narsai, on his death, has complained that Narsai's son Mari wants to re-enslave him. He has produced a manumission document. Ḥnanišoʿ orders the priest and judge Daniel and the honoured Mar Sargis to persuade the former master's son to confirm the manumission and to produce a written undertaking not to harass the freedman through taxation or other means. If he refuses, he is to be barred from the church ³⁹⁹.
118. VII The sons of Sūrēn bar Berōnā are in dispute over a male slave of their deceased father. Sefrai claims that the slave was left to them, but that two of his brothers, Mihrnarsē and Mihrān freed him because he was their 'milk father' (*maynqana*, the husband of their wet-nurse). The two claim that their father freed him. Ḥnanišoʿ asks for the matter to be investigated. If Sūrēn freed the slave, he is freed. If the two brothers freed him, all other siblings, if they do not wish to free him, are entitled to receive their part share of him ⁴⁰⁰.

392. Išoʿbokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 178-179.

393. Išoʿbokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 178-179.

394. Išoʿbokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 178-179.

395. Išoʿbokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 194-195.

396. Išoʿbokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 194-195.

397. Išoʿbokt, *Book of Judgements*, p. 196-197.

398. See Ḥnanišoʿ, *Juridical Decisions*, in the bibliography.

399. Ḥnanišoʿ, *Juridical Decisions*, p. 12-13.

400. Ḥnanišoʿ, *Juridical Decisions*, p. 14-15.

119. XII Male and female slaves are part of an inheritance that a widow is seeking for her son from the heirs of Sūrēn ⁴⁰¹.
120. XXIII A complaint has been brought against a deacon that he is married to a woman who was a slave and who is (or was) a fornicator / prostitute (*zānītā*). If true, she should be divorced and driven out of his house, with no right to any financial support. The deacon should be disciplined for having failed to investigate her origins adequately ⁴⁰².
121. XXIV Inheritance dispute between brothers that involves a house and a male slave ⁴⁰³.

Catholicos Timothy I (d. 823): *Law Code: Church of the East* ⁴⁰⁴.

122. § 70 In addition to his legitimate sons a man has a son from his slave woman. As he is dying he acknowledges him and states that he shall inherit as one of his legitimate sons. But he is not legitimate, and so receives a twentieth part of the estate, out of kindness ⁴⁰⁵.
123. § 77 A man may not separate a married Christian slave couple, nor sell them to non-Christians (presumably Muslims) ⁴⁰⁶.

Catholicos Išoʿbarnun (d. 828): *Law Code: Church of the East* ⁴⁰⁷.

124. § 3 If a man has two or more wives, whether free or slaves, and neither is legally married to him, he is subject to ecclesiastical punishment ⁴⁰⁸.
125. § 56 If a man dies childless and leaves a blind or ill wife, she shall receive an extra part of his estate to support her and a servant. When she dies, her clothes shall belong to the servant ⁴⁰⁹.
126. § 63 If a man has a disabled daughter, on his death the brothers should give her an inheritance for life to support her and the one who serves her. After her death, if some remains all (if little) or some (if much) should be given to the servant, and if she is a slave she should be set free with a gift ⁴¹⁰.
127. § 64 If a wealthy man has male or female slaves who become blind or disabled he shall feed them to the end of his life. After his death,

401. Ḥnanišoʿ, *Juridical Decisions*, p. 22-25.

402. Ḥnanišoʿ, *Juridical Decisions*, p. 42-45.

403. Ḥnanišoʿ, *Juridical Decisions*, p. 44-49.

404. See Timothy, *Law Code*, in the bibliography.

405. Timothy, *Law Code*, p. 104-105; see ʿAbdišoʿ bar Brika, *Order of Ecclesiastical Decisions*, III.24; Išoʿbarnun, *Law Code*, § 100.

406. Timothy, *Law Code*, p. 108-109; see Išoʿbarnun, *Law Code*, § 65.

407. See Išoʿbarnun, *Law Code*, in the bibliography.

408. Išoʿbarnun, *Law Code*, p. 265 (Sauget).

409. Išoʿbarnun, *Law Code*, p. 140-143.

410. Išoʿbarnun, *Law Code*, p. 146-147.

- his children shall do likewise. If the man or his children are poor, and cannot support themselves, they are not so obliged ⁴¹¹.
128. § 65 If someone wishes to sell his Christian male or female slave, he may not sell them to a non-Christian ⁴¹².
129. § 66 If a man frees his male or female slave, he may not re-enslave them, nor his sons after his death, on pain of anathema and excommunication ⁴¹³.
130. § 71 If a slave leaves his master and becomes a monk in a monastery, and his master then finds him, it would be an act of great piety if he allows it. But if he does not relinquish his ownership, then either the monks must pay the price of the slave because they did not check his status; or the monk, if he has the means; or he must pay in monthly instalments. If not, the master may reclaim his slave. The same applies if the owner is a woman, or minor children ⁴¹⁴.
131. § 99 A man's sons who are born to him by a free woman and after her death by a slave woman inherit equally. Because 'In Christ there are neither slaves nor free' ⁴¹⁵.
132. § 100 If a man has sons by a free woman, and either before the marriage or during it has a son by a slave woman, and does not acknowledge the slave's son before his death, this son is illegitimate and shall not inherit. But the legitimate sons should for God's sake show mercy and give him a part of the estate ⁴¹⁶.
133. § 101 If a married man has sex with his woman slave, he is to be barred from attending church until he repents. The wife may sell the slave, and if the slave bears a son, the son shall be a slave. The wife may divorce the man, and take her possessions with her, plus the price of the sold slave, plus 2000 drachmas. And she may marry another. As Gregory says, why is a woman who commits adultery condemned, but not a man? ⁴¹⁷
134. § 105 If a Christian buys and sells male and female slaves, he is to be excommunicated from the church until he renounces his evil trade and chooses another ⁴¹⁸.

‘Abdišo‘ bar Bahr̄z, metropolitan of Mosul (d. 823): *Code of Marriage and Inheritance*: Church of the East ⁴¹⁹.

411. Išo‘barnun, *Law Code*, p. 146-147.

412. Išo‘barnun, *Law Code*, p. 146-147.

413. Išo‘barnun, *Law Code*, p. 146-147.

414. Išo‘barnun, *Law Code*, p. 148-151.

415. Išo‘barnun, *Law Code*, p. 160-161.

416. Išo‘barnun, *Law Code*, p. 160-161.

417. Išo‘barnun, *Law Code*, p. 160-163.

418. Išo‘barnun, *Law Code*, p. 164-165.

419. See ‘Abdišo‘ bar Bahr̄z, *Code of Marriage and Inheritance*, in the bibliography.

135. II (160r) A man may marry his female slave if he sets her free first, in front of many, and then marries her as a freeborn woman ⁴²⁰.
136. Q11 If a male or female slave who is not freed dies, their masters are their heirs. If the slave makes a will, the masters decide whether to confirm it or nullify it ⁴²¹.
137. Q11 If a male or female slave is freed, and not married, and has no children, nor free relatives, their former masters and their sons are their heirs ⁴²².
138. Q11 If a male or female slave is freed, and married, but has no children, a third shall be given to God and to the poor ⁴²³.
139. Q12 If a man dies and has no heirs, the Church inherits. If he leaves non-freed slaves, they will be freed by the leader of the Church, and a portion will be given to them for their need. If he leaves freed slaves, they will be given a portion that the leader considers appropriate for their number and age and wealth. If he leaves an estate that produces income, let them be supported by its produce. But nothing is granted to their children or other relatives ⁴²⁴.

Gabriel, metropolitan of Baṣra (fl. late 9th c.): *Lawbook: Church of the East* ⁴²⁵.

140. I.26 Timothy: A man has a son from his slave woman, but does not acknowledge him until he is dying, and then states that he shall inherit as one of his legitimate sons. The son is reckoned among his sons, but as the son of slave, and so receives a twentieth part of the estate, out of kindness ⁴²⁶.
141. I.26 Išo'bokt: If a man with brothers, sisters, and a female slave dies, and his only children are from the female slave, his relations inherit, unless he has recognised them as his children. If they are small, or are disabled, they shall be supported from their father's estate ⁴²⁷.
142. I.26 Išo'bokt: If a man has a child with a slave or other woman before entering a legal marriage he may not make the child an heir. The first wife is clearly illegitimate, and so are her children ⁴²⁸.
143. I.26 Išo'bokt: If a man has no legal wife, but has children from a slave or other woman, are the children his heirs? If they are not publicly acknowledged by him during his lifetime, but are generally known to be his wife and children, then if the children

420. 'Abdišo' bar Bahrīz, *Code of Marriage and Inheritance*, p. 41-42.

421. 'Abdišo' bar Bahrīz, *Code of Marriage and Inheritance*, p. 202-203.

422. 'Abdišo' bar Bahrīz, *Code of Marriage and Inheritance*, p. 202-203.

423. 'Abdišo' bar Bahrīz, *Code of Marriage and Inheritance*, p. 202-203.

424. 'Abdišo' bar Bahrīz, *Code of Marriage and Inheritance*, p. 202-205.

425. See Gabriel of Baṣra, *Lawbook*, in the bibliography.

426. Gabriel of Baṣra, *Lawbook*, p. 152-153; see Timothy, *Law Code*, § 70.

427. Gabriel of Baṣra, *Lawbook*, p. 154-155; see Simeon, *Law Code*, § 22.

428. Gabriel of Baṣra, *Lawbook*, p. 154-155; see Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, IV.4.4.

were born to a slave, she and the children will be free, and cannot be re-enslaved by the man's heirs. And the children if small will be supported from the man's estate. But they are not heirs⁴²⁹.

144. I.48 [Guild regulations]: Anyone of us who sells a house, a field, a vineyard, or a slave should pay four zūz (to the guild)⁴³⁰.

Catholicos John V bar Abgārē (r. 900-905): *Lawbook*: Church of the East⁴³¹.

145. §159 A Muslim does not inherit from a Christian, nor a Christian from a Muslim, neither likewise the Jews and pagans [and Magi], unless he is his slave⁴³².
146. §169 [§169 On the manumission of slaves]: When a man frees a part share of a slave he is (entirely) freed⁴³³.
147. §169 When an emancipated slave dies, his inheritance is divided between his masters, in accordance with their number of shares in him⁴³⁴.
148. §169 When an emancipated slave dies, if he has a father fully freed, the father inherits.
149. §169 When an emancipated slave dies, if his father is half freed, and he has a brother who is (fully) freed⁴³⁵, they each receive half of the inheritance⁴³⁶.
150. §169 If he has no father, but has a legitimate (full) brother fully freed, he receives all. If his brother is half freed, he inherits half⁴³⁷.
151. §169 [ms. C]: If he (also) has a (fully) freed (half) brother from his father, they inherit equally⁴³⁸.
152. §169 [ms. D]: If he (also) has a (half) brother from his father, fully freed, he receives the rest of the inheritance. If the (half) brother is half freed, he receives half of the half, that is a quarter. The remainder is for his masters⁴³⁹.
153. §169 If his father is half freed, and he has a fully freed (half) brother from his mother, the inheritance shall be divided into 12 parts; 6 for his father; 1 part for his (half) brother, because the father

429. Gabriel of Baṣra, *Lawbook*, p. 156-157; see Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, IV.4.7.

430. Gabriel of Baṣra, *Lawbook*, p. 182-183; see BROCK 2009.

431. The attribution of this text to Yohannan is probable, but not certain; see John bar Abgare, *Lawbook*, p. 98. The second section (§ 51-163), which contains the references to slaves, is less certainly his than the first part. This is the source of the *West Syrian Synodicon*, LXIV.

432. John bar Abgare, *Lawbook*, p. 186-187.

433. John bar Abgare, *Lawbook*, p. 192-193.

434. John bar Abgare, *Lawbook*, p. 192-193.

435. Variant reading: 'half freed'.

436. John bar Abgare, *Lawbook*, p. 192-193.

437. John bar Abgare, *Lawbook*, p. 192-193.

438. John bar Abgare, *Lawbook*, p. 192-193.

439. John bar Abgare, *Lawbook*, p. 192-193.

- takes half; the rest goes to his masters [ms. D: to the *mawālī* (patrons)]⁴⁴⁰.
154. §169 If he has a (fully) freed (*bat ḥērē*) sister from his father and mother, and a mother and a paternal-uncle, the inheritance shall be divided into 12 parts; 6 for his sister; 6 for his mother and paternal-uncle⁴⁴¹.
155. §169 [ms. D]: He, (the former owner), can not revoke his slave's manumission, nor sell them⁴⁴².
156. §170 A slave who marries a free born wife, his children are free born and become clients (ms. C *mārayā*, 'lords'; D *mawālī*) of the members of their mother's family⁴⁴³.
157. §170 If their father is himself freed, they (the children) revert to being *mawālī* (clients) to the *mawālī* (patrons) of their father (so ms. D); they will all become clients (*mārayā*; so C)⁴⁴⁴.

Ibn aṭ-Ṭaiyib (d. 1043): *Law of Christianity: Church of the East*⁴⁴⁵.

[Many regulations relevant to slaves and slavery]

West Syrian Synodicon (ca. 1153 – 1204 CE): Syrian Orthodox⁴⁴⁶.

158. II.1.5 [Clementine Octateuch II]: If one wishes to be baptised, ask if he is slave or free. If he is a slave and his master permits, he may be instructed. If his master is a non-Christian, and does not permit him, he should be asked to permit him. If he says that the slave wants to be a Christian because he hates his masters, he shall be driven away. If no evidence of this is produced, he shall be accepted. If his master is Christian and does not give him a good testimony, he shall be driven away⁴⁴⁷.
159. II.2.7 [Clementine Octateuch II]: If a slave concubine wants to be a catechumen, she must educate her children (as Christians), and separate from or marry her master⁴⁴⁸.
160. II.2.10 [Clementine Octateuch II]: If someone has a concubine he must repudiate her and marry legally⁴⁴⁹.
161. IV.14 [Synodical Canons 14]: None of the clergy may live with concubines. Nor may any of the believers⁴⁵⁰.

440. John bar Abgare, *Lawbook*, p. 192-195.

441. John bar Abgare, *Lawbook*, p. 194-195.

442. John bar Abgare, *Lawbook*, p. 194-195.

443. John bar Abgare, *Lawbook*, p. 194-195.

444. John bar Abgare, *Lawbook*, p. 194-195.

445. See Ibn aṭ-Ṭaiyib, *Law of Christianity*. Due to time constraints, Ibn aṭ-Ṭaiyib's regulations on slaves have not been summarised here.

446. See *West Syrian Synodicon* in the bibliography.

447. *West Syrian Synodicon*, I.28 (Syr.), I.48 (trans.).

448. *West Syrian Synodicon*, I.29-30 (Syr.), I.49 (trans.).

449. *West Syrian Synodicon*, I.30 (Syr.), I.50 (trans.).

450. *West Syrian Synodicon*, I.52 (Syr.), I.67 (trans.).

162. IV.38 [Synodical Canons 38]: Slaves may not be ordained as clerics without their masters' permission; they may not use their Christian faith to try and rebel against their slave status ⁴⁵¹.
163. IV.39 [Synodical Canons 39]: Slaves shall cease from work (on holy days) ⁴⁵².
164. V.16 [Apostolic Canons 16]: He who has had a concubine cannot be made a cleric ⁴⁵³.
165. V.17 [Apostolic Canons 17]: Anyone who takes (as wife) a widow, or divorcee, or prostitute, or female slave, or of those of the theatres, can not be a cleric ⁴⁵⁴.
166. V.20 [Apostolic Canons 20]: A eunuch, non self-castrated, can become a bishop ⁴⁵⁵.
167. V.39 [Apostolic Canons 39]: A bishop can leave his own goods as inheritance as he wishes, for he may have wife, children, relatives, slaves ⁴⁵⁶.
168. V.78 [Apostolic Canons 78]: A slave may not be ordained as a cleric without the permission of his master. It would subvert family households ⁴⁵⁷.
169. VI.3.2 [Hippolytus: Paul]: A Christian man or woman should treat their slaves gently ⁴⁵⁸.
170. VI.4.1-9 [Hippolytus: Paul and Peter]: Slaves shall cease from work on Saturday and Sunday, and shall attend church; they shall do no work during Passion week and Easter week; nor on Ascension day; Pentecost; Christmas; Epiphany; days of the Apostles; commemoration of St Stephen, 'and the rest of the holy martyrs' ⁴⁵⁹.
171. VI.5.5 [Hippolytus: Paul]: Male and female Christians shall leave their slave partners, or they shall be rejected ⁴⁶⁰.
172. VI.D.2 [Hippolytus: Paul]: Applicants for the catechumenate should be asked if they are a slave or free; a slave of a Christian or of a non-Christian. If a slave of a Christian receives a good testimony, he is accepted; if the slave of a pagan, he must learn to please his master ⁴⁶¹.

451. *West Syrian Synodicon*, I.56 (Syr.), I.70 (trans.); see Apostles 78.

452. *West Syrian Synodicon*, I.56 (Syr.), I.71 (trans.); see VI.4 below.

453. *West Syrian Synodicon*, I.60 (Syr.), I.74 (trans.).

454. *West Syrian Synodicon*, I.60 (Syr.), I.74 (trans.).

455. *West Syrian Synodicon*, I.60 (Syr.), I.74 (trans.); see V.21-23.

456. *West Syrian Synodicon*, I.63 (Syr.), I.77 (trans.).

457. *West Syrian Synodicon*, I.70 (Syr.), I.82 (trans.).

458. *West Syrian Synodicon*, I.74 (Syr.), I.86 (trans.).

459. *West Syrian Synodicon*, I.74-75 (Syr.), I.86 (trans.).

460. *West Syrian Synodicon*, I.76 (Syr.), I.88 (trans.).

461. *West Syrian Synodicon*, I.83 (Syr.), I.93 (trans.); see CA VIII.32

173. VI.D.10 [Hippolytus: Paul]: The slave concubine of a non-Christian shall be received for the catechumenate if she keeps to him alone ⁴⁶².
174. VI.D.11 [Hippolytus: Paul]: If a male Christian has a concubine, if she is a slave he must separate and marry legally; if she is free, he must marry her legally ⁴⁶³.
175. XV.4 [Chalcedon canon 4]: No one shall receive a slave as a monk against the will of his master, on pain of excommunication ⁴⁶⁴.
176. XLVIII.20 [Jacob of Edessa to John the Stylite]: Question: A slave of pagan (= Muslim) masters was not allowed by his masters to be baptised, but he fell sick and thought he was dying. So he looked to heaven, confessed himself a Christian, and poured a bottle of water over himself in the name of the Trinity. If he dies will this be counted as equivalent to Church baptism? If he lives, how should the Church receive him? Jacob's answer: This was done by grace, and he will be received by God. If he lives, the priest shall baptise him saying: 'I baptise you, N.N., if you are not already baptised, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit' ⁴⁶⁵.
177. XLVIII.21 [Jacob of Edessa to John the Stylite]: Question: A slave of a heretic suffered and died for Christ. How is he to be ranked, and what is his reward? Jacob's answer: As Christ said, 'Let it be to you according to your faith', for everyone receives a reward in accordance with their love and faith ⁴⁶⁶.
178. LXIV.1 [LXIV. Arabic code of manumission]: When a part share of a slave is freed, he cannot be sold ⁴⁶⁷.
179. LXIV.2,3 When an emancipated slave dies, his inheritance is divided between his masters, in accordance with their number of shares in him ⁴⁶⁸.
180. LXIV.4 When an emancipated slave dies, if he has a father fully freed, the father inherits ⁴⁶⁹.
181. LXIV.5 When an emancipated slave dies, if his father is half freed, and he has a brother half freed, each receives half of the inheritance ⁴⁷⁰.
182. LXIV.6-7 If he has no father, but has a legitimate (full) brother fully freed, he receives all. If his brother is half freed, he inherits half ⁴⁷¹.

462. *West Syrian Synodicon*, I.84 (Syr.), I.94 (trans.); see CA VIII.32

463. *West Syrian Synodicon*, I.84 (Syr.), I.94 (trans.); see CA VIII.32

464. *West Syrian Synodicon*, I.131 (Syr.), I.132 (trans.).

465. *West Syrian Synodicon*, I.242 (Syr.), I.223 (trans.).

466. *West Syrian Synodicon*, I.243 (Syr.), I.223 (trans.).

467. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.82 (Syr.), II.88 (trans.).

468. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.82 (Syr.), II.88 (trans.).

469. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.82 (Syr.), II.88 (trans.).

470. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.82 (Syr.), II.88 (trans.).

471. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.82 (Syr.), II.88 (trans.).

183. LXIV.8-9 If he has a (half) brother from his father, fully freed, he receives the rest of the inheritance. If the (half) brother is half freed, he receives half of what remains, that is a quarter. The remainder is for the *mawālī* (patrons), that is, his masters ⁴⁷².
184. LXIV.10 If his father is half freed, and the (half) brother from his father is fully freed, they inherit equally ⁴⁷³.
185. LXIV.11 If his father is half freed, and he has a fully freed (half) brother from his mother, the inheritance shall be divided into 12 parts; 6 for his father; 1 part for his (half) brother, which is half of what he would have received if the father were dead; the rest goes to his masters ⁴⁷⁴.
186. LXIV.12 If he has a (fully) freed (*bat ḥērē*) sister from his father and mother, and his mother is a quarter freed, and her (his?) paternal-uncle is freed, the inheritance shall be divided into 12 parts; 6 for his sister; 1 for his mother; 5 for the paternal uncle ⁴⁷⁵.
187. LXIVa.15-16 A Muslim does not inherit from a Christian, nor a Christian from a Muslim, neither likewise the Jews and Magi, 'unless he is his slave' ⁴⁷⁶.
188. LXIVa.19 A master can not enslave or sell his freed slave. ⁴⁷⁷.
189. LXIVa.20 A slave who marries a free born wife, his children are free born and become *mawālī* (clients) of their mother ⁴⁷⁸.
190. LXIVa.21. If the slave is himself freed, his children become *mawālī* (clients) to the *mawālī* (patrons) of their father ⁴⁷⁹.
191. LXVIII.15 [LXVIII. Laws of the Christian Emperors] ⁴⁸⁰: If a mother should buy her son when is being sold in a public place after being taken captive, he immediately returns to the state of being free, and as a free-born man (*šapīr tūhmā*, see *eugenēs*) let him be taken away for (caring) ministrations ⁴⁸¹.
192. LXVIII.55 A freed slave cannot be enslaved through claims of changed circumstances ⁴⁸².
193. LXVIII.58 A (free) woman who has partnered with a male slave of a different household (*ʿabdā nūkrāyā*) is herself enslaved if she does not leave him after three warnings ⁴⁸³.

472. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.82 (Syr.), II.88 (trans.).

473. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.82 (Syr.), II.88 (trans.).

474. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.82 (Syr.), II.89 (trans.).

475. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.83 (Syr.), II.89 (trans.).

476. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.84 (Syr.), II.90 (trans.).

477. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.84 (Syr.), II.91 (trans.).

478. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.84 (Syr.), II.91 (trans.).

479. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.84 (Syr.), II.91 (trans.).

480. This group of laws comes from the *Sententiae syriacae*.

481. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.92 (Syr.), II.99 (trans.); see *Sententiae syriacae*, 16.

482. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.95 (Syr.), II.102 (trans.); see *Sententiae syriacae* 55.

483. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.95-96 (Syr.), II.102 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 44.3, and LXIX.74 below; see *Sententiae syriacae* 58.

194. LXVIII.59 No one less than 20 years old can be enslaved⁴⁸⁴.
195. LXVIII.65 A father who sells his son has no possible financial liability for him, since he sells him into slavery (?)⁴⁸⁵.
196. LXVIII.94 A freed slave who is childless and intestate, his patron (former master) takes all his estate. If testate, the patron takes half. If testate and he has a son, the patron takes nothing⁴⁸⁶.
197. LXVIII.96 A foundling child works as a slave for 20 years, if not registered. If registered as a slave in writing before a registrar (*tabularius*), he is a slave for life⁴⁸⁷.
198. LXVIII.97 With slaves the seed or generation is traced to the mother, with free people it is the father⁴⁸⁸.
199. LXIX.6 [LXIX. Laws of the Christian Emperors]⁴⁸⁹: If a man leaves his possessions to people outside his household they must be free men, and not people with disreputable professions⁴⁹⁰.
200. LXIX.13 A man can appoint his slave as an authorised agent (*šalīṭā*) over his property, or as a legal guardian (*ʿepiṭrōpā*), or give him power of attorney (Greek *entolikon*)⁴⁹¹.
201. LXIX.15 If a man has no children he may free a slave, born in the house or bought with money, and make him his heir⁴⁹².
202. LXIX.16 A man with young children can free a slave in his will and make him a legal guardian (*ʿepiṭrōpā*) for his children after death⁴⁹³.
203. LXIX.19 When buying property, whether houses, slaves, or other, once the price and contract has been agreed, even without deposit or full payment, the seller cannot sell the thing to another, and the buyer can be compelled to pay⁴⁹⁴.
204. LXIX.21 How many slaves can a man free in his will? If 1 or 2 are owned, they can be freed; if 3, then 2; if 5-10, half; if 10-30, a third; 30-100, a quarter. If the man attempts to free more, then the excess remain as slaves to the heirs. If all are freed in the will, all shall remain slaves⁴⁹⁵.

484. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.96 (Syr.), II.102 (trans.); see *Sententiae syriacae* 59.

485. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.96 (Syr.), II.102 (trans.). This translation is not certain; see *Sententiae syriacae* 65.

486. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.99 (Syr.), II.105 (trans.); see *Sententiae syriacae* 96.

487. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.99 (Syr.), II.105 (trans.); see *Sententiae syriacae* 98.

488. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.99 (Syr.), II.106 (trans.); see *Sententiae syriacae* 99.

489. This group of laws is linked to the *Syro-Roman Lawbook*.

490. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.105 (Syr.), II.111 (trans.).

491. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.106 (Syr.), II.113 (trans.).

492. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.107 (Syr.), II.113 (trans.).

493. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.107 (Syr.), II.113 (trans.).

494. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.108 (Syr.), II.114 (trans.).

495. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.109-110 (Syr.), II.115 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 4.

205. LXIX.22 A master may free his slave in the presence of bishops and priests, or, if in the country, before the chorepiscopus, according to the order of emperor Constantine ⁴⁹⁶.
206. LXIX.23 If a man frees his slave with his *peculium* (personal property) it must be in writing, or the heirs can retake the *peculium* ⁴⁹⁷.
207. LXIX.24 A freed slave can be re-enslaved if his master declares that he was dishonoured by the slave ⁴⁹⁸.
208. LXIX.25 A man can leave inheritance to a freed slave, and to the slave's children from a woman slave ⁴⁹⁹.
209. LXIX.26 If a man buys a 'good slave' (that is, with a warranty) who is not a fugitive he can keep him on trial for 6 months; if he does not please him, he can return the slave to the former owner and be refunded. If the slave runs away, he must first be found by the new owner, before the refund is given ⁵⁰⁰.
210. LXIX.27 A slave bought without warranty (*haplē ōnē*) cannot be returned, unless he has a devil in him ⁵⁰¹.
211. LXIX.28 A master is not allowed to order a slave to go to law (with another free man), because this is forbidden by law, for they are not equal in honour ⁵⁰².
212. LXIX.29 A man who knowingly receives a slave that is not his shall himself be enslaved ⁵⁰³.
213. LXIX.30 A man who knowingly receives a *colonus* that is not his shall himself be made a labourer ⁵⁰⁴.
214. LXIX.32 A slave is allowed to buy something for it belongs to his master, and he is authorised by him to buy ⁵⁰⁵.
215. LXIX.33 A man is not allowed to kill his slave. If a capital crime is committed, the slave must be handed to the authorities for punishment. Otherwise he himself shall be killed ⁵⁰⁶.
216. LXIX.34 A man is allowed to free a slave with the condition that he should work for his son or heirs for a certain number of years ⁵⁰⁷.
217. LXIX.35 A slave can be freed with conditions before the church, or before a judge, or through a will, if the conditions are written into the deed of manumission ⁵⁰⁸.

496. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.110 (Syr.), II.116 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 19.

497. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.110 (Syr.), II.116 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 19.

498. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.110 (Syr.), II.116 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 21.

499. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.110 (Syr.), II.116 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 24.

500. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.110 (Syr.), II.116 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 35.

501. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.111 (Syr.), II.116 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 35.

502. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.111 (Syr.), II.117 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 37.

503. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.111 (Syr.), II.117 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 45.

504. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.111 (Syr.), II.117 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 45.

505. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.111 (Syr.), II.117 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 48.

506. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.111 (Syr.), II.117 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 56c.

507. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.112 (Syr.), II.117 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 58.

508. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.112 (Syr.), II.117 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 58.

218. LXIX.36 If a free man of 20 years or more claims to be a slave (to deceive a buyer, aiding a fraudulent seller) he shall remain a slave ⁵⁰⁹.
219. LXIX.37 If a free woman of 20 years or more claims to be a slave (to be part of a dowry, or to deceive a buyer) she shall remain a slave; if younger, she may be freed ⁵¹⁰.
220. LXIX.38 If people receive goods stolen by slaves, they must be returned to their owners fourfold ⁵¹¹.
221. LXIX.39 If a man buys a male or female slave with a 'good contract' (*kalēi hairesis*), he can return them for a refund if a hidden sickness or demon is found in them before 6 months ⁵¹².
222. LXIX.40 If a man buys a male or female slave with a 'bad contract' (*kakēi hairesis*), or without warranty, he cannot return them unless a demon is found in them ⁵¹³.
223. LXIX.40b If a male or female slave runs back to their former masters, or is a thief, the slave can be returned and the price of the stolen goods can be demanded ⁵¹⁴.
224. LXIX.41 If a freed male slave then marries a female slave, his children shall not inherit from him, but his masters shall ⁵¹⁵.
225. LXIX.42 A man shall free a slave in town before a bishop and 6 priests; in a village before the periodeutes and 5 priests and inhabitants; so that they may sign the deed of emancipation. Otherwise, the manumission is not valid ⁵¹⁶.
226. LXIX.47 A slave may be pledged (and transferred to a creditor) as security for a debt ⁵¹⁷.
227. LXIX.50 Slaves may be included in a dowry and in a marriage settlement ⁵¹⁸.
228. LXIX.59 A man may buy a slave in the name of his wife if he uses money she has received after the transfer of her dowry ⁵¹⁹.
229. LXIX.61 A woman receives *jus liberorum* after 3 children if she is free born, after four children if she is a freed woman ⁵²⁰.
230. LXIX.69 Slaves cannot accuse their masters, unless their masters possess purple robes or precious stones restricted to emperors. Slaves cannot accuse free men in court, nor other slaves ⁵²¹.

509. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.112 (Syr.), II.118 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 74a.

510. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.112 (Syr.), II.118 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 74b.

511. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.112 (Syr.), II.118 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 76e.

512. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.113 (Syr.), II.118 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 101.

513. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.113 (Syr.), II.118 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 101.

514. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.113 (Syr.), II.118 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 101.

515. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.113-114 (Syr.), II.119 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 113.

516. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.114 (Syr.), II.119 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 19, 114

517. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.117 (Syr.), II.122 (trans.).

518. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.120 (Syr.), II.125 (trans.).

519. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.126 (Syr.), II.130 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 39a

520. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.126 (Syr.), II.130 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 8

521. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.128 (Syr.), II.132 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 23

231. LXIX.73 If a free woman marries a slave and lives in his masters' house, she becomes a slave, and her children also. If she does not agree in writing, she can leave, but her children remain slaves ⁵²².
232. LXIX.74 If a free woman receives a slave as a lover in her house, after three warnings from the slave's owner, the owner can enslave her ⁵²³.
233. LXIX.80 If a woman brings female slaves or livestock as part of her dowry, after a divorce she is entitled to the dowry plus half of the offspring of the slaves and livestock ⁵²⁴.
234. LXIX.84 If a woman brings male or female slaves in her dowry, after divorce she may take them. If they are already sold, the husband shall pay the price received. If a female slave has produced children, the woman shall take half. If a slave has died, nothing is owed ⁵²⁵.
235. LXIX.85 Among conditions under which a woman may divorce her husband without the agreement of her husband and father-in-law are the following: if he has taken a concubine; if he has beaten her with a rod or kick or whip like a slave, or raised an iron instrument against her ⁵²⁶.
236. LXIX.88 If a man dies leaving a widow, she shall take slaves in her dowry as in the case of divorce ⁵²⁷.
237. LXIX.107 Concerning a man who buys a farm or slave in the name of another man ⁵²⁸.
238. LXIX.110 A man may make a donation of property or a slave to another, but retain their revenues for himself ⁵²⁹.
239. LXIX.118 Those who steal humans, slaves or free, deserve death ⁵³⁰.
240. LXIX.130 If a man takes an unwanted child and raises them, they are free if he raised them free, and a slave if he raised them as a slave ⁵³¹.
241. LXIX.134 If a debtor pledges a female slave to a creditor, her labour is reckoned as the interest on the loan. If she produces children in this time, they belong to her owner, the debtor ⁵³².
242. LXIX.156 Only free men may be legal witnesses ⁵³³.

522. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.129 (Syr.), II.132 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 44

523. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.129 (Syr.), II.133 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 44

524. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.130 (Syr.), II.134 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 95

525. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.132 (Syr.), II.136 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 108, 119

526. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.133 (Syr.), II.136 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 120b

527. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.135 (Syr.), II.138 (trans.); see LXIX.84.

528. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.139 (Syr.), II.142 (trans.).

529. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.140 (Syr.), II.142 (trans.).

530. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.141 (Syr.), II.144 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 76c

531. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.143 (Syr.), II.145 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 86

532. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.145 (Syr.), II.147 (trans.); see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 91

533. *West Syrian Synodicon*, II.152 (Syr.), II.154 (trans.).

- Bar Hebraeus (d.1286): *Nomocanon (Ktābā d-Hūdāyē)*: Syrian Orthodox ⁵³⁴.
243. VII.4 Apostles 78: A slave may not be ordained as a cleric without the permission of his master ⁵³⁵.
244. VII.5 Apostles 17: Anyone who takes (as wife) a widow, or divorcee, or prostitute, or female slave, or one of those of the theatres, can not be of priestly rank ⁵³⁶.
245. VII.10 Chalcedon: A person's slave may not be accepted as a monk without the instruction of his master ⁵³⁷.
246. VIII.1 A mistress need not veil her face on account of a male slave, even if he is an adult, nor a woman slave on account of her master ⁵³⁸.
247. VIII.1 The betrothed woman should not be a female slave, nor the betrothed man a male slave; for these may only be betrothed by command of their masters ⁵³⁹.
248. VIII.2 Slaves are listed among those unable to act as legal witnesses to a betrothal ⁵⁴⁰.
249. VIII.2 If a freed female slave has no relations, her former master may betroth her to someone, or his son may, or his grandson, or his father, etc. ⁵⁴¹
250. VIII.2 A slave cannot act as a curator / legal guardian, for if he has no authority over himself, how should he have authority over another? ⁵⁴²
251. VIII.2 The master of a female slave is authorised to betroth her (to someone), even if she is not willing, but the master is not authorised to betroth a male slave when he is not willing. And if a female or male slave wish to be betrothed, the master is authorised to forbid it. And a woman's female slave, the mistress' legal guardian shall betroth her (to someone) on the instruction of her mistress; and a woman who is a freed slave, the former-slave's guardian shall betroth her, if she has one, and if not, the mistress' guardian ⁵⁴³.
252. VIII.3 One of the four impediments to legal marriage is being a slave (servitude) ⁵⁴⁴.

534. See Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, in the bibliography. The page references are to ÇIÇEK 1986.

535. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 54a.

536. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 55a.

537. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 66a.

538. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 71b.

539. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 72b.

540. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 74a.

541. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 74b.

542. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 75a.

543. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 75b.

544. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 76a.

253. VIII.3 A Christian free man is not allowed to betroth his female slave, even if she is a Christian, until he has freed her; nor the female slave of another⁵⁴⁵.
254. VIII.3 But a poor man who is unable to betroth a free woman, and fears to be tempted into fornication (may wish to betroth a woman slave), but it would be better for him to endure, rather than to see his wife's master enslave his children. For the children of female slaves are slaves, even if their father is free, and the children of male slaves are free, if their mother is free⁵⁴⁶.
255. VIII.3 A Christian man may not betroth a non-Christian female slave, or a female slave whose master is non-Christian, lest he father non-Christian children⁵⁴⁷.
256. VIII.3 If a man's wife is taken captive (and enslaved), the laws require that he find her, and buy her back, if he is able, and then free her and marry her. And if he has (meanwhile) acquired another woman, he must separate from her, and he has authority over her children⁵⁴⁸.
257. VIII.3 Likewise, if a woman's husband is taken captive (and enslaved), the laws require that she buy him back and free him. And if she has (meanwhile) acquired another man, she must separate from him, and she has authority over her children. But others say that a woman is not required to buy back her husband⁵⁴⁹.
258. VIII.3 A female slave who is joined to a man by command of her master, shall slave for the master by day, and is given over to her husband at night. Her husband owes her half of her expenses, but if she is given to him day and night he supplies all of her expenses⁵⁵⁰.
259. VIII.3 A male slave who betroths a woman by command of his master, the master is responsible for the expenses of his slave's wife⁵⁵¹.
260. VIII.3 And the woman who joins with a male slave without the command of her master, she is also enslaved, if she is a free woman and knew that he is a slave. But if not, they are to be separated⁵⁵².
261. VIII.4 A dowry and a bride price may include anything bought and sold, including male and female slaves. It may also include the promise to pay for the hire of a slave⁵⁵³.

545. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 79b.

546. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 79b.

547. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 80a.

548. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 80a.

549. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 80a.

550. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 80a.

551. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 80b.

552. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 80b.

553. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 82a.

262. VIII.4 If a female slave, or domestic animal, belonging to a wife gives birth, half of the children belong to the wife and half to her husband, if he fed them ⁵⁵⁴.
263. VIII.5 Servitude / slave status is one of the seven legal reasons to break up a marriage ⁵⁵⁵.
264. VIII.5 A man may be divorced if witnesses testify he has beaten his wife illegally, whether with a rod or by kicking or with a whip like a male or female slave, or raised an iron instrument against her, or brought in a prostitute, or added a concubine ⁵⁵⁶.
265. VIII.5 If a man dies between betrothal and marriage the woman is entitled to half of what she was promised, and the man's heirs receive half. If he promised her a pregnant female slave, she is not entitled to half of the female slave and half of a child, for the slave came with a foetus, not a child, and it is hard to price half a foetus ⁵⁵⁷.
266. VIII.5 Male and female slaves who are betrothed or married without the command of their masters, if their masters do not agree, we must separate them ⁵⁵⁸.
267. VIII.5 A free woman who partners with a male slave, if, when she has been warned three times, she will not hold back from him, she will be enslaved ⁵⁵⁹.
268. VIII.5 If a slave woman deceives a free man (saying) that she is not a slave, and he proposes to her and betroths her, her children are free born, but the betrothal is not valid, unless her master and her betrothed agree, and the latter receives a witnessed document of agreement. But if he had sex with her after he heard that she was a slave, he is not allowed to dismiss her, but he may reduce the value of the written statement of engagement and betrothal gifts ⁵⁶⁰.
269. VIII.6 A man owes his wife an allowance sufficient for (among other things such as food, clothing) a female servant (*mšamšānītā*), especially when she is sick (but he is not required to pay the cost of medicines or of hiring a physician if she has her own property). If she can serve herself, she may not ask him to pay for the servant. If the husband does not like her servant, he may dismiss her. If she has many servants, he is only required to pay for one ⁵⁶¹.

554. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 84a.

555. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 87a.

556. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 87a.

557. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 88a.

558. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 91b.

559. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 91b.

560. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 91b.

561. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 95a.

270. VIII.6 A female slave who was betrothed by order of her master, if she is willing to live with her husband in a life of hard labour, her master is not allowed to prevent her relationship due to a lack of earnings. But if she makes any profit from her earnings, this belongs to her master and not her husband, so long as he is not freed⁵⁶².
271. VIII.8 A master owes his slaves adequate allowances, according to need. And if they can labour, let them labour and be fed and clothed. And if they cannot labour⁵⁶³, the bishop shall compel the owner to sell them, but if they are not sold he must feed and clothe them. If he is poor and cannot, the church shall meet their needs, even if they are not believers, until the owner is judged, and a buyer is available. A owner must not contract with his slave for a fixed amount each day, but a slave must labour with all his strength, and the master must meet his needs, and not force him beyond his strength. Similarly, he must provide a stable for his domestic animals, and not be cruel to them⁵⁶⁴.
272. IX.1 Clearly a slave cannot make a will, since he has no authority over himself or over his possessions, for they and he himself belong to his owner. But if he wrote a will and was then freed, and acquired possessions and died, his will is legitimate, unless he previously annulled it⁵⁶⁵.
273. IX.2 No bequest is made to the slave of an heir. If he should be freed before the death of the testator he may receive and possess the legacy. But a bequest to the slave of a stranger who is not an heir is legitimate, and he may receive, though mastery belongs to his master. But if he does not accept it his master possesses nothing, and neither is he allowed to force him to accept it⁵⁶⁶.
274. IX.3 No one can bequeath more than a third of their goods to others than their heirs. If he states that two of his slaves should be freed, each of whom is worth a third of his possessions, the heirs cast lots, and one shall be freed⁵⁶⁷.
275. IX.3 If he says in the will 'let him be given one of my slaves', but he had no slave when making the bequest, a slave shall be bought from his estate, and shall be given. If he had a slave but he died before the testator's death, none will be bought from his estate or given. If he said, 'let one of my slaves be freed', but did not specify which, let them cast lots⁵⁶⁸.

562. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 96a.

563. Because neglected by the owner?

564. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 98a.

565. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 99b.

566. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 100a.

567. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 101a.

568. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 101b; for details of the procedure for casting lots, see below XXXII.1, (p. 251a).

276. IX.3 If a man bequeaths a slave, but then frees him, the bequest is annulled ⁵⁶⁹.
277. IX.4 A legal guardian (*ʿepiṭrōpā*) must be a free man, since it requires mastery, which is the opposite of enslavement. But the Greek emperors (canon 16) allow a person to appoint his slave as a guardian for his young children, and they say that even if he does not explicitly free him, the guardianship is an indicator of his being freed ⁵⁷⁰.
278. IX.4 Impediments to inheritance include being enslaved. A slave inherits nothing from his relations when they die, nor they from him, but his owner inherits. Even a half-freed slave receives nothing, but when he dies his relations receive half of his property, and his owner half ⁵⁷¹.
279. XI.1 A non-Christian is not allowed to buy a Christian slave, but he is allowed to sell one to a Christian buyer. But if there is some fraud in the valuation, or some old defect in the slave, the Christian slave may not return to his previous non-Christian owner, but the price may be reduced ⁵⁷².
280. XI.1 Five conditions relate to that which is sold. The fourth is control. Fish in the sea, birds in the air, an errant ox, a lost ass, and a fugitive slave, may not be sold ⁵⁷³.
281. XI.1 When a person's slave has committed an offence against someone, his owner is not allowed to sell him until he has made restitution for his offence ⁵⁷⁴.
282. XI.1 A person may not sell one of his slaves (or other goods) without specifying which, and if he sells one out of two or three he must allow the buyer to choose ⁵⁷⁵.
283. XI.1 Quality is assessed by sight alone. If a female slave is sold, her face, hands, feet may be seen. Some add, and her hair ⁵⁷⁶.
284. XI.2 If a male slave is bought with a 'contract with choice' (allowing both seller and buyer up to three days in which to change their minds), if one party frees the slave before the completion of the agreement, the slave is free, even if the other is unwilling ⁵⁷⁷.
285. XI.2 If a man buys a female slave with a 'contract with choice' and has sex with her he may no longer return her. And if the seller has sex with her the buyer is allowed not to take her and to

569. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 102b.

570. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 103b; see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 31.

571. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 111b.

572. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 114a.

573. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 115a.

574. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 115a.

575. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 115a.

576. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 116b.

577. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 118a.

- receive a full refund. And in either case, if she becomes pregnant the child shall be reckoned free born ⁵⁷⁸.
286. XI.2 If a man sells a male slave and says he is a baker, or a scribe, but this is not so, the buyer may return him. But if described as skilled when actually simple, he may not return him because it is the rule of sellers to praise what is sold ⁵⁷⁹.
287. XI.2 Pre-sale defects allowing the return of bought slaves include: being a fugitive; thieving; in male slaves, being a eunuch, even if this increases the price; and in female but not male slaves, being sold as a virgin when one is not; urinary incontinence; and habitual promiscuity ⁵⁸⁰.
288. XI.2 The slave cannot be returned if after the buyer becomes aware of the defect he is served by him. When returning an animal he may not remove its halter, and when returning a slave he may not remove his tunic ⁵⁸¹.
289. XI.2 If a virgin female slave is sexually violated by her buyer, even if some old defect is detected in her she may not be returned, according to our law. Others say she may be returned, with a financial penalty for her violation ⁵⁸².
290. XI.2 If, before the final agreement of the sale, a slave loses an eye, the buyer may accept him blind at the agreed price, or he may have a refund ⁵⁸³.
291. XI.2 When a man buys a slave, when he has handed over the price the seller must hand over the slave. But if he has fled, and the buyer takes back his money, the sale is void, and he is not allowed to take the slave when he is found, unless he pays the price. If he leaves the price with the seller he is allowed to take the slave if he is found, but if not found, he takes the refund ⁵⁸⁴.
292. XI.3 When a slave is sold, his possessions do not accompany him, since in law a slave does not have the right of ownership. And concerning his clothing people are divided; but the correct opinion is that only a loin-cloth accompanies him ⁵⁸⁵.
293. XI.3 Trees are sold with their leaves and fruit, even if that is not explicitly mentioned. A pregnant female slave is sold with her foetus, even if is not mentioned, because it is a part of her body ⁵⁸⁶.

578. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 118b.

579. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 118b.

580. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 118b.

581. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 119a.

582. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 120a.

583. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 121a.

584. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 122a.

585. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 125b.

586. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 126a.

294. XI.4 A slave may not buy or sell without his master's instruction. And when his master orders him to trade, he may not instruct another ('his own') slave to trade, unless his master allows him to. As soon as the master annuls his permission to him, the others are also annulled⁵⁸⁷.
295. XI.4 A slave may not buy anything from his master, nor sell anything to him⁵⁸⁸.
296. XI.4 A slave may not hire himself out, but he may hire out his master's slaves and animals. He may not buy anything by means of hiring himself out⁵⁸⁹.
297. XI.4 Nothing may be bought or sold by a slave without the permission of the master. The master's silence when seeing his slave buying and selling is not permission. With his master's permission he may buy or sell anything, except for his master's father and mother, although should they be slaves they may be freed⁵⁹⁰.
298. XI.4 When a slave trades on the instruction of his master, if he buys something but does not have the funds to pay, the master must pay⁵⁹¹.
299. XI.4 If the master gives the slave a hundred dinars to buy clothes (or vessels), and they are lost before he takes possession of the clothes, the sale is void, and the master suffers the loss. If the dinars are lost between his taking possession of the clothes and paying, the seller may not compel the slave-owner to pay out another hundred dinars, but he may take back his clothes⁵⁹².
300. XI.4 When a slave trades on the instruction of his master, if debts accumulate he may pay from the profit, but if that is not sufficient he may pay from the capital; and if that does not suffice, some say his master must pay; others that his master must transfer another fund for him to trade with and so repay; and others, correctly, say that the slave should labour with his own shoulders, and so repay⁵⁹³.
301. XI.5 A female slave should not be sold separately from her child, if the child is less than seven years old; and some also include a male slave and his child⁵⁹⁴.
302. XI.5 A sale contract should not include useless conditions, such as, I sold you this slave on the condition that you should only feed

587. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 127b.

588. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 127b.

589. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 127b.

590. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 127b.

591. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 128a.

592. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 128a.

593. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 128a.

594. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 132a.

- him like this, and dress him like this, and should not overwork him⁵⁹⁵.
303. XI.5 Another problematic contract: if a seller says to a buyer, I sold you this slave on the agreement that you would free him, but his inheritance will belong to me and not to you; and the buyer says he has (so) bought. Some say the purchase is valid, but not the agreement, and so the buyer need not free him. We say that there are two agreements here; the first is valid, and so the buyer must free the slave; the second is invalid, because the freed slave may deprive the seller of his inheritance⁵⁹⁶.
304. XI.5 If a seller should say, I have sold you this slave with an agreement that he is a scribe, or this ox with the agreement that he will pull a plough, if the agreement is not fulfilled, the sale is not valid⁵⁹⁷.
305. XII.2 Conditional advanced payment: he who pays in advance for slaves must mention in the contract the race (or kind), and colour, and age, and male or female gender, and should say (for example) a Chinese, or Hun, or Nubian male slave, seven or ten years old. And others say, other matters relating to appearance should be mentioned for female slaves, and virginity. If one makes advanced payment for the purpose of legal betrothal, then it is right that one should mention matters of beauty. Or if he is buying her to breastfeed a child, it is right that he should make a contract that she should have milk to give⁵⁹⁸.
306. XII.3 He who has made advanced payment for (among other examples) an Indian slave is not required to pay for a Hun slave, even if this is also good⁵⁹⁹.
307. XII.4 Loaning is valid for one who possesses the authority of ownership, so that one who is young, or a slave, or a demoniac, is not able to loan what belongs to him⁶⁰⁰.
308. XII.4 Not everything which is bought or paid for in advance is subject to being loaned, so that a person does not lend a male or female slave or an animal⁶⁰¹.
309. XIII.1 When a mother and her child are enslaved, it is not right for us that one of them should be individually pledged (as collateral for a debt), for one would not be individually sold, but the two of them should be sold together for the repayment of the debt⁶⁰².

595. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 132a.

596. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 133a.

597. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 133b.

598. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 136a.

599. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 138b.

600. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 140a.

601. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 140a.

602. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 141a.

310. XIII.1 A slave who has committed an offence should not be pledged until the owner has made restitution for the offence. And if he offends after he has been pledged and is led away to be executed, the debtor must appoint another in place of him for the creditor⁶⁰³.
311. XIII.1 A slave who is half-freed may be pledged, since half of him may be sold⁶⁰⁴.
312. XIII.1 It is right that a pledge consisting of one subject to enslavement should be under the control of the creditor. Therefore, a Christian slave should not be pledged to a non-Christian creditor; nor any of the holy books to one who denies their truth; nor a slave woman to a man who does not have a wife, even if he is a righteous man⁶⁰⁵.
313. XIII.1 If someone pledges a pregnant female slave, or a tree whose fruit has not yet formed, the infant and the fruit are also pledged when produced⁶⁰⁶.
314. XIII.1 One who is young, or a slave, or a demoniac, cannot be a pledge for debt⁶⁰⁷.
315. XIII.1 If a debtor pledges a female slave, but betroths her to someone before the creditor receives her, the pledge is not annulled, but she stays with her husband⁶⁰⁸.
316. XIII.1 A creditor cannot ask for a slave who is a pledge to be replaced if (while under his control) he offends or flees⁶⁰⁹.
317. XIII.2 One who makes a pledge has no authority over that which is pledged. While a male or female slave is pledged, and the creditor has received them, the pledger is not allowed to sell them, or give them as a gift, or hire them out, or betroth them⁶¹⁰.
318. XIII.2 If the debtor should free the male or female slave (through a will), if he is rich, he must first pay the debt, and the manumission is valid; if he is poor, the manumission is not valid, and the male or female slave shall be sold for the repayment⁶¹¹.
319. XIII.2 If he pledges a skilled slave, it is right that he receive the wages for his labour⁶¹².
320. XIII.2 One who pledged a male slave may not take him and move to a different country, just as a female slave's husband is not allowed

603. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 141a.

604. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 141b.

605. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 141b.

606. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 143a.

607. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 143a.

608. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 143b.

609. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 144a.

610. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 144b.

611. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 144b.

612. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 144b.

- to take her where she wants, but her owner has the right to take her elsewhere, even if the husband does not wish it ⁶¹³.
321. XIII.2 If a debtor has a temporary need of his pledged slave or ass or ox, he may appoint a guarantor while he makes use of it, until he returns the pledge to the creditor ⁶¹⁴.
322. XIII.2 The produce of something pledged belongs to the debtor not the creditor, such as the earnings of a slave or animal, offspring, milk, wool, fruits. If a pregnant female slave is pledged, she may not be sold before she gives birth, unless the foetus was explicitly pledged with her. If a male slave is struck and loses an eye, and his price is repaid, the money remains with him in exchange for that which has been lost ⁶¹⁵.
323. XIII.2 If a slave is pledged as collateral, this ends if he commits a crime and is executed by the hegemon, and the debtor does not need to replace him. If his master the debtor pays to redeem the slave (from the death penalty), the slave remains a pledge subject to the creditor. If the slave committed a crime against his master the debtor, such as killing his slave or son, he may kill him by command of the hegemon. He is not then required to replace him, but if he does not kill him he is not allowed to sell him without first repaying the debt. If the slave killed his master, the master's son has the same restrictions ⁶¹⁶.
324. XIII.2 When two slaves are pledged for a hundred dinars, if one of them dies the other remains pledged for a hundred, not fifty. If on one occasion the debtor pledged half a slave for fifty, and another time the other half for fifty, if he repays fifty, one half of the slave remains a pledge for fifty and not the whole slave. If he is sold, half of his price is given to the creditor owed fifty, and the other half is divided among other creditors without pledges ⁶¹⁷.
325. XIII.3 Provisions for resolving disputes between debtors and creditors relating to pledged slaves ⁶¹⁸.
326. XIV.1 If a debtor is insolvent and unable to pay his debts, the bishop intervenes and sells as much of his property, including slaves, as necessary in order to repay the creditors ⁶¹⁹.
327. XIV.2 The rights of a seller when a buyer is insolvent: when a man sells a female slave with a male slave, and the female slave should die with the insolvent buyer, preventing a return, and an old defect appears in the male slave, the seller may take back the male

613. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 144b.

614. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 145a.

615. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 146a.

616. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 146b.

617. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 147a.

618. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 148a.

619. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 153a.

- slave in order to recover the cost of the female slave from his sale ⁶²⁰.
328. XIV.2 If two male slaves are sold together, and one dies, and the buyer is insolvent, the buyer takes back the survivor, and the cost of the other is added to the buyer's debts ⁶²¹.
329. XIV.2 If a miller or a fuller teaches a slave their trade and then becomes insolvent and the slave is sold, the creditor is paid what he is owed, but the debtor receives the extra value that has been added ⁶²².
330. XIV.3 Five causes prevent owners from making use of their property: youth, demonic-possession, enslavement, insolvency, prodigality ⁶²³.
331. XV.3 If a slave is jointly owned by two owners and is sold, it is not allowed for one owner to take half the price and tell the other to take his share, for they jointly own the sale price as they jointly owned the slave ⁶²⁴.
332. XVI.2 When a person sells a slave and gives power of attorney (Greek *entolikon*) to another so that he should be paid the price by the buyer; but the slave then says that he is free born and not a slave, and the buyer and seller believe him; then the sale and purchase are void, but not the power of attorney. If the attorney does not accept that he is free, he is allowed to claim his money from the buyer; but if he accepts that he is free he is not allowed to claim it from the buyer ⁶²⁵.
333. XVII.1 A legal guarantor must be free born, and cannot be a slave, unless he is permitted by his master to engage in giving, receiving, and trade ⁶²⁶.
334. XVII.2 Conditions under which a freed slave may act as guarantor for his master ⁶²⁷.
335. XVIII.3 Disputes between partners: The case of two partners who own a slave, and one sells the slave and the other grants permission for this, but when the seller is paid he does not give the appropriate share to his partner ⁶²⁸.
336. XIX.1 An agent or guardian (*epitropos*) can only be appointed for specific tasks, such as the manumission of slaves, or the

620. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 154b.

621. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 156a.

622. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 156b.

623. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 157a.

624. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 162a.

625. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 164a.

626. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 165b.

627. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 168a.

628. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 171a.

- purchase of clearly specified slaves, so as not to cause harm or loss to the one appointing them ⁶²⁹.
337. XIX.1 An agent cannot be appointed by one without autonomy, such as a child, a demoniac, a woman (in relation to her betrothal), or a slave (except by permission of his master) ⁶³⁰.
338. XIX.2 Hypothetical account of someone appointing another person's slave as an agent and instructing him to buy himself from his master. If he does so, does he become the slave of the one who appointed him, or has he freed himself? ⁶³¹
339. XIX.2 If a man appoints his slave as an agent over his affairs, and then frees him, his acting as agent does not cease ⁶³².
340. XX.1 Legal confessions concerning oneself are accepted when made by anyone who is not young, a demoniac, dissipated, a slave, insolvent, sick. For these there are restrictions. If a slave confesses that he has killed or stolen he is executed or his hand is cut off. And his owner may not object that he himself has done no wrong but the value of his slave is being reduced. If the slave confesses that he has lost someone's property, but the matter is not proved by witnesses appointed by the owner of the property, his master is not required to repay anything. If it is proved, the master must pay ⁶³³.
341. XXI.1 If someone entrusts something to an adult slave and he loses it, the depositor is not allowed to sell the slave to recover the cost, nor to cause any loss to his master. But the cost remains a debt marked against the slave, so that if freed he must repay it ⁶³⁴.
342. XXII.1 A usufruct may not be granted to another by one who is a child, a demoniac, a slave, or insolvent ⁶³⁵.
343. XXII.1 The use to which a usufruct is put must be legal. Therefore a man is not allowed to give out his daughter or his female slave for sexual use with an agreement that he will take her back ⁶³⁶.
344. XXIV.3 When things given as charitable endowments (*šūkānē*, compare Arabic *awqāf*) have costs these should be supplied from their own profits where possible, but if a slave or ass grows old, the recipient is required to feed them. If a slave dies, the endowment ends ⁶³⁷.
345. XXIV.4 Charitable alms: If male or female slaves wish to free themselves, let them be given their prices. Or more precisely, if they are in

629. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 173a.

630. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 174a.

631. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 175a.

632. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 180b.

633. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 184a.

634. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 192a.

635. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 197b.

636. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 198a.

637. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 205b.

- the hands of people of another race, let them be given their prices, but not if they are in the hands of Christians. If the money is given to a slave so that his master might free him, if he keeps it with him, let it be taken from him and be given to his master, under the instruction of the slave ⁶³⁸.
346. XXV.1 A slave who has been given permission by his master to trade may receive analogically (proportionally) ⁶³⁹.
347. XXV.3 Children, slaves, prodigals, are unreliable sources of information ⁶⁴⁰.
348. XXVI.1 An investor may appoint his son or his slave to act as his business partners, working with the merchant ⁶⁴¹.
349. XXVII.1 Irrigation contracts must be specific. It is not valid for a vineyard owner to say that he will help with the irrigation; he must specify that he will send his slave to help, and who will bear the cost of this ⁶⁴².
350. XXIX.4 If a man hires out his slave, and then frees him before the completion of the time for which he was hired, the manumission is valid, but the hiring is not ended. The freed man receives from his former master the hiring charges for the period during which he was free ⁶⁴³.
351. XXIX.5 Anyone who finds and returns a lost ass, ox, or slave, is entitled to a finder's fee from the owner, but only if the owner has promised this directly to the finder ⁶⁴⁴.
352. XXIX.5 If a man in Edessa says that I will give a dinar to one who returns my slave from Sarug; if someone returns him from half the distance he gets half a dinar, but if he returns him from a region more distant than Sarug, he is not entitled to more ⁶⁴⁵.
353. XXX.1 If a slave finds some lost property, but then loses it himself, the owner of the property is allowed to sell the slave in order to recover the cost. If the sale price of the slave is not sufficient to cover the cost of the lost property he may not cause further financial harm to the owner of the slave. So it is better for the owner of the slave to require the bishop to take possession of what the slave found and to keep it safe, and so not run the risk of his slave being sold ⁶⁴⁶.

638. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 207a.

639. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 209a.

640. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 213a.

641. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 215a.

642. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 223b.

643. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 241b.

644. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 242a.

645. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 242b.

646. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 244b.

354. XXXI.1 Only an adult free person may take custody of abandoned or foundling children; a slave may only do so with the permission of his master ⁶⁴⁷.
355. XXXI.2 If a man says that this child which has been found is mine, his word is accepted, even if he is a slave. If a woman says it, without the agreement of her husband, it is not accepted. If a widow says it, it is accepted ⁶⁴⁸.
356. XXXI.2 So long as no one asserts that a foundling is a slave, he is free born. But when he dies, if he possesses anything, the church inherits it, because it is liable to pay fines if he offends as an adolescent. If someone asserts that he is a slave, but he is not in his possession, his word is not accepted, unless he affirms that his female slave gave birth to him and rejected him, and he took him in. Some people say that anyone who finds a child and takes him in, and states that he is a slave, his mastery over him is valid. But it is not correct. A son of a slave is not like a piece of clothing that is found. And he is not able to defend himself. But when he has grown up and says of himself that he is the slave of the one who asserted his servitude, his word is accepted, even if he previously said that he was not a slave. And if he should say that I am the slave of Peter, but Peter denies it; and if he then says that I am the slave of Paul, we do not accept it; but others affirm his enslavement to Paul ⁶⁴⁹.
357. XXXI.2 If a female foundling after her betrothal confesses that she is a slave of so-and-so, she is not separated from her husband on account of this, but her servitude to so-and-so is confirmed. Any children she gave birth to prior to her confession are free born, and those born afterwards are slaves ⁶⁵⁰.
358. XXXI.2 Likewise, if a male foundling after his betrothal confesses that he is a slave, among us (Christians) he is not separated from his wife, but others separate, even though they do not separate the female foundling. If he was buying and selling, his sales and purchases before his confession are not annulled, but those after are ⁶⁵¹.
359. XXXII.1 ‘Simple manumission’ (*ḥūrārā pšītā*): this term is used of one who is not contractually freed through the death of the one who frees, nor of the slave who purchases his own freedom. The manumitter must be an adult of sound mind, and not insolvent. The manumitted must be a slave who is not pledged against a debt ⁶⁵².

647. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 247a.

648. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 248a.

649. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 249a.

650. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 249b.

651. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 249b.

652. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 249b.

360. XXXII.1 If a person says to his male slave 'O lord', or 'O my lord', or 'O my bridegroom', or to his female slave 'O my lady', or 'O my bride', the manumission is not valid with these words. If he says to the male slave 'O free man' (*'ō hērā*), or to the female slave 'O free woman' (*'ō hērtā*), they are indeed freed⁶⁵³.
361. XXXII.1 He shall be condemned if he again enslaves them⁶⁵⁴.
362. XXXII.1 If he says to the slave of another person, I have freed you, it is not valid since he has no mastery over him⁶⁵⁵.
363. XXXII.1 If a person frees half a slave, the whole slave is freed. If the other half of the slave does not belong to him, he must pay the other owner for his half. So long as he and his household have clothes to wear, even if his house must be sold, he is to pay for the other half. If he would incur debt he is not obliged to free the whole of him. He may not just declare that he has freed the other owner's half without paying⁶⁵⁶.
364. XXXII.1 If a person buys half of his father or of his mother, that half is freed, whether or not he wills it. But he is not obliged to buy the other half of them⁶⁵⁷.
365. XXXII.1 If a person frees half a slave, and the other half has been pledged against a debt, he is not obliged to free it⁶⁵⁸.
366. XXXII.1 Anyone who buys a part share in his insolvent relations, those to whom he owes wages, that part is freed⁶⁵⁹.
367. XXXII.1 A person who is (mortally) sick may not free a slave who is worth more than a third of his property. If he only owns one slave, and nothing else, he may free a third of him. His heirs own the other two-thirds⁶⁶⁰.
368. XXXII.1 According to canon 21 of 'the Emperors' if a person owns 1 or 2 or 3 slaves, they can all be freed; if 5-10, half; if 10-30, a third; if 30-100, a quarter. If the man has a debt when he dies, the debt must be paid before the manumission happens; if his estate does not suffice, a slave which he has freed must be sold in order to pay off the debt⁶⁶¹.
369. XXXII.1 If a person frees slaves who are worth more than a third of his property, they cannot all be freed. Those to be freed are chosen by lot. On pieces of paper / parchment (*karṭisā*) shall be written either 'manumission' (*hūrārā*) or 'slavery' (*'abdūtā*), and they shall be (folded and) covered in wax, and they shall be handed

653. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 250a.

654. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 250a.

655. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 250a.

656. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 250a.

657. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 250b.

658. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 250b.

659. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 250b.

660. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 250b.

661. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 251a; see *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 4.

- to a young child who shall give them to each of the slaves. Those who receive ‘manumission’ are freed. If a third of the slaves are to be freed, and the slaves are all of equal value, and their number is divisible by three (e.g. 3, 6, 9), a third of the lots shall have ‘manumission’ written on them. If the slaves are not of equal value they will be put into three groups each of which is of equal value, even if they contain different numbers of slaves, and lots will be used to select the group to be freed. If they are of equal value, but their number is not divisible by three (e.g. 2, 4), a third part of each one of the slaves will be freed ⁶⁶².
370. XXXII.1 There is a relationship between the one who frees (and his heirs) and the one who is freed. The manumitter has a duty to betroth and to educate the one he has freed. When the freed slave dies, if he has no natural heir of his own, his manumitter (or, if dead, his heirs) is his heir ⁶⁶³.
371. XXXII.2 ‘Contractual manumission’ (*ḥūrārā mtanwyā*): this term is used when a person says to his slave, when I die you will be free. If a slave has two masters and they say he will be free when they die, he is only half free when one dies ⁶⁶⁴.
372. XXXII.2 If someone says to his slave, you will be free if you do this and that, the heirs are not allowed to sell him if he has not done this and that, but only if he refuses to do them ⁶⁶⁵.
373. XXXII.2 This promise of manumission after death is similar to that done by will / testament. He who says to his slave ‘you will be free after my death’, he is allowed to sell him or to give him away as a gift and to annul the promised manumission. He can also just say ‘I have annulled my promise’, or deny that he ever made the promise, if there are no witnesses ⁶⁶⁶.
374. XXXII.2 If the slave commits an offence and is sold to pay the fine, the promise of manumission is also annulled; if the master redeems him it is not annulled, unless the master explicitly annuls it ⁶⁶⁷.
375. XXXII.2 If a female slave is told by her master that ‘you will be free after my death’, if she gives birth after this promise she is free, but without her child; just as a female slave who is bequeathed to someone in a will, if she then gives birth her child is not handed over with her ⁶⁶⁸.
376. XXXII.3 ‘Conferral of manumission through the labour of the slave’ (*maš^elmūt ḥūrārā b-pūlhān ʿabdā*): this is contrary to normal legal procedures because that which does not belong to the slave is reckoned as though it does belong to him. For not only does a

662. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 251a.

663. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 251b.

664. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 251b.

665. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 252a.

666. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 252a.

667. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 252a.

668. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 252a.

- slave belong to his owner, but so also does his labour. So when a slave buys his own manumission through labour, it is as though the owner were buying something from his own possessions. It is considered legal for two reasons: first that the owner may not wish to manumit him for free; second that the slave will be more diligent about his labour and profitability ⁶⁶⁹.
377. XXXII.3 The master should say to his slave: I agree to free you if you give me a thousand zūz (or more, or less) on two occasions. And when you pay, you are free. The master may also say: you will have bought yourself when you pay me so much by such a time. The exact price to be paid must be specified, and the number of payments ⁶⁷⁰.
378. XXXII.3 The slave may also contract with his master to serve for a year (or more, or less), and in addition to his service he should pay one dinar, or more, or less (i.e. a nominal legal payment) ⁶⁷¹.
379. XXXII.3 For this agreement to be valid the owner must be an adult with administrative competence, and so not a child, or a demoniac. If the slave is pledged against a debt he may not free him. The slave himself must be an adult, of sound mind, and a Christian. The conferral of manumission must be for all of him, and not for part ⁶⁷².
380. XXXII.3 If the slave makes a single payment he remains entirely a slave, no part of him is freed. Even if a single zūz of the price is unpaid, he remains a slave ⁶⁷³.
381. XXXII.3 The owner must accept the slave's payment whenever he wishes to pay, he cannot refuse to accept it (and so prolong the enslavement). If time passes and the slave does not pay, because of insolvency, or journeying without permission of the owner, or having funds but not paying, the owner may annul the agreement. If the slave is possessed by a demon, and has funds, the bishop may take from these and pay for him to be freed ⁶⁷⁴.
382. XXXII.3 The owner may not sell a slave he has agreed to free, even if the buyer also agrees to the manumission after the agreed payment. He may bequeath the remaining sum in his will. A slave may not pay for the manumission of another slave by any means (?) ⁶⁷⁵.
383. XXXII.3 If a female slave gives birth after the agreement of conferral of manumission, her child will be freed with her ⁶⁷⁶.

669. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 252b.

670. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 252b.

671. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 253a.

672. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 253a.

673. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 253a.

674. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 253a.

675. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 253b.

676. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 253b.

384. XXXII.3 A slave who commits a crime after the agreement of conferral of manumission, whether against his master or against a stranger, is required to pay the fine by being sold⁶⁷⁷.
385. XXXIII.1 If a slave is abducted and lost, he who abducted him must repay the price of the slave to his owner. If the abductor cuts off any part of the slave he must pay the price for that part plus compensate for any overall loss in value of the slave. If the body part was lost due to an act of God (*nekyānā šmayānā, damnum fatale*), he must only pay for the overall loss in value⁶⁷⁸.
386. XXXIII.1 One who abducts a slave, or an ass, must also repay the lost income for their work, even if he did not put them to work, since their owner has lost this income. If one abducts a free man, if he puts him to work he must repay his wages, and if not, not⁶⁷⁹.
387. XXXIII.1 If one causes a slave to flee, and so pays his price to his owner, but then finds him and hands him to his owner, he is allowed to take back the money that he paid⁶⁸⁰.
388. XXXIII.1 If an abducted slave flees, his abductor must pay his price to his owner, and then the slave is not his. But if he is found his former owner must take him back and return the money to the abductor. But if the abductor intentionally made him flee, he must pay for his lost wages⁶⁸¹.
389. XXXIII.1 If the owner says that my slave whom you abducted or made flee was a skilled artisan (in order to increase the compensation), if he has no witnesses, then the word of the abductor that he was not skilled is accepted⁶⁸².
390. XXXIII.1 If the abductor says that the clothing which the (abducted) slave is wearing belongs to me, if the owner has no witnesses, the word of the abductor is valid⁶⁸³.
391. XXXIII.2 He who abducts a slave, if he loses him, or destroys him, or damages him, he must pay his price to his owner. If he destroys one of the slave's members, he must not pay for the member, but for the overall loss of value of the slave. So if he were worth a hundred, and his hand were cut off reducing his value to forty, he must return the slave with sixty. But if his hand wasted away by an act of God there is no penalty for the abductor. If the abducted slave is killed, if his owner kills the one who killed him, he is not allowed to claim his price from the abductor⁶⁸⁴.

677. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 253b.

678. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 255a; see below XXXIII.2.

679. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 255a.

680. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 255b.

681. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 256a.

682. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 256b.

683. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 256b.

684. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 257a.

392. XXXIII.2 If the abducted slave killed someone, and was arrested by the hegemon and executed, his owner is allowed to claim his price from his abductor. If the slave destroyed anything else, the abductor must pay the fine, and the owner gets his slave back. If he destroyed something and then died, the abductor must pay his complete price to the owner, plus the fine ⁶⁸⁵.
393. XXXIII.2 If the abductor castrates the slave he must pay the whole price of the slave. If the slave loses his testicles by act of God, the owner receives him back, and the abductor pays no extra damages because the value of the slave has increased, and not decreased ⁶⁸⁶.
394. XXXIII.2 If a fat slave grows thin while he is with the abductor, if his value does not decrease, the abductor pays no damages ⁶⁸⁷.
395. XXXIII.2 If a skilled slave forgets his trade while he is abducted, the abductor pays a penalty for the lost skill ⁶⁸⁸.
396. XXXIII.3 If someone abducts a female slave and betroths her, or betroths her to another, her master may separate her and annul her illegal betrothal. But if she was betrothed of her own will it is better that her owner accepts her price in payment and does not separate her, even if he is unwilling. If she has given birth to a child and it is not known who betrothed her and had sex with her, her child is free born; but if known, the child is a slave of her owner. And if the child was born alive but then died, the abductor who fathered him must repay the owner ⁶⁸⁹.
397. XXXIV.1 The financial penalty for semi-voluntary killing (with non-standard weapons) of male or female slaves is their sale price ⁶⁹⁰.
398. XXXIV.1 Some say that one who kills in a semi-voluntary way or by error, and is unable to meet the canon of penitence, he may redeem and liberate a Christian who has been enslaved, and so be received back into communion ⁶⁹¹.
399. XXXIV.1 If a freeman kills a slave he shall be executed. But if a man kills his own son or his own slave, he shall not be executed ⁶⁹².
400. XXXIV.1 If a slave confesses that he killed voluntarily, he shall be executed ⁶⁹³.

685. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 257a.

686. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 258a.

687. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 258a.

688. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 258a.

689. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 258a.

690. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 261b.

691. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 262a.

692. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 262b.

693. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 263a.

SEEING SLAVES IN SYRIAC SOURCES

401. XXXIV.1 When a slave damages something by error his master must either settle the matter with the owner of that thing, or he must pay a fine on behalf of his slave ⁶⁹⁴.
402. XXXIV.1 When someone kills someone's slave, he must pay his sale price ⁶⁹⁵.
403. XXXIV.1 Financial penalties for striking a pregnant woman and killing her child: For the male child of a slave woman, half of a tenth (a twentieth) of his sale price if he had lived; for a female child, an entire tenth of her price ⁶⁹⁶.
404. XXXIV.1 When a killed person is found and it is not known who killed him, fifty neighbours are made to swear that they did not kill him and do not know who did. Those who swear may not be children, or demoniacs, or women, or slaves ⁶⁹⁷.
405. XXXIV.2 If someone injures another, the same injury will be done to him. ... The hand of a freeman will be amputated for the hand of the slave he cut off ... and other body parts the same. Some say that only killings should be punished equally when a man injures a woman, or a free man a slave ⁶⁹⁸.
406. XXXIV.4 A male slave who fornicates with a free woman shall be stoned to death, and vice versa. Those who are sentenced to a hundred blows of the rod for fornication are also exiled for a year to a distance of at least two days' journey. A slave is not exiled, so as not to do harm to his owner; but some say he is exiled for half a year ⁶⁹⁹.
407. XXXIV.5 If someone steals a young slave from before the door of his owner, or lures him away, if the slave is of the age of understanding his abductor's hand is not cut off, otherwise it is ⁷⁰⁰.
408. XXXIV.5 If a slave confesses that he stole half a dinar his word is not accepted, unless his master agrees. But if he confesses that he stole a dinar his hand is cut off, even if his master does not agree. And if the slave says that I stole it and gave it to my master, his word is not accepted for he is surely trying to dishonour his master ⁷⁰¹.
409. XXXIV.6 A father is allowed to punish his child, and a master his slave, and a man his wife. But only a hegemon may impose beatings with rods. A father may only strike his son, and not beat; and so also a master his slave; but some say he may beat him; a man

694. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 263b.

695. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 264a.

696. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 264a.

697. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 264a.

698. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 265a.

699. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 267a.

700. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 270b.

701. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 271b.

- may only beat his wife if she is vexatious or flees his house; for other offences he may only strike her ⁷⁰².
410. XXXV.3 Even in an emergency when one is on the point of dying one cannot kill and eat a human, even if he is not a Christian, nor one's slave, nor one's child. ... It is not true, as some say, that in an emergency a master may cut off a part of his slave's thigh, so long as he knows that he will not die from this ⁷⁰³.
411. XXXVI.1 Anyone who swears an oath, even if true, must pay to free an enslaved Christian, if able ⁷⁰⁴.
412. XXXVI.1 If a slave swears an oath, even if true, he must fast (for three days) ⁷⁰⁵.
413. XXXVII.3 A slave is not required to tithe. A free man is not required to tithe his dwelling place, his clothing, his household goods, his working animals, or his slaves ⁷⁰⁶.
414. XXXVIII.3 On equitable division: If a man leaves three slaves of equal value to his three sons, some say that a son cannot reject the allocation of a slave by drawing lots since they are of equal value. But he is allowed to object, since the slaves might have different skills, and one of them might be more useful for one of the sons. If four slaves were left, they should be grouped into three groups of equal value ⁷⁰⁷.
415. XXXIX.1 Most lawgivers reject the testimony of a slave, even if he is a Christian, since he is subjected by force to slavery ⁷⁰⁸.
416. XXXIX.1 The testimony of a non-Christian, a child, and a slave is not accepted, but may be later accepted once they have converted, grown up, or been freed ⁷⁰⁹.
417. XXXIX.1 The testimony of slaves, children, demoniacs, non-Christians, the dissolute, should not be accepted ⁷¹⁰.
418. XXXIX.6 If two witnesses testify that so-and-so the slave was freed by his master, he is freed. But if they then change their testimony and deny it, he is not re-enslaved. But the witnesses must pay his price to his former owners ⁷¹¹.
419. XL.1 When a slave is in someone's possession, and says I am a free man, I am not a slave, his word is accepted when he swears to it, and not that of the person in whose possession he is who swears that he is a slave. But if he says I was a slave and then he freed

702. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 272Bb (sic).

703. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 280b.

704. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 282b.

705. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 283a.

706. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 286b.

707. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 300a.

708. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 301b.

709. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 305b.

710. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 306a.

711. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 312b.

- me, if he has no witnesses then his master's word is accepted when he swears that he did not free him. And if the slave should be young, his word is not accepted when he says that I am not a slave, but he must remain in the possession of that person until he grows up, and then when he swears his oath will be accepted⁷¹².
420. XL.2 When a slave is accused of having done something meriting death he is allowed to defend himself. When he is accused of having committed a crime meriting a fine, his master defends him. When a slave confesses that he has offended, his word is not accepted; he may not cause loss (to his master) through his confession⁷¹³.
421. XL.3 Strong oaths (made in holy places, or during holy church seasons, or using certain divine names, or on sacred books) are only to be used in extreme circumstances. For example, if a slave asserts that his master had freed him, but the master denies it, then the master may swear strong oaths that he did not free him⁷¹⁴.
422. XL.3 Limitations on oaths: If a master swears an oath on behalf of his slave, saying 'I do not know that he has done wrong', this does not free him from judgement. Opinions are divided about whether he can swear 'he did no wrong', as also about an ass, whether it has caused damage. The correct opinion is that he may not swear if he was not present at the time the slave or the ass are accused of doing wrong⁷¹⁵.
423. XL.5 On evidence: When a slave produces witnesses that his master freed him, and another produces witnesses that he bought him from his master, if there is a deed of sale⁷¹⁶ the first is accepted, because it annuls the other. But if there is no deed of sale, the purchase is confirmed, because it is possible that righteous witnesses, seeking the greater reward which is from God, affirmed the manumission of the slave, even though it were not true⁷¹⁷.
424. XL.5 When there is a dispute about the parentage of a child, if a slave says 'I fathered him', and a free man says 'I fathered him', the evidence of the free man is accepted, because he is naturally more capable of occupying himself with the matter⁷¹⁸.

712. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 315a.

713. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 317b.

714. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 318a.

715. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 318b.

716. The deed of sale is presumably that of the slave when he was first bought, which was given to him by his former master at his manumission. Since he has it, and not the person claiming to have bought him, the slave is vindicated.

717. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 324a.

718. Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, p. 324b.

‘Abdišo‘ bar Brika. (d. 1318): *Nomocanon: Church of the East* ⁷¹⁹.
 [Many regulations relevant to slaves and slavery]

‘Abdišo‘ bar Brika, metropolitan of Nisibis (d. 1318): *Order of Ecclesiastical Decisions: Church of the East* ⁷²⁰.

425. 1.1.4.17 Apostles 17: A man who marries a widow, a divorcee, a prostitute, or a slave, may not receive any of the ranks of priesthood ⁷²¹.
426. 1.1.4.78 Slaves may not enter the clergy without the permission of their masters.
427. 1.2.16 ‘Slaves, obey your masters in the flesh with fear, trembling, and sincerity of heart like Christ’ (Eph 6.4-5). ‘You masters should also treat your slaves in the same way and forgive them a mistake’ (Eph 6.9).
428. 2.1.2 From Išo‘bokt: Would it have been seemly for him to teach whether we should demand capital and interest, the dowry and property of women, the business of male and female slaves, goods and other worldly possessions?
429. 2.1.5 After all, there are many things in the home of each one of us that are not for eating, drinking, or clothing, such as the thong and the whip, which serve only to deter and warn children and slaves.
430. 2.1.5 We also let our slaves and slave-boys (لحقهم هلالتم) rest on (Sunday), but not under compulsion like the Jews.
431. 2.2.1 A judge must be a free man, because a slave has no power over himself, and how could he have power to judge and to command free people?
432. 2.2.6 From the Emperors: If a man wishes to order his slave to appear for him at trial, the law does not allow him to do so. He cannot, because it is not possible for a slave and a free man to appear in the trial, because they are not equal in honour.
433. 2.2.6 A slave, subjected one (مخضوع), concubine, (among others) cannot testify.
434. 2.2.6 A man cannot give testimony for his slaves (or sons, or brothers etc), nor a freed slave for his former master or his master’s son.
435. 2.3.3 People one cannot marry include women slaves whose husbands are alive.
436. 2.3.5 From the Synod of Bet Lapat: It is not becoming for a believing man to marry two wives or to take a concubine with his wife.

719. See ‘Abdišo‘ bar Brika, *Nomocanon*. Due to time constraints, these regulations on slaves have not been summarised here.

720. See ‘Abdišo‘ bar Brika, *Order of Ecclesiastical Decisions*, in the bibliography. This edition is clearly referenced throughout, and so page numbers have not been given here.

721. See Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, VII.5.

437. 2.3.9 Questions to be raised before marriage of potential bride and groom include (5) their free condition, that neither of them is under the yoke of slavery.
438. 2.3.22 Ch. 22: On the marriage of male and female slaves of the Christians
439. 2.3.22 From Išoʿbokt: The rule for betrothal is the same for slaves as for free people. Priests may act as intermediaries, with permission of their masters. Male and female slaves may not enter into legal marriages without the permission of their masters
440. 2.3.22 If married with the permission of their masters, their masters may no longer separate them. If one is sold, neither the buyer nor the seller may separate them. But if one travels abroad, and does not return for a long time, the master may order the remaining slave to remarry.
441. 2.3.22 Masters should exercise equity and justice towards their male and female slaves, knowing that they too have a Lord / master in heaven.
442. 2.3.22 Many Christians who buy slaves married to a free woman by former owners, break up that marriage and marry them to others. This is not right.
443. 2.3.22 A man may marry his woman slave if he has not married, or his wife has died, but first he must free her in front of many, and then he marries her as a free woman.
444. 2.4.1 The ownership of male or female slaves is not considered legitimate if one does not possess documentation or credible witnesses ⁷²².
445. 2.4.1 If the ownership of a slave is challenged, and the current possessor does not have documentation or reliable witnesses, the slave is returned to the former owner, but the current possessor can appeal ⁷²³.
446. 2.4.4 In legal cases a slave or a subjected one needs an advocate or attorney. A slave's administration and testimony is only acceptable with his master's permission.
447. 2.4.6 From 'the emperors': If a man buys a slave with a 'good contract' (*kalēi hairesis*), he can return them for a refund if a hidden sickness or demon is found in them before 6 months ⁷²⁴.
448. 2.4.6 If a man buys a male or female slave with a 'bad contract' (*kakēi hairesis*), or 'without warranty' (*haplē ōnē*), he cannot return them ⁷²⁵.
449. 2.4.6 A sale is only valid if both buyer and seller have the authority to carry it through, and neither is a slave, or subject to a legal

722. See Išoʿbokt, *Book of Judgements*, VI.4.7.

723. See Išoʿbokt, *Book of Judgements*, VI.4.8.

724. See *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 101.1-3.

725. See *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 101.4-5.

- guardian. Both must freely agree to the sale. If they part before a price and the sale is firmly agreed, it is not binding.
450. 2.4.6 A free man shall not be sold; nor a Christian slave to a non-Christian; nor close relations; nor anything donated or bequeathed to the houses of God.
451. 2.4.6 The seller shall not separate a female slave from her son; nor a male slave from his brother; nor a male slave from his wife and son.
452. 2.4.14 From the emperors: A man cannot kill his slave; if a capital crime is committed, the slave must be handed to the authorities for punishment; otherwise he himself shall be killed ⁷²⁶.
453. 2.4.14 From the emperors: Anyone who accepts stolen goods from slaves must repay the slaves' owners fourfold ⁷²⁷.
454. 2.4.15 If a debtor pledges a female slave to a creditor, her labour is reckoned as the interest on the loan. If she produces children in this time, they belong to her owner, the debtor. For a woman is not like a field ⁷²⁸.
455. 2.4.15 From the author: Humans are naturally equal in freedom from the roots of nature. But because of greed, and war, and oppression, and deceit, it has happened that some are called slaves and others masters.
456. 2.4.18 Ch..18: On the manumission of male and female slaves.
457. 2.4.18 From the emperors: a man may free one third of his slaves, but not the third that belongs to his wife, nor the third that belongs to his children ⁷²⁹.
458. 2.4.18 According to the old laws, a man can free as many slaves as he wants, because he loves his wife and children more than anyone, and knows best how to care for them ⁷³⁰.
459. 2.4.18 After manumission, freed slaves may not be re-enslaved ⁷³¹.
460. 2.4.18 If a man frees his male or female slave but does not free that which belongs to them (their *peculium*), it is not theirs ⁷³².
461. 2.4.18 If a man frees his woman slave, whether pregnant or not, even if he does not specify this, any children she produces are free ⁷³³.
462. 2.4.18 If a man frees a woman slave in whom he owns a one tenth share, any children born to her are also one tenth free ⁷³⁴.

726. See *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 56c.

727. See *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 76e.

728. See *Syro-Roman Lawbook*, § 91.4-5.

729. See Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, 13.1.

730. See Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, 13.1.

731. See Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, 13.2.

732. See Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, 13.3.

733. See Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, 13.3.

734. See Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, 13.5.

463. 2.4.18 If a man says all the male and female slaves in which I have a part are free, then they will determine the proportion of them that belong to him and cast lots, and those who fall into his lot will be entirely free⁷³⁵.
464. 2.4.18 A male or female slave who is free in one or more parts may work for themselves in that part and acquire property for themselves⁷³⁶.
465. 2.4.18 If a Christian man who has no wife frees his female slave who has no husband, and marries her according to the canon of the Church, she and any children by him are legally free, during his lifetime and after his death.
466. 2.4.21 If anyone gives a male or female slave for the service of God's houses, or for *xenodochia*, or for charitable purposes, they shall serve as he instructed. But their children shall be treated in accordance with the law governing male and female slaves, and they shall serve in continence and piety, in the hope of eternal reward⁷³⁷.
467. 2.5.3 Among those who do not inherit, except by the will of the testator, are slaves, the subjugated, and freed-slaves (or: 'slaves, whether enslaved or free').
468. 2.5.8 From Timothy: A man has a son from his slave woman. As he is dying he acknowledges him and states that he shall inherit as one of his legitimate sons. But he is not legitimate, and so receives a tenth part⁷³⁸ of the estate, out of kindness.
469. 2.5.8 But after Timothy, the fathers decided that an illegitimate son should receive half a share of a legitimate son, and an illegitimate daughter half a share of a legitimate daughter.
470. 2.5.8 Išo'bokt: If a man publicly acknowledges before priests and church leaders during his lifetime that his slave woman is his wife and her children are his children, the woman and children are free. When he dies, if the children are young they will be supported from the man's estate. The man's heirs cannot enslave them⁷³⁹.
471. 2.5.10 Ch.10: On the inheritance of slaves
472. 2.5.10 If a male or female slave who is not freed dies, their master is their heir. If the slave makes a will, the master decides whether to confirm it or nullify it.
473. 2.5.10 If a male or female slave is freed, their children are their heirs.
474. 2.5.10 If a male or female slave is freed, but have no children, but have slaves for relatives, their former master and his sons are their heirs.

735. See Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, 13.6.

736. See Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, 13.7.

737. See Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, 12.4.

738. Timothy, *Law Code*, § 70, said a twentieth part; so also a textual variant here.

739. See Išo'bokt, *Book of Judgements*, 4.7.

475. 2.5.10 If a man dies leaving freed and non-freed slaves, and if he has heirs, they have power over the slaves. If he has no heirs, a portion of the man's estate should be given to the freed slaves, and those enslaved should be freed. If he left a vineyard or sown land and the slaves are willing to work it, let them be supported by its produce. But the children of slaves inherit nothing.