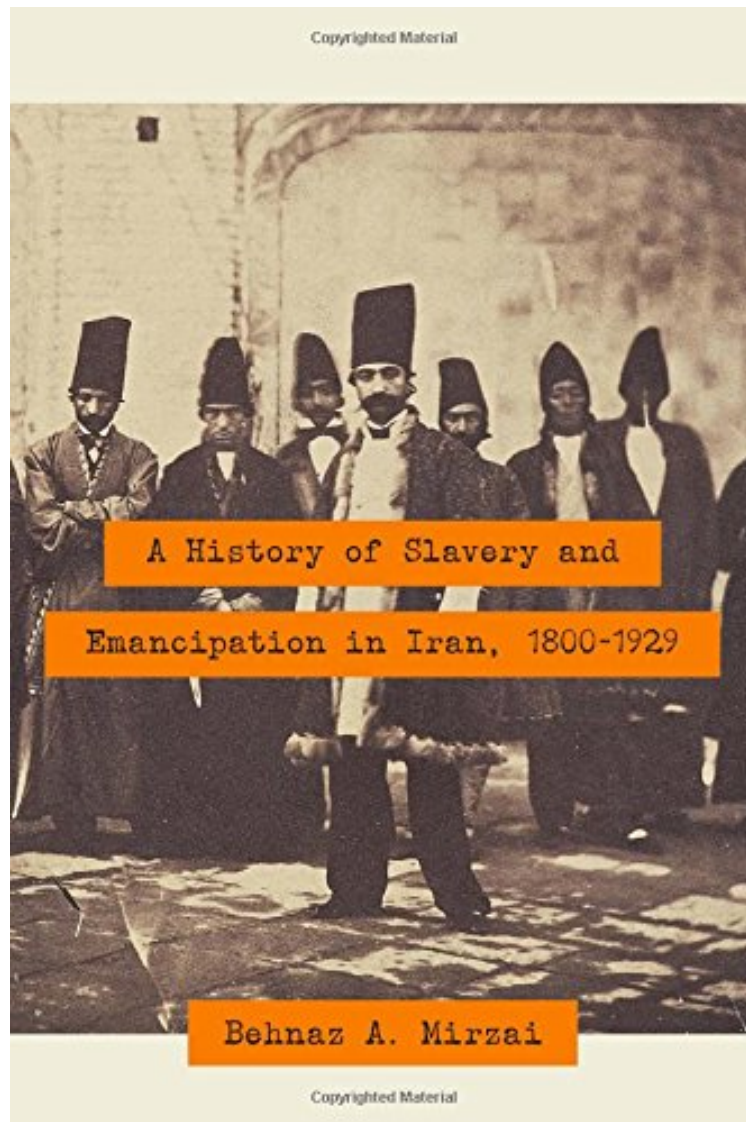


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A History of Slavery and Emancipation in Iran, 1800-1929

Behnaz A. Mirzai

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Slavery in the Middle East is a growing field of study, but the history of slavery in a key country, Iran, has never before been written. This history extends to Africa in the west and India in the east, to Russia and Turkmenistan in the north, and to the Arab states in the south. As the slave trade between Iran and these regions shifted over time, it transformed the nation and helped forge its unique culture and identity. Thus, a history of Iranian slavery is crucial to understanding the character of the modern nation. Drawing on extensive archival research in Iran, Tanzania, England, and France, as well as fieldwork and interviews in Iran, Behnaz A. Mirzai offers the first history of slavery in modern Iran from the early nineteenth century to emancipation in the mid-twentieth century. She investigates how foreign military incursion, frontier insecurity, political instability, and economic crisis altered the patterns of enslavement, as well as the ethnicity of the slaves themselves. Mirzai's interdisciplinary analysis illuminates the complex issues surrounding the history of the slave trade and the process of emancipation in Iran, while also giving voice to social groups that have never been studied: enslaved Africans and Iranians. Her research builds a clear case that the trade in slaves was inexorably linked to the authority of the state. During periods of greater decentralization, slave trading increased, while periods of greater governmental autonomy saw more freedom and peace.

"This is a major contribution to the study of enslavement in Iran, which will doubtlessly become a must-read for any future studies of Middle Eastern and Islamic enslavement and abolition, as well as for any work on Iranian history in general." (Ehud R. Toledano, Tel Aviv University, author of *As If Silent and Absent: Bonds of Enslavement in the Islamic Middle East*) "While this book will be revelatory to scholars of Iran, it also promises to engage with theoretical trends in the study of slavery elsewhere. It frames many research questions broadly to engage with scholars of slavery in other Muslim lands, as well as slavery elsewhere." (Kamran Scot Aghaie, University of Texas at Austin, coeditor of *Rethinking Iranian Nationalism and Modernity*) "This is a major contribution to the study of enslavement in Iran, which will doubtlessly become a must-read for any future studies of Middle Eastern and Islamic enslavement and abolition, as well as for any work on Iranian history in general." (Ehud R. Toledano, Tel Aviv University, author of *As If Silent and Absent: Bonds of Enslavement in the Islamic Middle East*) "While this book will be revelatory to scholars of Iran, it also promises to engage with theoretical trends in the study of slavery elsewhere. It frames many research questions broadly to engage with scholars of slavery in other Muslim lands, as well as slavery elsewhere." (Kamran Scot Aghaie, University of Texas at Austin, coeditor of *Rethinking Iranian Nationalism and Modernity*)

About the Author
Behnaz A. Mirzai is an associate professor of Middle Eastern history at Brock University in Canada. She is a co-coordinator and member of the preparatory committee for the Slave Trade Route project, UNESCO, and the founder of the website Brock/UNESCO Project for the Study of the Slave Trade and Slavery in the Mediterranean, Middle East, and Indian Ocean