Post World-War II Japanese Historiography on Slavery and Slave Revolts in Antiquity[*]

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The foundation of The Society for Studies on Resistance Movements in Antiquity in 1983 has enabled scholars from fifteen European countries and from the USA to meet their Japanese colleagues and to further the acquaintance with their works. The papers of the first symposium held at Susono, Shizuoka, Japan on January 5-8, 1986 have been published in three volumes, enabling western scholars to read the contributions of six Korean and twenty-seven Japanese historians in English and German translation.[**]

The study of the Classics in Japan goes back to the end of the nineteenth century, but before the end of World War II the interest in classical history was negligible. Before the war there were in Japan only approximately twenty classicists, most of whom had specialized in Greek literature and history. There had appeared a few translations of the sources: Kentaro Murakawa's of the *Athenaion Politeia*, Iwao Aoki's of Herodotus and Thucydides, and (from the English) Yusuke Tsurumi's selection from Plutarch's *Lives*. The latter had characteristically enjoyed considerable popularity.[1] Japanese classicists were mainly influenced by English scholarship, and from the end of the nineteenth century, by German scholarship.[2] Japan's unconditional capitulation on August 13, 1945 was followed by a democratization imposed by the U.S., which caused, among other developments, a radical change in Japanese historical consciousness. Suddenly, European experiences were deemed not irrelevant to Japanese history and society. Up to the capitulation and the end of Tennoism (the doctrine of a succession of godlike emperors for 2600 years), Japanese society was believed to have developed in its own unique way, obviating

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comparison to other societies. Now the question was raised, whether a better understanding of the present was possible by applying criteria developed for other societies, e.g.,whether Japanese society, like its European counterpart, had passed through the stages of feudalism and a slave-owning society.[3] The publication of a Japanese translation of one of Karl Marx's previously unpublished works[4] in 1947 led to the emergence of a marxist school of Japanese historians of classical antiquity and the Middle Ages, approximately at the time when we can observe a similar process — under different circumstances — in the then-Soviet Zone of Occupation (the later DDR) in Germany.[5] As in East Germany, so in Japan marxist historians lacked a base for their studies[6] and were thus forced to cover anew ground long before traversed by their western colleagues[7] in discussions of the relative merits of the theories of slavery of H. Wallon, J.K. Ingram, E. Ciccotti and W.L. Westermann.[8] The "Classical Society of Japan" was founded in 1948, and in 1953 began the publication of the *Journal of Classical Studies* (in Japanese), which now has a press-run of circa 800 copies.

The publication of the second volume of the Soviet *Vsemirnaya Istoriya* (*History of the World*) in 1956 confirmed the marxist historians in their belief that the society of

3   Sho Ishimoda, *The Formation of the Medieval World* (Tokyo 1946); Shinpachiro Matsumoto, *The Formation of Feudal Landownership* (Tokyo 1946) (both in Japanese).

4   K. Marx, *Formen die der kapitalistischen Produktion vorhergehen*, translated from the Russian by K. Ida, *Regishigaku Kenkyu* (*Journal of Historical Studies*) (Sept. 1947), 128; first published in *Proletarskaya Revoluciya* 3 (1939), then as a separate book: K. Marx, *Formy Predshestvuyushchie Kapitalisticheskomu Proizvodstvu* (Moskva 1940). A German edition appeared in Berlin only in 1952, and the first English translation by Jack Cohen, with a foreword by Eric Hobsbawm, in 1964. On its importance for Soviet historians, cf. A.S. Shofman, *Marx, Engels, Lenin ob Antichnom Obshchestve* (Kazan' 1971), 14-22 (*passim*). In this work Marx had analyzed the "Asiatic Mode of Production" (AMP), a subject of special interest for Japanese (and for Chinese) scholars; cf. H. Ota, "Theories on the Asiatic Mode of tProduction (AMP) in Japan, *Antiquitas* 10 (1983), 79-81. On the AMP, cf. M. Sawer, *Marxism and the Question of the AMP* (The Hague 1977); S.P. Dunn, *The Fall and Rise of the AMP* (London 1982).

5   R. Günther, "Der Beschluß des ZK der SED 'Die Verbesserung der Forschung und Lehre in der Geschichtswissenschaft der DDR' und das Studium der Alten Geschichte", *ZfG* 3 (1955), 905; G. Bokisch, "Die Popularisierung der sowjetischen Altertumswissenschaft durch ... die AdW zu Berlin", *Oktoberrevolution und Wissenschaft*, Das Präsidium der AdW, edd. (Berlin 1967), 157-169; H. Bulter, "Zur Entstehung und Entwicklung der wissenschaftlichen Kooperation zwischen der DAW zu Berlin und der UdSSR", *ibid.*, 57-68.

6   M. Doi (above, n. 2), 14: "Serious research on Western ancient [scil., Graeco-Roman] history ... was still very weak." Japanese marxist historiography has generally been ignored by western scholars. It is not even mentioned in such works as L.I. Fedeli, *Marx e il Mondo Antico* (Milano 1973); W. Backhaus, *Marx, Engels und die Sklaverei* (Düsseldorf 1974); *Marxism and the Classics*, ed. J.P. Sullivan (Buffalo, NY 1975) (= *Arethusa* 8.1, 1975); *Analisi Marxista e Società Antiche*, edd. L. Capograssi et al. (Roma 1978); *Marxismo, Mondo Antico e Terzo Mondo*, ed. E. Flores (Napoli 1979); *Marxism and Historical Writing*, ed. P.Q. Hirst (London 1985).

7   M.I. Finley (above, n. 2); the importance of this book is attested by its having received more than twenty reviews, recently by K. Christ, *Neue Profile der Alten Geschichte* (Darmstadt 1990), 324-329.

8   H. Wallon, *Histoire de L'Esclavage dans L'Antiquité* (Paris 1847, 2nd ed. 1879); J.K. Ingram, *A History of Slavery and Serfdom* (London 1895); E. Ciccotti, *Il Tramonto della Schiavitù nel Mondo Antico* (Torino 1899); W.L. Westermann, *s.v.* "Sklaverei", in: *RE Suppl.-Bd. VI, 1935*, 894-1068; *id.*, *The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia 1955).

Graeco-Roman antiquity had been a slave-owning society.[9] As Hidemichi Ota expressed it: "Basically, the history of Classical Antiquity was a process of the birth, the growth and the fall of slavery".[10] For the problem of "the fall of slavery", i.e. of the transition from antiquity to the Middle Ages, Hisashi Uono used an article by the Soviet historian M. Alpatov[11] as his starting point. Alpatov had taken two of Stalin's dicta on the subject[12] and had come to the conclusion that "the movement of the Bagaudae had been an integral part of the subsequent victorious stage of the Revolution of the Slaves" (p. 18). This revolution, according to Alpatov (pp. 20-23), made possible the rise of a new, more progressive social system, feudalism. It is worth noting that some Japanese scholars rightly objected that slavery as such persisted into the Middle Ages.[13] Thus, the problem of what constitutes a "slave-owning society" — as opposed to a society in which there existed slavery as a legal or economic status — and of the relative importance of slave-revolts in and for society, became the subject of at times heated discussion. In so far as they constitute a rehash of the ideas and controversies of western scholars, for example of G. Salvioli versus M. Weber, it does not seem worthwhile to discuss them.[14] But, as Toru Yuge noted at the beginning of an important article, in some cases Japanese scholars have formulated questions and developed answers that are different from those of their European colleagues.[15]

Toru Yuge, who apparently studied problems of slavery in the state and of slavery as a mode of production since the middle of the 1950s, reached the conclusion that the two should be sharply differentiated. According to him "die Sklavenformation" perished no later than 212 AD, with the dissolution of the Roman civic community ("Bürgergemeinde"), while slavery as a work-relationship ("Arbeitsverhältnis") continued to exist.[16] Consequently, the transition from antiquity to the Middle Ages should not be classified as a "revolution" in the Soviet marxist sense of the term.

In an article first published in 1978 Yuge put forward an original idea on Roman imperialism and its impact on the formation of what he defined as one single "Mediterranean world". According to him, the areas around the Mediterranean consti-

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9   M. Doi (above, n. 2), 8f.

10   Hidemichi Ota, "Classical Antiquity" in: *The Achievements and Tasks of Historical Science*, Iwanami Shoten, 1; now in: *The Slaves and the Dependent Peasants. Collected Articles* (Tokyo 1979) (in Japanese).

11   M. Alpatov, "Eine neue Etappe in der Bearbeitung des Problems: Der Übergang vom Altertum zum Mittelalter", *Geschichte in der Schule* 3, Heft 7 (1950), 11-24 (= *Voprosy Istorii* 7 [1947], 28-39).

12   J. Stalin, *Voprosy Leninizma* (Moskva 1947), 412, 432; for this. cf. W.Z. Rubinsohn, *Spartacus' Uprising and Soviet Historical Writing* (Oxford 1987), 6f.

13   Hisashi Uono, "A New Stage in the Study of the Problem of the Transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages", *Regishigaku Kenkyu* 147 (1950) (in Japanese). On the persistence of slavery in the Middle Ages, cf. P. Dockés, *Medieval Slavery and Liberation* (London 1982).

14   M. Doi, "Post-War Japan's Studies on Slavery in Classical Antiquity", *DHA* 14 (1988), 39-46. Doi here attaches undue importance to Soviet marxist views, undoubtedly because of his own post-war proclivities; cf. *id.*, *Methods for Viewing World History from the Perspective of the Ruled* (Tokyo 1985), 3-8. In 1950, after the outbreak of the Korean war, Doi lost his position when he was accused of being "a communist and a sympathizer with communism".

15   Toru Yuge, "Die Mittelmeerwelt und das römische Reich: ein Interpretationsversuch", *History and Culture* 13 (1980), 1.

16   M. Doi (above, n. 2), 46f. nn. 40-41 for Yuge's earlier works.

tuted a "world" in that in all of them "citizen-communities" evolved, which at any given chronological point had reached different stages of development.

> Rome, the most developed citizen-community, is to be regarded as the governing class of the Mediterranean world. As governed classes one must see on the one hand a great many other communities (*civitates peregrinae*), which were dominated politically by Rome, and, on the other hand, a great many peoples (slaves) who had been robbed of their own communities by Rome.[17]

Though legally the slaves of course were a separate class, historically both slaves and *peregrinae* belonged to a single class of those exploited by Rome.

> Ich glaube nun, daß wir ein Bild der Mittelmeerwelt, das sowohl Zentren als auch Peripherie berücksichtigt, nur dann zeichnen können, wenn wir die "Entwicklung der Gemeinde" in Betracht ziehen. ... Eine erste Eigenartigkeit der Mittelmeergemeinden ist die große Schnelligkeit ihrer "Entwicklung" oder ihrer "Zersetzung". Die zweite Eigenart ... ist ihre Regenerationsfähigkeit. ... Die Mittelmeerwelt war also eine Welt wo zahlreiche "Bürgergemeinden" verschiedener Entwicklungsstufen nebeneinander standen. ... Die antike Form der Gemeinde (Polis) und ihr Wirkungsbereich bildeten also gleichsam ein Magnetfeld mit der Polis [Rom] im Mittelpunkt, oder ... durch die Anziehungskraft des Zentrums auf die Gemeinden formte sich sozusagen ein kleiner Wirbel. Die Mittelmeerwelt war also eine Welt mit zahlreichen solchen Wirbeln, Peripherien im Sog eines Zentrums.[18]

Yuge's approach has the advantage of re-integrating slaves, slavery and slave-revolts into the history of Rome, from which they had been segregated in separate chapters or sections by most western historians. Thus, Rome became

> ... zur herrschenden Gemeinde nicht nur über Sklaven, sondern in noch stärkerem Maße über zahlreiche andere Gemeinden (*civitates peregrinae*). ... Italien, der Mittelpunkt des großen Wirbels und das Mutterland der herrschenden Bürgergemeinde, war das Zentrum der bedeutendsten Sklavenhaltergesellschaft ... .[19]

But, as already noted by Polybius (1.4.11), "it is only from the interconnection of all events one with another and from their comparison", that a composite picture can be achieved.[20] If, e.g., we separate the Gracchi from the Servile war in Sicily, from the Numantine war in Spain, and from the war of Aristonicus in Asia Minor, our understanding of each of these separately must necessarily be incomplete. For Yuge the Late Roman Republic and especially the Roman empire was "a typical slave-owning state" ("ein typischer Sklavenhalterstaat"), that was based on two "pipes" ("zwei Röhren"). The two pipes were used to exploit two disparate sections of subjected populations: the *peregrini* and the slaves. Over-exploitation by Rome caused both the slave-revolts in Sicily and in Italy and the local wars against Roman occupation in Spain, Asia Minor and in other parts of the Mediterranean world.[21] Yuge considers both to have been two forms of the class-war in antiquity, both pursuing a common aim: the re-establishment of their civic communities.

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[17]   T. Yuge, "The Mediterranean World and the Roman Empire", *Shiqaku-Zasshi* (*Journal of the Historical Society of Japan*) 87(6) (1978), 44 (in Japanese, with English Summary). Yuge acknowledges his debt to H. Levy-Brühl, "Théorie de l'esclavage", in: *Slavery in Classical Antiquity. Views and Controversies* (Cambridge 1960), 151-169 (first published in 1931).

[18]   T. Yuge (above, n. 15), 4-6.

[19]   T. Yuge (above, n. 15), 9.

[20]   Cf. F.W. Walbank, "Symplokē: its Role in Polybius' Histories", *Selected Papers. Studies in Greek and Roman History and Historiography*, ed. M.I. Finley (Cambridge 1985), 313-324.

[21]   T. Yuge, "Sklavenaufstand als Klassenkampf im römischen Reich", in: *Spartacus. Symposium Rebus Spartacis Gestis dedicatum 2050 A. Chr.*, edd. M. Danov & A. Fol, (Sofia 1981), 28-30.

Aufstand der Sklaven und Aufstand der Peregrinen können so als zwei verschiedene Formen des Klassenkampfes im römischen Reich interpretiert werden. ... Der charakteristische Zug des Klassenkampfes im römischen Reich ist der Kampf um die Wiederherstellung der eigenen Gemeinde.[22]

Such an interpretation of the slave-revolts, though cloaked in marxist terminology, is anything but marxist. The definition of Rome as a class is untenable, postulating the possibility of a retrograde development of the social order, a conservative rather than a revolutionary movement.[23] Thus also when Yuge wrote that the Mediterranean world had been "a world in which numerous civic communities at different stages of their development existed side by side: the fully developed polis and communities at a low level of development",[24] he implicitly denied that there had existed the ubiquitous stage, "slave-owning society", at any given time. Yuge accepted the definition by M. Weber and M. Rostovtzeff of the social formation of the Late Roman Empire as a "Leiturgie Staat", rather than the marxist definition of the phase of transition from slave-owning to feudal society. Yuge's position between Marx and Weber is best defined by his own statement in the "Introduction" to the Japanese translation (see n. 2) of M. Weber's *Agrarian Sociology*: "For historians who have sailed out into the ocean of historical events, Marx and Weber play the role of a mariner's compass at least in ancient history".

Masaoki Doi rejected Yuge's thesis of the "Leiturgie Staat" and the dissolution of classical slave-owning society in 212 AD,[25] but accepted his integration of the slave revolts into the more general symptoms concomitant with Roman imperialism.[26] In order to define and understand the characteristic features of ancient history Doi drew on contemporary events, and *vice versa*.[27] He used the Chinese "Long March", Castro's Cuban revolution, the People's Liberation Movements of the Third World and the Vietnam war to understand the resistance movements against Rome, both at home and in the provinces.

The descendants of the Germans and Britons who resisted the aggression of Rome, together with the descendants of the slaves and Italians who groaned under the yoke of Roman control, have established the anti-nuclear movement. Moreover, the descendants of Sicilian slaves, who resisted the Roman army with lead balls ... are now protesting the stationing of nuclear missiles by the U.S.A. at Comiso base in Sicily.[28]

Historical analogies tend to be fallacious, especially if they are used in the case of different socio-economic systems and different political situations. Yet, the temptation to use them is understandable in view of the paucity of the extant sources. Doi attempted to

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22   T. Yuge (above, n. 15), 9. According to Yuge the slaves in Sicily strove to establish their own state (civic community), while Spartacus strove to lead the slaves back to their own countries of origin in order to attempt a re-establishment of their own civic communities.

23   Cf. W.Z. Rubinsohn (above, n. 12), 4f.; G. Crane, "The Fear and Pursuit of Risk", *TAPA* 122 (1992), 232f. For an ideologically correct statement of the marxist view see, e.g., P. Oliva, "Die Bedeutung der antiken Sklaverei", *AAH* 8 (1960), 309-319; id., "Die charakteristischen Züge der Sklavenaufstände zur Zeit der römischen Republik", in: *Neue Beiträge zur Geschichte der Alten Welt* II, ed. E. Ch. Welskopf (Berlin 1965), 75-88.

24   T. Yuge (above, n. 15), 5; cp. 8: "Die Hauptklassen im römischen Reich waren also auf der einen Seite die römische Bürgergemeinde und auf der anderen Seite die Sklaven und Peregrinen".

25   T. Yuge, "The Last Stage of Antiquity and Slavery", *Regishigaku Kenkyu* 240 (1960) (in Japanese).

26   M. Doi (above, n. 2), 23-25, 38f.

27   M. Doi (above, n. 2), 27; id., *The Spartacus Uprising and the Viet Nam War* (Tokyo 1981), 1: "It was Che Guevara who made me aware that there was some relationship between Spartacus' Uprising ... and the Viet Nam War".

28   M. Doi (above, n. 14), 15.

view the events from a new perspective and looked for questions that had not been asked — according to him — by earlier scholars.[29] He assimilated the methodology used by H. Delbrück for military history at the beginning of this century. Delbrück's *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* had been translated into Russian and published by "Voenizdat" (the official publishing house of the Soviet military) in 1936-1939.[30] I do not know whether Doi drew on Delbrück directly or found the method in his Vietnamese and Cuban mentors.

In his study on the "bellum Spartacium" and the Vietnam war Doi asked why the first had ended in failure, while the latter (in his view) has succeeded.[31]

> Though these two wars occurred during different periods and in different social systems, they have something in common, for both can be regarded as "just wars". ... [Both were] fought by "people's armies", ... they had troop morale, a fighting spirit and an urge to change their [respective] destinies.[32]

The failure of Spartacus was due to Rome's success in preventing the formation of a common front of all her enemies: the slaves of Italy, the pirates, Sertorius, Mithridates VI Eupator, and the Thracian tribes, and because of the lack of "international support" for the movements, whatever may have been meant by this in antiquity.[33] The failure to unite all of Rome's enemies was due to the differences in their social standing, their divergent social systems. While Doi may be right in part, this can hardly be considered the whole answer, for, among other things, he starts from the mistaken premise that all these anti-Roman movements had a common goal. While he rightly rejected the rather widely accepted opinion that the "bellum Aristonicum" had been a slave-revolt,[34] few would agree with his thesis that it had been "a people's struggle by Asian people to protect the sovereignty of Pergamon from Roman agression".[35]

Doi's next argument is based on a faulty chronology.

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29   M. Doi (above, n. 14), 9-11, citing his colleague S. Ishimoda ("On the Object of Political History", *Shiso* 395 [1956], 182f.): "Only when we admit the contradictions of the present time and attempt to study them, can we aquire the knowledge necessary for a better understanding of the political history of the past"; and cf. M. Doi, *Why did Spartacus Stay in Italia* (Tokyo 1978), Ch. 1, "The Problem and the Method of its Solution", 1-6. By comparing the march of Spartacus to Mutina and back to Lucania with the "Long March" of the Chinese communists in 1926/7 under Mao Tse-Dung from Kiangsi to Shansi, Doi attempted to understand the influence exerted by such a march on the consciousness of the oppressed masses, and the organizational difficulties of the logistics of a large insurgent force moving through territory under the control of the enemy. In the long run, it was to be considered "a propaganda force", that "even influenced the Asian and African racial liberation movement" in the 1950's. For a recent different methodological approach, cf. K.B. Bradley, *Slavery and Rebellion in the Roman World* (London 1989), who attempted to improve his understanding of the subject by devoting his first chapter (pp. 1-17) to "Slave Resistance in the New World".

30   On H. Delbrück and the rejection of his method by Theodor Mommsen, among practically all of his colleagues, cf. A. Hillgruber, "Hans Delbrück", in: *Deutsche Historiker*, IV, ed. H.-U. Wehler (Göttingen 1972), 40-52 (esp. 47); A. Bucholz, *Hans Delbrück and the German Military Establishment: War Images in Conflict* (Iowa 1985).

31   M. Doi (above, n. 27), 5, 12.

32   M. Doi (above, n. 27), 3.

33   M. Doi (above, n. 27), 8, 11f.

34   For the positivist view, cf. e.g., J. Vogt, "Zur Struktur der antiken Sklavenkriege", in: *id.*, *Sklaverei und Humanität* (Wiesbaden 1965), 20ff.; *id.*, "Pergamon und Aristonikos", *ibid.* 61-68. For the marxist view, cf. e.g., V. Vavrinek, "On the Structure of Slave Revolts. The Revolt of Aristonicus", in: *Soziale Probleme im Hellenismus und im Römischen Reich*, edd. P. Oliva & J. Burian, (Prague 1973), 201-12.

35   M. Doi (above, n. 2), 31.

Even though Spartacus' army was defeated, it sparked a wave of anti-Roman wars in nations which were being held at that time under the control of the Roman Empire. These wars were really wars connected to the Spartacus war. Sertorius ... started a rebellion in Spain and this was followed by a revolt led by Mithridates in the East. ... In Thracia, Spartacus' fatherland, many tribes put up resistance against the invading Roman army. It seems that Spartacus had known about the movement in Thracia, and so had a desire to liberate himself and his fellow slaves and to go back to his own country.[36]

Apparently, the correct chronology was pointed out to him, for Doi's later formulation is less problematical.

The First Sicilian Slave War became the premise that caused Aristonikos' Uprising for the duration of the anti-Roman struggle at Numantia in Spain, leading to slave uprisings in Attica and Delos, etc.; Spartacus' Uprising broke out in the midst of Sertorius' Uprising in Spain, Mithridates' War in Asia Minor and anti-Roman struggles in Thracia.[37]

Doi did not change his mind on the aims of Spartacus. For him it remained not a war to achieve the personal freedom of the participants, but a direct confrontation with the Roman state.[38] It forced the Senate to abandon its support of the Sullan reorganization and to agree to a military regime which after passing through the stages of civil wars and triumvirates led to the foundation of the Principate, as the only means to control "the slaves and the provincial peoples".[39] Doi's presentation is reminiscent of pre-World War II Japanese history. His personal quest for democracy may have misled him to attribute similar aims to the slaves of antiquity.

It seems to me that Yuge's theory merits further study.[40] So do the studies on slavery and society by Hidemichi Ota.[41] But perhaps most worth heeding is the appeal to positivist and marxist historians to try to come to some sort of understanding.[42]

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[36]   M. Doi (above, n. 27), 7f.

[37]   M. Doi (above, n. 14), 12; cf. *id.*, "Spartacus' Uprising and Thracia", *Bulletin of the Ancient Orient Museum* (Tokyo) I (1979), 13-26: "What is more, the last gasp of the Thracian anti-Roman struggle had a subtle influence on Spartacus' defeat. This is because the defeat of the Thracian anti-Roman resistance dealt a fatal blow to Spartacus, who was hoping to return to his homeland and to his plan to liberate the slaves".

[38]   M. Doi, "Spartacus' Uprising as Italian Slave War", *Teachers' Materials on the New World History* (Tokyo 1989), 10f. For a more detailed Soviet marxist critique of Doi's views, cf. V.V. Khaldeev, "Problemy Vosstaniya Spartaka v Rabotakh Masaoki Doi", *Vestnik Dreunej Istorii* 166(4) (1984), 171-177.

[39]   M. Doi, "Between Spartacus' Uprising and the Transition from Republic to Empire", *Senshu Jinbunkagaku Kenkyu Nempo* 19 (1989), 18-20.

[40]   M. Doi (above, n. 14), 58-60.

[41]   H. Ota, "Slavery and Slave-Society", *Antiquitas* 10 (1983), 83-95.

[42]   M. Doi (above, n. 2), 25-27.