Enslaved Scholars:

The Arabic Writings of Muslim Scholars Enslaved in the Americas

Edited by Mbaye Lo and Carl W. Ernst

The Writings of Omar ibn Said

Editorial Procedures

The documents presented here have been prepared in a multi-stage process designed to produce maximum clarity and intelligibility. First, transcriptions of the Arabic text are created in the form of a diplomatic edition, that is, an exact copy of what has been written in the document, preserving local variants in Arabic script (Ajami), divergences that are normally regarded as errors of spelling and grammar, as well as changes to standard texts. In the case of Omar ibn Said’s writings, these diplomatic editions have been saved at the website of the Islamicate Texts Initiative at the University of Maryland, URL. A corrected edition has been produced in conjunction with the diplomatic edition, following the norms of Modern Standard Arabic, with the variations seen in the diplomatic edition listed as footnotes to the corrected edition.

The Enslaved Scholars digital repository reproduces the corrected edition of the Arabic text from the ITI website, accompanied by notes on the location, provenance, and special features of each manuscript, links to digital images of the manuscripts, and an English translation, taken from our book *I Cannot Write My Life: Islam, Arabic, and Slavery in Omar ibn Said’s America* (University of North Carolina Press, 2023). Readers interested in a full discussion of these writings are referred to that book for further analysis.

Passages from the Qur’an are displayed with verse numbers in parentheses at the end of each verse, while verses in the Arabic Bible (in the translation of Joseph Dacre Carlyle published in 1811 in Newcastle-upon-Tyne) are numbered at the beginning of each verse, as is customary. Minimal vocalization has been added to the text of the Arabic Bible. Passages from both scriptures are cited in parentheses in the Arabic and English versions, while references to other Arabic writings are provided in the footnotes to the translation. Transliteration of Arabic words follows the system of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*.

Texts are organized into separate sections for each quotation or comment by Omar, following the same organization in both the Arabic text and the English translation. Sections are marked by upper case Roman letters (A, B, C), and in the case of longer sections with clusters of texts, numerals are added for subsections. Titles have been added to sections of the translation in square brackets to clarify the structure of the documents.