

**Olga Todorova**

**THE UNTOLD HISTORY OF SLAVERY: ON THE PREREQUISITES  
FOR A PUBLIC “WAR OF THE TERMS”**

(Summary)

The article argues that speculation with the metaphorical use of the term “slavery”, which in recent years took over the Bulgarian public debate on the Ottoman past, is due not only to political and ideological reasons but also to the fact that the Bulgarian historical science does not pay enough attention to the study of the institution of slavery in the Ottoman empire. Very little, in particular, has been done for the research on domestic slavery, which was the most mass form of slavery in the Empire, including its Bulgarian provinces.

Several themes are discussed in the text, the illumination of which undermines the popular myth of the total Bulgarian “slavery” during the Ottoman era: 1/ about the ethnic composition of slaves, its dynamics over the centuries and the exceptionally modest place of the Bulgarians among the slaves after the middle of the 15th century; 2/ about the significant difference between the status of slaves in the Ottoman Empire – on the one hand, and its non-Muslim subjects – on the other hand and 3/ about the presence not only of the non-Muslim but also of the Muslim slavery in the Bulgarian lands during the Ottoman centuries, as well as about slavery as an integral part of the history not only of the Ottoman Empire, but also of all southern Christian Europe until the beginning of the 19th century.