

THE STRUCTURE OF SLAVERY IN INDIAN AFRICA AND ASIA



EDITOR
GWYN CAMPBELL

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The Structure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia

Editor

GWYN CAMPBELL



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Contents

Introduction: Slavery and Other Forms of Unfree Labour in the Indian Ocean World Gwyn Campbell	vii
Slavery: A Question of Definition Suzanne Miers	1
A Forgotten Corner of the Indian Ocean: Gujarati Merchants, Portuguese India and the Mozambique Slave-Trade, <i>c.</i> 1730–1830 Pedro Machado	16
The Mascarene Slave-Trade and Labour Migration in the Indian Ocean during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries Richard B. Allen	34
Flight to Freedom: Escape from Slavery among Bonded Africans in the Indian Ocean World, <i>c.</i> 1750–1962 Edward A. Alpers	52
Violent Capture of People for Exchange on Karen-Tai Borders in the 1830s Andrew Turton	70
Human Capital, Slavery and Low Rates of Economic and Population Growth in Indonesia, 1600–1910 Peter Boomgaard	83
Forced Labour Mobilization in Java during the Second World War Shigeru Sato	96
The Structure of Slavery in the Sulu Zone in the Late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries James Francis Warren	110
Slavery and Colonial Representations in Indochina from the Second Half of the Nineteenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries Karine Delaye	128

Slaves and Forms of Slavery in Late Imperial China (Seventeenth to Early Twentieth Centuries) Angela Schottenhammer	142
<i>Nobi</i> : A Korean System of Slavery Bok Rae Kim	153
A Theme in Variations: A Historical Schema of Slaving in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean Regions Joseph Miller	166
Maps	190
Notes on Contributors	192
Index	196

Introduction: Slavery and other forms of Unfree Labour in the Indian Ocean World¹

GWYN CAMPBELL

Introduction

This volume is the first of two containing an unparalleled number of specialist studies of slavery and abolition across the Indian Ocean World. As such, they represent an important advance in slavery studies—a field which, except for a handful of pioneering works,² is still largely dominated by the history of the Atlantic slave world. However, as these papers demonstrate, the essential features of the slave-trade and of slavery in the Indian Ocean world contrast sharply with those of the transatlantic slave-trade and plantation slavery in the Americas. This volume examines the meaning of slavery in the Indian Ocean region up to the period of European economic and political predominance in the nineteenth century, while the second volume focuses on the origin and impact and abolitionist impulses in the context of the rise of the international economy and of European colonialism.

The Indian Ocean World

For those who place Europe at the centre of the development of ‘world’ systems of trade and production, the term ‘Indian Ocean world’ is probably either new or associated with Asian cultures which in many conventional Eurocentric histories are portrayed as possessing insuperable social and political obstacles to modernization. From this perspective, economic development, where it occurred in the Asian region, was a result of external, specifically European, forces. However, some scholars have recently argued that Asia, not Europe, forged the first ‘global’ economy, and did so at a considerably earlier date than previously thought.

Adapting Ferdinand Braudel’s concept of a Mediterranean ‘maritime’ economy, K.N. Chaudhuri, and later André Wink, argued that an Asia-Indian Ocean ‘global’ economy emerged alongside Islam from the seventh century, and that Europeans achieved global dominance only in the eighteenth century. Others date the start of the Asia-Indian Ocean global economy to between the tenth and thirteenth centuries. Andre Gunder Frank considers that it may well have arisen

much earlier, and that European dominance was achieved only in the nineteenth century with industrialization and the emergence of a truly international economy.³ Although these revisionists have largely omitted Africa from their analysis, contributors to these volumes demonstrate that eastern and north-eastern Africa, which possessed linkages to the Middle East, South and South-East Asia, and the Far East, formed an integral part of the Asia-Indian Ocean economy.⁴ Therefore, the entire area from the Cape to Cairo to Calcutta to Canton and beyond forms what is here termed the Indian Ocean world (hereafter 'IOW').

Slavery: Conventional Definitions

In the Western tradition, slavery is contrasted with freedom: whereas a 'free' individual enjoyed basic rights of citizenship, choice of occupation and lifestyle, and security of person and property, the slave was a chattel with hereditary status. The slave owner, who legally could punish, sell or transfer a slave, and separate a slave mother from her children or male companion, controlled the slave's productive and reproductive capacities. Slaves thus formed a separate economic group, a 'chattel' class that possessed no communalities of interests with the 'free' working class. Some posit that where slave labour predominated, as on slave plantations, the economy was characterized by a 'slave mode of production'.⁵

Further defining features of plantation slavery in the Americas were violence, employed to enslave and to force the slave to work, and 'outsider' status, as slaves were overwhelmingly of foreign origin. They were also physiognomically distinct. In the Americas, where colour was a feature of the slave-free divide, 'race' has become a central issue in the historiography of slavery. In addition, slave owners characterized slaves as products of uncivilized communities.⁶

Slavery in the IOW Context

Views of plantation slavery in the Americas have largely formed the context for research into slavery in the 'non-European' world. Attention focussed first on western Africa, source of the bulk of the 10 million to 12 million slaves shipped to the Americas between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. Subsequently it expanded to include other African slave sources, African slave exports to the Middle East and European islands in the Indian Ocean, and intra-African slave-trades and systems of slavery. Separate projects have investigated Asian slave systems.⁷

The picture that has emerged from this research is one of complex trans-IOW slave-trades that, unlike the transatlantic system, started well before the Common Era, remained vigorous into the twentieth century, and in some areas are still maintained. Some scholars consider that the slave-trade was greatly stimulated by the rise of Islam, although more important was the demand for menial labour that accompanied the concomitant growth in the IOW global economy—as

occurred again with the rapid expansion of the international economy in the nineteenth century.⁸

The IOW slave-trade was multidirectional and changed over time. East African slaves were exported in cumulatively large numbers over the centuries to other regions of Africa, such as Ethiopia and Egypt, Arabia, the Persian Gulf, India, and to a lesser degree to the Far East. From the mid-eighteenth century, export markets in Africa expanded and considerable numbers of East Africans were shipped to Zanzibar, Pemba, Somalia, Madagascar, the Mascarenes, and some to Cape Town. They were also exported to Portuguese enclaves in India and the Americas. Malagasy slaves were sent in small quantities to Muslim markets, and to European settlements in the Americas, the Cape and Batavia and from the mid-eighteenth century in considerable numbers to Reunion and Mauritius. Indian slaves were shipped to Indonesia, Mauritius, Cape Town and the Middle East. However, most slaves to the Middle East initially originated from the Caucasus, Eastern Europe and Africa. These were joined in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by slaves from the Makran coast of Iran, some from Western India and a few from Indonesia and China.⁹ Indonesians were despatched mainly to markets across South-East Asia and to Cape Town, while Indochinese and Korean slaves were exported to China, and, in the nineteenth century, Chinese slaves were sent to Singapore and San Francisco. In all of these trades, sources, markets, routes, and slave functions varied considerably.¹⁰

It is currently impossible to estimate with any precision the number of slaves traded in the IOW given the duration of the slave-trade there, the limited nature of extant records, and the fact that, in contrast to the Atlantic system, IOW slaves rarely constituted a specialist cargo. However, slaves certainly comprised between 20 and 30 per cent of the population of many IOW societies, rising to 50 per cent and over in parts of Africa and in Indonesian ports.¹¹ The slave-trade in the IOW involved overland and maritime routes. It started at least 4000 years ago, experienced a number of periods of growth, as in the last centuries BCE and first centuries CE, and during the eras of commercial expansion that accompanied the expansion of Islam in the late first millennium and the international economy in the nineteenth century.¹²

In the nineteenth century, as the IOW slave-trade peaked, it came under increasing international scrutiny, which induced slavers to adopt indirect routes and pass slaves off as non-slave porters, sailors, domestics, and even as children or other kin.¹³ Unlike the transatlantic slaving system, which was dominated by European finance, ships and personnel, indigenous agents, coastal Chinese, Bugis and ‘Malays’ in the eastern sector, and coastal Arabs and Indians, notably Gujeratis, in the western sector, largely funded and ran the multiple IOW maritime slave-trades.¹⁴ Moreover, it is possible that the greatest IOW slave traffic was overland, notably within Africa, Hindu India and the Confucian Far East.¹⁵

Overall, it is clear that the structure of slaving and slavery in the IOW differed considerably from that of the Atlantic world. The contrast becomes even starker when the validity of conventional characteristics of Atlantic world slavery is tested in the IOW historical context.

Chattel

On the Atlantic world plantations, a slave was defined in terms of the market as a chattel. Some scholars argue that a slave in the IOW similarly constituted a ‘person-as-property’, who could be freely bought, sold and transferred.¹⁶ It is in the IOW that the world’s first known legal documents referring to the sale of slaves have been discovered—the *Ur-Nammu* tablets (c.2300 BCE) of Mesopotamia, in present-day Iraq.¹⁷ A lively traffic in ‘people-as-property’ has persisted ever since in the IOW where an individual or group could ‘own’ slaves; corporate slave property appears to have been widespread in ancient India and remained common in Africa into the nineteenth century.¹⁸

Nevertheless, there is no consensus as to the meaning of slavery in the IOW. Critical here is the issue of language. For instance, in nineteenth-century Somalia different terms employed to denote slaves included *Jareer*, *Bantu*, *Mjikenda*, *Adoon*, *Habash*, *Bidde*, *Sankadhuudhe*, *Boon*, *Meddo*, and *Oogi*.¹⁹ Each of these terms, as with similar ranges of terms in other cultures, had different meanings, depending on context. Moreover, the meanings could change over time. Certainly in most IOW societies there was little correspondence with the conventional image from the Americas of chattel slaves overwhelmingly assigned to field and mining labour. An exception was the Mascarene islands (Mauritius and Reunion) in the western Indian Ocean. These possessed no indigenous population at the time of European settlement and formed a European-dominated enclave characterized by Caribbean-style sugar plantation economy and chattel slavery.²⁰ On indigenous cash-crop plantations, such as those established in the nineteenth century by Omani Arabs on the Swahili coast of East Africa (cloves, sesame, copra and grain) and, on a more limited scale, by the Merina on the eastern littoral of Madagascar (sugar), chattel slaves existed alongside other forms of unfree labour.²¹ However, the slave plantation sector was limited and over most of the IOW an exact correspondence with chattel slavery rarely existed.

First, unlike the Atlantic slave-trade in which predominantly male Africans were shipped to plantations to serve as field hands, the majority of slaves traded in the IOW were female, notably girls and young women, valued particularly for their sexual attractiveness and reproductive capacity:²² young female slaves generally commanded higher prices than male and older female slaves. The exceptions were eunuchs (‘males made female’), who were universally highly prized, and boys in China; there, patriarchal ideology restricted the supply of boy slaves whose price was often four to five times that of a girl slave.²³

Second, most IOW slaves were employed in tasks the range and responsibilities of which were far wider than those encompassed by the model of slavery in the Americas. Hence, slave working and living conditions varied enormously. From early times female slaves worked as concubines, entertainers, prostitutes and domestic servants. They also laboured as water carriers, and in agriculture, textile production and mining.²⁴ Male slaves were employed in a wide range of activities, from agricultural labour, to craftwork, commerce, transport, fishing, domestic service, stewardship, bureaucratic service, soldiering and diplomacy. Some slaves depended for sustenance on their owners, while others were given land for subsistence cultivation. Yet others were rented out or left free to seek livelihoods: although generally remitting from 50 to 75 per cent of their earnings to their owner, they were often able to accumulate funds.²⁵ Slaves of the rich and powerful sometimes held important positions as household stewards, traders and officials that could bring them considerable wealth and prestige. Even non-elite slaves, such as porters in Imperial Madagascar, could sometimes earn an income that made them the envy of ordinary non-slaves.²⁶

Indeed non-slave commoners were frequently described as poorer and less content than domestic slaves, despite the inferior legal status of the latter. In wet-rice economies, owners were often expected to provide their male slaves with a bride whereas peasants were frequently incapable of raising a bride price, or to do so became indebted.²⁷ In Sulu, a slave who received inadequate food and clothing, or was accorded insufficient opportunity to earn a living, could demand a change of ownership.²⁸ The particularly good treatment of skilled slaves contrasts sharply with the position in some regions of non-slave artisans subject to state-imposed forced labour.²⁹

Third, non-slave servile labour in the IOW was also sold or transferred involuntarily. This included ‘serfs’ (Asia and Africa), ‘pawns’ (Africa) and ‘mui tsai’ girl servants (China).³⁰ Some were transferred as tribute, or ransom. In open and private markets, people sold family members into temporary and permanent slavery. Some individuals offered themselves for sale as unfree labour.³¹ In Africa, in times of famine, a kinship group might transfer its rights in a kinship member to another lineage in return for goods or money, children and young adults being the most marketable. If not redeemed, these transferred ‘pawns’ were retained by the creditor lineage.³² In China, the tendency in bad times was to sell daughters or secondary wives, though non-elite households were sometimes reduced to breaking the general taboo against selling sons.³³ Throughout the IOW parents also let their children out for adoption in exchange for money. Again, people subject to debt bondage could sometimes be exchanged, as could unfree labour as part of a marriage dowry, or a monastery donation.³⁴

In addition, slaves were not always traded as a commodity. For instance, there was no market for the Bolata of Bechuanaland (Botswana), who were considered property and sub-human and could be inherited or transferred as gifts.³⁵ In Tamil- and Telegu-speaking regions of South India, slaves were permanently

attached to the land on which they lived, and a transfer of slave ownership occurred only when that land changed hands. In such cases, no geographical movement of slaves occurred.³⁶

Finally, slaves in the IOW enjoyed an array of traditional and prescribed rights and protection unknown on the American plantations. In the parts of the IOW, outside the Mascarenes, where European law was applied, treatment of slaves was tempered by local economic and political forces.³⁷ Even in Korea and China, where the most extreme systems of hereditary slavery were practised, slaves possessed a legal status and rights: they were immune from state corvées, could be punished but not killed by their owners, their marriages were in general respected. Such rights, it could be argued, meant that they were not true outsiders as they had entered into the dominant society's system of reciprocity.³⁸

Violence

In the conventional historiography, violence is considered an elemental characteristic of enslavement and slavery.³⁹ Virtually absent from politically acephalous and technologically primitive forager communities, slavery became increasingly important the more economically developed and politically centralized a society became.⁴⁰ Geographical expansion, intrinsic to state formation, entailed the conquest and subjugation of weaker neighbours. This was, for instance, the reputed origin of slavery in Mesopotamia and India in the third and first millennia BCE respectively.⁴¹

Most adult males captured in campaigns of military expansion were killed, while younger women and children were enslaved, a practice largely motivated by the expense of surveilling men who were more likely to flee or rebel than women or children.⁴² While the killing of male captives continued in some regions into the nineteenth century, their enslavement became more common in areas where advances in agricultural techniques, such as irrigated rice-growing, promoted food production, demographic growth and an expansion in urbanization, crafts and commerce. Such developments altered land-labour ratios and stimulated demand for servile labour in an IOW context characterized by generally low birth and high mortality rates.⁴³ For the more economically developed societies, such factors made viable the enslavement and surveillance of male captives.⁴⁴

Initially a by-product of imperial expansion, the slave-trade proved so lucrative that it often became a goal of military campaigns.⁴⁵ It also encouraged the emergence of middlemen, sometimes members of 'primitive' acephalous communities, or even refugee slaves.⁴⁶ Indeed, slave-trading could be the means by which some middlemen communities transformed themselves into strong centralized states.⁴⁷ In all cases, violence characterized the capture and transfer of slaves, especially of males.

Nevertheless, Western authorities, such as the British in India, who considered that only 'captives' could constitute slaves, ignored the vast majority of slaves,

most of whom probably entered slavery by other, non-violent, means.⁴⁸ As noted, some people were sold into slavery by their families or larger kinship groups. Some opted to enter slavery; for example, certain Filipino girls voluntarily became concubines of high status Sulu males.⁴⁹ Possibly the majority of people entering slavery in the IOW did so through debt. Enslavement was legally enforced for debtors and their relatives in many IOW regions. Also the punishment for certain crimes was exacted in fines, which often led to indebtedness and subsequent enslavement.⁵⁰ Indebtedness was normally expressed in monetary terms, although it was often incurred in non-cash forms such as food or tools. If the debt was paid off, an enslaved debtor could regain non-slave status.

Here, slavery needs to be distinguished from debt bondage with which however, it could overlap. Enslavement for indebtedness was involuntary, whereas most people entered debt bondage voluntarily as a credit-secur ing strategy. Debt bondage embraced a vast range of people in the IOW, from farmers mortgaging future harvests and potential grooms borrowing a bride price, to small traders living off credit from larger merchants, the ubiquitous rural gambler of South-East and East Asia and opium addicts in nineteenth-century China.⁵¹ Those subject to debt bondage could outnumber slaves. For example, they were possibly the most numerous social category in Majapahit, in Java, while in central Thailand in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they formed up to 50 per cent of the total population. The servitude to which those in debt bondage were subject was generally taken as paying off interest on the loan they had contracted, to which was added the cost of lodging, feeding and clothing the debtor. Consequently the debt in most cases increased and servitude could become permanent, even hereditary, at which point there was little to distinguish debt bondage from slavery.⁵²

Conventional literature on slavery also assumes that violence was universally employed in order to extract labour from slaves. In the IOW, violence or the threat of violence could induce slaves to work, but was rarely employed outside European-managed plantations where economies of scale made higher levels of coercion profitable. This is not to deny that in some places, and at certain times, harsh working conditions existed and could provoke revolt, suicide and attempts to curtail reproduction; low birth-rates, characteristic of the Mauritian slave plantations, may have marked even milder slave regimes, as in the Gulf.⁵³ However, slaves represented a capital asset the value of which was worth maintaining or even enhancing. Indeed, maximum slave productivity could only be achieved through acknowledging the essential humanity of slaves.⁵⁴

The lot of female slaves was generally much easier than that of male slaves. Rulers and the wealthy, most of whom were men, surrounded themselves with female slaves who, as secondary wives, concubines, entertainers and domestic servants, enjoyed a lifestyle and, Anthony Reid argues for South-East Asia, a respect, superior to that of female peasants.⁵⁵ There are instances of concubines

in the Middle East sending for family members to join them—albeit as non-slaves.⁵⁶ Female slaves were also less likely to be sold.⁵⁷

Enslavement and surveillance costs were higher for male than for female or child slaves, and males were more likely to revolt or attempt escape. Once a decision had been made to enslave rather than kill male captives, their captors and subsequent owners were inclined to keep them in good health and did not mistreat them, or use excessive punishment, as this could lead to the slave committing suicide, seeking revenge, or fleeing.⁵⁸ Thus most European colonial authorities legislated for relatively mild treatment of slaves. Indeed, the Dutch and English East India Companies reserved for government authorities the meting out of severe punishments to slaves. However, private European masters generally needed little prompting. They were aware that many mistreated slaves would flee, and that some might seek revenge.⁵⁹ Malagasy and Sulu slaves, in particular, had a reputation for rebelliousness and violence.⁶⁰ In the larger Indonesian city ports—a port for functioning also as a city and vice versa—lacking the centralized authorities necessary to ensure the recapture of runaways, owners treated domestic slaves particularly well in order to retain them.⁶¹ For owners, a successful escape meant the loss of the costs of acquisition and maintenance of the slave. Recapture and subsequently heightened surveillance would significantly add to the overall ‘slave’ cost.

In addition, slaves were not alone in being subject to coercion; so were most other forms of labour. Unfree labour was central to all pre-industrial economies in the IOW, notably in centralized polities for which control over the labour force was critical to ensure agricultural surpluses and to generate tax revenue, in money, kind and labour.⁶² Forms of labour control introduced by such states included serfdom—defined as unfree labour bound to the land—that arguably emerged in China and Korea.⁶³

More commonly, IOW states imposed forced labour regimes on non-slave ‘subjects’. For instance, by 1600, demographic expansion in Java was such that Sultan Agung of Mataram rejected slavery in favour of a corvée system. The Dutch who, like the Spanish in the Philippines, found slavery too limited and slaves too expensive to meet their manpower requirements followed his example. Indeed, Peter Boomgaard considers that many Indonesian groups termed ‘slaves’ by the Dutch were in fact non-slaves subject to corvée.⁶⁴ Such schemes, which became characteristic of centralized powers, indigenous and colonial, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, sometimes proved more onerous than slavery. In order to escape forced labour some ‘subjects’ in Thailand voluntarily became slaves or bondsmen of private individuals, while in Imperial Madagascar (c. 1790–1895), non-slaves fled beyond the borders of state authority and slaves rejected opportunities to shed their slave status.⁶⁵

Outsider

The term ‘outsider’ is considered by most students of slavery to be a key characteristic of a slave. Being an ‘outsider’ was sometimes a valued attribute. It was, for example, considered essential by many Muslim courts that slave soldiers and armed retainers, much used in the IOW, be ‘outsiders’ with no local connections. Their value lay in a personal attachment to, and utter dependence upon, their owners. Such slaves were often given positions of considerable trust with power over non-slaves.⁶⁶ However, the use of slave soldiers was sometimes forbidden, as in Imperial Madagascar, for fear of a slave revolt.⁶⁷ Indeed, in Egypt and India, slave armies transformed themselves into ruling powers.⁶⁸

The term ‘outsider’ appears appropriate to a traffic whereby the labour resources of relatively weak egalitarian and decentralized communities were transferred to stronger, hierarchical and centralized societies: in India, Hindu societies forced so-called ‘tribals’ into the *shudra* slave outcaste.⁶⁹ Inhabitants of lowland South-East Asia and Indochina raided ‘barbaric’ mountain groups, and in the Indonesian Archipelago and South China Seas ‘piratical’ peoples such as the Sulu attacked and enslaved members of coastal communities.⁷⁰ Newly enslaved war captives and kidnap victims were generally despatched to distant regions in order to reduce the possibility of escape or of kin finding them. Commonly such slaves were terrified of the fate that awaited them. For example, Malagasy slaves destined for the Mascarene plantations believed that they were going to be eaten by whites.⁷¹

Again, most slaves in the Middle East were necessarily ‘outsiders’. This followed from the stipulation in the *sharia*, or Islamic law, that slaves could not be purchased or acquired as tribute and that the only legitimate targets of enslavement were non-Muslims opposed to Islam—which by the ninth century meant anyone living in non-Muslim lands.⁷² However, Abdul Sheriff questions the appropriateness of attempting to identify a specifically ‘Islamic’ form of slavery. In the Muslim world there emerged different schools of legal interpretation, within which individual scholars could differ significantly on the niceties of Islamic law. Some Islamic legal systems tolerated the covert enslavement of Muslims, and the equally forbidden production of eunuchs.⁷³ Moreover, Islam influenced vast swathes of the IOW. In the merchant cities of South-East Asia the *sharia* helped forge a legal distinction between slave and non-slave unknown in the rural hinterland. More frequently, however, the application of the *sharia* outside the Middle East was tempered by local customs. This allowed Muslims in regions as distant as Somalia, India and Indonesia to argue for the maintenance of pre-Islamic and other local structures of slavery even if these ran counter to the prescriptions of the *sharia*.⁷⁴

Some authors argue that an expansion in demand for slaves promoted a marked differentiation between slaves and non-slaves that ensured a permanent status for slaves as ‘outsiders’. James Watson argues that societies where this

became entrenched in rigid law codes were characterized by ‘closed’ systems of slavery. Slaves there formed a hereditary category, legally excluded from the dominant slave-holding society in which they lived and worked.⁷⁵ They were considered socially ‘dead’, even impure; the dominant society described them in pejorative terms and minimized relations with them. In India, where internally enslaved peoples were almost invariably categorized as ‘untouchables’, outsider status was institutionalized, ensuring for its members a permanent and hereditary ‘outcaste’ status.⁷⁶ Caste slavery of this sort, suggests Suzanne Miers, should be included in the category of ‘collective slavery’.⁷⁷ Moreover, it was not unique to India. For example, in South China, amongst the Nyiuba of Tibet and in Imperial Madagascar, slaves formed an outcaste that, unlike ‘real’ people, did not possess ancestors, were regarded as ‘impure’ and generally treated as ‘polluting pariahs’.⁷⁸ In Madagascar, slaves were termed ‘mainty’ ('black') and ‘maloto’ ('impure') as opposed to the ‘fotsy’ ('white' and 'pure') non-slave.⁷⁹ In both India and Madagascar, ritually impure tasks were conferred on members of the slave caste, with whom much social contact, including sexual relations, was taboo for non-slaves.⁸⁰ At the same time, it is asserted that slaves in such ‘closed’ systems were treated worse than non-slaves and coercion was applied to all aspects of their work.⁸¹

It could be argued that in China, not only slaves, but all females, were ‘outsiders’ because they were excluded from the patriarchal structure of ownership, power and religion. Some authors consider the Chinese form of marriage as institutionalized servitude for wives, while daughters, concubines and secondary wives were considered and treated as expendable ‘outsiders’ who could be sold when times were bad. Certainly, as elsewhere in the IOW, the slave-trade in China was predominantly in young females.⁸²

Sometimes, however, it was difficult to classify slaves as ‘outsiders’. Many were enslaved within their home societies as a result of indebtedness. Also, slave raiding and kidnapping were often conducted against neighbours of the same linguistic and cultural community. This was evident in the Philippines, Indonesia, Madagascar, and even in Arabia and the Persian Gulf region into the twentieth century,⁸³ while Europeans and frequently neighbouring peoples were unable to differentiate between slaves and owners in some African communities.⁸⁴

In addition, the social barrier between slave owner and slave, generally broken only in clandestine fashion on the American plantations, was often openly ignored in the IOW. While not necessarily effacing the ‘outsider’ status of slaves, it certainly facilitated the erosion of that status. Slave owners generally developed close working relations with their slaves. Non-elite farmers and craftsmen often laboured alongside their slaves. Most slaves, however, were employed in non-agricultural pursuits, many in elite households where some, notably child and young female slaves, had intimate relations with their owners forbidden to non-kinsmen. Terms for slaves were frequently cognates of those used for ‘children’, ‘foster children’ or ‘nephews’ and ‘nieces’.⁸⁵ Many young and almost all second-generation slaves largely shed their cultural origins, and

became monoglot speakers of the host community's language. Second-generation slaves possessed local kinship ties, sometimes with non-slave lineage groups. In most African societies, it was considered 'unseemly' to sell a second-generation slave, although in times of crisis they were sold before non-slave members of the lineage.⁸⁶ Again, rules governing slave castes were sometimes openly ignored: thus some female slave-owners in Imperial Madagascar broke caste rules with impunity and took male slaves as their sexual partners,⁸⁷ while in Korea it was not exceptional for daughters or wives of slave owners to sleep with male slaves.⁸⁸

Assimilation

Not only could slave status not be universally and unambiguously equated with 'outsider' status, in many regions of the IOW there existed structures for their assimilation into the dominant society.

There is considerable debate as to the nature of slavery in Africa. With the exception of Imperial Madagascar, which conformed to the Asian 'closed' model, many authors consider Africa to have been characterized by 'open' systems of slavery in which slaves were largely assimilated into the dominant society.⁸⁹ In some patrilineal societies, children of non-slave men and slave wives were given non-slave status, as sometimes were slave widows of owners who had married them. In matrilineal societies, the children of a non-slave mother and slave father inherited the mother's status.⁹⁰ Certainly a steady trickle of slaves was assimilated into many African communities, depleting local slave stocks and encouraging further slave imports. A similar process was evident in the Middle East,⁹¹ where the *sharia* extolled manumission as meritorious, stipulated that children borne to her owner by a slave woman would be free, and that a concubine who bore a child to a free Muslim would, upon his death, be manumitted.⁹² The rate of manumission could theoretically be high; whereas a rich Muslim was legally restricted to four wives, the number of concubines he might possess was unlimited.⁹³ Assimilation of ex-slaves was in theory assisted by the absence in Islamic religion and law of racial prejudice. In rare cases, as Sheriff notes for Bahrain, non-slave women married slave men.⁹⁴ However, racial preferences were expressed by the male elite, who, for example, valued as concubines Caucasian and lighter-skinned Ethiopian women more than darker skinned Africans.⁹⁵ Also, the relative absence of colour prejudice characteristic of the early Islamic era changed radically with Arab expansion, notably from the late seventh and early eighth centuries.⁹⁶ Finally, assimilation was also characteristic of South-East Asia. There, female slaves were more likely than males to be assimilated, many as adopted daughters.⁹⁷

Even so-called 'closed' slavery systems possessed mechanisms for 'adoption' that promoted limited assimilation. In China, there was a steady trade in poor children to elite households in exchange for cash.⁹⁸ Girl slaves were mostly absorbed into the owner's household where upon puberty some became

concubines while others, raised alongside their owner's sons as their future brides, inevitably gained some status within the dominant group.⁹⁹ Moreover, the rate of heirlessness in China was such that there also existed a high demand in elite households for boys as adopted sons, although owners waited until boy slaves reached adolescence before deciding whether or not to proceed with legal adoption.¹⁰⁰

Economic versus Uneconomic Slavery

In what forms part of the wider ‘orientalist’ debate over the supposedly non-progressive nature of African and Asian economies there is also considerable debate over the productive capacity of slaves in the IOW. Some authors hold that many IOW slaves, if not the majority, fulfilled unproductive roles. Slaves performed possibly the bulk of agricultural work in Africa and India,¹⁰¹ but there and elsewhere in the IOW peasant slave-owners generally worked alongside their slaves in predominantly subsistence production.¹⁰² As noted, most slaves who were traded in the IOW were children and young women, the majority of whom were absorbed by wealthy households, where females were employed predominantly in domestic and sexual services and entertainment that arguably had little impact on the overall economy.¹⁰³ Male slaves were also often employed in sectors of indirect economic impact, such as domestic service and, in court circles, as palace guards, advisers and administrators. Probably the minority were engaged in transport and commerce, or in direct production as agricultural workers, craftsmen, and divers. The demand for slaves increased with commercial prosperity. Thus in pre-colonial South-East Asia and eighteenth and nineteenth-century Africa, there arose large merchant cities the populations of which were largely composed of slaves and other bondspeople. However, only part of this slave population was directly involved in full-time productive or commercial activities. Many were acquired as symbols of conspicuous consumption, to reflect the power and wealth of slave owners.¹⁰⁴ In some cases, the costs of maintaining a slave exceeded the benefits accruing from his/her services. In exceptional circumstances, this could lead to the financial ruin of the owner.¹⁰⁵

Nevertheless, a false dichotomy has often been assumed between ‘productive’ and ‘unproductive’ activities,¹⁰⁶ many of which had considerable economic significance. Outside agriculture, slaves undoubtedly performed vital economic functions. For instance, in a nineteenth-century Sulu economy based on intra-regional commerce, they played a critical role as raiders, traders, and collectors of forest products. Indeed, James Warren argues that slaves enjoyed full property and marriage rights and children of a non-slave male and a female *banyaga*, or slave-raid victim, inherited the father’s status precisely because slaves played such economically vital roles.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, trade in Imperial Madagascar was dependent upon slave porters, the only indigenous body of regular wage earners on the island.¹⁰⁸

Wives and children acquired for kinship groups were both status symbols and important additions to the group's productive and reproductive capacity, while throughout the IOW slaves acquired by elite households were often encouraged to engage part-time in profit-bearing activities.¹⁰⁹ Slave soldiers were used to enforce law and order, a prerequisite for economic growth, and to safeguard vital trade routes, supply centres and markets. Most were 'remunerated' with battle spoils or were expected to engage part-time in economic activities. Indeed, the capture and exchange of slaves was a principal objective of most pre-colonial armies and navies. Slave armies thus often generated slaves, sometimes—as in the Sulu case—on their own initiative, and for their own as well as their owner's material interests.¹¹⁰ Finally, slaves acquired for status often served the same function as status symbols and activities for business people in the capitalist West. Signs of wealth, prestige and influence, they were considered essential in forging the right contacts and business deals.¹¹¹

Slave Class-Consciousness

Authors including Claude Meillassoux have argued that slaves comprised a social class oppressed and exploited by the slave-owning class.¹¹² In the process of class formation, the development of class consciousness was critical. In the case of slave class formation, the development of slave class-consciousness required the existence of large concentrations of slaves, experiencing similar work and living conditions, with clearly identifiable 'opponents' in the form of the slave holders, and a leadership that articulated their interests.

In the IOW, the greatest potential for the development of a slave class was on the plantations, where there existed relatively high concentrations of slaves. However, there is little indication of a slave consciousness within the ranks of plantation labourers, even on the Mascarenes. Clare Anderson's study of Indian convict 'slave' labour on Mauritius in the first half of the nineteenth century reveals group consciousness, but it was caste rather than class based, so could not act as a unifying force for unfree labour.¹¹³

Outside the plantations, the vast variety of slave occupations and living and working conditions hindered any rise of 'slave' consciousness. The 'Zanj' in Iraq, who from 869–83 CE sustained 'perhaps the most successful slave rebellion of all times', have been presented as a possible exception, but it would appear that non-slave influences were crucial in promoting the revolt.¹¹⁴

Indeed, the aim of most slaves was to secure a niche within the dominant society, improve that position over time and, if granted non-slave status, to assume a new ethnicity. Individual slaves therefore sought to forge linkages not with other slaves but with slave holders who alone could ameliorate their conditions and station. Central to this process was acculturation. For most owners, it was vital that the slave speak the local language. The general preference was thus for young slaves who could learn quickly. At the very minimum, slaves needed to understand orders but, in marked contrast to slaves in

the Americas, the majority of IOW slaves were employed in sensitive positions—within the household, court, administration or commerce—where they needed to fully comprehend and assimilate the cultural and ideological values of the slave-holding society. In such circumstances, the native languages of slaves quickly ceded to that of the dominant society. In South-East Asia acculturation was facilitated by the fact that many slaves originated from societies with linguistic and cultural backgrounds similar to that of the dominant society.¹¹⁵ In China and Imperial Madagascar, language classes were established in slave reception camps to facilitate the process.¹¹⁶

Slaves also often accepted the religious ideology of slave holders, which in turn justified slavery. Vestiges of cultural origin, such as the Zar healing ceremony practised by ex-slaves in the Gulf, were insufficient basis for a separate consciousness to be maintained.¹¹⁷ In nineteenth-century Madagascar, many slaves sought religious roles as ‘traditional’ mediums.¹¹⁸ In China and Korea, Confucian concepts of hierarchical social, familial and sexual relations, impregnated into the minds of daughters sold into slavery, were vital to the maintenance of the system.¹¹⁹ As crucial was the conversion of imported child brides and concubines to local belief and value systems so that these might in turn be transmitted to their children.¹²⁰ Acceptance of the dominant society’s ideology was a prerequisite for slaves employed in sensitive posts in the royal household, army and administration.

Again, internal divisions within slave groups militated against the development of slave class-consciousness. Ethnic differences were often apparent; for instance, the fierce ethnic loyalty of Bugis slaves in Sulu separated them as much from other slaves as from their owners.¹²¹ In general, slaves originating from the slave-holding society were considered superior in status to those procured from outside. In a movement resembling that of immigrant waves into nineteenth-century America, new arrivals raised the status of resident slaves. Thus the mass influx of African slaves in nineteenth-century Madagascar placed the newcomers at the bottom of the slave hierarchy.¹²² Similarly placed were recaptured fugitive slaves, whose inferior status was often visibly clarified through branding or tattoos.¹²³ A sign of superior slave status was avoidance of menial or ritually degrading activities: those engaged in harsh manual tasks such as mining, irrigation work, agriculture and diving were considered inferior to those employed within a household or court, or by a trader. Moreover, those at the top of the slave hierarchy, and any other slaves who could afford to do so, became slave holders.¹²⁴

In such contexts, it could prove futile to search for a slave class or ‘slave modes of production’, constructs which, as the case of Imperial Madagascar illustrates, sometimes bear little relation to historical reality in the IOW.¹²⁵

Slaves in a Hierarchy of Dependency

Miers emphasizes that the definition of slavery is best sought by defining its opposite, the concept of ‘freedom’.¹²⁶ As noted, however, there was little concept of individual liberty in IOW societies that rather embraced individuals in social hierarchies wherein each person had an allotted status that carried with it a multiplicity of rights and obligations. Moreover, there existed an overlap in status between slaves and other forms of unfree labour. For example, in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Sulu, the dominant Taosug ethnicity permitted *banyaga* to marry, own property and perform a wide range of functions each with the same rights and privileges as accorded to non-slaves.¹²⁷ Overlapping statuses in the IOW render it difficult to forge hard and fast distinctions between types of servitude, or to contrast ‘slave’ with ‘free’ for, as Reid underlines, the concept of personal freedom can only be pitched against that of slavery when all other forms of servitude are subsumed into a clearly defined category of ‘slaves’.¹²⁸

The meaning of slavery in the IOW becomes clearer if Western notions of a division of society into free and slave, and of slaves as property, are replaced by a vision of society as a hierarchy of dependency in which ‘slaves’ constituted one of a number of unfree groups from which menial labour was drawn to perform services both productive and nominally unproductive. It was a reciprocal system in which obligation implied servitude to an individual with superior status, to a kin group or the crown, in return for protection.¹²⁹ The highest status fell generally in acephelous societies to a group of elders and in centralized societies to the sovereign who theoretically ‘owned’ all of inferior status: This is possibly most visible with corvée labour imposed on subjects who in most IOW countries were considered crown ‘property’. In this sense, it could be argued that corvée fits the concept of ‘property’ performing ‘compulsory labour’ used by some authors as a defining characteristic of slaves.¹³⁰

Moreover, in the world-view of pre-industrial societies, there was no division between the temporal and the supernatural, which could bless or curse human activities and so required respect and appeasement. Thus, in most communities, the living and the dead were incorporated into a giant hierarchy of overlapping statuses, each with associated rights and obligations, in which the concept of bondage transcended temporal life. Kings were considered to be imbued with sacred power, but were in turn governed by the ancestors or gods. In Islam, for example, all Muslims were ‘slaves’ of Allah.¹³¹

Slavery as a Form of Social Security

Noting differences with chattel slavery in the Americas, Europeans often characterized slavery in the IOW as ‘mild’. The British in nineteenth-century India even described types of slavery as a form of poor relief, saving destitute people

from starvation. Judged by Western concepts of slavery and individual liberty, such notions appear curious if not absurd. Historians have sought to explain them in part by European ignorance of what constituted slavery, and in part by the desire by officials to conceal aspects of the slave-trade in which they colluded.¹³²

However, possibly more important in explaining such attitudes, which were sometimes shared by indigenous authorities, were pre-industrial patterns of human and natural disasters. This issue, ignored or downplayed in most of the literature on slaves, forms a key component of Boomgaard's chapter.¹³³ Man-made and natural calamities were an ever present threat in the IOW. Monsoons and cyclones frequently brought flooding to major rice producing areas from China to India and Madagascar. In addition, South-East and East Asia formed a centre of volcanism that could wreak both immediate local destruction and, through cloud-veil induced lower temperatures, years of depressed agricultural productivity that affected vast areas of the globe. Where its impact was greatest, volcanism could sharply reduce precipitation, ruin harvests and induce famine. For instance, the period 1638–43 experienced seven major sulphur-rich volcanic eruptions, contributing to the five worst years of continuous drought in China (1637–41) and to the collapse of the Ming dynasty in 1644.¹³⁴ Again, the 'Southern Oscillation' or 'El-Niño' ('ENSO') effect, produced every 7 to 10 years by changes in the pressure gradient across the Pacific Ocean, often provokes severe droughts throughout the IOW. Moreover, it tends to be followed in consecutive years by 'La Niña', a cold ENSO that causes unusually heavy rain in affected regions.¹³⁵ When a strong ENSO effect coincided with sulphur rich volcanism, as in 1641, the effect could be catastrophic.¹³⁶

Such natural disasters were frequently accompanied by famine and disease, which could independently have catastrophic consequences. A notable example was the Black Death or bubonic plague (*Pasteurella pestis*). Eurocentric historiography has focussed on the devastation wrought in Europe by the Black Death, but its impact was greater in Asia. The plague first erupted in epidemic form in China in 1331, spreading along the main commercial caravan routes of Asia before reaching the Crimea and Europe in 1346. An estimated 90 per cent of those infected died. While it killed probably one third of Europeans in 1346–50, it halved China's population, which declined between 1200 and 1393 from an estimated 123 million to 65 million. The impact was probably as devastating in centres of population in India, the Middle East and Africa linked to trans-Asian commercial routes. Thus the Egyptian population, of about 4 million, probably fell by half, as it was estimated at only 2.5 million in the 1790s.¹³⁷

It is against this background that IOW systems of unfree labour including slavery and debt bondage should be considered. During catastrophes, people often entered slavery, either voluntarily or propelled by their kin group, as a survival strategy.¹³⁸ Thus in India from about 500 BCE many *dvija* caste members entered debt bondage and slavery in return for subsistence.¹³⁹ In hard years, densely populated monocrop regions, such as Makassar in Indonesia and areas of South India, exported their surplus population as slaves.¹⁴⁰ There also

existed a strong connection between natural catastrophes and the gambling ubiquitous in South-East and East Asian communities. Gambling was both a reflection of the precarious nature of human existence, and a desperate attempt to elude misfortune through chance enrichment.¹⁴¹ In China, destitute parents sold pre-pubescent daughters to anyone who could feed or clothe them.¹⁴² The trade in children, outright, as redeemable ‘pawns’, or for adoption was frequently a measure of last resort during disastrous times, taken because it might ensure survival for both remaining kin members and the enslaved child. Indeed, in China and India, the sale of young girls for ‘adoption’ was commonly viewed as a charitable system. Usually very little money was involved and parents trusted the adoptive family would care for the girl and find her a suitable spouse.¹⁴³

In such contexts, concepts of ‘slave’ and ‘free’ are of limited analytical utility. For most of the IOW population, security, food and shelter rather than an abstract concept of liberty, were the primary aims. ‘Liberty’ in the sense of individual freedom from inherited status and responsibilities, would have effectively destroyed the web of obligations that offered protection from man-made and natural dangers.¹⁴⁴ This helps explain the remarkable absence of class-consciousness and of revolt amongst IOW slaves who generally sought to integrate themselves into the slave-holding society that provided them with basic sustenance and sometimes the chance of an enhanced lifestyle. It also explains why some slaves who were presented with the opportunity to gain ‘freedom’ through manumission or redemption, rejected it in favour of retaining their slave status.¹⁴⁵

Summary

Conventional Western historiography of slavery has characterized the slave as a chattel that could be sold or transferred at will by the owner, and a capital asset who, through coercion, bore dividends both in productive labour and through reproduction. Some authors have considered that economies in which slave labour predominated were characterized by a ‘slave mode of production’. The slave/free divide, the major social division in slave-owning societies, was accentuated by the slave’s legal inferiority and his/her foreign and allegedly uncivilized origin. Only in exceptional cases was a slave granted freedom.

However, as contributions to this volume demonstrate, slavery in the IOW varied enormously both geographically and over time, rarely approximating to the plantation model of the Americas except in the relatively limited IOW plantation sector. Elsewhere, non-slaves performed most directly productive work. In contrast to the Atlantic slave-trade, the majority of slaves trafficked in the IOW were females. Many female and male slaves in the IOW were employed in activities removed from direct production. Nevertheless, many slave activities that were not directly productive, such as in the military, trade and administration, often had an important, sometimes vital economic impact. Coercion, generally considered a defining feature of slave work, was not

exclusive to slavery. Coerced labour was probably extracted from the majority of the non-elite IOW population well into the twentieth century. Nor can slavery be understood fully in terms of ‘open’ and ‘closed’ systems, characterized respectively by slave assimilation into the dominant society and exclusion from it.

The key question in such societies was not an individual’s legal status. Social mobility was built even into so-called ‘closed’ systems, and an individual’s status could change, for the better or for the worse. Rather, a social hierarchy of dependence in which each possessed a status with concomitant rights and obligations embraced both slaves and non-slaves. As the exact meanings of each status varied geographically and over time, any definition of slavery in IOW societies must of necessity be highly culture- and time-specific. Of major consideration were the human and natural disasters that constituted an ever-present threat in the IOW. The key issue throughout was the dynamics of the relationship between people of inferior and superior status, and the extent to which a superior could and did offer protection to an inferior in return for labour and other services.¹⁴⁶

It is against this backdrop that institutions of servitude, including slavery and debt bondage, are best judged. In good times, the social group attempted to increase the number of its dependents, but in bad times it sold the most expendable and marketable to further the survival of the group. Some voluntarily entered slavery. Others ‘sold’ or ‘pawned’ their children. Possibly the majority entered slavery through indebtedness, a process largely ignored in the conventional historiography of slavery. Most slaves at least received the food and shelter essential to survive, unlike many ordinary non-slaves. Indeed, some slaves rejected opportunities to gain ‘liberty’ and some non-slaves entered slavery in order to improve their chances of survival and even of a significantly better lifestyle.

In sum, conventional Western concepts of ‘slave’ and ‘free’ are not particularly helpful tools of historical analysis in most of the IOW. The concept of ‘slavery’ was highly time- and culture-specific, often embracing or overlapping with other forms of unfree labour. Moreover, the idea of an abstract form of liberty, in the form of a community composed of individuals equal before the law and governed by market rules of supply and demand, was inconceivable in most IOW societies. Such liberty would deprive the individual of a social network, patronage and protection, rendering him/her utterly vulnerable to human and natural hazards.

NOTES

1. Most of these articles were originally presented at the conference on ‘Slave Systems in Asia and the Indian Ocean: Their Structure and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries’, held at the University of Avignon, from 18 to

20 May 2000. Together with other papers from that conference, they will be published in two volumes: Volume one will be titled *The Structure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (London: Frank Cass, 2004), and volume two *Abolition and Its Aftermath in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (London: Frank Cass, 2004).

‘Slavery’ is here defined according to the 1926 Slavery Convention as ‘the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised’ (quoted in Léonie Archer (ed.), *Slavery and Other Forms of Unfree Labour* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), pp.21–2); and ‘unfree labour’ as ‘labour that is not able to bargain at its will over wages and conditions of work, and which cannot legally withdraw from contract, implied or specific’ (Jim Hagan, Rob Castle and Andrew Wells, ““Unfree” Labour on the Cattle Stations of Northern Australia, the Tea Gardens of Assam, and the Rubber Plantations of Indo-China, 1920–1950”, paper presented at the international conference on ‘Unfree Labour, Brigandry and Revolt in the Indian Ocean and Asia’, Avignon, Oct. 2001).

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2. Anthony Reid (ed.), *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia* (St Lucia, London and New York: University of Queensland Press, 1983); Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Igor Kopytoff and Suzanne Miers (eds.), *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977); Claude Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press; London: Athlone Press, 1991); James L. Watson (ed.), *Asian and African Systems of Slavery* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980); Martin A. Klein (ed.), *Breaking the Chains: Slavery, Bondage and Emancipation in Modern Africa and Asia* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993); William Gervase Clarence-Smith (ed.), *The Economics of the Indian Ocean Slave Trade* (London: Frank Cass, 1989).
3. K.N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean. An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); *idem*, *Asia before Europe: Economy and Civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); André Wink, *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, 2 Vols. (Leiden, New York, Köln: E.J. Brill, 1996, 1997); Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250–1350* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); George Modelski and William R. Thompson, *Leading Sectors and World Powers: The Coevolution of Global Economics and Politics* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1996), esp. pp.142–5, 156; Andre Gunder Frank, *ReORIENT: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: Berkeley University Press, 1998); see also P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, ‘Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas, I: The Old Colonial System 1688–1850’, *South African Journal of Economic History*, 7, 1 (1992), pp. 150–81.

4. Chapter by Peter Boomgaard; chapters by Abdul Sheriff and Nigel Worden in Gwyn Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (London: Frank Cass, 2004).
5. David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), pp.45–50; Meillassoux, *Anthropology of Slavery*, pp.9–40; Lovejoy, *Transformations*, pp.8–11.
6. Meillassoux, *Anthropology of Slavery*, pp.74–5; Davis, *The Problem of Slavery*, esp. pp.300–315 and ch.15.
7. For Africa, see Lovejoy, *Transformations*; Kopytoff and Miers (eds.), *Slavery in Africa*; Patrick Manning, *Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental, and African Slave Trades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). For the IOW: Clarence-Smith (ed.), *The Economics of the Indian Ocean Slave Trade*. For India: Utsa Patnaik and Manjari Dingwaney (eds.), *Chains of Servitude: Bondage and Slavery in India* (Hyderabad: Sangam Books, 1985). For South-East Asia: Reid (ed.), *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency*. For comparative works see Watson (ed.), *Asian and African Systems of Slavery*; Klein (ed.), *Breaking the Chains*.
8. Chapter by Joseph Miller; Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation*; Wink, *Al-Hind*; Richard M. Eaton, ‘Islamic History as Global History’, in *idem* (ed.), *Islamic and European Expansion: The Forging of a Global Order* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), pp.1–36.
9. Chapters by Suzanne Miers, Sheriff and Martin Klein in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
10. Chapters by Richard Allen, James Warren, Karine Delaye, Edward Alpers, Angela Schottenhammer, Pedro Machado and Boomgaard; chapters by Worden, Gwyn Campbell and Sheriff in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
11. Chapters by Boomgaard and Kim Bok Rae; Igor Kopytoff and Suzanne Miers, ‘African “Slavery” as an Institution of Marginality’, in *idem* (eds.), *Slavery in Africa*, pp.60–61; Anthony Reid, ‘Introduction: Slavery and Bondage in Southeast Asian History’, in *idem* (ed.), *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency*, pp.12, 29; Gwyn Campbell, ‘Slavery and Fanompoana: The Structure of Forced Labour in Imerina (Madagascar), 1790–1861’, *Journal of African History*, 29, 2 (1988), pp.474–5.
12. Chapter by Schottenhammer; Wink, *Al-Hind*, Vol.I, pp.30–1; Jack Goody, ‘Slavery in Time and Space’ in James L.Watson (ed.), *Asian and African Systems of Slavery*, p.18.
13. See e.g. introductory chapter in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
14. Chapters by Machado and Warren; chapters by Sheriff, Worden and Miers in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*; Gwyn Campbell, ‘Madagascar and the Slave Trade, 1810–1895’, *Journal of African History*, 22, 2 (1981), pp.203–27; *idem*, ‘Indians and Commerce in Madagascar, 1869–1896’, *African Studies Seminar Paper* 345 (University of the Witwatersrand, 1993); Reid, ‘Introduction’, pp.31–2.
15. Chapter by Miller; James Watson, ‘Transactions in People: The Chinese Market in Slaves, Servants, and Heirs’ in *idem* (ed.), *Asian and African Systems of Slavery*, p. 235.
16. Meillassoux, *Anthropology of Slavery*, pp.10–11; James L.Watson, ‘Introduction: Slavery as an Institution, Open and Closed Systems’, in *idem* (ed.), *Asian and African Systems of Slavery*, pp.4–6; Reid, ‘Introduction’, pp.2, 36.

17. Goody, ‘Slavery in Time and Space’, p.18.
18. See discussion in Watson, ‘Introduction’, pp.4–5; Kopytoff and Miers, ‘African “Slavery”’, pp.7–26. For India, see Utsa Patnaik, ‘Introduction’ to *idem* and Manjari Dingwaney (eds.), *Chains of Servitude*, pp.28–9.
19. Chapter by Omar Eno in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
20. Jean Mas, ‘Scolies et hypothèses sur l’émergence de l’esclavage à Bourbon’, in Claude Wanquet (ed.), *Fragments pour une histoire des économies et sociétés de plantation à la Réunion* (Saint-Denis: Université de la Réunion, 1989), pp. 109–58.
21. Frederick Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1997); Abdul Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar* (London: James Currey, 1987); Campbell, ‘Slavery and Fanompoana’.
22. Chapter by Miller; Goody, ‘Slavery in Time and Space’, pp.20–21.
23. Chapter by Miers in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*; Watson, ‘Transactions in People’, p.235.
24. Goody, ‘Slavery in Time and Space’, pp.21, 32.
25. Chapter by Warren; Reid, ‘Introduction’, p.11.
26. Kopytoff and Miers, ‘African “Slavery”’, pp.28; Reid, ‘Introduction’, p.14. For slave porters see Gwyn Campbell, ‘Labour and the Transport Problem in Imperial Madagascar, 1810–1895’, *Journal of African History*, 21, 3 (1980), pp.341–56 and ‘Introduction’ to *idem* (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*,
27. Reid, ‘Introduction’, pp.8–9.
28. Chapter by Warren.
29. See e.g. Campbell, ‘Slavery and Fanompoana’.
30. For serfs, see e.g. chapter by Kim; Martin Klein, ‘Introduction: Modern European Expansion and Traditional Servitude in Africa and Asia’, in *idem* (ed.), *Breaking the Chains*, pp.5–6; for pawns, see Lovejoy, *Transformations*, pp.13–14; and for ‘mui tsai’ see Watson, ‘Transactions in People’, pp.240–45.
31. Watson, ‘Transactions in People’, pp.228–36; chapters by Boomgaard and Delaye.
32. Kopytoff and Miers, ‘African “Slavery”’, pp.10–11.
33. Watson, ‘Transactions in People’, pp.227–30.
34. See e.g. chapter by Boomgaard.
35. Suzanne Miers (personal communication).
36. Patnaik, ‘Introduction’, p.4.
37. Chapter by Boomgaard; chapter by Worden in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
38. Chapters by Schottenhammer and Kim; see also chapter by Michael Salman in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
39. See e.g. Meillassoux, *Anthropology of Slavery*, pp.73–7.
40. Goody, ‘Slavery in Time and Space’, pp.24–6; Patnaik, ‘Introduction’, pp.2–3, 25–6; Klein, ‘Introduction’, pp.4, 9.
41. Goody, ‘Slavery in Time and Space’, p.18. The association of slavery with the Aryan conquest originated with D.D.Kosambi, *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India: An Historical Outline* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965); see Patnaik, ‘Introduction’, p.3.

42. Goody, ‘Slavery in Time and Space’, p.32–4; Gwyn Campbell, The State and Pre-colonial Demographic History: The Case of Nineteenth Century Madagascar’, *Journal of African History*, 31, 3 (1991), pp.415–45.
43. See e.g. chapter by Campbell in *idem* (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
44. Goody, ‘Slavery in Time and Space’, pp.21–2.
45. Ibid, pp.32–4; for an example of the association between ‘indigenous’ imperialism and slavery in imperial Madagascar, see Gwyn Campbell, ‘The History of Nineteenth Century Madagascar: “le royaume” or “l’empire”? *Omaly sy Anio*, 33–6 (1994), pp.331–79; *idem*, ‘The State and Pre-colonial Demographic History’, pp. 415–45.
46. Chapters by Andrew Turton and Alpers.
47. Chapter by Campbell in *idem* (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*; Gwyn Campbell, ‘The Structure of Trade in Madagascar, 1750–1810’, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 26, 1 (1993), pp. 111–48; see also Goody, ‘Slavery in Time and Space’, esp. pp.23–6; Kopytoff and Miers, ‘African “Slavery”’, p.60.
48. Chapter by Indrani Chatterjee in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
49. Chapters by Warren and Kim; Kopytoff and Miers, ‘African “Slavery”’, pp.3–84.
50. Reid, ‘Introduction’, p.10.
51. Chapters by Boomgaard, Delaye and Schottenhammer; see also Watson, ‘Transactions in People’, pp.228–36.
52. Chapter by Kim; Reid, ‘Introduction’, p.12; for debt bondage from another angle, see chapter by Miller.
53. Chapters by Boomgaard and Alpers; chapter by Sheriff in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
54. Klein, ‘Introduction’, pp.11–12; Meillassoux, *Anthropology of Slavery*, pp.9–10.
55. Reid, ‘Introduction’, pp.25–6; chapter by Miller.
56. Chapter by Miers in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
57. Reid, ‘Introduction’, pp.25–6.
58. Chapter by Boomgaard.
59. Chapter by Alpers; Reid, ‘Introduction’, p.16.
60. Chapters by Allen and Alpers: chapter by Worden in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*; see also Reid, ‘Introduction’, p.3, 19.
61. Reid, ‘Introduction’, p.15.
62. See chapter by Miller.
63. Chapter by Kim. The 1956 Slavery Convention defines serfdom as ‘the tenure of land whereby the tenant is by law, custom or agreement bound to live and labour on land belonging to another person and render some determinate services to such other person, whether for reward or not, and is not free to change his status’ (quoted in Archer (ed.), *Slavery and Other Forms of Unfree Labour*, p.23).
64. Chapter by Boomgaard; M.Hoadley, ‘Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Pre-Colonial Java: the Cirebon-Priangan Region, 1700’, in Reid (ed.), *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency*, pp.91–117.
65. Campbell, ‘Slavery and Fanompoana’; Klein, ‘Introduction’, p.5.
66. Kopytoff and Miers, ‘African “Slavery”’, pp.28.
67. Campbell, ‘Madagascar and the Slave Trade’, p.209; *idem*, ‘Slavery and Fanompoana’.

68. See e.g. Carl F.Petry, ‘Medieval Egypt’, in Paul Finkelman and Joseph C.Miller (eds.), *Macmillan Encyclopaedia of World Slavery* (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, Simon & Schuster, Macmillan, 1998), I, pp.283–4; R.R.S.Chauhan, *Africans in India: From Slavery to Royalty* (New Delhi: Asian Publication Service, 1995).
69. See e.g. Patnaik, ‘Introduction’, p.3.
70. Chapters by Warren, Boomgaard, Turton and Delaye; chapter by Salman in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
71. David Griffiths, *Hanes Madagascar* (Machynlleth: Richard Jones, 1840), p.26; see also chapter by Miller. For comparative material see William D.Piersen, ‘White Cannibals, Black Martyrs: Fear, Depression, and Religious Faith as Causes of Suicide Among New Slaves’, *Journal of Negro History*, 62, 2 (1977), pp.147–59.
72. Chapters by Miers, Sheriff and Klein in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
73. Chapter by Miers; chapters by Sheriff, Behnaz Mirzai, William Clarence-Smith and Miers in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
74. Reid, ‘Introduction’, pp.13–14; chapter by Warren; chapters by Sheriff, Clarence-Smith and Eno in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
75. Watson, ‘Introduction’, pp.1–15.
76. Klein, ‘Introduction’, p.9.
77. Chapter by Suzanne Miers.
78. For China and Tibet, see Watson, ‘Transactions in People’, pp.237–8 and *idem*, ‘Introduction’, p.10.
79. Chapter by Campbell in *idem* (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*; see also Sandra Evers, ‘Solidarity and Antagonism in Migrant Societies on the Southern highlands’, in François Rajaonson (ed.), *Fanandevozana ou Esclavage* (Antananarivo: Université d’Antananarivo, 1996), pp.565–71.
80. Patnaik, ‘Introduction’, p.4; Klein, ‘Introduction’, p.14.
81. Kopytoff and Miers, ‘African “Slavery”’, pp.14–16, 51; Klein, ‘Introduction’, pp.4–5, 11; Reid, ‘Introduction’, p.12.
82. Watson, ‘Transactions in People’, pp.227–8; Maria Jaschok and Suzanne Miers, ‘Women in the Chinese Patriarchal System: Submission, Servitude, Escape and Collusion’, in Jaschok and Miers (eds.), *Women and Chinese Patriarchy: Submission, Servitude and Escape* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1994), p. 10.
83. See e.g. chapters by Sheriff and Salman in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
84. Klein, ‘Introduction’, p.13; Kopytoff and Miers, ‘African “Slavery”’, p.5.
85. Chapters by Kim and Schottenhamer; Klein, ‘Introduction’, p.8; Reid, ‘Introduction’, p.9.
86. Kopytoff and Miers, ‘African “Slavery”’, p.35.
87. Ch. Poirier, ‘Un “Menabe” au cœur de la forêt de l’Est’, *Bulletin de l’Académie Malgache*, 25 (1942–43), p.100 n.1.
88. Chapter by Kim.

89. For the debate, which centres on the concepts of ‘kin’ and ‘slave’, see Meillassoux, *Anthropology of Slavery*, and Kopytoff and Miers, ‘African “Slavery”’; see also chapter by Miller; Watson, ‘Introduction’.
90. Kopytoff and Miers, ‘African “Slavery”’, pp.32–3; Goody, ‘Slavery in Time and Space’, p.19.
91. Chapter by Sheriff in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
92. See chapters by Sheriff and Clarence-Smith in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
93. Chapter by Miers in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
94. Chapter by Sheriff in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
95. Goody, ‘Slavery in Time and Space’, p.29.
96. Bernard Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp.19, 26–7, 37–41.
97. Chapter by Boomgaard; Reid, ‘Introduction’, pp.13, 25–6.
98. Watson, ‘Transactions in People’, pp.227, 230.
99. Ibid., pp.240–44.
100. Ibid., pp.229–30, 235–6. For African comparison, see Kopytoff and Miers, ‘African “Slavery”’, pp.10–11, 25.
101. Patnaik, ‘Introduction’, pp.2–4, 26.
102. Goody, ‘Slavery in Time and Space’, p.36; chapter by Boomgaard; Klein, ‘Introduction’, p.9.
103. See chapter by Miller.
104. Chapter by Boomgaard; see also Patnaik, ‘Introduction’, pp.2–4, 26; Reid, ‘Introduction’, p.13; Goody, ‘Slavery in Time and Space’, pp.36–7; Klein, ‘Introduction’, pp.8–13.
105. Chapter by Boomgaard.
106. See Kopytoff and Miers, ‘African “Slavery”’, pp.55–7, 64–6.
107. Although upon his death a slave’s property passed to his/her master (chapter by Warren).
108. Campbell, ‘Labour and the Transport Problem’, pp.351–6.
109. See e.g. Reid, ‘Introduction’, p.14.
110. Chapter by Warren; Goody, ‘Slavery in Time and Space’, pp.26–7.
111. See e.g. chapters by Boomgaard and Turton.
112. Meillassoux, *Anthropology of Slavery*.
113. Chapter by Clare Anderson in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
114. Alan Fisher, ‘Zanj’ in Finkelman and Miller (eds.), *Macmillan Encyclopaedia of World Slavery*, II, p.967; Alexandre Popovic, *The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century* (Princeton: Marcus Weiner, 1999), p.22.
115. Reid, ‘Introduction’, pp.13, 25–6.
116. Chapter by Delaye; Campbell, ‘Madagascar and the Slave Trade’, p.224.
117. Chapter by Sheriff in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
118. Chapter by Campbell in *idem* (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*; Gwyn Campbell, ‘Crisis of Faith and Colonial Conquest: The Impact of Famine and Disease in Late Nineteenth-Century Madagascar’, *Cahiers d’Études Africaines*, 32.3–127 (1992), pp.409–53.

119. Chapter by Kim; James Francis Warren, ‘Chinese Prostitution in Singapore: Recruitment and Brothel Organisation’, in Jaschok and Miers, *Women in the Chinese Patriarchal System*, pp.79–80.
120. Chapters by Kim and Schottenhammer; chapter by Sheriff in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
121. Chapter by Warren.
122. Chapter by Campbell in *idem* (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
123. Reid, ‘Introduction’, p.12.
124. Chapter by Schottenhammer; Klein, ‘Introduction’, p.7; Chauhan, *Africans in India*, pp.12–17.
125. Lovejoy, *Transformations*, pp.234, 238–9; Klein, ‘Introduction’, pp.10–11; Bloch, ‘Modes of production and slavery in Madagascar’, in James L.Watson (ed.), *Asian and African Systems of Slavery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp.110–12; chapter by Campbell in *idem* (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*; *idem*, ‘Madagascar and the Slave Trade’, pp.203–27; *idem*, ‘Slavery and Fanompoana’.
126. Chapter by Miers.
127. However, a slave’s property upon the death of the slave passed to his/her master (chapter by Warren).
128. Reid, ‘Introduction’, p.21.
129. Goody, ‘Slavery in Time and Space’, pp.16–42.
130. See Watson, ‘Introduction’, p.7.
131. See, e.g., Reid, ‘Introduction’, p.4; Campbell, ‘Crisis of Faith’.
132. Chapters by Delaye, Chatterjee and Klein; Campbell, ‘Introduction’ to *idem* (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
133. Chapter by Boomgaard.
134. William S.Atwell, ‘Volcanism and Short-Term Climatic Change in East Asian and World History, c.1200–1699’, *Journal of World History*, 12, 1 (2001), pp.31–2, 34–6, 42, 62–4; William H.McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* (New York: Anchor Books, 1976), p.266.
135. Atwell, ‘Volcanism’, pp.39–40.
136. Candace Gudmundson, ‘El Niño and Climate Prediction’ (2002), at <http://www.atmos.washington.edu/gcg/RTN/rtnt.html>.
137. McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples*, pp.144–9; Clive Ponting, *A Green History of the World* (London: Penguin, 1991), pp.228–9; Chaudhuri, *Asia Before Europe*, pp.381–2.
138. Klein, ‘Introduction’, p.11.
139. Patnaik, ‘Introduction’, pp.25–6.
140. Chapter by Boomgaard.
141. Chapters by Boomgaard and Delaye; Reid, ‘Introduction’, pp.8–10.
142. Warren, ‘Chinese Prostitution in Singapore’, p.80.
143. See e.g. Jaschok and Miers, ‘Women in the Chinese Patriarchal System’, pp.11, 18.
144. Chapter by Boomgaard; chapters by Miers and Salman in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
145. See e.g. Campbell, ‘Slavery and Fanompoana’.
146. See, e.g., Reid, ‘Introduction’, pp.6–8; Kopytoff and Miers, ‘African “Slavery”’, pp.17–19.

Slavery: A Question of Definition

SUZANNE MIERS

Slavery is arguably the most misused word in the English language. It has become a metaphor for extreme inequality, for subordination, deprivation and discrimination. It is bandied about in all manner of contexts. Thus we have the ‘classic’ or ‘chattel slave’, the Marxian ‘wage slave’, the ‘sex slave’ and, in the late twentieth century, the ‘contemporary slave’. Scholars, government officials, colonial civil servants, explorers, missionaries, nationalists, League of Nations and United Nations anti-slavery committees, Human Rights activists, and lawyers charged with drawing up national laws and international conventions, have all wrestled with the difficulty of giving a precise meaning to the term.

The Academic Debate

Scholars have disagreed over the attributes of slavery. Were slaves primarily property, and if so, how was property to be defined?¹ Did slaves have to be saleable, or otherwise transferable? What rights did owners have over their slaves that they did not have over the free members of a kin group, family or community? Would it be more accurate to define slaves as persons under the complete control of, and utterly dependent upon a master, a mistress, a kin group or some other organization? If so, did that control have to be lifelong and/or hereditary, or could slavery be a temporary condition? Was the slave always acquired through an act of violence? If so, what constituted violence? If people were sold against their will was this sufficient by itself to define them as slaves? Were slaves necessarily ‘socially dead’—that is non-persons without social existence or status except by virtue of their owners—or could they be recognized as people with rights of their own?

There have been debates on the purpose of slavery. Was it primarily a way of mobilizing labour? If so, was it cost effective? Was it a step towards the incorporation of ‘outsiders’ and their descendants, as full members of a society? Alternatively, was it a method of incorporating outsiders into a particular social formation while excluding them permanently from full membership of a kinship or other group? Was it a device for elites to acquire and retain power and prestige? The questions are endless and the approaches are not mutually exclusive.

Slavery as the term is commonly used can fulfil all these purposes, as the chapters here make very clear.

No definition of slavery can be separated from the definition of its antithesis—freedom. This is as difficult to define as slavery, since freedom has meant different things to different peoples and even to the same people at different times in their history. The main question is whether different societies have a different concept of freedom or whether there are certain rights without which people in any society would not consider themselves to be free. In the western world at the outset of the twenty-first century a free person is generally considered to be an autonomous individual— someone with the economic and social rights to move freely, to choose his (or her)² occupation, to keep the proceeds of his labour, to determine his own lifestyle, to choose his spouse, to control his own children and so forth. Free persons are protected from physical abuse and have a range of political rights, which include freedom of speech, of religion, of association, and freedom from arbitrary arrest, embodied in the concept of the ‘rule of law’. Communist writers and statesmen have argued that political rights are secondary to the social and economic rights to sustenance, employment and equal opportunity. Asian statesmen and intellectuals have challenged some of the western human rights agenda on the grounds that primacy should be given to social and political stability and the well-being of the community.³

Complete freedom obviously exists only in theory. In practice free people, even when freedom is defined in the western sense, do not have complete control over their lives, nor do they have equal social standing or material wealth. Their choices are limited by economic, political and social constraints. In certain societies, they are also limited by the demands of religion and caste, and/or the demands of family or kin group, which in some cases had the power to sell or transfer their own members, just as fathers could sell their children in ancient Rome and in pre-communist China. In many societies, also, women do not have equal rights with men. Parents or guardians everywhere have certain rights over their children. Yet in spite of these constraints women, children, and other full members of families, kin groups and societies consider themselves to be free. The term, therefore, may be taken to designate the norm in any society, and hence is culturally defined, but within certain limits. Thus, while different societies emphasize different essential features of freedom depending on their history, economic development, politics and culture, some forms of curtailment of personal liberties are universally considered to be forms of slavery.

Thus chattel slavery is usually seen as the antithesis of freedom. A chattel slave is normally defined as someone under the complete domination of an owner who has powers of life and death over him or her,⁴ can sell and transfer him at will and has full control over his daily and domestic life including his progeny. Moreover, his status is hereditary. However, as will be seen from the studies discussed below, chattel slavery took many forms, and was only one form of servitude among many.

Slavery and Unfree Labour in the Indian Ocean World

With some notable exceptions,⁵ most discussion on the nature of slavery and freedom has been in the context of the New World and Africa. The essays in this collection provide a rich source of information on the diversity of both slavery and freedom in the world of the Indian Ocean. They cover a huge geographical area, stretching from South Africa to East Asia and the Philippines. Since the authors use the term slavery to cover a great variety of institutions, they add to the complexity and difficulty of finding any universally acceptable definition of either term.

A number of essays deal with slavery as practised by Europeans. Called by Edward Alpers the ‘Christian European model’, this varied from the plantation system of the Mascarenes and Seychelles discussed by Musleem Jumeer⁶ to the Cape Colony model described by Nigel Worden.⁷ In both cases, as in the Americas and the Caribbean, the slave was a chattel, with no rights, who existed only as the property of his or her master.⁸

In Mauritius, slavery, together with the apprenticeship system which succeeded it (which tied freed slaves to their owners for a term of years after their emancipation), and the indentured labour and other later forms of labour on the island were all part of a single ‘core system of labour exploitation’ for economic purposes.⁹ In theory there were important differences between slaves and indentured labourers. Theoretically the latter came voluntarily, although some may, as Richard Allen suggests, have been ‘praedial slaves’, or other unfree persons in southern India who had no choice in the matter. Once in Mauritius, however, they were all confined to the plantations, poorly fed, housed and clothed, and worked just as the slaves had been.¹⁰ Keya Dasgupta shows that indentured labourers on tea plantations in the Brahmapura Valley in Assam were also subjected to much the same work regime as the slaves on the plantations of the New World.¹¹ Moreover, like slaves in the Americas, in both Mauritius and Assam, indentured labourers were uprooted from their homelands, settled in regions where they had no links with the local people, and kept isolated on the plantations. However, their condition differed from that of chattel slaves in that their families often accompanied them and laboured with them. They were also paid wages, although at a minimal rate. Most importantly when their contracts ended they were free to leave the plantations. Thus, although planters often found ways to keep them, they were legally free. Their servitude was thus temporary. The question for us is whether or not this was ‘a new system of slavery’ as has been suggested in relation to the Caribbean, or, as contended by recent researchers, this temporary servitude enabled labourers to escape the poverty of their homelands and raise their standards of living.¹² Thus although some may have been acquired as slaves and for a while treated as slaves, the final outcome was an escape from slavery.

In the Cape Colony, many slaves were bought and imported from all over the huge Indian Ocean catchment area, while other persons were enslaved by a

different process. Neighbouring Khoi pastoralists were gradually reduced to servitude. After slavery lost its legal status, African children were captured in commando raids and theoretically indentured for a period of years. In practice, they rarely regained their independence. Kerry Ward shows that even Africans taken from captured slave ships by the British and landed at the Cape, although ostensibly free, actually became effectively slaves.¹³ All these victims, acquired in different ways were melded into what became a complex system of unfree labour, often called ‘virtual slavery’—a term used as loosely as slavery itself, when no more precise definition can be found, for a situation in which the victim has most but not all the attributes of a slave.

Several chapters deal with Islamic slavery.¹⁴ These cover a wide geographical span from East Africa to Indonesia. Everywhere practice varied with local circumstances and variations in Muslim law. In Muslim slavery, as in the western world, slaves were chattels. Most were initially acquired by force. Some were bought. Others were victims of trickery. All were freely traded and transferred. What was notably different from the slavery of the western world, however, was the degree to which they were protected by Muslim law.¹⁵ When the law was observed, their treatment was good. They might expect to marry and have families of their own, and they had a good chance of being freed. There were also built in avenues of escape. For instance, a female slave who married her master had to be freed first. Concubines—slaves by definition—were freed or, at least were not saleable, once they had borne their masters’ children; and in most branches of Islam, their children were free. As in the West, slaves could be manumitted by their masters, or could ransom themselves, but in Islam manumission was a meritorious act, earning credit in the next world and was more widely practised. Manumitted slaves, however, were not free in the Western sense. They and their descendants became clients in perpetuity of their former owners and their progeny. Clients had to have their patrons’ permission to marry and suffered other restrictions on their liberty.

It is clear that not all owners obeyed Muslim law. The actual well-being of slaves in the Islamic world, as elsewhere, depended largely on the position and the disposition of their owners. Many slaves, as Alpers shows, fled from the plantations on the east coast of Africa, preferring to take the risks of marronage to the cruelties of slavery. The hardships of slave life on these plantations are commented on by both Omar Eno and by Mohamed Kassim, writing on the Benadir coast and hinterland.¹⁶ Abdul Sheriff writing on the Persian Gulf region, and Suzanne Miers writing on Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, note that a number of slaves took refuge with British officials or on British warships, risking recapture and severe punishment, in order to obtain manumission. Nevertheless the rules were adhered to in general to the point that there was a steady attrition in the numbers of slaves in the Muslim world, hence the demand remained high.¹⁷

As has often been noted, the chapters on Muslim slavery show that slaves could rise to high office and have power over the free. They were valued just

because, without kin ties, if they were well treated, their loyalty to their owners could be counted on. Moreover, they often had considerable personal freedom. James Warren cites examples in Sulu where they were sent on trading expeditions and even on armed raiding parties.¹⁸ Some became richer than their owners through trade and other means. They even acquired slaves of their own, and could keep their wealth for their lifetime. In the Muslim world, slaves were not necessarily the lowest rank in society. Michel Boivin, writing on Sindhu, notes that the castes whose task was to dispose of refuse suffered greater discrimination, although they were legally free.¹⁹

In the non-Muslim world of the Indian Ocean, slaves could also have more security and be better provided for than free poor people. Karine Delaye points out that in Indo-China they were hereditary chattels, with all the usual disadvantages, but they could hold most offices.²⁰ Moreover, even ordinary slaves had certain recognized legal rights, including protection from physical or sexual abuse. Delaye suggests that these rights and the fact that they could be freed was a recognition of the slave's humanity. Even in the western world the humanity of slaves could not be completely denied in practice, and the slave in Islamic society has been described as 'property with a voice'.²¹ However, in Indo-China, as elsewhere, these rights were more theoretic than real, given that slaves would find it almost impossible to bring cases against their owners.

In Indo-China some slaves were only called upon to work intermittently and, as in the Muslim world, they also might be better off than the free in terms of lifestyle, although they could never be their social equals. This was a common situation. Writing on the Merina empire in Madagascar, Gwyn Campbell emphasizes the fact that, at certain periods, even ordinary slaves were so much better off than the free that they refused freedom because it would have rendered them liable to conscription for *corvée* labour.²² This raises the question of whether slaves who preferred enslavement to freedom, more particularly, whether those whose 'worldly success' and standard of living was greater than that of the poor free population, should really be considered slaves. However, their legal status had not changed and their success was possible just because they were slaves and outside the normal kinship and political groupings of the society.

In Sulu, where slaves were imported on a large scale, Warren states unequivocally that slavery was a method of incorporating strangers into society. However, Peter Boomgaard, writing on Indonesia, where slavery was widely practised both by the Dutch colonists and the indigenous people, takes issue with the proposition that the slave was always an outsider. He admits that this is often the case, but disputes the assumption on the grounds that people in Indonesia often captured their neighbours. This turns on the definition of the outsider. In Africa, slaves might be members of the same society as their captors, but were nevertheless strangers to the kin group into which they were inducted, a process which might require ritual sanction and renaming. Members of the society sentenced to slavery for crime, or debtors reduced to slavery for non-payment of

their debts became ‘non-persons’ by the very act of enslavement, and hence became outsiders, whose reintegration began when they found an owner. Indrani Chatterjee notes that in India slaves, usually children and girls acquired for various purposes including prostitution, were incorporated into their owner’s household under guise of adoption, concubinage or marriage.

A common occurrence, noted here in relation to Indo-China, the Burma-Thai border, Arabia, Persia, India, Indonesia and Sulu, was that people sold themselves or their children in times of famine or other disaster. Slavery in such cases was sometimes justified as a form of ‘poor relief’.²³ This raises again the question of whether the method of acquisition determined slave status. Was a slave necessarily someone sold or otherwise acquired against their will; or was the defining characteristic how they were subsequently treated; or was it their legal status? Some, as we have seen, were well treated and even rose to high office. Women and children might be treated like full members of their adoptive kin group or families. Men might be indistinguishable in their daily lives from junior kinsmen. Concubines might live in such luxury that their relations joined them. Observers sometimes said they could not tell the slaves from the free.²⁴ Nevertheless, the distinction between slave and free was clear to both owners and slaves and it remained so long after the legal end of slavery. A point not discussed in this collection, but it is well known in relation to Africa, that some slaves freed by Europeans, particularly in Muslim societies, would insist on paying ransom to their owners in order to be free in their own eyes and those of their former owners. Robin Maugham, who bought a slave in Timbuktu in 1958, long after slavery had been outlawed,²⁵ was told by an informant that whereas ‘in his head’ the slave knew he was free, ‘in his heart’ he did not believe it.²⁶ Moreover, servile origins were also often remembered generations after slavery lost its legal status and led to discrimination when it came to questions of marriage and inheritance.²⁷

Then there is the all-important question of whether slavery was necessarily a system of labour exploitation for economic motives or whether it had other equally important functions. It is no surprise to find the many examples in this collection of the uneconomic use of slaves as status symbols. In Indo-China rulers had hundreds of barely occupied slaves, and there was a whole category of ‘Pagoda slaves’, who served the temples. Boomgaard states that in Indonesia slaves were used in agricultural and urban production, but that both Europeans and Indonesians also kept them to enhance their prestige, even, sometimes, to the point of impoverishing themselves. Slaves were also, as he says, used for sacrifice and were thus a wasting asset. He notes also that the rulers of Bali sometimes had as many as 300 slave prostitutes.²⁸ Andrew Turton notes that slaves were used for conspicuous consumption as well as productive labour in Bangkok.²⁹ Slaves could obviously fulfil both roles and were also a political asset. Apart from providing leaders with loyal supporters, they could be used to produce the goods needed to buy other slaves. They could be given away to attract prospective followers. Concubines were used for this purpose in Sulu. The

more adherents, including slaves, a potentate had, the greater his power, wealth and prestige.

Then there is the question of whether slaves were always acquired by violence.³⁰ The problem here is that many people enslaved themselves to escape starvation or to gain protection, or parents sold their children to improve their prospects or ensure their survival. The definition of violence, therefore, has to be stretched to include peaceful alienation from one's natal kin. Chatterjee writing on India, notes that persons who accepted food in time of famine could incur an 'obligation debt' resulting in their becoming the slaves of their benefactors. In such cases, hospitality, rather than an act of benevolence, could be an act of aggression. Moreover, if a third party paid the debt, they were considered to have bought the debtor.³¹

Many of the studies here show that slavery often existed side by side with debt bondage. Legally this is distinct from slavery because the servitude ended with the repayment of the debt. However, this distinction was often more theoretic than real, as the debtors might never be able to repay the debt, which could be indefinitely inflated. Often the debtor's whole family laboured with him. His children might inherit the debt, or be forced to run into debt themselves in order to survive. Chatterjee describes how slavery and debt bondage were enmeshed in India. A man might be in debt but the debt was not called unless the debtor tried to leave. If a third party repaid the debt for him, they were considered to have 'bought' him. He was thus transferable.³² Debt bondage is an older institution than slavery. It also outlasted slavery as a legal status. Examples from Sindh, Sulu and Indo-China show that its incidence rose when slavery ended.³³

Slavery also existed side by side with serfdom. This term has been used almost as loosely as 'slavery'. A serf was usually conceived as different from a slave because he was in some way attached to the land. He was not saleable but could be transferred with the land. He could not leave and was bound to perform certain services for the landlord. His status was hereditary. However, his position varied in different societies. Boomgaard states that serfs in Java may have been bound to a master rather than to the land. He also describes a 'more or less serf-like population' employed making bricks, among other things. The point is that a serf was neither a slave nor a free person. In Sumatra he was described as 'free as a chicken' rather than 'free as a bird'.³⁴

As a number of authors point out, slavery was never a static institution. So far this discussion has been a-historical in that I have taken examples from different geographical regions and different centuries in order to illustrate the problem of definitions. Most of the studies mentioned here discuss the changes in the institutions they describe. For instance, Kim Bok Rae, writing on Korea, discusses the evolution of the *nobi* from slaves to serfs to independent producers. Campbell describes the evolution of slavery and forced labour in the Merina empire, showing that at times slavery was widespread and at others it contracted. Both these authors also deal with the changes in the ownership of slaves.³⁵ In Imerina, for instance, at certain times there were poor owners, but changes in the

economy squeezed them out, while the holdings of the elite escalated. However, this was not a steady progression for poor owners resurfaced later.

The studies on Sulu and Korea furnish examples of the range of uses of slaves in a society at any one time.³⁶ In both cases there were agricultural slaves living in their own settlements, and bound to their owners in various ways. For instance, some were sharecroppers, some paid tribute, some gave military service. At the same time there were slaves living in or near their masters' households under closer control. Slaves in most areas were used not just as field hands or domestics but also as concubines, as officials, as soldiers, as trading agents, as fishermen, as pearl divers, and in an endless range of other occupations. The point is that each occupation determined not only the lifestyle of the slaves but also the nature of their relationship with, and obligations to, their owners.

The existence of forced labour together with slavery is also noted. Theoretically, forced labour differs from slavery because the labourers are free and are usually conscripted for a limited time. In practice, however, it may deteriorate into permanent bondage, as in Madagascar in the nineteenth century, and as Shigeru Sato believes it would have done in Indonesia had the Japanese not lost the Second World War.³⁷ The victims of forced labour, like persons in debt bondage, have often been more exploited and worse off than slaves.

In theory, the servitude of a debtor, a forced labourer and a contract worker is temporary. Theoretically they are free when the debt is repaid, the contract expires or the job is done. Similarly, the 'comfort women' employed by the Japanese as 'sex slaves' to serve their troops would regain their freedom when they grew old or ill.³⁸ None of these practices are hereditary, nor are the victims 'owned'. However, many of the victims never achieved the freedom that theoretically awaited them. They are often described as having been in 'Virtual slavery'—a term which emphasizes the difficulty of drawing a clear line between the slave and the free person.

A term not used in these volumes, but used by the United Nations, was 'collective' slavery. This was applied to persons suffering extreme discrimination, such as Africans in South Africa in the days of apartheid. This term might well be applied here to the various groups in Japan discriminated against on account of their ethnicity, as described by Tracy Steele.³⁹ Similarly, it might apply to the depressed castes in Sindh and elsewhere on the Indian sub-continent.

The Politics of Defining Slavery

Finding a universal definition of slavery is all the more difficult because it has been manipulated for political, economic, and social reasons. Michael Salman, writing on the Philippines, demonstrates how both Filipino nationalists and American politicians and officials defined it to suit their political aims.⁴⁰ The Filipinos, anxious to gain independence from the United States, maintained that colonialism was slavery, and distorted historical records to show that chattel

slavery had never existed in the islands. American administrators and politicians, on the other hand, ignored the existence of slavery in Sulu until it suited them to use it to justify their war of conquest. They also played up the existence of slavery to delay granting independence to the islands.

Similarly, anti-slavery ideology played an important role in justifying the European colonial conquests of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as Delaye shows in relation to Indo-China.⁴¹ However, when it came to actually governing conquered territories, the colonial powers delayed taking action to end slavery for fear of antagonizing the slave-owning elites, disrupting the economy, and being saddled with having to look after freed slaves. As Chatterjee shows, the British in India were particularly wary of antagonizing the people in frontier regions for fear that they would turn to neighbouring powers for support. In order to excuse inaction, the British redefined Indian slavery, resorting to euphemisms, describing it, for instance, as ‘mild serfdom’, or ‘a form of poor law’ or ‘unpaid service’. Non-western slavery was described as ‘benign’. Chatterjee points out that they even distinguished between permissible and other forms of slave-trading—allowing for instance, the sale of women and children for domestic purposes but not for prostitution, and maintaining that it was permissible to sell a child for ‘adoption’.⁴²

Moreover, administrators and other observers were wont to call practices slavery without defining them and without any clear frame of reference, with the result that what one administrator might call slavery another might consider adoption or clientage, or even poor relief. Similarly explorers saw what they wanted to see, as the essay on Indo-China makes clear.⁴³ European administrators also had a culturally specific view of freedom—if a slave could leave his/her owner and could earn a living and keep the proceeds, by western standards he or she was free, whereas to the slave real freedom might require not just personal autonomy but complete social and, sometimes ritual, equality with the freeborn.⁴⁴ It might even involve renouncing some freedoms. Thus when freed some slave women in Muslim societies elected to wear the veil and accept the constraints of purdah rather than retain the greater freedom of movement and the dress of slaves.⁴⁵ Different societies also had different views of what constituted slave-trading. In China, for instance, the sale of children was only slave-trading if they were sold by someone other than their legal guardians, whereas to the British in nineteenth century Hong Kong all exchanges of person for money or exploitation were illegal.⁴⁶

Research has been hampered because in many areas slavery is still a sensitive subject. In Africa, where much successful work has been carried out, the descendants of slaves are often reluctant to talk of their origins—evidence that there is still a stigma attached to slave descent. Owners may be equally reluctant to point out persons of such descent, and in some countries it would be illegal to do so. The desire to forget a slaving past has also impeded research. Chatterjee points out that in India, historians have virtually ignored the subject.⁴⁷ In Arabia, 30 to 40 years since abolition, it seems it is still too delicate to investigate.

Scholars are thus prisoners of their sources, which are often unreliable and sometimes almost non-existent. They are also prisoners of their particular individual political or cultural outlook. Thus Kim Bok Rae points out the differences in the approach to slavery and serfdom between ‘colonialist’ and Marxist Korean scholars.⁴⁸ Another problem is that, since slavery was never a static institution, all descriptions of it must be put into the context of their time as well as considered together with the cultural and political outlook of the author and/or the informant.

The Need for a Definition of Slavery

Considering the great range of institutions and practices that have been labelled slavery and the fact they cannot all be encapsulated in one word with a concise definition, one must ask why we continue to use the term. The simple answer is that it gets attention. As Salman has shown, it evokes strong reactions in those accused of practising it, as well as in those who perceive themselves as victims. The reason being that it is irrevocably associated in the public mind with the extreme deprivation and inhumanity of chattel slavery, particularly in the western world. This is a tribute to the work of the British anti-slavery society and, to a lesser extent, its counterparts abroad. This society, now called *Anti-Slavery International*, together with its antecedents, has conducted unremitting propaganda against slavery for over 200 years.

The simplest answer for the scholar is to do what the contributors to this collection have done—use the local terms and describe their meaning. Alternatively they can suggest their own definitions. The academic controversy over definitions has been more useful in showing up the difficulties of reaching a consensus than in pointing to a solution.

The definition of slavery, however, is not confined to discussions between scholars. It has some very practical implications for the modern world. On one level it is still the subject of dispute. For instance the government of Sudan has been accused of fostering the capture, sale, and use for menial labour of southern Sudanese women and children, by northern Muslim pastoralists. It rejects the accusation that it is allowing slave raiding and trading and countenancing slave labour. It insists that since slavery is illegal, the victims of the raids are not being enslaved but are ‘abducted’ and used not as slaves but as ‘forced labour’.⁴⁹ Slavery has been outlawed in Mauritania but nevertheless some ‘freed’ slaves, mostly women and children, are still forced to work for their owners, whose rights are upheld by shariah courts. Such abuses are commonly referred to as ‘vestiges’ of slavery. But to activists and to the victims they are manifestations of slavery itself.⁵⁰

At the international level, the League of Nations’ Temporary Slavery Commission established in 1924 to investigate ‘slavery in all its forms’ had great trouble finding a definition that would include all the forms they wished to attack. They ended by defining slavery as the ‘status of a person over whom *any or all of*

the powers of ownership' were exercised. They listed among 'all its forms' chattel slavery, domestic slavery (slaves born in their owner's household), serfdom, debt bondage, forced marriage, the adoption of children to exploit them, and forced labour. They knew the colonial powers would not agree to a charter to protect native labour nor would they end child labour or interfere with indigenous marriage customs. However, if these were called forms of slavery it would be more difficult for them to resist taking action, or at least signing a treaty binding them to take action. The commission also called for the negotiation of a convention against forced labour to prevent its deteriorating into slavery. When this was signed in 1930, it was aimed at the practices of the colonial powers. At the insistence of Britain, it was carefully worded to outlaw the French conscription of labour under guise of military service, as well as the forced crop-growing practised by colonial powers to stimulate export production. The supplementary forced labour convention of 1957 was designed to outlaw forced labour exacted as punishment for political opposition, as well as its use for economic purposes or a means of labour discipline. This was aimed at the communist countries, particularly Russia with its Gulags. Today it remains as an attack on the Chinese labour camps.

The supplementary Slavery Convention of 1956 included all the practices named by the League Commission in the definition of slavery. The definition was extended in the late 1960s to include 'the slavery-like practices of apartheid and colonialism'. This was added because some of the newly independent states and the communist bloc were anxious to attack colonialism and apartheid but not anxious to have an inquiry into slavery 'in all its forms'. The new definition gained their support and in 1974 the United Nations Working Group on Slavery was established. It has met almost every year since 1975 to hear evidence from non-government organizations (NGOs) and United Nations bodies. As far as definitions go, it has muddied the waters still further.

It has considered slavery, debt bondage, forced labour, child labour, trafficking in persons, prostitution, pornography, sex slavery, sweated labour, the exploitation of contract and migrant labour, and of illegal aliens, as well as forced marriage, adoption for exploitation, and the use of child soldiers. If these practices all bear some relation to slavery, it takes a stretch of the imagination to include some of the other practices brought before the group. These include female circumcision, the honour killing of Muslim women by their relations, marriage practices which discriminate against women, incest and the killing of people in order to sell their organs for transplants. And so it goes on—an ever-widening definition of slavery to accommodate whatever human rights violations or labour practices are under attack. In order to bring its title into line with its work, it is now called the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery. As in the past, calling a practice a form of slavery attracts media attention. It may also shame governments into taking action. Thus, as in the past, slavery was the wild card—the joker which could be played or not depending on circumstances, and the definition was changed to suit a variety of purposes.

While, on the one hand, the group has been continually expanding the definition of slavery until it threatens to become a meaningless term, the United Nations and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have been negotiating conventions requiring the precise definitions needed in international law. These conventions set international standards for the protection of labour. Two papers presented at the Avignon conference in 2000, but not included here, dealt with this question. One by Jérôme Joubert made the point that politics are never far from any discussion of the definition of slavery.⁵¹ Admirable, he says, as these labour standards are, they are considered in the developing world to be part of an effort by the richer countries to protect themselves from competition from cheap labour in poor countries. The other paper by Marie-Hélène Advieille deals with setting standards which distinguish child slavery from child labour.⁵² Thus children are considered to be slaves if they are deprived of education and recreation, and if they are used in ways detrimental to their health or life threatening. The latter include prostitution, military service, riding as camel jockeys, working in fireworks factories, producing charcoal, and spending long hours tied to looms and other crippling occupations. Since child labour is essential to the survival of many poor families and produces much needed export goods, politics, economics and humanitarianism are interwoven in the negotiation of treaties setting these standards.

Slavery has been outlawed everywhere since 1970. However, ‘contemporary forms of slavery’ are not only widespread but in some cases are increasing. Forced prostitution of women, and of children of both sexes, is growing with the rise of the global sex industry, spurred on by the use of the Internet for trafficking, by pornography, and by linkages to organized crime and drug trafficking. The use of child soldiers, and the sexual slavery of girls forced to serve rebel armies, is increasing with the proliferation of small wars and the collapse of some states. Almost unnoticed has been the kidnapping of thousands of women and girls in China for sale as brides. There is also an active trade in children across boundaries in Africa. Children are sent from rural areas to work as exploited domestics or apprentices in urban areas in Africa, Haiti and elsewhere. Migrant labour, legal and illegal is exploited in sweatshops and even in private homes. Forced labour exists, particularly in Myanmar. The Chinese still sentence political dissenters and others to labour camps producing goods for export. Debt bondage is widespread and taking new forms.⁵³

The many conventions against these abuses are almost unenforceable. This is partly because governments are too weak, too poor, or too corrupt to take action. But it is also because of the lack of clear definitions without which the courts cannot launch successful prosecutions. What is needed at the international level is a new definition of slavery. The old League definition based on ownership is inadequate to counter contemporary forms of slavery. ‘Slavery’ and ‘Virtual slavery’ are now catch-all terms without precise definition. At the level of international relations they should either be scrapped or redefined.

ABBREVIATION

- SSAI— conference on ‘Slave Systems in Asia and the Indian Ocean: Their Structure and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries’, Université d’Avignon, 18–20 May, 2000.

NOTES

1. Only a few of the relevant works dealing with the subject can be cited here. See for instance Igor Kopytoff and Suzanne Miers, ‘African “Slavery” as an Institution of Marginality’, in Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff (eds.), *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press 1977), pp.3–81; Igor Kopytoff, ‘Commentary One (on Paul Lovejoy)’ in Michael Craton (ed.), *Roots and Branches: Current Directions in Slave Studies* (Toronto: Pergamon Press, 1979), pp.62–77; Igor Kopytoff, ‘Slavery: Introduction’, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, II (1982), pp.207–30; Paul Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Claude Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Orlando Patterson. *Slavery and Social Death: a Comparative Study* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: 1982).
2. I use the masculine term henceforth only to avoid the more cumbersome his/her, but most slaves were probably female.
3. See Orlando Patterson, *Freedom in the Making of Western Culture* (New York: Basic Books 1991); David Kelly and Anthony Reid (eds.), *Asian Freedoms: The Idea of Freedom in East and Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
4. In some societies the owner had the right to punish the slave but not actually to kill him.
5. See for instance, James Watson (ed.), *Asian and African Systems of Slavery* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980); Anthony Reid (ed.), *Slavery, Dependency and Bondage in Southeast Asia* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1983); Martin A.Klein (ed.), *Breaking the Chains: Slavery, Bondage, and Emancipation in Modern Africa and Asia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).
6. See article by Alpers in this collection; Musleem Jumeer, ‘Slave Systems in Mauritius: Structure and Change, 18th–20th centuries’, paper presented at the SSAI (2000).
7. Nigel Worden, ‘Indian Ocean Slavery and its Demise in the Cape Colony’, in Gwyn Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2004), ch.2.
8. I use the word master for convenience although some women owned slaves.
9. To quote Jumeer.
10. Richard Allen’s article in this collection.
11. Keya Dasgupta, ‘Plantation Labour in the Brahmapura Valley: Regional Enclaves in a Colonial Context’, in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
12. I am not discussing here the forced recruitment of Africans for the Indian Ocean plantations, which was certainly a disguised form of slave-trading. For two different

- views on the traffic in indentured labour see Hugh Tinker, *A New System of Slavery: the Export of Indian Labour Overseas 1830–1920* (London: Hansib Publishing, 1993); Pieter Emmer, “‘A Spirit of Independence’ or Lack of Education for the Market? Freedmen and Asian Indentured Labourers in the Post Emancipation Caribbean, 1834–1917”, in Howard Temperley (ed.), *After Slavery: Emancipation and its Discontents* (London: Frank Cass 2000).
13. Kerry Ward, ‘Changing Patterns of Forced Migration at the Cape after the Collapse of the Dutch East India Company’, paper presented at the SSAI (2000).
 14. See Omar Eno, The Abolition of Slavery and the Aftermath Stigma: the Case of the Bantu/Jareer People on the Benadir Coast of Southern Somalia; Suzanne Miers, ‘Slavery and the Slave Trade in Saudi Arabia and the Arab States on the Persian Gulf 1921–1963’; Behnaz Mirzai, ‘The 1848 Abolitionist *Farmān*: A Step Towards Ending the Slave Trade in Iran’; Abdul Sheriff, ‘The Slave Trade and Its Fallout in the Persian Gulf’; and W.G.Clarence-Smith, ‘Islam and the Abolition of the Slave-Trade and Slavery in the Indian Ocean’—all in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
 15. For a discussion of this see Bernard Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East: An Historical Enquiry* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press 1990).
 16. Eno, ‘The Abolition of Slavery’; Mohamed Kassim, The Maroon Settlements of Southern Somalia’, paper presented at the SSAI (2000).
 17. Miers, ‘Slavery and the Slave Trade’; Sheriff, ‘The Slave-Trade’—which see for a discussion of slave reproduction in the Persian Gulf.
 18. Warren’s article in this collection.
 19. Michel Boivin, ‘La Condition servile dans le Sindh colonial—remarques préliminaires’, paper presented at the SSAI (2000).
 20. Delaye’s article in this collection.
 21. Alaine Hutson, ‘Enslavement and Manumission in Saudi Arabia, 1926–1938’, *Critique* 11, 1 (2002), pp.49–70.
 22. Gwyn Campbell, ‘Unfree Labour and the Significance of Abolition in Madagascar, c.1825–1949’, in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
 23. Boomgaard’s article in this collection; Indrani Chatterjee, ‘Abolition by Denial: The South Asian Example’, in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
 24. See e.g. Delaye’s article in this collection.
 25. At that time the French were still in control.
 26. Robin Maugham, *The Slaves of Timbuktu* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), p.164.
 27. This point is not discussed in this collection as most articles deal with an earlier period.
 28. Boomgaard’s article in this collection.
 29. Turton’s article in this collection.
 30. As maintained by Claude Meillassoux, *Anthropology of Slavery*.
 31. Chatterjee, ‘Abolition by Denial’.
 32. *Ibid.*
 33. Boivin, ‘La Condition servile’; articles by Warren and Delaye in this collection.
 34. Boomgaard’s article in this collection.
 35. Kim Bok Rae’s article in this collection; Campbell, ‘Unfree Labour’.
 36. Articles by Warren and Kim Bok Rae in this collection.
 37. Campbell, ‘Unfree Labour’; Sato’s article in this collection.

38. Tracy Steele, 'Race, Ethnicity, and Labor in Japan', paper presented at the SSAI (2000).
39. Ibid.
40. Michael Salman, 'The Meaning of Slavery: The Genealogy of "an Insult to the American Government and to the Filipino People"', in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
41. Delaye's article in this collection. For a discussion of this in relation to Africa see Suzanne Miers and Martin A.Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule in Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1998); Suzanne Miers and Richard Roberts, *The End of Slavery in Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).
42. Chatterjee, 'Abolition by Denial'.
43. Delaye's article in this collection.
44. For an interesting discussion of this point in relation to Africa see Carolyn A.Brown, 'Testing the Boundaries of Marginality: Twentieth Century Slavery and Emancipation Struggles in Nkanu, Northern Igboaland, 1920–1929', in *Journal of African History*, 17, 37 (1996), pp.51–80.
45. See for example Barbara M.Cooper, *Marriage in Maradi:Gender and Culture in a Hausa Society in Niger, 1900–1964* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann 1997).
46. Elizabeth Sinn, 'Chinese Patriarchy and the Protection of Women and Girls in 19th Century Hong Kong', in Maria Jaschok and Suzanne Miers (eds.), *Women and Chinese Patriarchy: Submission, Servitude and Escape* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd., 1994), pp.141–70.
47. Chatterjee, 'Abolition by Denial'.
48. Kim Bok Rae's article in this collection.
49. 'Is There Slavery in Sudan? Provisional Observations of a visit to Sudan by Anti-Slavery International Representatives (18–28 October 2000)' and 'Exchange of faxes between the Committee for the Elimination of the Abduction of Women and Children (30 August 2001) and Anti-Slavery International (12 October 2001)'.
50. See for instance Boubacar Messaoud, 'L'esclavage en Mauritanie: de l'idéologie du silence à la mise en question', in *Journal des Africanistes: l'ombre porté de l'esclavage: Avatars contemporains de l'oppression sociale*, 70, 1/2 (2001), pp. 291–337.
51. Jérôme Joubert, 'Travail force, travail des enfants et commerce international: qui a peur des normes sociales?', paper presented at the SSAI (2000).
52. Marie-Hélène Advielle, 'Le travail des enfants en Inde. Une forme d'esclavage moderne', paper presented at the SSAI (2000).
53. For a brief discussion of contemporary forms of slavery see Suzanne Miers, 'Contemporary Forms of Slavery', in Richard Roberts and Philip Zachernuk (eds.), *Canadian Journal of African Studies* (Special Issue: 'On Slavery and Islam in African History: A Tribute to Martin Klein'), 34, 3 (2000), pp.714–47. See also the Reports of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, and the publications of Anti-Slavery International, and Human Rights Watch.

A Forgotten Corner of the Indian Ocean: Gujarati Merchants, Portuguese India and the Mozambique Slave-Trade, c.1730–1830¹

PEDRO MACHADO

The slave-trade which developed in Mozambique from the mid-eighteenth century owed its initial growth to French slavers who sought to satisfy growing demands for servile labour in the Mascarene Islands. From the 1790s, Brazilian demand gradually became more important as Atlantic supply centres for Brazil were increasingly threatened by British antislave-trade surveillance. So great did this demand for ‘Moçambiques’ become that by the 1810s slaves had replaced ivory, gold and silver as the mainstay of the export economy of northern Mozambique.

While the slave-trade from Mozambique to Madagascar, the Mascarene Islands and Brazil during this period has been studied, the traffic in Mozambique slaves to the Portuguese Indian territories of Goa, Diu and Daman has been neglected. Although slave imports into Portuguese India appear to have declined after peaking in the seventeenth century when the Goan market supplied all Portuguese territories in the Indian Ocean, a regular traffic in slaves continued well into the nineteenth century.² While examining the Mozambique slave export trade in general, this chapter also focuses on the slave-trade to Diu and Daman from the late eighteenth century to the early 1830s. In particular, it explores the activity of Hindu Gujarati merchants from Diu, and to a lesser extent Daman, who started trading to Mozambique on a regular basis from the end of the seventeenth century. They dominated commerce in Mozambique and were prominent in much of the western Indian Ocean until the 1820s when groups such as the Kutchi Bhatias, Khojas and Lohanas began expanding their trade networks to southern Africa. An analysis of slave-trade figures reveals the existence of a market in western India for African slaves and suggests that traditional estimates for slaves imported into South Asia need to be revised. It is hoped that this study will also contribute to recent historical interest in the African ‘Diaspora’ of the western Indian Ocean.³

Indian Merchants and Slave Ownership in Mozambique

Indian Gujarati merchants on Mozambique Island traditionally owned small numbers of slaves whom they employed on their boats. On an irregular basis, they also shipped small numbers of slaves to Diu and Daman from the 1730s, but

remained largely aloof from the slave export trade until the late eighteenth century. While ivory remained their primary commercial focus, they then moved from ‘indirect’ involvement in the slave-trade (as providers of the cloth for which most slaves were exchanged) to ‘direct’ participation, exporting slaves to western India and supplying credit to visiting Portuguese and Brazilian slavers.⁴

The Portuguese in Mozambique displayed general mistrust of non-Christians. In the 1720s, this was manifested against Swahili Muslims whose presence on the coast was considered ‘threatening’. Official rhetoric stressing the ‘nefarious’ influence of Islam on the African population disguised fear of ‘Arab’ and ‘Swahili’ commercial competition that led to Portuguese attempts to curb Muslim ownership of, and trade in, slaves.⁵ In the 1730s, this xenophobia spread to embrace *gentios* (Hindus), who in the 1740s were similarly barred from slave ownership.⁶

Indian merchants reacted by petitioning to be allowed to trade and own slaves ‘as they did presently, [and] to make use of them whilst they remained on the island [Mozambique Island].’⁷ They argued that only because ‘other satisfactory goods’ were unavailable did they accept slaves in payment for imported Gujarati cloths,⁸ and that the prohibitions should not apply to them as, unlike Islam, theirs was not a proselytizing religion. Indeed, they encouraged their slaves to attend Christian services, allowed them to be baptized, and reassured the Portuguese that upon leaving Mozambique an Indian would sell his slaves only to Christians.⁹ Nevertheless, slaves had become so essential to Gujarati merchants for their domestic and other labour requirements that should the Portuguese authorities proceed with a ban on them holding slaves, they threatened to remove themselves to another part of the East African coast.

Conscious of the potentially disastrous consequences this would have on the local economy, the Portuguese in 1746 granted Indians permission to own and trade openly in slaves in Mozambique.¹⁰ *Mouros* (Arab and Swahili Muslims) and *Gentios* were ordered to submit their slaves for instruction in ‘Christian doctrine’,¹¹ but the Portuguese lacked the power to enforce compliance and moreover could ill afford to alienate either of these groups. During the 1750s and 1760s, slaves continued to be used extensively on Mozambique Island, chiefly as dock labourers serving vessels from Diu and Daman, and as porters, carrying goods cleared at customs to nearby warehouses and subsequently to markets in the interior.¹² Slaves could be cheap enough for even ‘poor’ Indians to purchase, but the average number owned by Indian residents of Mozambique Island was two or three, although a few possessed ten or more slaves. A 1782 inventory records that the 49 Indian merchants of Mozambique Island, Mossuril and the Cabaceiras (settlements on Makuana, the mainland opposite Mozambique Island) owned a total of 1245 slaves, but this number almost certainly included *mercadores volantes* or *patamares*, mostly free African tradingagents (often Yao and Makua) who distributed Gujarati cloth in the interior in exchange for ivory. While some were nominally ‘slaves’, their status vis-à-vis their ‘masters’ is often unclear.¹³ Indians also used slaves to cultivate vegetables for domestic

consumption on *machambas*, small land-tracts on Makuana acquired through debtors defaulting on loan payments.¹⁴

The Mozambique Slave-Trade and Slave Exports to Portuguese India

In the 1740s, continued concern about non-Christian ‘influences’ is reflected in the demand that the Governors of Diu and Daman ‘record precisely the slaves which are *usually* taken from Mozambique on the vessels of those ports’ and ‘be careful not to allow them to go to areas which are not Catholic.’¹⁵ This reveals that, although it is unclear when the trade began, Gujarati merchants were by then exporting slaves to western India. However, the numbers involved were small as the Mozambique slave export trade only developed fully in the late eighteenth century. African slaves brought to Daman were either absorbed locally or sent on to Goa, but those sent to Diu were overwhelmingly re-exported to north-west India, notably Kathiawar, where demand remained small until the nineteenth century when markets also developed for them in Kutch and possibly even Sind. These regions were relatively close to Diu, with which they had established commercial ties pre-dating the Portuguese.¹⁶ The Rana of Porbander admitted that slave ships from Mozambique then touched at Porbander ‘bound for other ports’,¹⁷ while it was common for slaves to change hands a number of times before arriving at their final destination.¹⁸ In Kathiawar, African slaves were employed in domestic and ‘ceremonial’ service and in the armies of local rulers, and in Kutch, which was sparsely populated due in large part to high rates of male out-migration, as maritime labour.¹⁹ Some slaves imported into Diu were also transhipped to the French possessions of Pondicherry and the Ile de France primarily, it would seem, through Goa.²⁰

Mozambique slaves retained in Diu were employed as deck-hands on ships involved in the country trade, dock labour and domestic labour. Indian vessels returning from Mozambique made landfalls at ports like Muscat and Mocha. At the latter, some slaves may have been sold for work on coffee plantations, while most slaves in the Persian Gulf were employed as soldiers, household servants, sailors and dock hands, and pearl divers.²¹ Diu merchants also visited Mecca where slaves may have been sold for the Arabian market.²²

From the 1770s demand from the French Mascarenes led to an expansion in the Mozambique slave export trade and of Indian involvement. While recent work has explored aspects of the slave-trade to Muslim countries in the western Indian Ocean,²³ studies of African *Sidi* or *Habshi* communities in India have generally paid only cursory attention to their origins in the slave-trade.²⁴ Jeanette Pinto’s 1992 study of slavery in Portuguese India is heavily anecdotal, and while Celsa Pinto (1994) included some statistics on the slave traffic from Mozambique, only the work of Rudy Bauss (1997) has revealed the overall dimensions of that trade.²⁵ Nevertheless, as Bauss relied on Pinto’s incomplete figures of 383 slaves

arriving in Diu (1804–33) and 236 in Daman (1827–33), he underestimates total slave imports from Mozambique.²⁶

Bauss' estimate of 25 slaves a year entering Diu and Daman from Mozambique during the 1770s is plausible.²⁷ These levels were probably maintained until the late 1780s, when slave imports increased: 71 slaves entered Diu in 1787, and 40 to 60 slaves were being annually shipped annually from Mozambique to Diu by 1789, and half that number to Daman, while possibly 100 to 150 were exported to Goa.²⁸ Figures fluctuated considerably from year to year, peaks being reached in 1793 (106) and in 1800 and 1801 (258 and 386). Of the 177 slaves exported from Mozambique to Daman in 1800, Indian vessels carried 107, the remaining 70 being shipped by Joaquim do Rosario Monteiro, the most prominent Portuguese slave merchant of the era.²⁹

Increased slave imports to Diu and Daman should be seen in the context of the opening of Mozambique ports in the 1780s in order to increase the level of trade with Portuguese India and generate more revenue,³⁰ and more importantly, increased French and Brazilian slaving. Mascarene interest in slaves from Mozambique and the Kerimba Islands grew from *circa* 1760 to 1795. The main focus of French slavers subsequently moved to the east African coast north of Cape Delgado, but Mozambique slave exports were sustained by Brazilian slavers who turned to east African waters from the late 1780s due to intensified British anti-slave-trade measures in the Atlantic. Slave exports to Brazil grew spectacularly during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, especially in the 1820s. While French slavers had concentrated on Mozambique Island due to restrictions on 'direct' contact with the colony's subordinate ports, under the liberalized trade-regime ports such as Quelimane and notably Inhambane emerged as important slave markets.³²

TABLE 1
SLAVE IMPORTS INTO DIU, DAMAN AND GOA³⁰ FROM MOZAMBIQUE, 1770–1834

Year	Diu	Daman	Total imports	Mortality rate ^a	Total exports from Mozambique
1770–1786 ^b	425 (25 average)	425 (25 average)	850	18%	1003
1787	71		71	18%	84
1790	77		77	18%	90
1791		19	19	18%	22
1793	35	55	90	18%	106
1794	61		61	18%	72
1796	41		41	18%	48
1798	33		33	18%	38
1799	14		14	18%	16
1800	42	177	219	18%	258
1801	40	287	327	18%	386
1802	9		9	18%	10
1803	31 ^c	72 ^d	103	18%	121

Year	Diu	Daman	Total imports	Mortality rate ^a	Total exports from Mozambique
1804	10	97	107	18%	114
1805	3		3	18%	4
1809	33		33	18%	39
1810	91		91	18%	107
1811	31		31	18%	36
1815	37 ^e	78	115	18%	136
1817	68		68	18%	80
1818	32		32	18%	37
1819	52		52	18%	61
1820		80	80	18%	94
1821	26		26	18%	30
1822	22		22	18%	25
1823	10		10	18%	11
1824	28		28	18%	33
1825	50	23 ^f	73	18%	86
1826	50		50	18%	60
1827		21	21	18%	24
1828	63	65	128	18%	151
1829	75	34	109	18%	129
1830	3	51	54	18%	64
1831	14	43	57	18%	67
1832		40	40	18%	47
1833	50	69	119	18%	140
1834	25		25	18%	29
Goa 1770–1830			3000	18%	3540
Total	1227+ Bauss estimate: 1652	1211+ Bauss estimate: 1636	2438+ Bauss estimate: plus Goa total: 6288		2855+ Bauss estimate: plus Goa total: 7398

Notes: a. This rate has been calculated from the following: The work of Martin and Ryan which, by using Alpers' estimate of a 20 per cent death rate on a 40-day journey, and the logic that 'transit mortality is an increasing function of travel time', calculated mortality on crossings to the Gulf at 9 per cent for voyages lasting 17–20 days ('A Quantitative Assessment', p.77); HAG, Correspondencia de Damão 1067, Crew and Cargo List of the Azia Feliz, Damão, 24 Oct. 1820 which indicates that of the 96 slaves embarked at Moçambique, only 80 survived the voyage for a mortality rate of around 17 per cent. We should note that it was not uncommon for slave deaths to be high on vessels which were not specialized for the slave-trade because these failed to provide adequate onboard provisions or living conditions as the slaves were not necessarily considered the most valuable 'commodities' on the voyage. W.G. Clarence-Smith, private communication, 3 Sept. 2001.

b. These figures are drawn from Bauss, 'The Portuguese Slave Trade' and represent low-end averages.

c. This figure is based on 5-year averages on either side of the gap.

d. Indian merchants imported less than half (23) of this total.

e. This figure is based on 5-year averages on either side of the gap.

f. This figure is taken from Bauss, 'The Portuguese Slave Trade', p.23

Source: Compiled from the information contained in the HAG, Correspondencia de Diu 999–1013, Alfandegas de Diu 4952–69, Correspondencia de Damão 1055–70, Alfandegas de Damão 4836–49.

By the 1760s, Gujarati merchants had established direct contact with Mozambique's southerly coast, especially with Quelimane, approximately one week's sailing distance. However, only from the 1790s did such voyages become frequent as Indians intensified their search for alternative export sources. Slaves figured amongst Quelimane's exports in the 1780s, but only from the mid-1790s did the southern slave export trade gain momentum. Increased Indian involvement is reflected in the increased number of ship passes issued to Indian merchants for travel to these ports.³³ While in 1781, three passports were issued to Indian merchants for travel to Quelimane,³⁴ in 1794 ten and in 1795 nine vessels, half of which were owned or commissioned by Indian merchants, arrived there from Mozambique Island.³⁵ This pattern persisted until the late 1820s.³⁶

During this period, Quelimane exported to Mozambique Island predominantly ivory, secondary exports including gold, silver, and foodstuffs such as rice and wheat. Slaves, shipped initially as a supplement to ivory, came to dominate Quelimane exports only from the mid-1820s.³⁷ Nevertheless, some Indian merchants specialized early in slaves, primarily by entering into partnerships with established Portuguese merchants. Two of the most active were Laxmichand Motichand and Shobhachand Sowchand.³⁸

Laxmichand Motichand, one of the most prominent Gujarati merchants in Mozambique, first visited the southern coast (Sofala) in 1781 and in 1785 sailed twice to Quelimane, establishing more regular contact with the port in 1793 with his ship *Minerva*, manned by 22 lascars.³⁹ The *Minerva* was a *palla*, a vessel widely employed by Indians for western Indian Ocean crossings. An average of 200 to 250 tons burthen, 2 or 3-masted (lateenrigged), with uncovered decks, their manoeuvrability and speed made them ideal for the relatively short voyages to Mozambique.⁴⁰ From 1793 to 1795, Jose Henriques da Cruz Freitas, an experienced pilot and captain and 'one of the first great slavers of Mozambique'⁴¹ travelled on the *Minerva*, which in 1794 and 1795, alongside other goods, carried 96 and 154 slaves respectively to Mozambique Island.⁴² He was accompanied on the 1795 voyage by Monteiro. While there is no evidence that they were partners, the two took the majority of the slave cargo.⁴³

From 1795 to 1801, Indian connections with Quelimane slackened due to the danger of attack in the Mozambique Channel by French corsairs, although those like Laxmichand Motichand and Shobhachand Sowchand who could afford the risk managed to continue trading for slaves.⁴⁴ From 1800 to 1810 an estimated 20,800 slaves were shipped from Quelimane, mostly to Mozambique Island which over the same period exported 50,000 slaves.⁴⁵ However, slave imports into Diu by Indian merchants dipped in this decade to approximately 220, possibly due to a reduced number of voyages to Quelimane. Particularly low imports were recorded in 1802, and from 1804 to 1805 when only 13 slaves arrived, although imports increased thereafter to reach almost 100 in 1810.⁴⁶ By contrast, slave imports to Daman were high from the start of the decade, numbering 287 in 1801 and 97 in 1804. Of the slaves shipped in 1801, 118 were carried on Indian vessels, 99 on a Portuguese vessel and 70 on an American

vessel.⁴⁷ The difference between the Diu and Daman slave-trades reflects different commercial structures. Diu belonged to the north-west Indian trading complex centred on Kathiawar, whereas Daman was also integrated into a European nexus, being frequented by Portuguese traders like Monteiro, who purchased slaves for Goa and Macão, English merchants buying for the Ceylon market, and American slavers.⁴⁸

In the 1810s, Mozambique Island trade with Quelimane recovered, 25 vessels being sent south by Indian merchants. Prominent amongst them was the financier Shobhachand Sowchand, who in the late eighteenth century even leased one of his vessels to the English East India Company for their trade at Bengal.⁴⁹ At the same time, he regularly despatched the 350 tonne *Conquistado* and the 200 tonne palla *Feliz Aurora* to trade at the southern ports of Quelimane, Inhambane, Sofala and Lourenço Marques, and for a few years even shipped slaves to the Cape of Good Hope.⁵⁰

Slave imports under the Dutch at the Cape came mostly from Madagascar, India and the East Indies, but some were imported from Mozambique, especially from 1721 to 1730 when a Dutch East India Company (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*—VOC) settlement was established at Delagoa Bay.⁵¹ Following the 1767 ban on the import of Asian slaves by VOC vessels in reaction to the murder of a Company official by Buginese and Sumatran slaves, the Cape relied on foreign, chiefly French ships destined for St Domingue. However, some were ‘Portuguese’, and their number increased from 1797 to 1812, following the first British occupation of the Cape.⁵² Chief amongst them was Monteiro who in 1795 and 1799 sold the bulk of his cargoes (354 and 422 slaves respectively) at the Cape. Most Portuguese slavers declared their destination to be the Brazilian ports of Rio de Janeiro or, after 1813, Bahia and Pernambuco. This allowed them to put into Table Bay for water, provisions and/or medical assistance. While there, they offloaded their cargo of slaves to local partners before returning to Mozambique. The three-week Mozambique- Cape voyage involved much lower risks and slave mortality and thus higher profits than the 90-day Mozambique-Brazil voyage. In addition, the Cape market was attractive for Mozambique-based merchants, who suffered from a perennial shortage of currency, because payment there for slaves was in Spanish *piastres*.⁵³

At the Cape, Monteiro bought vessels and established commercial relationships with importers Michael Hogan and Alexander Tennant that endured until his death in c.1812/13.⁵⁴ He also involved Shobhachand Sowchand who in 1806 purchased from Monteiro the brig *General Izidro*, which in 1804–5 had transported slaves to the Cape, specifically for his Cape ventures.⁵⁵ Granted a passport to sail to the Cape ‘laden with slaves’, and from there ‘onto any Portuguese port in South America’, the *General Izidro* reached the Cape in February 1806 and there sold its entire cargo of 242 slaves.⁵⁶ However, the British embargo imposed from 1806, after the colony passed for the second time into British hands, resulted in a break-up of the Sowchand-Monteiro partnership after their final joint shipment to the Cape in 1807.⁵⁷

Nevertheless, Monteiro continued exporting slaves to Brazil, while Sowchand, through Ricardo de Souza and Manuel Jose Gomes, other Portuguese slave merchants, purchased two large (2–3 mast, 500–600 tonne) ships at the Ile de France for shipping slaves from Mozambique.⁵⁸ Sowchand, one of the biggest financiers in Mozambique, recouped the cost of buying the ships through using his vessels and others leased from the Portuguese, for the slave-trade. In the process he also became, alongside Amirchand Meghaji, another Gujarati, one of Mozambique's largest slave owners.⁵⁹

Like the *karany* (Indian) merchants who from the 1830s were involved in the Madagascar slave-trade,⁶⁰ Sowchand rarely took an active role in the actual shipment of slaves. However, his compatriots did actively engage in the slave export trade from Mozambique to Diu and Daman as later they did from Zanzibar and the Arabian peninsula to Kutch and Kathiawar.

Mozambique slave exports, sustained by demand from the Brazilian sugar plantations, are for the decade after 1810 estimated at 62,000, and in 1820 alone exceeded 10,000 per annum.⁶¹ Quelimane 'benefited' most from this demand as a port 'uniquely placed to supply large numbers of slaves'⁶² to which from 1811 Brazilian slavers could sail direct without first calling at Mozambique Island.⁶³ From 1811 to 1815, slave exports doubled from Quelimane where in 1817 a customs house was opened.⁶⁴ By the end of the decade, over 90 per cent of the 16,400 slaves exported from Quelimane were shipped to Brazil (Rio, Bahia and Pernambuco).⁶⁵

The slave-trade to Portuguese India was small by comparison, on average only 46 slaves a year being exported to Diu from 1811 to 1820, while in 1815 there were 52 slaves shipped to Daman.⁶⁶ Working from D. Bartolomeu dos Martires' figures for 1819, mortality at sea reduced the number of slaves from Mozambique arriving in Portuguese India from 350 to about 287.⁶⁷

The Mozambique slave-trade peaked from 1820 to 1835 when Quelimane became the 'greatest mart for slaves on the east coast',⁶⁸ with Inhambane emerging by the mid-1820s in another major slave market. During the 1820s over 100,000 slaves were exported from Mozambique Island, Ibo, Inhambane and Lourenço Marques, with almost 50,000 more slaves (averaging 10,000 a year by the close of the decade) being shipped from Quelimane.⁶⁹ Slave exports were in large part fuelled by Brazilian demand, notably in the latter 1820s. The major Brazilian market for Mozambique slaves was Rio de Janeiro, followed by Bahia, Pernambuco and Maranhão. From 1822 to 1830, an estimated 37,413 slaves entered Brazil from Mozambique Island, and 24,394 from Quelimane. Most were shipped in the late 1820s as merchants reacted to the Anglo-Brazilian agreement to ban slave imports into Brazil from 1830.⁷⁰

Increased demand from western Indian Ocean markets further stimulated the Mozambique slave-trade, notably from Inhambane that from 1824 to 1826 exported an annual average of 3,500 slaves to the French islands. The extent of this trade has led Gwyn Campbell to argue that 'so great did the French demand for East African slaves become that, contrary to traditional assumptions, the

French islands were rivalling and might even have replaced Brazil as the major export market for Mozambique slaves by 1830.⁷¹

Irregular trading relations existed between Mozambique and Madagascar, the west coast of which was visited by Gujarati merchants from the mid-1810s to the mid-1820s. By contrast, from the 1810s, Khoja and Bohora Shia Muslim merchants from Kutch established a significant presence as financiers of the slave-trade in Madagascar where by the 1830s they provided intense competition for the Gujaratis operating from Mozambique.⁷²

While continuing to fluctuate at comparatively low levels, Mozambique slave exports to Portuguese India also increased in the 1820s as demand for African slaves increased in western India. Thus in 1821 the ruler of Bhavnagar ‘hired [one of his largest vessels] to a merchant’ who shipped slaves from Mozambique.⁷³ However, Mozambique slave exports to Diu were sharply curtailed in 1830–31 due to British pressure and, although slave exports to Daman peaked in 1833 at 69, slave imports into Portuguese India from the east African coast had effectively ended by 1840.⁷⁴

Anti-slave-trade measures from the mid-1820s increasingly impacted on Indian commerce with Mozambique, notably on Gujaratis whose cloth trade was inextricably linked to the slave-trade from the interior of Mozambique.⁷⁵ In 1829, Diu stated despondently:

The trade with the capital of Mozambique is the only way open to make this island prosper but the news of the ending of the slave trade has meant that most of the goods exported last year have not been successfully traded; as a result the return has been very small, and has discouraged the trade of the merchants.⁷⁶

Whereas between 1792 and 1831, the African slave population of Diu had increased from about 150 to 350, it had slumped by 1838 to 150 and by the mid-1850s no slaves were recorded on the island.⁷⁷

Numbers, Sex Ratios and Prices

Efforts to quantify the east African slave-trade have proved difficult, not least slave exports to South Asia. Sheriff’s estimate of 3,000 slaves shipped annually to markets in Arabia, the Persian Gulf and India during the first half of the nineteenth century is close to those of Martin and Ryan (2500 for 1770–1829) and Austen (roughly 2300 from 1700–1815).⁷⁸ Sheriffs rejection of these authors’ argument that slave exports to these regions expanded after the Napoleonic Wars possibly underestimates the demand for maritime, urban and domestic slave labour, notably in South Asia where demand for slaves in agriculture was small.⁷⁹

The slave traffic to Arabia and the Persian Gulf was far greater than to India, but Austen’s estimate, that from 1800 to 1850 some 500 slaves were imported

annually into South Asia, appears overly conservative given the evidence presented above which indicates that sometimes close to half this number, and in some years possibly 350 to 500 slaves, were entering Portuguese India from Mozambique.⁸⁰ Moreover, if estimates that by the 1830s annual slave imports into Karachi reached 150, and into Mandvi, at the entrance to the Gulf of Kutch, 400 to 500,⁸¹ total imports into South Asia were possibly double the figure proposed by Austen. Clearly, further research in receiving areas is necessary before definitive pronouncements can be advanced, but the evidence for Portuguese India strongly suggests that an upward revision in imports will be likely.

Sources indicate that adult male slaves were traditionally in highest demand in India.⁸² At Diu, the average male to female import ratio for adult African slaves was traditionally 3:1, but by the mid- to late 1820s this changed in favour of boys and women. Demand for boys, who were considered less likely to flee than adult males, was particularly strong in Kutch where they were used primarily as deck-hands.⁸³ Indeed, the import of African boys continued well into the middle of the nineteenth century despite the British pressure.⁸⁴ Also by the late 1820s, greater numbers of female than male slaves were entering Diu, possibly in the ratio of 6:4.⁸⁵ Women and young girls were in demand in Kathiawar and Kutch as domestic workers and concubines, and there are cases of Kutchi women being sent to East Africa ‘for the express purpose of purchasing young girls to be brought up to prostitution’.⁸⁶ Some were also imported to become the wives of African slaves, as in Mandvi where they were to be ‘married to the Seedhis now in Kutch’.⁸⁷

As slave labour in Diu and Daman was used in essentially non-productive capacities, slave prices were not dependent on commodity price levels as they were on the cash-crop plantations of places like Zanzibar and Reunion. Slave prices in Diu, which were generally stagnant in the late eighteenth and first few years of the nineteenth century, grew by 50 to 100 per cent by the 1820s, a rise confirmed by fragmentary evidence from Daman.⁸⁸

Conclusion

Indian merchant involvement in the Mozambique slave-trade reflected both the existence of a market for African slaves in western India, and the flexibility of those merchants in the face of changing commercial conditions. Gujarati merchants dominated the Mozambique market for cloth, manufactured in western India, that formed the primary commodity of exchange for staple exports such as ivory and slaves until at least the 1810s, when firearms became increasingly popular.

This study, which focuses on Indian involvement in the Mozambique-Portuguese India slave-trade nexus, describes the nature and provides some idea of the size of this slave-trade during the eighteenth and early nineteenth

centuries. It is suggested that, while comparatively low, estimates of Mozambique slave exports to Portuguese India need to be revised upwards.

ABBREVIATIONS

AHU	Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon
ANTT	Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisbon
HAG	Historical Archives of Goa, Panaji
OIOC	Oriental and India Office Collections, British Library, London.

NOTES

1. Part of this article was presented at the workshop ‘Reasserting Connections, Commonalities, and Cosmopolitanism: The Western Indian Ocean Since 1800’, Yale University, 3–5 Nov. 2000. I wish to thank participants for their comments, especially Edward Alpers, and Michael Pearson who with Rudy Bauss, Richard B. Allen, and notably William Gervase Clarence-Smith also commented on the PhD dissertation chapter from which this material is drawn.
2. Maria de Jesus dos Martires Lopes, *Goa Setecentista: Tradição e Modernidade (1750–1800)* (Lisbon: Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 1996), p.93; Rudy Bauss, ‘The Portuguese Slave Trade from Mozambique to Portuguese India and Macau and Comments on Timor, 1750–1850: New Evidence from the Archives’, *Camões Center Quarterly*, 6/7, 1–2 (1997), p.21.
3. See, for example, Edward Alpers, ‘The African Diaspora in the Northwest Indian Ocean: Reconsideration of an Old Problem, New Directions for Research’, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 17, 2 (1997), pp. 61–80; *idem*, ‘Recollecting Africa: Diasporic Memory in the Indian Ocean World’, *African Studies Review* (Special Issue: ‘Africa’s Diaspora’) 43, 1 (2000), pp.83–99; Emmanuel Akyeampong, ‘Africans in the Diaspora: The Diaspora and Africa’, *African Affairs* (Centenary Issue: ‘A Hundred Years of Africa’), 99 (2000), pp.183–215.
4. Customs records indicate that ivory dominated the Indian export trade from Mozambique until c.1810. Silver and gold also figured prominently. See HAG, Alfandegas de Diu 4952–69 and Alfandegas de Damão 4836–49.
5. See J.H da Cunha Rivara (ed.), *Archivo Portuguêz Oriental* (Nova Goa: Imprensa Nacional, 1857–77), Vol.6, pp.286–7; Nancy Hafkin, Trade, Society and Politics in Northern Mozambique, c.1753–1913’ (PhD dissertation, Boston University, 1973).
6. AHU, Moçambique, Cx 5 Doc 27, Jorge Barbosa Leal to Governor, Moçambique, 17 Nov. 1734. This was strongly supported by the Catholic Church: See AHU, Cx 6 Doc 6, Bishop D.Luis Caetano de Almeyda to King, Moçambique, 13 May 1741; Edward Alpers, ‘East Central Africa’, in Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L.Pouwels (eds.), *The History of Islam in Africa* (Athens, OH/Oxford/Cape Town: Ohio University Press/James Currey/David Philip, 2000), p.305.
7. Cunha Rivara, *Archivo Portuguêz Oriental*, Vol.6, pp.467–9.
8. Ibid, pp.467–8; AHU, Cx 67 Doc 2, Letter to Governor, Sena, ant 3 May 1794.

9. Cunha Rivara, *Archivo Portuguêz Oriental*, Vol.6, p.468.
10. *Ibid.*, p.468.
11. AHU, Moçambique, Cx 18 Doc 60, Moçambique, 12 Aug. 1760.
12. ANTT, Ministerio do Reino, Maço 602, Despacho do Coutinho Rangel, Moçambique, 9 Oct. 1821.
13. AHU, Cx 93 Doc 17, 1802; ANTT, Mapa da População de Moçambique, 1820; see also Fritz Hoppe, *A África Oriental Portuguesa no Tempo do Marques de Pombal, 1750–1777* (Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1970), p.182.
14. AHU, Moçambique, Cx 34 Doc 38, Vicente Caetano Maria Vasconcellos to Governor of Moçambique, Moçambique, 10 March, 1780; AHU, Moçambique, Cx 40 Doc 4, Representação of vassals of the King at Moçambique to Members of the Senate of the Camara de Moçambique, Moçambique, ant. 9 Oct. 1782; Francisco Santana, *Documentação Avulsa Moçambicana do Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino* (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, 1974), Vol.3, p.343.
15. Cunha Rivara, *Archivo Portuguêz Oriental*, pp.468–9. The emphasis is mine.
16. HAG, Alfandegas de Diu 4960, and Correspondencia de Diu 1004, Manoel Jose Gomes Loureiro to Governor of Diu, Goa, 17 March 1808.
17. OIOC, European MSS Eur E 293/125 (Willoughby Collection), ‘Memo and Summary regarding Slave Trade in Kathiawar and Kutch and its subsequent suppression (1835)’.
18. Thomas M.Ricks, ‘Slaves and Slave Traders in the Persian Gulf, 18th and 19th Centuries: An Assessment’, in William Gervase Clarence-Smith (ed.), *The Economics of the Indian Ocean Slave Trade* (London: Frank Cass, 1989), pp.60–70.
19. OIOC, European MSS Eur E 293/125 (Willoughby Collection); see also *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol.VIII: Kathiawar* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1884); H. Wilberforce-Bell, *A History of Kathiawad from the Earliest Times* (London: Heinemann, 1916); Harald Tambs-Lyche, *Power, Profit and Poetry: Traditional Society in Kathiawar, Western India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1997).
20. Teotonio de Souza, ‘French Slave-Trading in Portuguese Goa (1773–1791)’, in Teotonio de Souza (ed.), *Essays in Goan History* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing House, 1989), pp.119–31, and *idem*, ‘Mhamai House Records: Indigenous Sources for Indo-Portuguese Historiography’, *II Seminario Internacional de Historia Indo-Portuguesa* (Lisbon: Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical, 1985), pp.933–41.
21. HAG, Correspondencia de Dio 999; Ricks, ‘Slaves and Slave Traders’, pp.64–5; Ralph Austen, ‘The 19th Century Islamic Slave Trade from East Africa (Swahili and Red Sea Coasts): A Tentative Census’, in Clarence-Smith, *Economics of the Indian Ocean Slave Trade*, pp.21–44.
22. See A.B. de Bragança Pereira, *Os Portugueses em Diu (Separata de O Oriente Português)* (Bastora, n.d.), pp.255–7; HAG, Correspondencia de Diu 995, Marquez de Tavora to Castellan of Diu, Goa, 26 Oct. 1753.
23. William Gervase Clarence-Smith, ‘The Economics of the Indian Ocean and Red Sea Slave Trades in the 19th Century: An Overview’ and Ralph Austen, ‘The 19th Century Islamic Slave Trade from East Africa (Swahili and Red Sea Coasts): A Tentative Census’ in Clarence-Smith, *Economics of the Indian Ocean Slave Trade*, pp.1–20, 21–44; Ralph Austen, *African Economic History: Internal Development and External Dependency* (London: James Currey, 1987), ch.2; Patrick Manning,

Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental and African Slave Trades (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

24. The major exception remains Joseph Harris. See, for example, *The African Presence in Asia: Consequences of the East African Slave Trade* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1971); ‘A Commentary on the Slave Trade’, in *The African Slave Trade from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Century* (Paris: UNESCO, 1979), pp.289–95; ‘The African Diaspora in the Old and New Worlds’ in B.A.Ogot (ed.), *General History of Africa: Volume 5* (London/Berkeley/Paris: Heinemann/University of California Press/UNESCO, 1992), pp.113–36; see also Alpers, ‘The African Diaspora in the Northwest Indian Ocean’ and ‘Recollecting Africa’; P.P.Shirodkar, ‘Slavery in Coastal India’, *Purabhilka-Puratatva*, 3, 1 (1985), pp. 27–44 and ‘Slavery on [sic] Western Coast’, in P.P.Shirodkar, *Researches in Indo-Portuguese History* (Jaipur: Publication Scheme, 1998), Vol.1, pp.25–43.
25. Jeanette Pinto, *Slavery in Portuguese India* (Bombay: Himalaya Publishing House, 1992); Celsa Pinto, *Trade and Finance in Portuguese India: A Study of the Portuguese Country Trade, 1770–1840* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing House, 1994); Bauss, ‘The Portuguese Slave Trade’ pp.21–6; *idem*, ‘A Demographic Study of Portuguese India and Macau as well as Comments on Mozambique and Timor, 1750–1850’, *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 34, 2 (1997), pp.199–216.
26. Pinto’s figures are based on customs records. HAG archives indicate much higher figures.
27. Bauss, ‘The Portuguese Slave Trade’, p.22.
28. HAG, Correspondencia de Diu 999, Cargo lists of Indian vessels returned from Mozambique to Diu; Jeronimo Jose Nogueira de Andrade, ‘Descripção Do Estado em que ficavão os Negocios da Capitania de Mossambique nos fins de Novembro do Anno de 1789 com algumas Observações sobre a causa da decadência do Commercio dos Estabelecimentos Portugueses na Costa Oriental da Affrica. Escrita no anno de 1790,’ *Arquivo das Colônias*, 2 (1918). p.34.
29. HAG, Correspondencia de Damão 1061, Cargo Lists of vessels returned from Mozambique.
30. The tentative figure for Goa is based on personal communication with Rudy Bauss who believes that an annual average of at least 50 African slaves entered Goa over the period 1770–1830. It is possible, given the relatively high number of slaves present in Goa at the beginning of the nineteenth century, that this estimate is conservative. Clearly, extensive research is necessary in the records for Goa before we can arrive at more satisfactory data for slave imports over this period. For a view that slave numbers in Portuguese India (particularly in Goa) have been underestimated, see Timothy Walker, ‘Abolishing the Slave Trade in Portuguese India: Documentary Evidence of Popular and Official Resistance to Crown Policy, 1842–1860’, Unpublished paper presented at the conference ‘Slavery, Unfree Labour and Revolt in the Indian Ocean Region’, Avignon, 4–6 October 2001.
31. See Alexandre Lobato, *História do Presídio de Lourenço Marques*, 2 (Lisbon: Minerva, 1960).
32. For the Mascarene trade see Edward A. Alpers, The French Slave Trade in East Africa (1721–1810), *Cahiers d’Etudes Africaines*, 10, 37 (1970), pp.80–124; *idem*, *Ivory & Slaves in East Central Africa: Changing Patterns of International*

- Trade to the Later Nineteenth Century* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1975), pp.151, 185–7.
33. AHU, Codices 1324, 1329, 1345, 1355, 1366 and 1376. Merchants leaving Moçambique Island for any destination along the coast were required to obtain a ship pass in which they declared their destination, length of time away from the capital, name and type of vessel, crew members and reason(s) for undertaking the voyage.
 34. Govindji Gangadas, Laxmichand Nemidas and Velji Ambaidas—AHU, Codice 1345.
 35. The increase also reflected further relaxation of Portuguese controls over foreign trade—see José Capela, *O Escravismo Colonial em Moçambique* (Lisbon: Edições Afrontamento, 1993), pp.135–6.
 36. AHU, Codice 1355.
 37. Capela, *O Escravismo Colonial*, p.148. For the most recent work on the Mozambique slave-trade, see José Copela, *O Tráfico de Escravos nos Portos de Moçambique 1753–1904* (Porto: edições Afrontamento, 2002).
 38. Other major Indian merchants included Naranji Danji, Giva Sangarji and Velji Tairsi.
 39. AHU, Codice 1355.
 40. *Palla* may have been a corruption of *pahala*, a vessel used along the coast of western India. See Jean Deloche, *Transport and Communications in India Prior to Steam Locomotion* (Delhi/New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).
 41. Capela, *Escravismo Colonial*, p.138. A useful biographical sketch of da Cruz Freitas is provided on pp.172–3.
 42. AHU, Codice 1355; AHU, Moçambique, Cx 68 Doc 76 and Cx 70 Doc 69, Cargo List of the Palla Minerva returned from Quelimane, Moçambique, August 1794 and 27 April 1795.
 43. See Capela, *Escravismo Colonial*, pp.169–71.
 44. AHU, Codice 1365.
 45. Gerhard Liesegang, ‘A First Look at the Import and Export Trades of Mozambique,’ in G. Liesegang, H. Pasch and A. Jones (eds.), *Figuring African Trade: Proceedings of the Symposium on the Quantification and Structure of the Import and Export and Long Distance Trade in Africa 1800–1913* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1983), p.463. See also Manuel Joaquim Mendes de Vasconcellos e Cirne, *Memoria sobre a Província de Moçambique*, ed. Jose Capela (Maputo: Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique, 1990), p.23–4; Antonio Norberto de Barbosa de Villas Boas Truão, *Estatística da Capitania dos Rios de Senna do Anno de 1806* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1889), p.14.
 46. HAG, Correspondencia de Diu 1003, Cargo lists of Vessels returned from Mozambique, 1802 and Correspondencia de Diu 1005, Cargo List of the Galera de viagem, Diu, 10 Nov. 1810; Alfandegas de Diu 4953.
 47. HAG, Correspondencia de Damão 1061, Cargo lists of Vessels returned from Mozambique, 1801 and Correspondencia de Damao 1061, Cargo lists of Vessels returned from Mozambique, 1804.
 48. HAG, Correspondencia de Damão 1063, D.Joze Maria de Castro e Almeida to Viceroy, Daman, 7 Jan. 1812.
 49. AHU, Moçambique, Cx 166 Doc 102, Relação das Embarcações em Moçambique, 1819.

50. He transported 35 slaves to Moçambique in 1812. AHU, Moçambique, Cx 140 Doc 33, Cargo list of the Brig Santo Antonio Triunfo d'Africa returned from Quelimane, Moçambique, 2 April 1812; see also AHU, Codice 1365.
51. See Alan Smith, 'The Struggle for Control of Southern Mozambique, 1720–1835' (PhD dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1970).
52. Robert Ross, 'The Last Years of the Slave Trade to the Cape Colony', in Clarence-Smith, *Economics of the Indian Ocean Slave Trade*, pp.212, 215 and 'The Dutch on the Swahili Coast, 1776–1779: Two Slaving Journals', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 19, 2 (1986), pp.304–60, and 19, 3 (1986), pp.479–506; James Armstrong, 'The Slaves, 1652–1795', in Richard Elphick and H. Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652–1820* (Cape Town/London: Longman, 1979, 1st edition), and Armstrong and Nigel Worden, 'The Slaves, 1652–1834', in Elphick and Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652–1820*; Capela, *Escravismo Colonial*, p.170; Alpers, *Ivory & Slaves*, p.185.
53. See Michael Charles Reidy, The Admission of slaves and 'prize slaves' into the Cape Colony, 1797–1818' (MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1997), esp. pp.36–7.
54. AHU, Codice 1362; Reidy, 'The Admission of Slaves', pp.54, 56, 70, 93–4, 98–9, 101; Capela, *Escravismo Colonial*, p.171.
55. AHU, Codice 1365; Reidy, 'The Admission of Slaves', pp.114–22.
56. AHU, Codice 1365; Reidy, 'The Admission of Slaves', p.120.
57. See Reidy, 'The Admission of Slaves', p.72; Christopher Saunders, "Free, Yet Slaves", Prize Negroes at the Cape Revisited', in Clifton Crais and Nigel Worden (eds.), *Breaking the Chains* (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand Press, 1995), pp.99–116; Robert C.H. Shell, 'Islam in Southern Africa, 1652–1998', in Levzion and Pouwels, *The History of Islam in Africa*, pp.327–48.
58. AHU, Codice 1356.
59. ANTT, Mapa da População de Moçambique, 1820.
60. See Gwyn Campbell, 'Madagascar and Mozambique in the Slave Trade of the Western Indian Ocean 1800–1861', in Clarence-Smith, *Economics of the Indian Ocean Slave Trade*, p.172.
61. Liesegang, 'A First Look', p.463; Herbert S.Klein, *The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), Table 3.2, p.56; L.Bethell, *The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade: Britain, Brazil and the Slave Trade Question, 1807–1869* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Mabel V. Jackson, *European Powers and South-East Africa: A Study of International Relations on the South-East Coast of Africa, 1796–1856* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), p.63; Alpers, *Ivory & Slaves*, pp.210–13; Leroy Vail and Landeg White, *Capitalism and Colonialism in Mozambique: A Study of Quelimane District* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), p.17; Rudy Bauss, 'Rio de Janeiro: The Rise of Late Colonial Brazil's Dominant Emporium, 1777–1808' (PhD dissertation, Tulane University, 1977).
62. Vail and White, *Capitalism and Colonialism*, p.17.
63. Alpers, *Ivory & Slaves*, p.216; Capela, *Escravismo Colonial*, p.142.
64. Capela, *Escravismo Colonial*, pp.141–4. However, Malyn Newitt in *A History of Mozambique* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), p.

- 249, states that Quelimane got its customs house, and was made a separate captaincy, in 1812.
65. Jackson, *European Powers*, p.228; Liesegang, ‘A First Look’, p.463. Reidy, ‘The Admission of Slaves’, p.95; Edward A. Alpers, “‘Moçambique’ in Brazil: Another Dimension of the African Diaspora in the Atlantic World”, unpublished paper.
 66. HAG, Correspondencia de Damão 1063.
 67. D.Bartolomeu dos Martires, ‘Memoria Chorografica da Provincia ou Capitania de Mossambique na Coast d’Africa Oriental conforme o estado em que se achava no anno de 1822’, in Virginia Rau, ‘Aspectos étnico-culturais da ilha de Moçambique em 1822’, *Studia*, 11 (1963), pp.151, 163; Bauss, ‘The Portuguese Slave Trade’, p. 22.
 68. Thomas Boteler, *Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery to Africa and Arabia, performed in His Majesty’s Ships Leven and Barracouta, from 1821 to 1826* (London: Richard Bentley, 1835), Vol.1, p.248. See also Lt. Wolf, ‘Narrative of Voyages to Explore the Shores of Africa, Arabia and Madagascar’, *The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, 3 (1833), p.206.
 69. Liesegang, ‘A First Look’, p.463; See also Capela, *Escravismo Colonial*, p.190; Allen F. Isaacman, *Mozambique: The Africanization of a European Institution—The Zambezi Prazos, 1750–1902* (Madison and London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1972), p.92, table 8.
 70. Manolo Garcia Florentino, *Em Costas Negras: Uma História do Tráfico Atlântico de Escravos entre a África e o Rio de Janeiro (Séculos XVIII e XIX)* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, 1995), pp.257–8: His figures suggest contemporary British estimates for slave arrivals at Rio, cited by Alpers, *Ivory & Slaves*, p.216, were inflated by possibly 80 per cent. However, for the years 1825–30 Klein estimates a total of 48,648 slave arrivals from Mozambique, including 15,608 from Quelimane and 25,601 from Moçambique Island. See Tables 4.1 and 4.2 on pp.76 and 77. From 1811 to 1830, ‘Moçambique’ accounted for around 20 per cent of all slaves disembarked at Rio. See Alpers, ‘Moçambique in Brazil’, p.2; see also Bethell, *The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade*.
 71. Gwyn Campbell, ‘Madagascar and Mozambique in the Slave Trade of the Western Indian Ocean 1800–1861’, p.169; For a recent estimate of the illegal slave-trade to Mauritius and the Seychelles from East Africa and Madagascar in these years, see Richard B. Allen, ‘Licentious and Unbridled Proceedings: The Illegal Slave Trade to Mauritius and the Seychelles during the Early Nineteenth Century’, *Journal of African History*, 42 (2001), pp.91–116.
 72. Gwyn Campbell, ‘Madagascar and Mozambique in the Slave Trade of the Western Indian Ocean’; *idem*, The East African Slave Trade, 1861–1895: The “Southern” Complex’, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 22, 1 (1989), pp.1–26; *idem*, ‘Madagascar and the Slave Trade, 1810–1895’, *Journal of African History*, 22 (1981), pp.203–27; Bartle Frere, *Correspondence Respecting Sir Bartle Frere’s Mission to the East Coast of Africa, 1872–3* (Parliamentary Papers. 1873. LXI).
 73. James Tod, *Travels in Western India* (London: WmH. Allen and Co., 1839), pp. 263–4.
 74. HAG, Correspondencia de Diu 1010, Cargo lists of vessels returned from Mozambique, and Alfandegas de Damão 4839; Bauss, ‘The Portuguese Slave Trade’, p.23

75. HAG, Correspondencia de Dio 1011, Francisco de Mello da Gama e Araujo to Viceroy, Diu, 14 Nov. 1829, and Correspondencia de Dio 1010, Oficio, Goa, 7 Jan. 1830.
76. HAG, Correspondencia de Diu 1011, Joaquim Piedade Mascarenhas to Viceroy, Diu, 11 Nov. 1829. In anticipation of its future potential as an export, Mascarenhas suggested that opium sent to Macão could revitalise the economy of Diu and raise profits for both Indian and Portuguese merchants.
77. Pinto, *Trade and Finance in Portuguese India*, pp.31, 181–2 fn. 39; HAG: Correspondencia de Diu 1011, Mapa da População actual da Fortaleza de Dio, Aldeas e Hortas pertencentes a sua jurisdição, 1829; Diu 2314, Mapa da População de Diu 1838; and Escravos 2981, Registo dos Escravos da cidade de Diu 1855; see also Lopes, *Goa Setecentista*; Bauss, ‘A Demographic Study’, pp.199–216; *idem*, ‘The Portuguese Slave Trade’, p.23.
78. Abdul Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East African Commercial Empire into the World Economy, 1770–1873* (London/Nairobi/Dar es Salaam/ Athens, OH: James Currey/Heinemann Kenya/Tanzania Publishing House/ Ohio University Press, 1987); Esmond B.Martin and T.C.I.Ryan, ‘A Quantitative Assessment of the Arab Slave Trade of East Africa, 1770–1896’, *Kenya Historical Review*, 5, 1 (1977), pp.71–91; Austen, ‘The Islamic Slave Trade out of Africa (Red Sea and Indian Ocean): An Effort at Quantification’, Conference on ‘Islamic Africa: Slavery and Related Institutions’, Princeton University, 1977.
79. Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar*, p.40; Austen, ‘The 19th Century Islamic Slave Trade’; Clarence-Smith, ‘The Economics’, p.7; Frederick Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977), p.43.
80. Austen, ‘The 19th Century Islamic Slave Trade’, p.32; Alpers, *Ivory & Slaves*, p. 192; Martin and Ryan, ‘A Quantitative Assessment’, p.78; see also Henry Salt, *A Voyage to Abyssinia...in the Years 1809 and 1810; in which are included, An Account of the Portuguese Settlements on the East Coast of Africa, visited in the Course of the Voyage....* (London: F.C. and J. Rivington, 1814), pp.32–3; Rau, ‘Aspectos étnico-culturais’.
81. Assistant Resident in Charge to Secretary to Indian Government, Bhuj Residency, 29 Dec. 1835 enclosed in OIOC, Residency Records, 18/A/71; Leech, ‘Memoir on the Trade...of the Port of Mandavi in Kutch (submitted 1837)’, OIOC, Selections of the Records, V/23/212; ‘Extract from Lt. Carless’ Memoir on Kurrachee dated 1st February 1838’ enclosed in OIOC, European MSS, Eur E293/125, ‘Memorandum and summary regarding slave trade in Kathiawar and Kutch and its subsequent suppression’.
82. OIOC, European MSS Eur E 293/125 (Willoughby Collection).
83. OIOC, European MSS Eur E 293/125 (Willoughby Collection). Maharashtra State Archives, Political Department, Kutch, Slave Trade, Vol. No.106/990, Memorandum of 20 slaves brought to Mandvi from East Africa, 1838.
84. Maharashtra State Archives, Political Department, Slave Trade, Vol.169 (1852), Political Agent, Kathiawar, to Chief Secretary of Bombay Government, 8 April 1852.
85. These ratios draw on data from HAG, Correspondencia de Diu 995–1012 and the Alfandegas de Diu 4952–69.

86. OIOC, Residency Records, 18/A/71, Political Secretary to Government of India, Bhuj Residency, 18 Nov. 1836; Maharashtra State Archives, Political Department, Kutch, Slave Trade, Vol. No. 106/990, Memorandum of 20 slaves brought to Mandvi from East Africa, 1838.
87. OIOC, 18/A/71, Slave Trade, Vol.587, Letter from Assistant Resident to Secretary to Government of India, Bhuj Residency, 29 Dec. 1835.
88. HAG, Livros da Alfandega de Diu 4952–69, and Livros da Alfandega de Damão 4839–49; see also Clarence-Smith, ‘The Economics’, pp.13–14.

The Mascarene Slave-Trade and Labour Migration in the Indian Ocean during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries¹

RICHARD B.ALLEN

The institution of slavery is inextricably bound up with the social, economic, and political history of the Mascarene Islands and the south-western Indian Ocean. Slaves first reached the Mascarenes in 1639, only a year after the Dutch East India Company launched its first attempt to colonize Mauritius. The fledgling colony received more than 300 Malagasy slaves during the early 1640s,² and slaves remained part of the Mauritian population until the Dutch abandoned the island in 1710. Although the status of the first Malagasy labourers to arrive on Réunion after 1663 remains uncertain, slavery was established in fact, if not yet in law, on that island by the 1690s.³ The *Compagnie française des Indes*⁴ planned to have slaves accompany the colonists who occupied Mauritius in 1721, and by late 1722 at least 65 Malagasy slaves had reached the island.⁵ This chattel population grew steadily in size, and during the second half of the eighteenth century slaves accounted regularly for 75–85 per cent of the Mascarene population. While the proportion of slaves declined during the early nineteenth century, chattel labourers still comprised two-thirds of the Mauritian population on the eve of slave emancipation in 1835, and three-fifths of Réunion’s population when slavery was abolished on that island in 1848.

Scholarly interest in the Mascarene slave-trade dates to the 1960s when historians began to investigate French slave-trading along the East African coast during the eighteenth century.⁶ In 1974, J.-M. Filliot published his classic study of the Mascarene trade from 1670 to 1810.⁷ Subsequent scholarship focused on the Asian slaves imported into the islands⁸ and probed the illegal slave-trade to Mauritius and Réunion during the early nineteenth century.⁹ Other work on early Mascarene history has largely ignored this traffic, concentrating instead upon the nature and structure of the Mauritian and Réunionnais slave regimes.¹⁰ With the exception of Gwyn Campbell and Pier Larson, historians of Madagascar and eastern Africa have similarly paid little attention to the Mascarene trade or discounted its importance in shaping developments in the western Indian Ocean during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹¹

Strikingly absent from this historiographical tradition are attempts to paint a more comprehensive picture of the Mascarene trade from its inception during the late seventeenth century until its demise more than 150 years later. This omission has precluded more meaningful assessments of the islands’ role in the slave and

other migrant labour systems that were an integral part of life in the Indian Ocean basin—and beyond—into the early twentieth century. Historians of Africa and the African diaspora have done little to correct this oversight even though this era probably witnessed a minimum of 1,100,000 slave exports from eastern Africa to the Middle East, South Asia, and various parts of the European colonial world.¹²

Recent work on the illegal slave-trade to Mauritius and the Seychelles underscores the need for such a comprehensive assessment.¹³ This work suggests firstly that the volume of the Mascarene trade was larger than hitherto believed, that the islands had a correspondingly greater impact on the development of the Malagasy and East African slave-trades than previously supposed, and that estimates of slave exports from these regions need to be revised accordingly. Second, this work highlights the need to explore possible structural connections between slave-trading and the indentured labour trades that flourished between the 1830s and the early twentieth century. The first attempts to secure ‘free’ agricultural workers for the Mascarenes occurred as the local slave-trade began to wither during the 1820s, while the advent of an indentured labour system on Mauritius coincided with the abolition of slavery in 1835.¹⁴ The extent to which the 2,000,000 Asian ‘servants’ who reached Africa, the Caribbean, South-East Asia, and the South Pacific between 1834 and c.1920 became victims of the purported ‘new system of slavery’ that first emerged in post-emancipation Mauritius remains a subject of debate.¹⁵

The Mascarene Slave-Trade to 1848

The demand for slave labour remained a constant feature of early Mascarene life. The *Compagnie* imported slaves from Madagascar and India, and also sought to tap the Portuguese-controlled Mozambican market whenever possible. The 1769 royal decree opening the Mascarenes to free trade by all French nationals increased trade with traditional sources of chattel labour such as Madagascar, and encouraged French merchants to frequent East African slave markets such as Kilwa and Zanzibar. The Mascarene slave population increased dramatically as a result of this activity, climbing from 33,031 in 1765 to more than 93,000 by the late 1790s.

Among historians of the Mascarenes, only Filliot has attempted to gauge the volume of the slave-trade to the islands, an undertaking complicated by a scarcity of the kinds of sources that have allowed others to continue refining Philip Curtin’s classic census of the Atlantic trade.¹⁶ Filliot estimated that 160,000 slaves reached Mauritius and Reunion before 1810: 45,000 from 1670 to 1768 (mostly after 1721); 80,000 from 1769 to 1793; and 35,000 between 1794 and Britain’s conquest of the islands in 1810.¹⁷ These estimates gave substance to Edward Alpers’ argument that the dramatic expansion of the Malagasy and East African slave-trades during the late eighteenth century was due largely to the Mascarene demand for chattel labour.¹⁸

Filliot's study drew upon an impressive array of sources, but failed to review local census data to confirm his estimates. It is these admittedly spotty and frequently problematic data that mandate a re-evaluation of his estimates of the volume of slave imports into the Mascarenes before 1810. In 1808, for example, the islands reportedly housed 126,506 slaves, a figure equal to four-fifths of the total number of slaves Filliot estimated had reached the islands since the trade had begun in earnest some 70 to 80 years earlier. Such figures suggest that he made inadequate allowance for the slaves who had to be imported each year simply to replace those who had died or been emancipated.

Slaves reached the Mascarenes from throughout the Indian Ocean basin and beyond. Grégoire Avine observed *c.*1802 that Mauritius housed 'blacks of every ethnicity', including Anjouanais, Guineans, Indians, Makuas, Makondes, Malagasies, Malays, Mozambicans, and Wolofs.¹⁹ A decade later, Jacques Milbert confirmed that the Mauritian slave population included Indians, Malays, Malagasies, Mozambicans, and West Africans.²⁰ Baron d'Unienville noted in turn that the island's Malagasy slaves came from among the Antateime [*sic!*], Betsileo, Hova (Merina), and Sakalava, and that its 'Mozambican' slaves included those taken from among the Makonde, Makua, Maravi, Mondjavoa (probably Yao), Moussena (Sena), Mouquindo (Ngindo), Niamoese (Nyamwezi), and Yambane (probably Nyambane).²¹ Other sources also reveal the presence of Abyssinians, Bambaras, and Canary Islanders among Mauritian slaves of African origin, and Bengalis, Lascars, Malabars, Talingas, and Timorese among those from southern Asia.²²

Although drawn from a multiplicity of African and Asian peoples, Mascarene slaves were usually identified as belonging to one of four broadly defined *castes*, or ethnically and geographically based categories: Creole (locally born), Indian, Malagasy, and Mozambican (from the Swahili coast as well as Mozambique).²³ Although colonists and government officials regularly noted the *caste* of individual slaves, the archival record sheds little light on the ethnic composition of the Mascarene slave population as a whole. Filliot projected that Madagascar and eastern Africa (Mozambique and the Swahili coast) supplied the bulk of Mascarene slaves before 1810, with these two regions furnishing 45 per cent and 40 per cent respectively of all imports, while India and West Africa supplied the balance (13 per cent and 2 per cent respectively) of such imports.²⁴ However, as Table 1 indicates, the relative importance of different sources of supply varied over time, and generalizations about the ethnic composition of the Mascarene trade must be qualified accordingly. We may note, for example, that while the bulk of Reunion's non-Creole slaves in 1735 and 1765 were of Malagasy origin, Mozambicans comprised the majority of non-Creole slaves on Mauritius and Reunion by *c.*1806–8. Two decades later, however, the percentage of Mozambicans among non-Creole slaves on both islands had declined while that of Malagasies had increased.

These data allow us to distinguish three major phases to the Mascarene slave-trade on the basis of its sources of supply. During the first phase, from 1670 to

TABLE 1
MASCARENE SLAVE ETHNICITY, 1735–1827^a

	Year	Malagasy (%)	Mozambican (%)	Indian (%)	Other (%)	Number
Réunion	1735	76.1	14.3	9.6	-	5,066
	1765	67.8	24.1	8.1	-	13,692
	1808	36.6	59.2	4.2	-	46,249
	1826	39.4	50.4	5.1	5.1 ^b	35,618
Mauritius	1806	25.1	60.8	14.1	-	43,908
	1826/7	36.8	55.8	6.4	0.6 ^c	34,393
Seychelles	1826/7	6.6	92.4	0.9	<0.1 ^c	4,246

Notes: a. Exclusive of Creole slaves.

b. Arabs and Malays.

c. Malays.

Sources: CO 167/141, Return No.4—Return of Slaves Registered in Mauritius between the 16th of October 1826 and the 16th of January 1827....; M.J.Milbert, *Voyage pittoresque à l'Ile de France, au Cap de Bonne-Espérance et à l'Ile de Ténériffe* (Paris: A.Nepveu, 1812), Vol.2, p.233 bis; R.R.Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), Vol.2, p.908; J.V.Payet, *Histoire de l'esclavage à l'Ile Bourbon* (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 1990), p.17; Sudel Fuma, *L'esclavagisme à La Réunion, 1794–1848* (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, and St Denis: Université de La Réunion, 1992), p.37.

1769, Madagascar supplied about 70 per cent of all slaves reaching the islands, with the balance coming from Mozambique and the Swahili coast (19 per cent), South Asia (9 per cent), and West Africa (2 per cent). During the second phase, from 1770 to 1810, eastern Africa became the most important source of slaves, with Mozambique and the Swahili coast furnishing 60 per cent of all imports compared to 31 per cent from Madagascar and 9 per cent from South Asia. East African slave imports remained constant at 59 per cent during the trade's final phase, from 1811 to 1848, during which there was also a resurgence (to 38 per cent) in Malagasy imports, the demise of the trade from India, and a serious attempt by Réunionnais colonists to tap South-East Asian markets (3 per cent). Overall, these figures suggest that East Africa and Madagascar supplied 53 per cent and 39.9 per cent respectively of Mascarene slave imports from 1670 to 1848, with the balance of such imports coming from southern Asia (6.8 per cent) and other regions such as West Africa (0.3 per cent).

Like other European colonies of the day, the Mascarenes needed to import significant numbers of slaves simply to maintain a population constantly diminished by manumission and especially by high mortality rates.²⁵ Inaccurate and incomplete civil status records left Baron d'Unenville, Mauritian archivist during the early nineteenth century, with no other option than to estimate local slave birth and death rates, projections that indicate an average annual net decline of 0.33 per cent in the size of the island's slave population from 1764 to

1824.²⁶ R.R.Kuczynski has argued that this figure is too low and that, at least from 1827 to 1834, the Mauritian slave population declined at an annual rate of 1.2 per cent.²⁷ Data on Mauritian apprentices, ex-apprentices, and government-owned slaves, however, point to even higher rates of net decline.²⁸ The apprentice/ex-apprentice population, for example, shrank by an average of 1.74 per cent each year from 1835 to 1846, while the government slave population declined at an annual average rate of 2.54 per cent from 1814 to 1832,²⁹ rates comparable to those among slave populations in the early nineteenth-century British Caribbean.³⁰ Unfortunately, similar data apparently do not exist for Reunion.

Other evidence also points to high rates of slave mortality. Beriberi, dysentery, enteric fevers, intestinal parasites, pulmonary infections, and typhoid frequently plagued Mascarene residents who also had to contend periodically with epidemic smallpox, cholera, and influenza. One visitor to Mauritius noted c. 1768 that colonists particularly feared smallpox ‘which some years ago carried away upwards of a thousand Souls in the space of a month’.³¹ Smallpox epidemics swept Mauritius in 1742, 1754, 1756, 1758, 1770–72, 1782–83, and 1792–93, and Reunion in 1729, 1756, 1789, and 1827. The 1756 epidemic reportedly killed 1800 of the *Compagnie*’s slaves and one-half of all individually held slaves, while the 1770 and 1792–93 epidemics may have killed 20 to 25 per cent and 33 per cent respectively of Mauritian slaves.³² Seven thousand slaves reportedly died during the Mauritian cholera epidemic of 1819–20.³³ Mauritian dependence upon imported foodstuffs³⁴ and the attendant probability of malnutrition among local slaves also point to higher rather than lower mortality rates. The first British governor of Mauritius, for example, asserted that famine had reduced the island’s slave population by 5 per cent a year immediately before the British conquest of 1810.³⁵ Subsequent reports noted that many Mauritian slaves had a daily food ration of no more than 1.25 lb of maize or 3 lb of manioc, and that many captured fugitive slaves sought to avoid being returned to their masters because they were fed better in prison.³⁶ The impact of disease, malnutrition, and harsh working conditions is suggested by official reports that at least 22,340 Mauritian slaves died from 1810 to 1826.³⁷

The rates of net decline among Mauritian apprentices and government slaves and the data we have on the size of the Mascarene slave population provide the basis for the projections in Table 2,³⁸ which suggest that the number of slaves imported into the Mascarenes before 1810 was probably 12 to 27 per cent higher than Filliot estimated. Given the dearth of reliable demographic data on this population, determining which of the two rates of decline in question may more accurately indicate actual slave mortality necessarily becomes an exercise in judgement. What we know about the quality of local slave life suggests, however, that the higher of these two rates is probably more representative of Mascarene slave mortality, and that the corresponding estimate of some 203,000 imports is more indicative of the volume of the Mascarene slave-trade before 1810.

The number of slaves imported into the Mascarenes after 1810 also remains a subject of informed speculation. The decision first by Britain and then by France to abolish slave-trading³⁹ and the attendant criminalization of this activity ensured that few relevant shipping records found their way into the archival record. One informed observer estimated that 9000 slaves reached Réunion between 1811 and early 1814.⁴⁰ Hubert Gerbeau has estimated that at least 45,000 slaves reached the island illegally from 1817 to 1848, most from 1817 to 1831.⁴¹ A review of census data using the methodology outlined above suggests between 48,900 and 66,400 slaves reached Réunion from 1811 to 1848, and that 52,550 entered Mauritius and the Seychelles illegally from 1811 to 1827.⁴² When viewed in their entirety, these figures suggest that a total of between 280,000 and 322,000 slaves were imported into the Mascarenes between the late seventeenth and mid-nineteenth centuries.

This volume of imports required even larger exports from the markets that supplied the Mascarenes with slaves. Unfortunately, few references exist to slave mortality en route to the islands. On occasion, these human cargoes were devastated by disease and ill-usage, as in 1739 when 58 per cent of the slaves aboard a vessel arriving from Mozambique died at sea and in 1740 when the death rate on a ship arriving from Pondichéry reached 92.5 per cent.⁴³ Such losses seem, however, to have been the exception rather than the rule. Filliot's estimates of a 20 to 25 per cent mortality rate among Indian slaves shipped to the Mascarenes and of a 25 to 30 per cent rate among those coming from West Africa⁴⁴ are reasonable given the distances involved and what we know about mortality rates on French slavers operating in the Atlantic.⁴⁵ Average mortality rates among slaves arriving from closer catchment areas were probably more in line with Auguste Toussaint's report of a 12 per cent mortality rate amongst slaves aboard 27 ships from Madagascar between 1775 and 1807, and of a 21 per cent mortality rate aboard 64 vessels from East Africa between 1777 and 1808.⁴⁶ Isolated reports from 1818 and 1820 indicate that death rates during the era of the illegal slave-trade were probably much the same as Toussaint's averages for the period 1775 to 1808.⁴⁷

These rates and the estimated volume of slave imports reported above provide the basis for the figures in Table 3, which suggest that between 336,000 and 388,000 slaves were exported to the Mascarenes from 1670 to 1848. Available information on slave exports from Mozambique and Madagascar suggests that these estimates are not unreasonable. Edward Alpers' estimate that some 75,000 slaves were shipped from Mozambique Island, Ibo, and Kilwa to the Mascarenes during the 1770s and 1780s is consistent with the projected volume in Table 3 of East African exports from 1770 to 1810.⁴⁸ His data on Mozambican exports during the 1820s and 1830s, although more problematic, likewise suggest that the estimated volume of East African exports from 1811 to 1848 is reasonable.⁴⁹ Similar conclusions about the Malagasy trade's magnitude can be drawn from Larson's work on slave exports from highland Madagascar from 1770 to 1820.⁵⁰

TABLE 2

PROJECTED SLAVE IMPORTS INTO THE MASCARENES, 1715–1809

Period	Size of Slave Population			Slave Mortality			Projected Imports			Average Annual Imports	
	Start of Period	End of Period	Net Change	Deaths at 1.74% ANSM ^a	Deaths at 2.54% ANSM	At 1.74% ANSM	At 2.54% ANSM	At 1.74% ANSM	At 2.54% ANSM		
1715–25	633	[1,800]	+1,167	121	177	1,288	1,344	117	122		
1726–35	[1,800]	7,193	+5,393	313	457	5,706	5,850	571	585		
1736–46	7,193	[12,863]	+5,670	1,126	1,644	6,796	7,314	755	813		
1747–65	[12,863]	33,031	+20,168	4,700	6,861	24,868	27,029	1,184	1,287		
1766–79	33,031	57,240	+24,209	8,046	11,746	32,255	35,955	2,304	2,568		
1780–88	57,240	76,120	+18,880	8,964	13,085	27,844	31,965	3,094	3,552		
1789–97	76,120	93,880	+17,760	11,920	17,401	29,680	35,161	3,298	3,907		
1798–1809	93,880	126,506	+32,626	17,969	26,230	50,595	58,856	4,600	5,351		
Total	–	–	–	53,159	77,601	179,032	203,490	–	–		

Note: a. Average net slave mortality.

Sources: Kuczynski, Demographic Survey, pp.751, 753, 755–6, 758, 760; Auguste Toussaint, *Histoire des îles Mascareignes* (Paris: Editions Berger-Levrault, 1972), pp.336–7; Payet, *Histoire de l'esclavage*, p.17; Fuma, *L'esclavagisme*, p.29; Claude Wanquet, *La France et la première abolition de l'esclavage, 1794–1802* (Paris: Editions Karthala, 1998), p.12.

These estimates underscore the vigor of the Malagasy and East African slave-trades and the central role the Mascarenes played in their development. Of equal importance is the additional light these figures shed on the nature, dynamics, and impact of the slave-trading systems that flourished in the western Indian Ocean during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The low volume of East African exports before 1770, for instance, substantiates earlier assertions that political and diplomatic considerations inhibited large-scale French slave-trading in Mozambique before the 1760s.⁵¹ The high percentage of slaves imported from Madagascar before 1770, on the other hand, is consistent with the *Compagnie's* control of the Mascarenes until 1767 and its long-standing commercial and political interests in Madagascar.⁵²

The dramatic increase in East African slave imports into the Mascarenes after 1770 illustrates the impact that the 1769 decree opening the islands to free trade by all French nationals had upon slaving interests elsewhere in the region.⁵³ These estimates give new significance, for instance, to the treaty that Jean-Vincent Morice, a French adventurer and aspiring slave-trade monopolist, signed with the Sultan of Kilwa in 1776 in which the Sultan promised to bar other Europeans from slave-trading in his dominion and furnish Morice with 1000 slaves each year.⁵⁴ The volume of Malagasy exports after 1770 supports

arguments about the slave-trade's importance in facilitating the rise of the Merina state after c.1780 and its subsequent expansion after 1810.⁵⁵ The resurgence of Malagasy exports after 1810 likewise demonstrates the extent to which the trade could profoundly affect regional political and economic interests. As Campbell notes, the illegal slave-trade to Mauritius and the Seychelles provided Radama I with both a significant source of revenue and an important reason for Britain formally to acknowledge his status and position in Madagascar, while the 1820 Anglo-Merina treaty to end this illicit traffic was an important factor in the Merina court's subsequent adoption of autarky.⁵⁶

The Mascarene Slave-Trade and the Wider Indian Ocean World

Although the great majority of Mascarene slaves came from Madagascar and East Africa, sizeable numbers also arrived from elsewhere in the Indian Ocean basin. Contemporary accounts of Mascarene life reveal the presence of sizeable numbers of slaves from southern Asia. In 1806, for example, Mauritius housed 6162 Indian slaves who comprised 10.2 per cent of the island's chattel population.⁵⁷

Historians have long appreciated that South Asia supplied the Mascarenes with slaves. Charu Chandra Ray noted more than 90 years ago that slaves abounded in eighteenth-century Chandernagore, some of whom were exported to Réunion.⁵⁸ D.R.Banaji subsequently reported that an extensive slave-trade existed during the 1790s at Mahé, another French comptoir in India, to supply the Mascarenes with chattel labour.⁵⁹ K.K.N. Kurup and Amal Kumar Chattopadhyay elaborated upon these studies, as have Hubert Gerbeau and Marina Carter.⁶⁰ Teotino de Souza and Rudy Bauss in turn have revealed that Goa was a centre from which small numbers of Mozambican slaves were transhipped not only to other parts of India and Portugal's possessions in eastern Asia, but also to the Mascarenes during the latter part of the eighteenth century.⁶¹

'Malay' slaves likewise reached the Mascarenes during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁶² The volume of this trade from Southeast Asia was small before 1810, but subsequently expanded as British efforts to limit Mascarene access to Malagasy and East African sources of supply met with some success during the late 1810s and early 1820s.⁶³ In 1826, for instance, an English sea captain noted the 'considerable extent' of French slave-trading on the island of Nias off the Sumatran coast.⁶⁴ Another report that same year observed that the English ship *Hippomene* had stopped at Diego Garcia with Malay slaves aboard, as had the *Chicken*, sailing under Dutch colours and destined for Reunion, which had acquired a cargo of 40 seven and eight-year old boys at Nias.⁶⁵

The presence in the Mascarenes of significant numbers of Asian slaves is an important reminder that Africa was not the only source of chattel labour in the

TABLE 3
PROJECTED SLAVE EXPORTS TO THE MASCARENES, 1670–1848

Period	Source	% of Trade	Total Imports	% AMER ^a	Total Exports
At 1.74% ANSM:^b					
1670–1769	Madagascar	70	31,076	12	35,314
	Eastern Africa ^c	19	8,435	21	10,677
	India	9	3,995	20–25	4,994–5,327
	West Africa	2	888	25–30	1,184
	<i>Subtotal</i>		44,394 ^d		52,169–52,587
1770–1810	Madagascar	31	40,659	12	46,203
	Eastern Africa	60	78,695	21	99,614
	India	9	11,804	20–25	14,755–15,739
	<i>Subtotal</i>		131,158 ^e		160,572–161,556
1811–1848	Madagascar	38	38,551	12	43,808
	Eastern Africa	59	59,856	21	75,767
	Southeast Asia	3	3,043	20–25	3,804–4,057
	<i>Subtotal</i>		101,450 ^f		123,379–123,632
GRAND TOTAL			277,002		336,120–337,775
At 2.54% ANSM:					
1670–1769	Madagascar	70	33,379	12	37,931
	Eastern Africa	19	9,060	21	11,468
	India	9	4,292	20–25	5,365–5,723
	West Africa	2	954	25–30	1,272–1,363
	<i>Subtotal</i>		47,685 ^g		56,036–56,485
1770–1810	Madagascar	31	47,016	12	53,427
	Eastern Africa	60	90,999	21	115,189
	India	9	13,650	20–25	17,063–18,200
	<i>Subtotal</i>		151,665 ^h		185,679–186,816
1811–1848	Madagascar	38	45,201	12	51,365
	Eastern Africa	59	70,180	21	88,835
	Southeast Asia	3	3,569	20–25	4,495–4,759
	<i>Subtotal</i>		118,950 ⁱ		144,695–144,959
GRAND TOTAL			318,330		386,410–388,260

Notes: a. Average mortality en route.

b. Average net slave mortality.

c. Mozambique and the Swahili coast.

d. Projected on the basis of slave population figures for 1714–65, plus an estimated 1000 imports for the period 1670–1714, plus 1184 imports for each of the four years from 1766 to 1769.

e. Projected on the basis of slave population figures for 1765–1808, less 2304 imports for each of the four years from 1766 to 1769.

f. Projected on the basis of 52,550 Mauritian and 48,900 Réunionnais imports during this period.

g. Projected on the basis of slave population figures for 1714–65, plus an estimated 1000 imports for the period 1670–1714, plus 1287 imports for each of the four years from 1766 to 1769.

h. Projected on the basis of slave population figures for 1766–1809, less 2,568 imports for each of the four years from 1766 to 1769.

i. Projected on the basis of 52,550 Mauritian and 66,400 Réunionnais imports during this period.

Sources: Kuczynski, Demographic Survey, pp.751, 753, 755–6, 758, 760, 904–5, 907–8, 911; Toussaint, *Histoire des îles*, pp.336–7; Payet, *Histoire de l'esclavage*, p.17; Fuma, *L'esclavagisme*, p.29; Wanquet, La France, p.12; Richard B. Allen, 'Licentious and Unbridled Proceedings: The Illegal Slave Trade to Mauritius and the Seychelles During the Early Nineteenth Century', *Journal of African History*, 43 (2001), pp.96ff.

Indian Ocean basin, that such labour could flow toward the African continent as well as away from it, and that we underestimate the complexity of slave-trading in this region at our peril. Unfortunately, the fragmented nature of existing scholarship limits attempts at this time to paint a more comprehensive picture of the slave-trade from India and South-East Asia to other parts of the Indian Ocean. The exportation of perhaps as many as 24,000 Indian slaves to Mauritius and Réunion before 1810 (Table 3) and of at least 4500 slaves from the Indonesian archipelago to the Mascarenes during the early nineteenth century highlights the need for a better understanding of how these trades were conducted and their impact upon the peoples and countries in question.⁶⁶

Equally important is the need to assess the extent to which Asian systems of slavery may have influenced the institution of slavery elsewhere in the region. Contemporary accounts of Mauritius note that Indian and Malay slaves often worked as artisans or household servants while African and Malagasy slaves commonly served as agricultural labourers.⁶⁷ Historians usually attribute these ethnically-based occupational patterns to the colonial propensity to stereotype slaves, e.g. fewer Asians worked as field hands because they were considered to be cleaner, more intelligent, and less suited to hard physical labour than Africans.⁶⁸ Work on slavery elsewhere in the region suggests, however, that the reasons why at least some Indian and Malay slaves occupied a somewhat more privileged position in Mascarene society may have been more complex. Several historians have argued that slavery in southern Asia was primarily urban and/or domestic in nature and that, at least in South-East Asia, Europeans adopted the beliefs and practices that characterized these local slave systems.⁶⁹ Under such circumstances, the seemingly preferential conditions under which some Asian slaves lived and worked in the Mascarenes may have been influenced by colonial awareness of and sensitivity to the particularities of slave status elsewhere in the region.

The significant number of Indian slaves in the Mascarenes raises other questions about the nature and dynamics of the Indian slave-trade to the islands, and about possible connections between this traffic and the indentured labour trades that developed during the mid-nineteenth century. Periodic slave exports from the Coromandel coast during the seventeenth century,⁷⁰ for example, raise the possibility that the *Compagnie* and other Europeans simply tapped existing indigenous slave-trading networks to supply the Mascarenes.⁷¹ It is also likely the trade in Indian slaves to Mauritius and Réunion drew upon a wider range of sources of supply than hitherto supposed. Earlier studies assert that children and young adults, many of whom had been kidnapped and sold into bondage, comprised the majority of these slaves.⁷² The famines that swept India during the late eighteenth century were yet another source of chattel labour as desperate men and women struggled to keep body and soul together by selling themselves or their children into slavery.⁷³

While economic distress and acts of violence undoubtedly led to the enslavement of many of the Indians who reached the Mascarenes during the

eighteenth century, studies of slavery in India point to other possible sources of supply that warrant closer scrutiny. Tanika Sarkar has identified three general types of slavery in the subcontinent: an urban, market-oriented system in which slaves were little more than chattel that could be bought and sold (and imported or exported) freely; a traditional system of household slavery characterized by a more restrictive market and an almost complete reliance upon local sources of supply; and a system of agrestic or praedial slavery in rural areas in which slave status was closely tied to low caste status.⁷⁴ While Sarkar asserts that an indigenous trade in praedial slaves did not exist, she and other students of agrestic slavery in southern India also note that these individuals could often be bought and sold at will.⁷⁵ Such statements suggest that the various systems of agricultural servitude that prevailed in this part of India cannot be dismissed as potential sources of supply for the export slave-trade until the archival record has been plumbed with far greater assiduity.

Southern Indian praedial slavery also raises questions about possible connections between slave-trading and/or indigenous systems of slavery and the indentured labour trades that developed after the mid- 1830s. The possibility of such structural linkages should come as no surprise. The recruitment of tens of thousands of ‘indentured’ East Africans to labour in Réunion’s cane fields after the mid-nineteenth century is widely viewed as nothing more than the old slave-trade in new garb.⁷⁶ Nineteenth-century abolitionists first advanced the argument, subsequently adopted by many modern historians, that the coercion used to recruit many of these labourers, and their poor living and working conditions once they reached their destination, bespoke the development of a ‘new system of slavery’ following slave emancipation.⁷⁷ The 1827 statement by Mahomet, a native of Surabaya in Java, underscores the fine line that could exist between the slave and indentured labour trades during the early nineteenth century. Mahomet reported that he had recruited a number of workers from the countryside around Surabaya for the captain of the Dutch brig *Swift* by giving each recruit two months’ advance wages and telling them that they were to work in Singapore when, in fact, they soon found themselves bound for Réunion.⁷⁸

As was noted earlier, Mascarene attempts during the 1820s to recruit Indian and Chinese indentured labour coincided with the illegal slave-trade’s decline, while the first such workers to reach the islands toiled alongside slaves. Studies of nineteenth-century Indian indentured labour have nevertheless ignored this system’s possible slave antecedents.⁷⁹ Benedicte Hjejle’s work on agricultural bondage in southern India suggests, however, that the recruitment of at least some of these ‘free’ workers cannot be understood without reference to indigenous systems of servitude. She notes specifically that a significant number of migrant workers to Sri Lanka from 1843 to 1873 came from among South India’s praedial slave population.⁸⁰ The absence of detailed studies of caste status among Indian immigrants in Mauritius, Reunion, and other parts of the colonial plantation world, together with the problems of determining the relationship between caste and slave status in different parts of India,⁸¹ makes it

impossible at present to determine just how many Indian ‘slaves’ left the subcontinent as indentured labourers. However, the fact that one-third of the 451,000 Indian immigrants who reached Mauritius from 1834 to 1910 came from southern India underscores the possibility that at least some Indian slaves may have reached the Mascarenes, as well as Sri Lanka, during the first years of this ‘free’ labour diaspora.

Conclusion

The Mascarenes have long been the neglected stepchildren of African history in general, and of African diaspora studies in particular. Their relegation to the margins of African studies may be traced in part to what some have aptly characterized as the continuing ‘tyranny of the Atlantic’. Their marginalization also reflects the continuing propensity among many Africanists to regard the beaches at Mogadishu, Mombasa, and Mozambique as marking the easternmost limits of the African experience.⁸² In all fairness, historians of the islands must shoulder some of the responsibility for this state of affairs given their frequent reluctance to ask probing questions about important aspects of Mauritian and Réunionnais social and economic history, to make fuller and more innovative use of the rich archival record at their disposal, to forswear studying the islands in isolation from one another and, most importantly, to situate Mascarene developments firmly within wider historical contexts.

More than 20 years ago, Hubert Gerbeau noted that reconstructing the history of slavery in the Indian Ocean basin involves coming to terms with a huge, ill-defined, and exceptionally diverse human and geographical domain.⁸³ The Mascarene case study illustrates the probity of his observation, and underscores the need to examine the nature, structure, and dynamics of the slave systems that existed in this part of the world from the broadest possible perspective. Such endeavours can pay handsome dividends such as a more detailed and hopefully more accurate picture of the Mascarene slave-trade and, concomitantly, a better understanding of the islands’ role in shaping developments in the western Indian Ocean during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Finally, the Mascarene case study highlights the need to explore the possible structural links between the slave systems that flourished in the European colonial world and the ‘new systems of slavery’ that developed after slave emancipation. Doing so will require a deeper understanding of the complexities of slave status in southern Asia, a commitment to look beyond the conceptual frameworks that have traditionally guided research on indentured labour systems, and a willingness to forgo making a final judgment about the possibility of such linkages until the archival record has been explored with greater care and thoroughness than has been the case so far.

ABBREVIATIONS

CO	Colonial Office files, Public Record Office, Kew
MA	Mauritius Archives
OIOC	Oriental and India Office Collections, British Library, London
PP	British Parliament Sessional Papers

NOTES

1. Earlier versions of this article were presented to the workshop on ‘Slave Systems in Asia and the Indian Ocean: Their Structure and Change in the 19th and 20th Centuries’, Université d’Avignon, 18–20 May 2000, to the workshop on ‘Reasserting Connections, Communalities, and Cosmopolitanism: The Western Indian Ocean Since 1800’, Yale University, 3–5 Nov. 2000, and to the Department of History Seminar, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 14 March 2001. My thanks to Edward Alpers for his comments on the two workshop papers.
2. P.J.Moree, *A Concise History of Dutch Mauritius, 1598–1710* (London and New York: Kegan Paul, 1998), pp.31–2.
3. Hai Quang Ho, ‘L’esclavage à l’Île Bourbon de 1664 à 1714’, in Ignace Rakoto (ed.), *L’esclavage à Madagascar: Aspects historiques et résurgences contemporaines* (Antananarivo: Institut de Civilisations-Musée d’Art et Archéologie, 1997), pp.29–51.
4. The French East India Company, henceforth called the *Compagnie*.
5. R.R.Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), Vol.2, p.750.
6. G.S.P.Freeman-Grenville, *The French at Kilwa Island* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965); G.A.Akinola, The French on the Lindi Coast, 1785–1789’, *Taniania Notes and Records*, 70 (1970), pp.13–20; Edward A.Alpers, The French Slave Trade in East Africa (1721–1810)’, *Cahiers d’études africaines*, 37 (1970), pp.80–124.
7. J.-M.Filliot, *La traite des esclaves vers les Mascareignes au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: ORSTROM, 1974).
8. Hubert Gerbeau, ‘Des minorités mal-connues: Esclaves indiens et malais des Mascareignes aux XIXe siècle’, in *Migrations, minorités et échanges en océan indien, XIXe-XXe siècle*, IHPOM Etudes et Documents No.11 (Aix-en-Provence, 1978), pp.160–242, and ‘Les esclaves asiatiques des Mascareignes aux XIXe siècle: Enquêtes et hypothèses’, *Annuaire des pays de l’océan indien*, 7 (1980), pp.169–97; Marina Carter, ‘Indian Slaves in Mauritius (1729–1834)’, *Indian Historical Review*, 15, 1/2 (1988–89), pp.233–47.
9. Hubert Gerbeau, ‘Quelques aspects de la traite illégale des esclaves à l’Île Bourbon aux XIXe siècle’, in *Mouvements de populations dans l’océan indien* (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1979), pp.273–308; Claude Wanquet, ‘La traite illégale à Maurice à l’époque anglaise (1811–1835)’, in Serge Daget (ed.), *De la traite à l’esclavage: Actes du colloque internationale sur la traite des noirs, Nantes, 1985* (Nantes: Centre de Recherche sur l’Histoire du Monde Atlantique et Société Française d’Histoire d’Outre-Mer, Paris, 1988), Vol.2, pp.451–65.

10. More recent studies include J.V. Payet, *Histoire de l'esclavage à l'Ile Bourbon* (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 1990); Sudel Fuma, *L'esclavagisme à La Réunion, 1794–1848* (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, and St Denis: Université de La Réunion, 1992); Anthony J. Barker, *Slavery and Antislavery in Mauritius, 1810–33* (London: Macmillan Press, and New York: St Martin's Press, 1996); Vijaya Teelock, *Bitter Sugar: Sugar and Slavery in 19th Century Mauritius* (Moka, Mauritius: Mahatma Gandhi Institute Press, 1998).
11. E.g., Hubert Deschamps, *Histoire de Madagascar* (Paris: Editions Berger-Levrault, 1961); R.W. Beachey, *The Slave Trade of Eastern Africa* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976); Mervyn Brown, *Madagascar Rediscovered: A History from Early Times to Independence* (Hamden, CT: Archon Press, 1979); Abdul Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar* (London: James Currey, 1987). For Campbell, see 'Madagascar and the Slave Trade, 1810–1895', *Journal of African History*, 22 (1981), pp.203–27; 'Madagascar and Mozambique in the Slave Trade of the Western Indian Ocean, 1800–1861', *Slavery and Abolition*, 9, 3 (1988), pp.166–93; and 'The Structure of Trade in Madagascar, 1750–1810', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 26 (1993), pp.111–48. For Larson, see 'A Census of Slaves Exported from Central Madagascar to the Mascarenes Between 1769 and 1820', in Rakoto, *L'esclavage*, pp.131–45, and *History and Memory in the Age of Enslavement: Becoming Merina in Highland Madagascar, 1770–1822* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000).
12. Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.62, 156.
13. Richard B. Allen, 'Licentious and Unbridled Proceedings: The Illegal Slave Trade to Mauritius and the Seychelles During the Early Nineteenth Century', *Journal of African History*, 43 (2001), pp.91–116.
14. Huguette Ly-Tio-Fane, *Lured Away: The Life History of Indian Cane Workers in Mauritius* (Moka, Mauritius: Mahatma Gandhi Institute Press, 1984), pp.17–23.
15. Modern proponents of this argument follow Hugh Tinker, *A New System of Slavery: The Export of Indian Labour Overseas, 1830–1920* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974). For critiques of this paradigm, see Bridget Brereton, 'The Other Crossing: Asian Migrants in the Caribbean, A Review Essay', *Journal of Caribbean History*, 28, 1 (1994), pp.99–122; Marina Carter, *Servants, Sirdars and Settlers: Indians in Mauritius, 1834–1874* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.1–6.
16. Philip Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969).
17. Filliot, *La traite des esclaves*, pp.54–69.
18. Alpers, 'The French Slave Trade', pp.82–4.
19. Raymond Decary, *Les voyages du chirurgien Avine à l'île de France et dans la mer des Indes au début du XIXe siècle* (Paris: G.Durassé et Cie, 1961), p.17.
20. M.J. Milbert, *Voyage pittoresque à l'Île de France, au Cap de Bonne-Espérance et à l'Île de Ténériffe* (Paris: A.Nepveu, 1812), Vol.1, p.162.
21. Baron d'Unienville, *Statistiques de l'île Maurice et ses dépendances suivie d'une notice historique sur cette colonie et d'un essai sur l'île de Madagascar*, 2nd edn. ([Île] Maurice: Typographie The Merchants and Planters Gazette, 1885–86), Vol.1, p.257.

22. Richard B. Allen, *Slaves, Freedmen and Indentured Laborers in Colonial Mauritius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.14, 42, 83.
23. Some ‘Malagasy’ slaves were actually Africans distributed via slave markets in northern Madagascar (Campbell, ‘Madagascar and Mozambique’, pp.170–74; Larson, *History and Memory*, p.54).
24. Filliot, *La traite des esclaves*, p.69.
25. Official sources reported, for example, 2343 births and 4285 deaths among Mauritian slaves between the slave censuses of 1815 and 1819 (CO 167/141, Return No.7—General Return of the Periodical Recensemens of Slaves...).
26. CO 172/42, Tableau No.17—Mouvements de la Population Esclave depuis 1767 Jusqu’en 1825.
27. Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey*, pp.869, 879.
28. Mauritian slaves were emancipated on 1 Feb. 1835, but these new freedmen were required to continue working for their masters as ‘apprentices’ for a period of up to six years. The Mauritian apprenticeship system ended on 31 March 1839.
29. Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey*, pp.765–6, 774, 777, 852.
30. B.W.Higman, *Slave Populations in the British Caribbean, 1807–1834* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), pp.308–10.
31. OIOC: H/99, p.327—An Account of the Island Mauritius Received from Mr. Desvoeux....
32. Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey*, pp.873–4; Payet, *Histoire de l’esclavage*, p.15.
33. Sir R.T.Farquhar to R.W.Hay, 3 Feb. 1829 (PP 1829 XXV [337], p.5).
34. Auguste Toussaint, ‘Le trafic commerciale entre les Mascareignes et Madagascar, de 1773 à 1810’, *Annales de l’Université de Madagascar*, Série lettres et sciences humaines, 6 (1967), pp.35–89; Madeleine Ly-Tio-Fane, ‘Problèmes d’approvisionnement de l’Île de France au temps de l’Intendant Poivre’, *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences of Mauritius*, 3, 1 (1968), pp. 101–15.
35. CO 167/10—R.T.Farquhar to the Earl of Liverpool, despatch dated 28 July 1812.
36. CO 167/79—Despatch No.48, Sir Lowry Cole to Earl Bathurst, 12 Sept. 1825; MA: IB 6/No.9—J.Finniss to G.A.Barry, 24 Feb. 1825.
37. CO 415/6/A. 124—Returns of the number of Births and Deaths of Slaves in the [district/town of...] from the Year 1810 to 1826, inclusive.
38. Slave imports were estimated by adding the projected number of slave deaths, calculated using available population figures and the average rates of net decline among Mauritian apprentices/ex-apprentices from 1835 to 1846 and Mauritian government slaves from 1814 to 1832, to the net increase in the size of the slave population during the years in question.
39. The 1807 Parliamentary act prohibiting British subjects from engaging in the slave-trade was applied to the Mascarenes from 1811 to 1814, and remained in force in Mauritius and its dependencies after 1814. Following its return to French control in 1814, slave-trading to Réunion became legal again until France formally abolished the trade in 1817.
40. CO 167/23/E, No.66—Lt. Col. Henry S.Keating to R.T.Farquhar, 8 Jan. 1814.
41. Gerbeau, ‘Quelques aspects de la traite illégale’, p.293.
42. Allen, ‘Licentious and Unbridled Proceedings’, p.100.
43. Filliot, *La traite des esclaves*, p.226.
44. Ibid., p.228.

45. Mortality rates on eighteenth-century French slavers operating in the Atlantic averaged 14.9 per cent; see Herbert S.Klein, *The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp.195–6.
46. Auguste Toussaint, *La route des îles: Contribution à l'histoire maritime des Mascareignes* (Paris: SEVPEN, 1967), pp.451, 454.
47. Allen, ‘Licentious and Unbridled Proceedings’, p.110.
48. Edward A.Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), pp.151, 185–7.
49. Ibid., pp.213–5.
50. Larson, *History and Memory*, pp.65, 81, 134.
51. Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves*, pp.94–6; José Capela and Eduardo Medeiros, ‘La traite au départ du Mozambique vers les îles françaises de l’Océan Indien, 1720–1904’, in U.Bissoondoyal and S.B.C.Servansing (eds.), *Slavery in South West Indian Ocean* (Moka, Mauritius: Mahatma Gandhi Institute Press, 1989), pp.250–51.
52. Philippe Haudrère, *La Compagnie française des Indes aux XVIIIe siècle (1719–1795)* (Paris: Librairie de l’Inde, 1989), *passim*.
53. Auguste Toussaint, *Le mirage des îles: Le négoce français aux Mascareignes au XVIIIe siècle* (Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1977), pp.20ff; Campbell, ‘The Structure of Trade’, pp.139, 143; Madeleine Ly-Tio-Fane, ‘The Americans and the Franchise of Port Louis, Ile de France’, *The Indian Ocean Review* (June-Sept. 1995), pp.19–22.
54. Freeman-Grenville, *The French at Kilwa Island*, pp.10–24; Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves*, pp.150–51.
55. E.g., Brown, *Madagascar Rediscovered*, pp.129, 132; Larson, *History and Memory*, *passim*.
56. Gwyn Campbell, ‘The Adoption of Autarky in Imperial Madagascar, 1820–1835’, *Journal of African History*, 28 (1987), pp.395–409.
57. Milbert, *Voyage pittoresque*, Vol.2, p.233 bis. Reunion housed 1955 Indian slaves in 1808 (Payet, *Histoire de l'esclavage*, p.17).
58. Charu Chandra Ray, ‘A Note on Slaves and Slavery in Old Chandernagore’, *Bengal, Past and Present*, 6 (1910), pp.257–65.
59. D.R.Banaji, *Slavery in British India*, 2nd edn. (Bombay: D.B.Taraporevala, 1933), p.59.
60. K.K.N.Kurup, ‘Slavery in 18th Century Malabar’, *Revue historique de Pondichéry*, 11 (1973), pp.56–60; Amal Kumar Chattopadhyay, *Slavery in the Bengal Presidency, 1772–1843* (London: Golden Eagle Publishing House, 1977), pp.79–115; Marina Carter and Hubert Gerbeau, ‘Covert Slaves and Coveted Coolies in the Early 19th Century Mascareignes’, *Slavery and Abolition*, 9, 3 (1988), pp.194–208.
61. Teotino R.de Souza, ‘French Slave-Trading in Portuguese Goa (1771–1793)’, in Teotino R. de Souza (ed.), *Essays in Goan History* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1989), pp. 119–31; Rudy Bauss, ‘The Portuguese Slave Trade from Mozambique to Portuguese India and Macau and Comments on Timor, 1750–1850: New Evidence from the Archives’, *Camões Center Quarterly*, 6–7, 1/2 (1997), pp.21–6.

62. The term ‘Malay’ could refer not only to persons from Malaya and elsewhere in South-East Asia, but also to individuals arriving from India and even the Maldives (Gerbeau, ‘Des minorités mal-connues’, pp.160–64).
63. A.Reid, ‘Introduction: Slavery and Bondage in Southeast Asian History’, in Anthony Reid (ed.), *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1983), especially pp.27–33; A. van der Kraan, ‘Bali: Slavery and Slave Trade,’ in Reid, *Slavery, Bondage*, especially pp.329–37. See Allen, ‘Licentious and Unbridled Proceedings’, pp.96ff., on the suppression of the illegal trade to the Mascarenes.
64. CO 415/1, Letter Book (Private & Confidential), p.15—W.M.G.Colebrooke and W.Blair to Earl Bathurst, 25 Oct. 1826.
65. CO 415/7/A. 164—Memorandum for Captain Ackland from Mr Finniss [after 13 Sept. 1826].
66. Some 500–600 slaves were exported from Bali to the Mascarenes each year during the 1810s and 1820s (van der Kraan, ‘Bali’, p.332).
67. Milbert, *Voyage pittoresque*, Vol.2, pp.169–70; d’Unienville, *Statistiques*, Vol.1, pp.256–7.
68. Charles Grant, *The History of Mauritius, or the Isle de France, and the Neighbouring Islands...* (London: W.Bulmer & Co., 1801), pp.297–8; J.H.Bernardin de St Pierre, *Voyage a l’île de France* (Paris: Armand-Aubréé, 1834), pp.120–22; Milbert, *Voyage pittoresque*, Vol.2, pp.162–3; d’Unienville, *Statistiques*, Vol.1, pp.255–8.
69. Lionel Caplan, ‘Power and Status in South Asian Slavery’, in James L.Watson (ed.), *Asian and African Systems of Slavery* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1980), pp.170, 173, 182, 189; Reid, ‘Introduction,’ pp.14–17, 24; Gerrit J.Knaap, ‘Slavery and the Dutch in Southeast Asia’, in Gert Oostinde (ed.), *Fifty Years Later: Antislavery, Capitalism and Modernity in the Dutch Orbit* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996), p.197.
70. Sinnappah Arasaratnam, ‘Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean in the Seventeenth Century’, in K.S.Mathews (ed.), *Mariners, Merchants and Oceans: Studies in Maritime History* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1995), pp.195–208.
71. Unfortunately, Haudrère makes no reference to Indian slave exports to the Mascarenes in his *La Compagnie française*.
72. Chandra Ray, ‘A Note on Slaves’, p.263; Banaji, *Slavery*, pp.45, 59; Kurup, ‘Slavery’, p.56; Chattopadhyay, *Slavery*, pp.11, 16, 80.
73. Carter, ‘Indian Slaves’, pp.235–6.
74. Tanika Sarkar, ‘Bondage in the Colonial Context’, in Utsa Patnaik and Manjari Dingwaney (eds.), *Chains of Servitude: Bondage and Slavery in India* (Madras: Sangam Books, 1985), especially pp.99–103.
75. Sarkar, ‘Bondage’, p.104; Dharma Kumar, *Land and Caste in South India: Agricultural Labour in the Madras Presidency During the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp.37–43; K.Saradamon, *Emergence of a Slave Caste: Pulayas of Kerala* (New Delhi: People’s Publishing House, 1980), pp.10, 52–6.
76. Huguette Ly-Tio-Fane Pineo, ‘Aperçu d’une immigration forcée: L’importation d’Africains libérés aux Mascareignes et aux Seychelles, 1840–1880’, in *Minorités et gens de mer en océan indien, XIXe-XXe siècles*, IHPOM Etudes et Documents No.12 (Aix-en-Provence, 1979), pp.73–84; Hubert Gerbeau, ‘Engagees and

- Coolies on Reunion Island: Slavery's Masks and Freedom's Constraints,' in P.C.Emmer (ed.), *Colonialism and Migration: Indentured Labour Before and After Slavery* (Dordrecht, Boston, and Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1986), especially pp.220–23, 236; Gwyn Campbell, The East African Slave Trade, 1861–1895: The ‘Southern’ Complex’, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 22, 1 (1989), esp. pp.23–4; Capela and Medeiros, ‘La traite au départ’, esp. pp.266–71.
77. See n.15.
 78. CO 415/9/A.221—Documents relating to the Dutch Brig *Swift* which was wrecked at Rodrigues in Augt. 1827 with Malays on board.
 79. E.g., I.M.Cumpston, *Indians Overseas in British Territories, 1834–1854* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953); Panchanan Saha, *Emigration of Indian Labour, 1834–1900* (Delhi: People’s Publishing House, 1970); Tinker, *A New System of Slavery*; Carter, *Servants, Sirdars*; David Northrup, *Indentured Labour in the Age of Imperialism, 1834–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
 80. Benedicte Hjejle, ‘Slavery and Agricultural Bondage in South India in the Nineteenth Century’, *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 15 (1967), p.106.
 81. Kumar, *Land and Caste*, p.35; Indrani Chatterjee, *Gender, Slavery and Law in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.1–17.
 82. Edward A.Alpers, ‘The African Diaspora in the Northwestern Indian Ocean: Reconsideration of an Old Problem, New Directions for Research’, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 17, 2 (1997), p.62.
 83. Gerbeau, ‘The Slave Trade’ pp.184–5.

Flight to Freedom: Escape from Slavery among Bonded Africans in the Indian Ocean world, c.1750–1962

EDWARD A. ALPERS

Introduction

One of the striking features of the African diaspora in the Indian Ocean is that enslaved Africans found themselves scattered across several quite different slave systems. For example, the Mascarene Islands (including the Seychelles), are best conceptualized as displaced Caribbean sugar islands; Madagascar, which both exported and imported slave labour, shares much in common with Asian closed systems of slavery in which slaves were permanent outsiders; Zanzibar and coastal East Africa can be fitted into broader patterns of Islamic slavery in Arabia and the Persian Gulf. Ideologically, one represents a Christian European variety of plantation slavery, another an independently evolved Afro-Asian hierarchical state system model, the last a variation on Islamic slave systems. In addition, we must include colonial slavery at the Cape, which was very different from the Caribbean system that obtained in the Mascarenes, and distinct yet again from the African open system of slavery, in which slaves were considered as belonging to their owner's lineage, that characterized the Zambezi *prazos* [leased Crown estates] of the Portuguese. In Arabia and South Asia, we find that Africans were enslaved in somewhat different systems under Islam, in which the ideology of slavery was comparable in theory, if not always in practice. Finally, Africans also turn up as bonded servants in the European administrative emporia of Mozambique and India. In addressing the issue of flight among bonded Africans—including Malagasy—in the Indian Ocean world, therefore, we need to keep these distinctions well in mind.

The best known examples of flight in the historiography on enslaved Africans focus overwhelmingly on the Atlantic world. In particular, the very substantial literature on runaways and maroons shows a strong bias towards the Americas, although there is also a growing body of scholarship on fugitive slaves in Africa itself.¹ Commenting two decades ago on the increasing pace at which new studies of maroon societies were then appearing, Richard Price observed ‘that resistance, rebellion, and marronage [flight] and the existence of independent maroon communities were even more frequent and geographically widespread than anyone was aware just a few years ago’, including the plantation islands of

the Indian Ocean.² Price argued vigorously for a comparative approach to the study of maroon societies because of ‘the particularistic nature of maroon scholarship’.³ Furthermore, the study of flight as a strategy for dealing with enslavement has the potential to tell us much about the nature of different slave systems, not least by revealing the ways in which they addressed the issue of flight. My purpose in this article is to pull together evidence on African runaways in the Indian Ocean world and to place it in the comparative perspective for which Price advocates.

Runaways and *petit marronage*

In general, most runaways embodied the practice of *petit marronage*, a form of temporary absence from one’s master that was the most widespread form of escape taken by enslaved Africans across the region. What set *petit marronage* apart from *grand marronage* was above all the length of time a slave absented herself or himself from a master. This distinction itself, however, often reflected no more than an arbitrary legal distinction from one slave regime to another, rather than any fundamental difference in motivations and goals. For example, premeditation could be as much on the minds of slaves who engaged in acts of *petit marronage* as in those that are usually classified as *grand marronage*. Similarly, there is no evidence that all groups of slaves who absented themselves for long periods of time attempted to form themselves into independent communities, or that those individuals who fell into the first category because they were captured sooner rather than later did not seek to create such communities. Thus, these two generally accepted categories in the literature reflect not clearly demarcated entities, but as Richard Allen has persuaded me, ‘two somewhat fuzzy clusters of non-exclusive attributes that occur along a spectrum of maroon activity’.⁴

Although this temporary form of escape reveals the attempt by enslaved Africans to mediate the terms of their bondage, it also reflects a form of coming to terms with slavery. At the Cape, where the earliest recorded example of slave escape was in 1655, The most common form of resistance was escape’, which was ‘a regular feature of life at the Cape.’⁵ Patterns of escape established in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries endured into the nineteenth century. Thus, increased labour demands regularly provoked flight. Such escapes tended not to be premeditated, ‘but were resorted to in the aftermath of committing a crime or enduring punishment’. All slaves were liable to resort to this form of flight and they generally remained close to their farm or Cape Town without seeking to leave the colony altogether.⁶ In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, some runaways found refuge among the different indigenous peoples of the Cape, and in the late eighteenth century others managed to assimilate themselves among the so-called Bastaard-Hottentots of the farther interior.⁷ By the 1820s, however, fear of extradition caused runaways to avoid the territory controlled by the Griquas on the Cape frontier.⁸

The situation on the Mascarenes was not entirely dissimilar, except for the important difference that there were no indigenous populations on the islands. The literature for La Reunion (until 1848 Île de Bourbon) focuses on *grand marronage* during the middle decades of the eighteenth century, but runaways were a consistent, if minor, feature of slavery on the island from the very beginning of French occupation in 1663. These runaways or *petits marrons* were also known as ‘*renards*’ or ‘foxes’, a name that tells us something about the nature of their mode of existence. They typically were individuals who remained close to inhabited areas and lived by pillaging. Most were captured within a few weeks. From the last quarter of the eighteenth century until abolition in 1848, the phenomenon of runaways reasserted itself as a form of resistance to slavery, assuming the form of small-scale ‘vagabondage’.⁹ Newly landed slaves, not all of whom were African or Malagasy, were particularly prone to individual flight, especially during the era of the illegal slave-trade in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The most frequent reason for this form of escape was harsh treatment at the hands of one’s master. As late as 1829, some 4403 maroons were counted in the colony, although the incidence of *petit marronage* declined dramatically during the two decades preceding emancipation. Among the official reasons given for this decline are improved conditions of slavery and the suppression of the illegal slave-trade, while Sudel Fuma considers the development of a more efficient police force and the threat of severe punishment to be the root cause of this decline.¹⁰ It is worth noting, however, that runaways were punished much less severely than *grands marrons*.¹¹

During the Dutch occupation of Mauritius (1638–1710), Malagasy slaves fled into the interior almost immediately upon their landing in 1642 and Robert Ross has suggested that they may have made the island virtually impossible for the Dutch to colonize.¹² On Mauritius (which the French occupied in 1721 as Île de France and the British gained and renamed in 1810), the physical conditions for *grand marronage* were much less conducive than at Reunion, thus *petit marronage* was much more prevalent. According to Richard Allen, the annual rate of *marronage* from the 1770s to the end of the period of French rule was about 5 per cent, with a significant increase after the British take-over to about 11.5 per cent in the 1820s and over 9 per cent in the 1830s.¹³ *Petit marronage* was understood to encompass those runaways who absented themselves for periods of up to a month in length, whom Allen indicates constituted at least half and perhaps as many as three-quarters of all maroons.¹⁴ A register of fugitive slaves dating from early 1831 more than bears this out, with nearly 83 per cent of 563 maroons absenting themselves for a month or less.¹⁵ For the most part, flight was a means by which slaves manifested their objections to specific kinds of ill-treatment or fear of punishment and it had the consequence of disrupting the smooth functioning of the slave system that obtained at Mauritius, whether in the fields or in the household.¹⁶ But as Vijaya Teelock observes, and *petit marronage* demonstrates, There was never any escape from slavery; only temporary and short-lived relief.¹⁷ Anthony Barker suggests, as well, that we

should understand ‘a great deal of marronage as restless pursuit of personal space within the broader confines of slave society, rather than bloody revolt against it’.¹⁸ Such pursuit included slaves’ desire to maintain contact with family and friends who resided on other plantations. Allen’s analysis of the available data indicates that the vast majority of maroons, about 80–90 per cent, were men.¹⁹ Although some women were spirited away into marronage by men, when they did maroon voluntarily, women frequently took their children with them.²⁰ As at the Cape and Reunion, Malagasy slaves were regarded as the most prone to flight, but as the proportion of East African slaves came to predominate in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, official records identify most maroons as being ‘Mozambiques’.²¹ Finally, when emancipation was declared at Mauritius in 1835 and the despised apprenticeship system abolished in 1839, it is no wonder that the vast majority of freed slaves—African, Malagasy, and Creole—left the plantations where they had laboured to lead their lives in communities that lay beyond the reach of the still expanding sugar economy.

There exists little evidence for the Seychelles Islands, which the French occupied from Mauritius only in 1770, but among the 219 slaves enumerated in the first census in 1788, two were listed as maroons.²² Half a century later, W.F.W.Owen observed that although the ‘attempt to escape from slavery is regarded as a capital offence, desertions are constantly taking place’.²³ In 1832, slaves were captured in the Seychelles who had been living ‘in the woods’ for more than four years, while runaways—defined as anyone absent for six days—were commonplace during the period of apprenticeship (1834–39). Flight remained a persistent problem in the Seychelles for the next half-century, as evidenced by the strict enforcement of successive Vagrancy Acts.²⁴

Information on runaways among the African slaves who were imported to Madagascar in the nineteenth century is sparse, although Gwyn Campbell reports a strong tradition of *marronage* in the context of indigenous Malagasy slavery.²⁵ African slaves were known either as Makoa (from the dominant Makua peoples of northern Mozambique) or simply as Masombika (the generic Indian Ocean term for slaves exported from the Portuguese possessions in northern Mozambique). While some were employed as military retainers (*tsiarondahy*), most were settled in semi-autonomous agricultural villages. In general, the unstable conditions that characterized western Madagascar and the degree of control exercised by imperial Imerina in the highlands made flight difficult.²⁶ When the French established their colonial rule over Madagascar, ‘the [Makoa] former dependents quit the village of their former masters and engaged themselves as wage earners in the service of the Europeans or again in the first [colonial] agricultural cultivation (mangrove bark).’ They subsequently took advantage of the opening of new lands for settlement that were ‘free from memory and that escaped the control of their former masters’. Located on the periphery of larger towns, the descendants of these slaves today occupy entire villages and quarters, one of which still bears the name ‘Morima’—*mrima* being Swahili for ‘coast’, the name by which the Makoa identify the African homeland

of their forebears.²⁷ Even less is known about this aspect of slavery in the Comoro Islands, but a clue may be found in the fact that in 1868 at the French possession of Mayotte, ‘bands of maroons pervaded the interior of the island and menaced the security of the planters’, despite the fact that slavery had been abolished in 1848.²⁸

In contrast to the European establishments at the Cape and the Mascarenes, the Portuguese in East Africa generally did not import slaves by sea from other parts of the continent. But at Mozambique Island and in the settlements of the Zambesi valley, significant numbers of slaves were held from among peoples of the interior and the surrounding hinterland. While slavery at Mozambique Island was comparable to that in other European settlements around the Indian Ocean littoral (including its islands), slavery in Zambesia was decidedly African in its open organization, with the exception of the household slaves of the *prazo*-holders and their slave retainers.²⁹ Embedded in Africa and with porous frontiers, escape was always a ready option for slaves of the Portuguese in Zambesia. Maltreatment, change of ownership, and the possibility of overseas sale were all reasons for flight; the nearby refuge of Mount Morumbala, on the north side of the Zambesi, provided a ready place for runaways, who were welcomed by local African chiefs. Most treaties between the Portuguese and the major chiefs to the north and south of the valley included clauses governing the return of escaped slaves. But as Malyn Newitt comments, ‘For the most part slaves moved when they liked and took service with whom they pleased.’³⁰ Of 314 slaves belonging to the Jesuit *pazo* at Tete in 1759, for example, 30—almost ten per cent—were indicated as being fugitive.³¹ No such details exist for Mozambique Island and the Portuguese holdings on the mainland, although a 1758 report records that the lands belonging to the African chiefs of the mainland ‘above all serve as asylum to escaped slaves’.³²

Turning to coastal East Africa north of Mozambique, flight was again the most common form of resistance to slavery in the nineteenth century. At Zanzibar, recently arrived slaves were considered the most likely runaways and a French observer describes the Makua from the Mozambique hinterland, in particular, as ‘strongly inclined to flee’.³³ Some fugitives hid in neighbouring plantations and lived by theft; others fled to the far reaches of the island and lived as independent cultivators. European missionary stations and, at the end of the century, government outposts, also attracted runaways who sought their protection. Still others drifted into rapidly growing Zanzibar Town, where they ‘simply disappeared.’ On Pemba, some slaves fled to the small islets off its coast. Others ventured to escape across the channel separating Zanzibar from the African mainland, while British naval patrols were frequently ‘besieged with slaves, who have requested to be taken on board, some from the land, some from canoes’.³⁴ Ill-treatment and brutality were the most frequent causes of this form of flight. Fred Cooper suggests that ‘escape became more common in the last years before abolition because the presence of British officials made the consequences of failure less severe.’³⁵ The conditions of slavery at Zanzibar and

Pemba, where slaves lived in scattered homesteads and had considerable mobility, made flight relatively easy, but the indigenous Africans of the islands did not welcome them in their midst. Moreover, slaves who managed to escape to the mainland were as likely to be recaptured and sold once more into slavery as they were to find safe harbour.³⁶ Late in the century, however, a number of Yao and Ngindo slaves from southern Tanzania escaped from the brutality of their Arab masters, who had established sugar plantations near the Pangani River in northern Tanzania, to the protection of Chief Saleh Mwanakingwaba of the Mgambo section of the Zigua.³⁷ In the same era, several hundred individual slaves from the mainland plantation areas of the southern Kenyan coast fled to recently established Christian mission stations.³⁸ On the Mrima (northern) coast of Tanzania in the late nineteenth century, Jonathon Glassman tells us that 'Village slaves and urban *vibarua* [unskilled daily wage labourers] ran off to enlist as trading-porters on upcountry caravans; thus, much of the labor of the booming Pangani ivory trade was performed by what were essentially *petits marrons*'.³⁹

The situation in Arabia was quite different. Here the combination of the freedom of movement enjoyed by many slaves, the possibility of manumission and the unpromising nature of the terrain and Arab society for sheltering runaways may have made even temporary flight difficult, if not entirely impossible. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, near the palace of the reigning Sherif Yahya at Mekka, John Burkhardt encountered 'the numerous low huts built of brush-wood, the former abodes of Sherif Ghaleb's slaves, who served as soldiers in his guard', most of whom fled following his forcible removal from office.⁴⁰ Slavery was not abolished in Saudi Arabia until 1962, but according to Alaine Hutson, from 1926 to 1938, when the British at Jiddah were granted treaty rights to manumit runaway slaves, 262 individuals (nearly all of whom were African) sought this means of escape.⁴¹ In late nineteenth century Hadramaut, most slaves were said to be of either Somali or Nubian (in the broadest sense) descent and born in the country, rather than freshly imported. According to one knowledgeable source, 'Manumission is a relatively rare act in Hadramaut', despite its place in Islamic law. 'The descendants of freedmen belong generally to the class of domestic servants; recently manumitted slaves prefer to leave the country to seek their fortune abroad', many in Indonesia.⁴² Commenting on the low incidence of flight from slavery in the Aden hinterland in the late nineteenth century, R.B.Serjeant commented, 'If slaves reached Aden Colony they could, I have heard, automatically become free, but I imagine this was a rare occurrence since a freed slave would have no local protectors and perhaps no means of earning a livelihood'.⁴³ Half a century later, Harold Ingrams, the first British Commissioner to the Hadramaut, counted '4,000 or 5,000 persons in a technical state of slavery in the country, most of whom are of African descent. In far the largest number of cases the state is purely technical: the slaves are in fact free to do anything they please'.⁴⁴ In 1938 an agreement was signed with the Sultan of the Qu'ayti state which facilitated general emancipation,

notwithstanding resistance from the slaves themselves, many of whom were soldiers and administrators in the Sultan's government and who feared losing their powerful protector.⁴⁵

The same conditions apparently prevailed at Oman, which had a large population of enslaved Africans as a consequence of the Busaidi control of Zanzibar. According to a visiting French naval officer, in the late 1860s 'desertions are very rare, and the greatest number of freed slaves remain in the country', where they constituted about one-quarter of the population and occupied the lowest levels of society.⁴⁶ In the early twentieth century, Percy Cox, the British Resident at Muscat, stated, 'A few escaped slaves are still freed annually by H.M.ships or at British Consulates, but the numbers are gradually decreasing.'⁴⁷ Slavery was not abolished in Oman until about 1970, however, and while

some ex-slaves choose to maintain their association with previous masters through various symbolic means, notably by using submissive greetings, by serving as butchers for the ex-master's household, and by having a special role at the life-crisis ceremonies of the superior family,

notes Frederick Barth writing about Sohar, a town on the northern coast of Oman,

other slaves chose to repudiate all connections with their former owners, often joining what seems to have been a rather massive exodus at the time of manumission, traveling as labor migrants to Kuwait or elsewhere regardless of age and marital status.⁴⁸

The evidence for India is very thin. The earliest notice that I have been able to identify for a runaway African slave in India dates to 1786 in Calcutta: 'Run Away from on board of a Vessel, A Coffrey [African] slave boy, about five feet high, named Anthony,' who was reported to be 'guilty of a crime of a higher nature, than that of barely *running away*'.⁴⁹ The Portuguese agreed to abolish slavery in 1836 and signed a treaty with the British to abolish the slave trade in 1842, but small numbers of freed slaves from captured slaving vessels continued to arrive in the Portuguese possessions, where they were apprenticed out by a government agency. Nevertheless, legal slavery persisted until 1854, when all slaves were declared free. Most of these liberated slaves did not remain in Portuguese possessions. According to Shastry, 'Circumstantial evidence shows that most of the slaves migrated to the forest areas of Khanapur, etc. in neighbouring Karnetaka [Uttara Kanada]', where they survive to the present in largely endogamous Sidi (African descended) villages. 'Knowing their masters,' he concludes, 'a large number of slaves must have preferred to run away.'⁵⁰ It seems likely that similar circumstances would have prevailed at Diu, in Gujarat, where 6 per cent of the population was African in 1838.⁵¹ As Gujarat fell increasingly under British control, much the same process probably occurred

wherever African slaves were held, and where small Sidi communities exist to the present.⁵²

Across the entire region of the western Indian Ocean these examples of *petit marronage* during slavery reveal common characteristics of short-term escape, usually as a protest against or fear of punishment: a certain degree of freedom of movement, often an apparent absence of planning and, in cases of total escape from an individual's current enslavement, the importance of an environment that enabled the fugitive to gain protection, even though such protection may not have resulted in complete freedom. Upon the new circumstances of emancipation, whether in plantation slavery at Mauritius, praedial bondage in Madagascar or household slavery in Arabia and India, many slaves exercised this option by simply walking away from the masters who no longer had the authority to keep them in servitude.

Grand marronage and Maroon Societies

As we have seen, sometimes individuals and small groups of slaves sought to escape enslavement altogether by seeking shelter with indigenous people. A second kind of complete escape was for slaves to attempt to return to their homeland. Although neither of these models conforms to the usual understanding of maroon societies, that is, the reconstruction of independent African communities beyond the reach of the dominant slave society, I believe they constitute an important intermediary point along the continuum from *petit marronage* to *grand marronage*. At the Cape, some slaves clearly planned their escape from the colony and left in larger groups from farmsteads or Cape Town. James Armstrong and Nigel Worden note that 'such rejection of slave status was most often carried out by newly arrived slaves. Malagasy slaves were particularly prone to escape as they are reported to have believed that they could reach Madagascar by travelling overland'.⁵³ To stand a chance of success, escaped slaves withdrew to the mountainous terrain of the Cape, including Table Mountain and surrounding ranges within sight of Cape Town. Maintaining themselves was always a problem, however, as they needed regular supplies of food in order to survive. In the 1770s one group of escaped slaves on Table Mountain 'worked out a silent barter system, exchanging firewood for food with slave woodcutters from Cape Town'.⁵⁴ By the 1820s there were enough of these escaped slave troops, as they were called, to be considered a nuisance to travellers around Cape Town. One group of fugitive slaves organized a maroon community at Cape Hangklip, on the coast at False Bay, which endured throughout the eighteenth century.⁵⁵ Not surprisingly, a regular system of pursuit developed that made it difficult for escaped slaves to remain free, while penalties for harbouring or assisting fugitive slaves were severe. Slaves who returned on their own received hard punishment, to be sure, but slaves who were captured were often killed. Those who lived were sentenced to especially harsh

punishment. Rather than face further captivity, some captured slaves committed suicide.⁵⁶

Grands marrons dominated the slave society of Reunion during most of the eighteenth century, creating great alarm among the slave-holding class because of their frequent raids, called ‘*descentes*’,⁵⁷ upon European settlements and provoking a fearsome retaliatory regime of organized hunting and punishment. The island was ideally suited for marooning and for the establishment of maroon communities. To be viable,’ writes Price, ‘maroon communities had to be almost inaccessible, and villages were typically located in inhospitable, out-of-the-way areas.’⁵⁸ Reunion fitted this ideal type perfectly, with a narrow coastal plain and heavily forested volcanic mountains cut by numerous deep ravines.⁵⁹ According to what are undoubtedly incomplete records, from 1725 to 1788, 1057 *grands marrons* were found by patrols, nearly half of them during the period 1750–65. Of the total, 309 (29 per cent) were killed in the woods and the remainder captured.⁶⁰ The vast majority, some 90 per cent, of *grands marrons* were Malagasy, who often claimed ‘le mal de malgache’—longing for Madagascar—as a cause for flight.⁶¹

Maroon communities were organized into camps located throughout the interior of the island.⁶² Camps ranged in size from a dozen or more individuals living in temporary shelters to as many as 70 individuals inhabiting some 20 huts constructed of wood. Maroons cultivated maize, manioc, sweet potatoes, some vegetables, and gathered honey, fruits, and other forest foods. They also hunted and fished for food. In addition to being hidden away, dogs sometimes guarded the camps, and male maroons were always armed. When they were being pursued, maroons often secreted themselves in caves.⁶³ Each maroon camp had a chief, and the different chiefs maintained a loose political network and observed a certain degree of hierarchy among themselves. One of these, a man named Jouan who was regarded as ‘a kind of sorcerer’, is recorded as being a ‘*café Mozambique*’, but the other principal maroon ‘kings’ were all Malagasy. Many of the place names of the interior of the island can be traced to these leaders.⁶⁴ In addition to citing the effectiveness of the severe measures taken by the French authorities against maroons at Reunion, Jean Barassin attributes the end of *grand marronage* to the reduction of slave imports from Madagascar and the greatly increased numbers of continental East Africans after 1765, ‘the Malagasy always showing themselves the most seditious among the slaves’.⁶⁵ Although maroon communities ceased to be prominent after the late eighteenth century, *grand marrons* continued to hold the attention of French colonists for decades afterwards and became the focus of literary mythologizing in the years leading up to emancipation in 1848.⁶⁶

I have already noted that *grand marronage* was less prevalent at Mauritius than at Reunion. Nevertheless, at least some runaways succeeded in removing themselves effectively from slave society by withdrawing to the forested mountains of Black River and Savanne. According to a visitor to the island in 1769–70, a maroon community flourished on the inaccessible height of Le

Morne Brabant, an isolated promontory at the south-western tip of the island. There they have plantations, huts, they elect a chief who protects them, they are armed with a sort of spear, they have women and they multiply. People pursue them, but the place is so steep that they are never able to dislodge them from there.⁶⁷ Although there are no major maroon leaders who are remembered at Mauritius, all Mauritians know the story of how a number of maroons hurled themselves from Le Morne when they heard soldiers who were, in fact, bearing news of slave emancipation. Even the Seychelles had at least one major maroon leader, a certain Macondé, who for several years in the late 1820s caused British authorities problems, until he turned himself in and became himself a hunter of runaways.⁶⁸ From his name he was apparently a Makonde from either northern Mozambique or southern Tanzania.

Madagascar was the site of several ‘refugee republics’, as Campbell calls them. While most of these communities were founded and dominated by free men who had fled from the oppression of the imperial Imerina forced labour system called *fanompoana*, Campbell notes that ‘runaway slaves comprised an element in almost all refugee brigand communities’. In late nineteenth-century western Madagascar he notes that the main Betsiriry maroon community included ‘runaway slaves of both Malagasy and African origin’. In the eastern part of the island he mentions the presence of Malagasy slaves as members of a community ‘composed of Taimoro exslaves who had fled east coast plantations’ in the 1830s and another slave community in the eastern forest in about 1889.⁶⁹

Maroon communities were a common phenomenon in late nineteenth-century eastern Africa. As early as the mid-eighteenth century, however, a peripatetic maroon named Macambe who had fled his master on Mozambique Island, attracted a band of followers ‘and eventually built himself a fortified settlement in the country behind Angoche. He and his men maintained themselves by raiding the surrounding settlements and terrorising the whole coast.’⁷⁰ A century later, in Zambesia, these communities were known as *musitu*. Isaacman notes that the well-armed *musitu* ‘presented a very serious problem for the prazeros both because they offered a sanctuary to other slaves and colonos and because they threatened the outlying prazos’. Sometimes they prodded local populations to revolt against the prazo overlords. In the end, ‘the runaway slaves continually challenged the stability of the prazo system and were instrumental in bringing about its ultimate demise.’⁷¹

In addition to large numbers of maroons who joined local leaders and added to their growing strength,⁷² communities of escaped slaves were also an important feature of both the Mrima and Kenya coast in the last decades of the nineteenth century, where they were known in Swahili as *watoro*, from the verb *kutoroka*, ‘to run away’. Cooper, Fred Morton and Glassman point out that marooning peaked during periods of intensive plantation expansion on the coast. Fugitives from a major slave revolt in protest of the expansion of sugar cultivation behind Pangani gave rise to the important *watoro* community of Makorora, located just north of Mkwaja and 25 miles south of Pangani. As Glassman demonstrates

convincingly, their decision to do so was deliberate and well planned. They selected an easily defensible position, ‘hidden in a thicket of thorny bushes’. A three-metre fortification with loopholes surrounded the settlement. The Busaidi sultan of Zanzibar was unable to bring them to heel and they remained independent until conquered by the Germans in 1889.⁷³ On the southern Kenya coast, *watoro* established a village called Koromio, although it was destroyed by Arab forces from Takaungu in 1852. Later, a much larger settlement at Fulladoyo was created in 1879 and by 1890 it was believed to be home to about 1000 inhabitants, having survived attack by coastal Arabs in 1883. Behind Malindi, around the Sabaki River, *watoro* successfully built villages at Jilore, Makongeni, Chakama, Yameza, and Mlangobaya. Jilore had a reported population of 300 in 1878; Makongoni a thousand souls in 1890. Cooper remarks, The hinterland north of the Sabaki River even acquired the name—still remembered today—of *Utoroni*, “the place of the runaway slaves.”⁷⁴ Farther north, around the Tana and Juba Rivers, escaped slaves built heavily fortified maroon villages ‘and made their own spears and poisoned arrows while they farmed the surrounding land’.⁷⁵ The Sultanate of Witu, in the hinterland between the Tana and Lamu, on the coast, lay at the centre of a polity largely settled by and comprised partly of *watoro* villages, such as Jongeni, that ‘were self-governing, with their own *wazee* or village elders’.⁷⁶ Despite a reputation for surviving on pillage, Glassman argues persuasively that like many other maroon communities, agriculture and trade lay at the heart of the *watoro* economy.⁷⁷

The Benadir [southern Somali] coast represented the farthest northern extension of coastal plantation slavery and, consequently, imported a great deal of slave labour through Zanzibar from the interior of eastern Africa. Two major maroon communities took root and flourished in the interior of southern Somalia: the first grew up in what became known as the Gosha region up the Juba River, the second evolved around Avai in the swampy marshes of the Shabeelle River behind the coast at Baraawe. The different settlements in Goshaland had a total population of perhaps 25,000 to 30,000, all of whom were originally Bantu-speaking peoples who had fled slavery at the coast from the middle years of the nineteenth century. Led by a Yao ex-slave named Nassib Bunda, who brought them together under federated political leadership in the last quarter of the century, they presented a formidable challenge to Italian conquest. Avai came together less dramatically with individual slave families hiving off from Golweyn, inland and south-west of Marka, and settling as autonomous clients of the dominant Somali clan in the area. In 1903 Avai consisted of six villages with a population of something fewer than 3000, two-thirds of whom were men.⁷⁸ After emancipation in the Italian colony (1903–8), many more slaves migrated to Gosha, as we have seen occurred elsewhere in the Indian Ocean world.⁷⁹

I know of no recorded examples of maroon societies in the Islamic world of Arabia, the Gulf, or South Asia, with the possible exception of the small Siddi villages in the hills of Uttara Kannada, western India.

Somewhere between the two broad categories of marooning that dominate the literature lay another form of flight to which Malagasy were especially prone: escape by sea. The Malagasy urge to return to their homeland was not simply a matter of their also being island dwellers or, more reasonably, of the relative proximity of Madagascar to the Mascarenes; rather it drew its power from the deep cultural belief that for the soul to rest one must be buried in the land of one's birth. As early as 1733 a group of 12 Malagasy slaves swam out into the harbour at Saint-Paul (Réunion) and fled unimpeded in a boat anchored next to a company ship, never to be heard of again. Fifteen years later the French recorded the successful escape of several Malagasy in two pirogues. During the same era a number of Malagasy maroons from Mauritius also seem to have made their way over to Réunion.⁸⁰ A quarter-century later, Bernadin de Saint Pierre mentions that at Mauritius some slaves 'put themselves in a pirogue, and without sails, without food, without compass, attempt to make a crossing of two hundred leagues by sea in order to return to Madagascar'.⁸¹ A contemporary French poet wrote in 1775:

Their country (Madagascar) is two hundred leagues from here. They imagine themselves, however, listening to the cock's crow and recognizing the smoking pipes of their comrades. Sometimes twelve or fifteen of them steal away, carrying a pirogue and give themselves up to the waves. They almost always lose their lives, and it is a small thing when one has lost one's freedom.⁸²

Various measures were taken to prevent such escapes, and the losses they represented to slave owners at Réunion, but despite the apparent futility of such escapes, they persisted into the nineteenth century.⁸³ The same pattern existed at Mauritius in the nineteenth century, where M.J.Milbert recorded the way in which slaves would either seize a longboat or carve out a pirogue from a single tree trunk and launch it from some hidden cove towards Madagascar, which all knew lay to the west.⁸⁴ 'Though many of these adventurers were lost,' Patrick Beaton tells us,

some of them have been known, by the force of the currents and the favour of the winds, which generally blow that way, to have regained their native land, having been recognised by French people who had seen them at Mauritius. Sometimes they have even been known to make for the continent itself, over the stormy and pathless ocean; and though the majority perished, some succeeded.⁸⁵

Similar maritime attempts to escape slavery were also made from the Seychelles.⁸⁶

A different form of maritime escape was for an individual to stow away on a ship, of which we have examples from the Cape, Réunion, and the northern Swahili coast.⁸⁷ Janet Ewald informs us that many Seedies, the generic name

given by the British to African seamen, both slave and free in the nineteenth-century Indian Ocean, were escaped or manumitted slaves. Some had fled to Aden; in one instance, ‘eleven slave pearl fishers in the Red Sea hijacked their owner’s boat, itself commanded by a freedman, and headed for the port.’⁸⁸

All forms of *grand marronage* and escape by sea entailed a high degree of risk and the distinct possibility of punishment by death if one were captured. But as several of the contemporary writers cited above noted, the possibility of successful escape, however remote, was clearly considered to be worth the risk for those bold enough to make the attempt.

Conclusions

It should now be evident that wherever Africans were enslaved in the Indian Ocean world, escape was an indelible aspect of their history. As we have seen, newly landed captives, especially Malagasy, were prone to flight. While not all slaves sought to maroon, where circumstances and opportunity presented themselves, many seized their chance. Whether classified as *petit* or *grand marronage*, flight and the threat of escape had a significant impact on the ability of slave societies to operate at maximum efficiency, and where we possess records, as for the Mascarenes, the Cape, and eastern Africa, it is equally clear that *marronage* created an atmosphere of serious apprehension among slave owners. Finally, where slaves were for the most part unable or unlikely to run away from their captivity, as in Arabia and South Asia, we have seen that many of them expressed their deep longing for freedom as soon as emancipation made flight possible. Even where marooning was a common feature during slavery, the examples of Mauritius and Madagascar upon emancipation reveal how tenuous was the attachment of freed slaves to the world their masters made. As many of the historians whose work I have cited in this chapter have demonstrated with reference to the analyses they have made of runaways in their particular corners of the Indian Ocean, these broad patterns reiterate those that other scholars have elicited from their more detailed studies of *marronage* in the Americas. At the same time, given the wide incidence of *marronage* in the Indian Ocean world, we need to know much more than we do at present about the nature and dynamics of maroon activity. What I hope I have demonstrated here is that such comparisons can be made not only for individual case studies from the Indian Ocean side of Africa, but also for the entire region.

NOTES

1. Notable contributions to this vast literature include Richard Price (ed.), *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, 2nd edn. (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979); Gad Heuman (ed.), *Out of the*

- House of Bondage: Runaways, Resistance and Marronage in Africa and the New World* (London: Frank Cass, 1986).
2. Richard Price, ‘Afterword’, in Price (ed.), *Maroon Societies*, pp.417, 425.
 3. Price, ‘Introduction’, in ibid., p.30; also ‘Afterword’, p.424.
 4. Richard Allen to author, 9 Aug. 2000.
 5. James C.Armstrong and Nigel A.Worden, ‘The Slaves, 1652–1834’, in Richard Elphick and Hermann Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652–1840*, revised edn. (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1989), p. 157.
 6. Ibid., p.158.
 7. Ibid., pp.159, 160.
 8. Robert Ross, *Adam Kok's Griquas: A Study in the Development of Stratification in South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p.17.
 9. Jean Barassin, ‘La révolte des esclaves à l’Île Bourbon (Reunion) au XVIIIe siècle’, *Mouvement de Populations dans l’Océan Indien* (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1979), pp.360–61; Clélie Gamaleya, *Filles d’Heva: Trois siècles de la vie des Femmes de la Reunion* (Saint-Denis: U.F.R., 1984), p.30; Jean-Marie Desport, *De la servitude à la liberté: Bourbon des origines a 1848*, 2nd edn. (Reunion: C.C.E.Océan Editions, 1989), pp.67, 69.
 10. Sudel Fuma, *L’esdavagisme à La Reunion, 1794–1848* (Paris/Saint-Denis: L’Harmattan/ Université de La Reunion, 1992), pp.71–5.
 11. Ibid., p.76; Prosper Éve, ‘Les formes de resistance à Bourbon de 1750 à 1789’, in Marcel Dorigny (ed.), *Les Abolitions de l’Esclavage de L.F.Sonthonax à V.Schoelcher 1793 1794 1848* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes and Éditions UNESCO, 1995), p.60.
 12. Satteeanund Perrthum, ‘Fear and Phobia of Slave Rebellion in T’Eylandt Mauritius’, paper presented at the Colloque international ‘L’esclavage et ses séquelles: Mémoire et vécu d’hier et d’aujourd’hui’, Port-Louis, Mauritius, 5–8 Oct. 1998. Ross is cited by Vinesh Y. Hookoomsing, ‘Identités à re(construire): point(s) de repère culturel’, paper presented at the Colloque international ‘L’esclavage et ses séquelles’, p.1.
 13. Richard B.Allen, *Slaves, Freedmen, and Indentured Labourers in Colonial Mauritius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.40–41.
 14. Allen, ‘Marronage and the Maintenance of Public Order in Mauritius, 1721–1835’, *Slavery and Abolition*, 4 (1983), pp.217–24.
 15. L.Sylvio Michel, *Esclaves Résistants* ([Mauritius]: Quad Printers, 1998), p.5.
 16. Anthony J.Barker, *Slavery and Antislavery in Mauritius, 1810–33: The Conflict between Economic Expansion and Humanitarian Reform under British Rule* (Hounds mills and London: Macmillan Press, 1996), pp.121–31.
 17. Vijaya Teelock, *Bitter Sugar: Sugar and Slavery in 19th Century Mauritius* (Moka: Mahatma Gandhi Institute, 1998), p.203.
 18. Barker, *Slavery and Antislavery*, p.125.
 19. Allen, *Slaves, Freedmen, and Indentured Labourers*, p.42; cf. Allen, ‘Marronage’, pp.219–20, [Table 3](#); Michel, *Esclaves Résistants*, p.2.
 20. See, e.g., M.J.Milbert, *Voyage pittoresque à l’Île-de-France au Cap de Bonne-Espérance et à l’Île de Ténériffe* (Marseille: Lafitte Reprints, 1976 [1812]), Vol.2, p.317. Milbert visited Mauritius from March 1801 to February 1804.
 21. Allen, *Slaves, Freedmen, and Indentured Labourers*, p.43, [Table 3](#).

22. Claude Wanquet, ‘Le peuplement des Seychelles sous l’occupation française, une expérience de colonisation à la fin du XVIIIe siècle’, *Mouvements de Populations dans l’Océan Indien* (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1979), p.191.
23. Owen quoted in Burton Benedict, ‘Slavery and Indenture in Mauritius and Seychelles’, in James L.Watson, ed., *Asian and African Systems of Slavery* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), p.140.
24. Julien Durup, ‘Slavery in Seychelles 1770–1976’, paper presented at the Colloque international ‘L’esclavage et ses séquelles’.
25. Gwyn Campbell, *Unfree Labour, Brigandry and Revolt in Imperial Madagascar, 1790–1895* (Rochester University Press, forthcoming), ch.7: ‘Flight and the Formation of Refugee Communities’. My thanks to the author for permission to cite his work before publication.
26. Ignace Rakoto, ‘L’esclavage historique et ses séquelles a Madagascar’, paper presented at the Colloque international ‘L’esclavage et ses séquelles’; chapter by Gwyn Campbell in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2004).
27. Sophie Goedefroit, *A l’ouest de Madagascar: Les Sakalava du Menabe* (Paris: Éditions Karthala and ORSTOM, 1998), pp.133–4, 152.
28. Jean Martin, ‘L’affranchissement des esclaves de Mayotte, décembre 1846—juillet 1847’, *Cahiers d’Études Africaines*, 61–2 (1975), p.224.
29. Allen F.Isaacman, *Mozambique: The Africanization of a European Institution, The Zambesi Prazos, 1750–1902* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1972), pp.47–56; M.D.D. Newitt, *Portuguese Settlement on the Zambesi* (London: Longman, 1973), pp.187–203.
30. Newitt, *Portuguese Settlement*, p.202.
31. Newitt, *A History of Mozambique* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), p.235.
32. António Alberto de Andrade, *Relações de Moçambique Setecentista* (Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1955), p.152.
33. Archives Nationales, Paris, Fond Marine 3JJ 347, #26, Germain to Ministre de la Marine, 1 Sept.–12 Dec. 1867.
34. Frederick Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977), pp.200–201.
35. Ibid., p.202.
36. Ibid., p.204.
37. Tanganyika District Books, microfilm copy 1/1, Handeni District Book, Tribal History and Legends, Asmani b.Mmaka, trs. JEGR[ansome], 23 Aug. 1929.
38. Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*, p.207.
39. Jonathan Glassman, ‘The Bondsman’s New Clothes: The Contradictory Consciousness of Slave Resistance on the Swahili Coast’, *Journal of African History*, 32 (1991), p.292, also p.294.
40. John Lewis Burkhardt, *Travels in Arabia, comprehending an account of those territories in Hedjaz which the Mohammedans regard as sacred* (London, 1829, reprinted Beirut, 1972), p.115.
41. Alaine Hutson, ‘Enslavement and Manumission in Saudi Arabia, 1926–38’, *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, 11/1 (2002), pp.49–70.
42. L.W.C.van den Berg, *Le Hadhramaut et les Colonies Arabes dans l’archipel Indien* (Batavia, 1886), p.70.

43. R.B.Serjeant, 'Some Observations on African Slaves in Arabia', paper presented at the workshop on the long-distance trade in slaves across the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea in the nineteenth century, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 17–19 Dec. 1987, p.2.
44. Harold Ingrams, *Arabia and the Isles* (London: John Murray, 1942), p.349.
45. *Ibid.*, p.350.
46. A.Germain, 'Quelques mots sur l'Oman et le sultan de Maskate', *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), 5e série, 6 (1868), p.351.
47. Percy Cox, 'Some Excursions in Oman', in Philip Ward, *Travels in Oman, on the Track of the Early Explorers* (New York: The Oleander Press, 1987), p.295.
48. Fredrik Barth, *Sohar: Culture and Society in an Omani Town* (Baltimore/London, 1983), pp.47–8.
49. *The India Gazette, and Calcutta Public Advertiser*, No.307 (2 Oct. 1786)—repeated in No.309 (16 Oct. 1786).
50. B.S.Shastry, 'Slavery in Portuguese Goa (A Note on the Nineteenth Century Scene)', paper presented at the workshop on the long-distance trade in slaves across the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea in the nineteenth century, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 17–19 Dec. 1987, pp.4–6. Shastry's hunch is confirmed by Charles Camara, 'The Siddis of Uttara Kannada: History, Identity and Change among African Descendants in Contemporary Karnataka', forthcoming in Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy and Edward A.Alpers (eds.), *Sidis and Scholars: Essays on African Indians* (New Delhi: Rainbow Publishers, and Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003).
51. Ernestina Carreira, 'India', in Valentim Alexandre and Jill Dias (eds.), *O Império Africano 1825–1890*, Vol.10 of Joel Serrão and A.H.de Oliveira Marques (gen. eds.), *Nova História da Expansão Portuguesa* (Lisboa: Editorial Estampa, 1998), p. 686.
52. See Helene Basu, 'Redefining Boundaries: Twenty Years at the Shrine of Gori Pir', forthcoming in Catlin-Jairazbhoy and Alpers (eds.), *Sidis and Scholars*.
53. Armstrong and Worden, 'The Slaves', p.157.
54. *Ibid.*, p.158.
55. Robert Ross, *Cape of Torments: Slavery and Resistance in South Africa* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), pp.54–72.
56. Armstrong and Worden, 'The Slaves', p.159.
57. Barassin, 'La révolte des esclaves', p.366; Ève, 'Les formes de resistance à Bourbon', p.57.
58. Price, 'Introduction', p.5.
59. On the inaccessibility of maroon settlements, see Ève, 'Les formes de resistance à Bourbon', p.55, and Barassin, 'La révolte des esclaves', p.363.
60. Ève, 'Les formes de resistance à Bourbon', p.51; cf. Barassin, 'La révolte des esclaves', p.388; Claude Wanquet, 'Esclavage et liberté: le débat sur les aspirations et les aptitudes à la liberté, durant l'époque révolutionnaire, des esclaves des Mascareignes', paper presented at the Colloque international 'L'esclavage et ses séquelles'.
61. Barrasin, 'La révolte des esclaves', pp.358, 360.
62. For a map of where these camps were located in the eighteenth century, see Desport, *De la servitude à la liberté*, p.68.

63. Barassin, ‘La révolte des esclaves’, pp.361–4, 368–9; Éve, ‘Les formes de resistance à Bourbon’, pp.52, 58.
64. Éve, ‘Les formes de resistance à Bourbon’, p.50.
65. For the measures taken against the maroons, see Barassin, ‘La révolte des esclaves’, pp.369–87; for the quotation, see *ibid.*, p.389. For some idea of the magnitude of this swing, see Allen, ‘The Mascarene Slave-Trade and Labour Migration in the Indian Ocean during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries’, in this collection, Table 4.
66. See Alpers, ‘The Idea of *Marronage*: Reflections on Literature and Politics in Reunion’, forthcoming in Edward A. Alpers, Gwyn Campbell, and Michael Salman (eds.), *Resisting Bondage, Bonds of Resistance*.
67. Maximilien Wiklinsky quoted in Amédée Nagapen, *Le Marronage à l’Isle de France-Ile Maurice: Rêve ou Riposte de l’Esclave?* (Port-Louis: Centre Culturel Africaine, 1999), p.144.
68. Deryck Scarr, *Slaving and Slavery in the Indian Ocean* (Hounds mills: Macmillan, and New York: St Martin’s Press, 1998), p.159.
69. Campbell, *Unfree Labour, Brigandry and Revolt*, ch.7.
70. Newitt, *Portuguese Settlement*, p.202.
71. Isaacman, *Mozambique*, p.41; also, Newitt, *Portuguese Settlement*, pp.193, 202, 227.
72. See e.g., Fred Morton, *Children of Ham: Freed Slaves and Fugitive Slaves on the Kenya Coast, 1873 to 1907* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), pp.40–49.
73. Glassman, ‘The Bondsman’s New Clothes’, pp.305–10, and *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856–1888* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995), pp. 109–13; for reference to other *watoto* communities along the lower Kingani River, behind Bagamoyo, see *ibid.*, pp.251–2.
74. Cooper, *Plantation Slavery*, pp.205–6.
75. Morton, *Children of Ham*, pp. 11–15.
76. Glassman, The Runaway Slave in Coastal Resistance to Zanzibar: The Case of the Witu Sultanate’ (MA thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1983), p.43; see also, Morton, *Children of Ham*, pp.29–40.
77. Glassman, ‘The Runaway Slave’, p.56; Morton, *Children of Ham*, pp.60–68.
78. Lee V.Cassanello, ‘Social Construction on the Somali Frontier: Bantu Former Slave Communities in the Nineteenth Century’, in Igor Kopytoff, ed., *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp.216–38; also Morton, *Children of Ham*, pp.19–29.
79. Francesca Declich, ““Gendered Narratives,” History, and Identity: Two Centuries along the Juba River among the Zigula and Shanbara”, *History in Africa*, 22 (Aix-en-provence, 1995), p.101.
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81. Bernadin de Saint Pierre, *Voyage à l’Île de France*, ed. Robert Chaudenson (1773; Mauritius: Éditions de l’Océan, 1986), p.177.
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85. Patrick Beaton, *Creoles and Coolies; or, Five Years in Mauritius* (1859; Port Washington, NY, and London: Kennikat Press, 1971), p.77.
86. Benedict, 'Slavery and Indenture', pp.140–41.
87. Ross, *Cape of Torments*, pp.73–80; Nigel Worden, *Slavery in Dutch South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.123; Gerbeau, 'Les esclaves et la mer', pp.14–16; Patricia W.Romero, *Lamu: History, Society, and Family in an East African Port City* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1997), p.131.
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Violent Capture of People for Exchange on Karen-Tai borders in the 1830s

ANDREW TURTON

The journals kept by two British soldier-diplomats of their missions through the borderlands between Burma and Siam in the 1830s provide a valuable opportunity to examine aspects of indigenous forms of slavery in a region in which westerners were not directly involved. The missions were by David Richardson,¹ a surgeon in the Madras European Regiment, and W.C. McLeod² (1837), of the Madras Native Infantry. Seconded as political officers to the administration of the new British territory of Tenasserim Provinces, they became the two most senior assistants to the Commissioner, with responsibility notably for justice and finance, but also health, education and other civil affairs. Both had seen military action in the 1824–26 war in Burma in the most dangerous and unhealthy situations, were excellent linguists, and were also chosen for their ‘scientific acquirements’ and ‘mild and conciliatory manner’. Richardson undertook a mission to the King of Siam in Bangkok in 1839, at a time when McLeod was temporarily British Resident in Ava, capital of the Burmese Empire. Richardson translated and annotated a comprehensive and influential Buddhist legal text that was to remain in use for nearly a century.³ He married a Tai-speaking aristocratic woman, and died aged 49 in Moulmein. McLeod became a full General, serving in the Madras Presidency, and retired to London, where he died in 1880. Their journals are exceptionally fine examples of the genre and constitute a rich resource for the study of the period in this region.⁴

In the 1830s, both Burma and Siam were at relative peace with each other, largely due to the British ascendancy following the 1824–26 war between Britain and the Burmese Empire. The Treaty of Yandabo (1826), which concluded the war, had, *inter alia*, ceded Arakan and the Tenasserim Provinces (Moulmein, Mergui and Tavoy) to the British. Assam, in the north, which also contained Tai peoples and had borders with Tai states, was no longer part of the Burmese imperium. Siam, at war with Vietnam over the Khmer kingdom, was still an expansive empire.

The re-established kingdom of Chiang Mai, since 1775 free from Burmese overrule, was consolidating its political control and expanding population settlement within its territories that were under the relatively loose overlordship of Siam. Chiang Mai declined during the second half of the century, but the two soldier-diplomats visited it in the 1830s, when its strength and independence

were at a maximum. Notwithstanding the long presence of the British in the Bengal and Madras Presidencies, contact of any formal or substantial kind with the Tai-speaking world was only just beginning. The visits by McLeod and Richardson were the first official diplomatic contacts with the Karen and the Tai states to the north of Siam.

In 1807, the British had declared an end to the slave-trade in the region (e.g. in Penang), and in 1833 the condition of slavery was no longer recognized in territories directly under the Crown. By 1843, this extended to East India Company controlled areas, including Tenasserim Provinces, though since 1826 claims there to rights over slaves had not been entertained. Richardson and McLeod refer with satisfaction to the presence in the Provinces of ‘runaway’ former slaves from Siamese and Burmese territories. Unfree labour, in the form of convicts, was nonetheless a major source of labour, paid and unpaid, in the Tenasserim Provinces. Moulmein town’s prison population, which was partly local, but mostly Bengali in origin, at times comprised about ten per cent of the total population and, since convicts were mostly adult males, a higher proportion of the potential workforce.

The principal aspect of slavery noted in the journals was the violent capture of people for exchange. There is no doubt that enslavement through raiding in the South-East Asian region generally was of great importance,⁵ although it is not much treated in the literature on mainland South-East Asia for the following reasons: capture occurred outside or at the peripheries of the state; such origins did not determine the subsequent status of the slave; the preponderant form of slavery notes in western accounts that multiplied from the mid-nineteenth century was debt bondage; and the violent ‘razaia’⁶ form of slave raiding and trading was the first to disappear with the expansion of European influence in the region.⁷

This article is a continuation of intermittent published work on slavery in Tai-speaking societies.⁸ Its focus is the manner and social consequences of enslavement by violent capture, especially for commodity exchange (sale or barter, rather than for direct use, or for royal gift or bestowal); and in the relationship, or overlap, between this and practices of forced or involuntary resettlement of so-called ‘war captives’, especially as part of more state directed and military actions. I omit here the subsequent fortunes and status of such slaves,⁹ the chief and highly important difference between whom is that slaves purchased for a full price—as opposed to being ‘mortgaged’, or ‘pawned’—were not legally redeemable. In practice, however, an owner could free a male slave permanently by permitting ordination as a Buddhist monk, many redeemable slaves were not redeemed, and non-redeemable slaves could have much freedom of action.

Violent capture for exchange (hereafter VCE) was among the most important ways in which slaves entered the exchange system from outside the social formation, i.e. as a net increase in the total labour force. It was arguably most important for individual (as distinct from state or royal) strategies of wealth

accumulation, and for export, despite this being illegal. However, indigenous laws and chronicles tend to refer less to VCE than to ‘war captives’ or to ‘purchased’ or inherited slaves as the source of servile labour—i.e. people already possessing slave status—without specifying how they first came to be slaves. Examples include people who were (i) purchased for at least the legal price (ii) born of slaves in the master’s house (iii) inherited or given by parents to children (iv) donated slaves (v) slaves by judicial decision (vi) those acquired through distress, or (vii) war slave.¹⁰ Such lists obscure original means of enslavement and subsequent transfers of ownership, although most people originally subject to VCE would subsequently have been purchased.

The *Mangraisat*¹¹ lists five kinds of slave, coinciding with (i) (ii) and (vi) above. It distinguishes two kinds of ‘distress’: freemen either unable to care for themselves, or fleeing from personal danger. It neither contains categories (iv) and (v), nor that of ‘war slave’ as such, but rather a slave ‘acquired outside, or on the borders of the state’.

A Burmese law book lists under a single category ‘war captives’ and ‘refugees’.¹² An older Hindu law book which lists seven types, specifies the ‘captive’ category as ‘he who is made captive under a standard’.¹³ This perhaps refers to a strictly military ‘prisoner of war’. A northern Thai phrase of probably no judicial meaning, is ‘slave end spear tusk elephant’, perhaps another reference to a major military engagement, although spears and one to two elephants might also be used in smaller-scale raids. None of the above distinguishes clearly between adult male combatants and other people violently captured in actions ranging from collaborative armed ambush or kidnap by a few people, to a razzia involving up to several hundred men, to a larger armed force of thousands mobilized by the state.

Nineteenth century literature overwhelmingly emphasizes forms of debt bondage and judicial restraint on liberty, then the predominant kinds and causes of slavery. However, the number of slaves of VCE origin were considerable, if fluctuating, up to formal abolition, which in Siam occurred between 1868 and 1905.

Social Identities of some of the Principal Actors

A number of communities were involved in slavery in the region, including Karen/Karenni/Kayah (hereafter generically ‘Karen’), Burmese, Mon, Bengalis and Tai-speakers (Siamese, ‘Siamese Shan’ or Khon Müang/ northern Thai, and Burmese Shan). The principal initial captors were Karen and the main purchasers were Tai-speakers from Chiang Mai and other ‘Siamese Shan’ states. In contrast to regions like southern Laos, a noteworthy feature of the slave system on the Siam/Burma borderlands was the capture of people from majority populations like the Burmese, Mon and Tai by decentralized and illiterate Karenic speaking groups inhabiting the mainly mountainous borderlands between present-day Burma and Thailand. Their influence extended from the far south of the Mergui

archipelago, where they enslaved the coastal and insular Moken peoples,¹⁴ through Siamese and Chiang Mai territory into southern Shan states close to the Burmese heartland around Ava and Mandalay. The group most featured in the journals were the ‘Red Karen’, a loose confederation of three multiethnic and polyglot ‘chiefdoms’ who intermittently waged war against one another as well as outside groups. All possessed slaves, chiefly in debt bondage, but also captives of various ethnicities including their own. Richardson writes: ‘Slaves are so common amongst them that hired labour is nearly unknown’.¹⁵

The neighbouring Tai speakers¹⁶ were called by the British either ‘Burmese Shan’ or ‘Siamese Shan’ (also known as Lanna Tai of the Chiang Mai, Lamphun and Lampang kingdoms of present-day northern Thailand), according to which suzerainty they recognized—the Siamese empire being of major influence at the time. By contrast with the Karen, they were Buddhist and literate, organized into some 50 populous states possessing sophisticated systems of governance and complex social hierarchies, with an economy based on irrigated rice agriculture. Slavery was a central institution, a crucial form of labour mobilization and control. Even the smallest states competed fiercely for control of manpower, and there was a vibrant slave-trade in which the aristocracy often employed slaves as trading agents. Slaves, including a category ‘bought on board a junk’, formed part of Siam’s extensive maritime trading relations with the Chinese oecumene and the Indian Ocean. Imported slaves, war captives and other immigrants made for complexly ‘multi-ethnic’ populations. In Siam, which also received indentured and free Chinese labour, such ‘immigrants’ may periodically have comprised the majority of the population and/or the capital city.

Tai political domains were invariably termed *müang*, close in meaning to the Greek *polis* and Roman *civis*. In all *müang*, there existed a relationship of interdependence, and domination between Tai and non-Tai populations. The most important and frequent classifications are the pairs *tai: kha* and *müang: pa*; where *kha*=both a generic ethnonym for non-Tai, and a generic social status of (actual or potential) servant, slave etc; and *pa*=forest, the wild, savage. It may be more appropriate to say that the socially dominant people are classified as Tai, rather than that some ‘ethnic Tai’ are everywhere socially dominant.

In some Tai languages (e.g. Tai Lue) there is just one word with one tone which denotes *kha* as generic ethnonym, and slave of all sorts, with perhaps a primary or historically prior meaning of ‘war captive’. Also basic is *kha soek* for ‘enemy’ (*soek*=fight). ‘Central Thai’ or Siamese Tai differentiates *kha* (tone 1)=generic ethnonym; *kha* (tone 2) servant (from highly servile to e.g. equivalent of ‘civil servant’, ‘your obedient and humble servant’ etc.) also sometimes slave; *that* (Sanskrit) legal and general term for slave; and *that chaloei* (the latter a Khmer language term)=war slave.

In the earliest written accounts, northern Tai states had slaves (*kha*), listed as marks of wealth together with warriors, elephants and horses. They could form part of a royal dowry: King Mangrai’s (r.1283– c.1317) wife’s dowry included 500 *kha* families. *Kha* are assumed to have been war captives: King Tilok of

Chiang Mai in 1462 captured eleven Shan *müang* and gained 12,328 slaves; Lanna attacks on Sukhotai yielded in 1513 forty slaves; in 1514 ‘twenty and some Karen’; in 1515 three elephants and eighty prisoners.¹⁷ This minutious recording, and estimation of value underlines the importance of slaves.

The term *kha* in many ways resembles the Latin *hospes* (foreigner, stranger, guest, friend) and *hostis* (stranger, foreigner, armed foreign enemy) and their Greek equivalents, i.e. someone, not a member of one’s own family group or *ethnos*, with whom one has a relationship involving positive obligations (hospitality), negative duties (hostility), or both (marriage exchange, ‘peace in the feud’ etc.). The initial contrast may have been less that of *pa: müng* than that of autochthony : recentness of arrival. ‘Autochthony’ more than ‘indigenousness’ or ‘aboriginality’ indicates a connectedness to the land, the ground, the earth itself and associated mystical powers that is recognized in Tai rituals of respect for indigenous ‘spirits’ or powers of non-Tai lands and places.¹⁸

Slave Raiders, Traders and their Victims

McLeod and Richardson identify slave raiders (Karen) and traders more than their victims. Karen raiders attacked other Karen groups in their own territory, and used horses in attacks against areas nominally governed by the Burmese, or by Shan under Burmese colonial overrule. There they captured people of different ethnic backgrounds, including Karen, Shan, Mon and Burmese. The men were often killed. Women and children were preferred: although captives could include adult males, old people and even entire nuclear families.

Communities could buy immunity from slave raids by a particular Karen chief through what Richardson considers to have been a forced and illegitimate payment. He called it ‘black mail’ a term originally used for the tribute exacted by freebooting chiefs in the England-Scotland borderlands. A similar practice may be widespread in the Tai region.¹⁹ The notion of assimilated or tame *kha* is reflected in the classificatory pairs in Tai such as Karieng (Karen) *baan* (village, domesticated) and Karieng *pa* (forest, wild), - the latter being ‘fair game’—and later European colonial concepts such as ‘assimilated’ or ‘administered’ tribes etc. Also exempt from raids were individuals and families who re-settled voluntarily in Karen territory or sought refuge among Karen communities where they sometimes came to form the majority of the population.

Most polities and individuals in the region that possessed armed groups engaged in or encouraged VCE. When officials were involved, VCE usually occurred outside state territories and was justified as ‘warfare’ with captives deemed to be ‘war slaves’. European commentators, from earliest times, commonly referred to state military campaigns as little more than slaving raids. Some of their Tai interlocutors seemed to have agreed. I would argue that the larger scale practices of Karen chiefs, especially those engaged in outside their own territory, are comparable to many forms of ‘state’ type raids. Although Karen utilized slaves, most were probably debt bondsmen. Moreover, the value

of slaves was greater in the valley states, and so there was an incentive to exchange. However it seems certain that the ‘Chiang Mai Shan’ sold them on also into Siam, despite the injunctions repeated to Richardson and McLeod that ‘men and women’, and ‘muskets and slaves’ were virtually the only prohibited exports from the state (at other times also elephants and cattle, though the latter were freely exchanged for slaves).

Exchange Value of Slaves

The chief motive and currency of slave exchange, according to the Richardson and McLeod journals, was cattle usually referred to as ‘bullocks’, rather than buffalo which were also available. This should be judged in a context where the Irawaddy, or hills to the west of it, marks the eastern limit of the use of mithan (*bos frontalis*) in the political economy and ritual life of the hill peoples. Since the cash value of this commodity (the bullock) fluctuated; the value of the slave to the Karen also varied.²⁰

The importance of cattle to Karen would have been very different from their importance to the British who valued cattle mainly for meat. Indeed, their prime mission in the region seems at times to be the acquisition of cattle for the garrison at Moulmein. The Karen, who were mainly swiddeners and did not use cattle in agricultural production, utilized them in part for transport—military and commercial bullock trains of up to 1000 animals are referred to. However, the main value of cattle was for sacrifice at key social events, marriages and funerals especially, and perhaps other competitive ‘feasts of merit’. The number of bullocks required for a single event might be obtained only by the successful sale or barter of several slaves.

One more commodity of crucial importance to the Karen was salt. This is dramatized in a notable comment recorded by McLeod:

I asked him [‘Chou Kurn Kam’ a very senior royal official] how his countrymen, being good Buddhists, could permit and encourage the slave-trade with that country. He said that God had provided every nation according to its necessities; that to the Red Kareng he had given men, but no salt.²¹

Other commodities, all relatively ‘luxury’ items, included lowland rice, ‘ngapie’ (fish paste), betel-nut and small quantities of British hand-kerchiefs, and book muslin.²²

Slave Raiding and Warfare

Part of my purpose in this article has been to consider the overlap and similarity between the dominant and state centred Tai slaving raids and those of the Karen. While the former were somewhat less than fully mobilized state military

TABLE 1

TERMS USED BY RICHARDSON AND MCLEOD FOR KAREN SLAVE RAIDS

petty predatory warfare	to plunder and to carry off the defenceless people
slave-taking incursions	their system of kidnapping and selling their neighbours
predatory expeditions	that ruthless and devastating system of warfare
licensed robbers	the most barbarous system of border warfar
treacherous midnight robbers/ men-catching	the brutal rapine, and destructive waste of human life in the petty border-warfare and slave-catching

campaigns, Karen raids ranged from small scale to large ‘politically’ organized affairs termed *kwat torn* (‘sweeping’ raids) in the Thai language. However, British commentators saw them all in much the same light, as illustrated by the various terms they used to describe them (see Table 1).

In 1839 Richardson, by then a most seasoned analyst of the region and almost certainly already married to his aristocratic Shan wife, witnessed part of the planning and aftermath of a relatively large-scale campaign. The Vice-Roy of Chiang Mai had attacked three Burmese Shan towns (that had been similarly attacked 30 years earlier) situated from seven to eleven elephant days’ march from Chiang Mai, with a force of 7500 men, a commissariat train of 1000 cattle, and a quantity of elephants that is not totalled but must have been several hundreds. In total, they captured 1815 people of all ages from a few days up to 70 or 80 years old and some 500 cattle.²³

Quantitative Significance of the Slave-Trade

Richardson is given two estimates of the numbers involved in the Karen-Shan slave-trade. In 1835 he is told that ‘three to four hundred unfortunate beings are annually caught by these people and sold’. He thinks that inflation in the price of cattle will reduce the attractiveness of the trade, but in 1837 he writes that there are ‘still nearly 300 persons sold annually into Siamese [namely Chiang Mai] territory’.²⁴ Edward O’Riley, who visited the Burmese Shan states in 1856 and 1864 seems to indicate an increase in Karen slaving between the 1830s and the 1850s and 60s, stating that about 1200 people were ‘annually captured and purchased by the Karenns’.²⁵

Volker Grabowsky²⁶ reports that over the sixty-year period from 1780 to 1839 in 23 major campaigns by Lanna forces, an estimated 53,600 (minimum) to 70,800 (maximum) captives were taken from Burmese territories into Tai territories. Put another way, a campaign would yield on average between 2330 and 3078 captives, equivalent to an average annual addition to the population of the territory of from 893 to 1180 people. We can assume a net demographic increase within this added population, since Grabowsky estimates, conservatively, that by 1840 at least one-third of the Lanna population of about 400,000 (133,332) was

derived from forced resettlements. These figures give us some context to assess the value to the political economy as a whole of an annual additional input from slaves originating in violent capture of anything between 300–400 and 1200, something between one-quarter of the average annual amount produced by forced resettlement and an equivalent amount.

These figures resonate with other estimates or records from other parts of the South-East Asian region. Boomgaard²⁷ gives a figure of between approximately 1000 and 2000 slaves shipped annually to Indonesia from Madagascar, India and the Philippines. Anthony Reid gives 3000 slaves annually imported through Batavia in the eighteenth century, from India, Arakan, Sulawesi, and increasingly from within the Indonesian region itself. For particular sub-regions, roughly comparable with the Tai-Karen border region, we have 500 annually from Bali over the period 1620 to 1830 and from the Sulu region approximately 1000 annually in the early seventeenth century. Reid concludes: There is little doubt that the majority of the South-East Asian (that is, excluding Chinese, Indian, European and so on) urban population prior to about 1820 was recruited in a captive state, either through the slave-trade or war.²⁸

Concluding Comments

The journals cited offer perspectives on the local slave raiding and trading complex along the Karen-Tai frontier in the early nineteenth century. The vast areas of densely forested, mountainous territory, cut north-south and cross-cut by innumerable rivers, between the perennially hostile Siamese and, to the west, Mon and Burmese kingdoms, provided a niche for Karen, Karenni, and some others, to engage in a trade in slave labour, originating in violent capture. In the region as a whole, ‘slavery’, capture, and forced resettlement constitute an overarching historical experience and memory of exile, on a Babylonian scale, for the Tai and Lao peoples especially. For example, a well-known item of northern Thai (Lanna) literature is a long verse epic of displacement and yearning based on the wholesale movement of population from Chiang Mai to Pegu (the Mon capital just north of Rangoon) in 1615.

Comparable situations existed in the ‘Kachin’ areas of northern Burma, neighbouring Assam and China²⁹ and in the ‘Chin’ areas of western Burma neighbouring Bengal and Arakan.³⁰ Indeed there were few if any forested and mountainous zones of mainland or maritime South-East Asia from which people were not hunted and gathered, like forest products, stick-lac and deer hides which had for centuries been highly desired and demanded in tribute, tax and trade, and accumulated in a kind of capillary action towards the centres of social power and energy. If we focused on Siam and Bangkok we should have to take into account also the trade originating in the mountainous regions of present-day Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, as well as the maritime trade, with all its many centres of origination and accumulation.

Dominant political and social formations in the mountainous regions, outside the direct or even indirect rule of neighbouring empires, engaged in accumulating wealth and labour through internal and external forms of enslavement. Given the generally ‘open’ forms of slavery in these regions³¹ the external origin of slaves can soon become effaced, so that classification in colonial records of slaves ‘seized by force’³² can give a misleading picture, the more so the later the date of the census. There are exceptions; for example, some ‘Assamese’ among Kachin populations appear to have retained an ‘Assamese’ identity for some hundred years from 1824 to 1925.³³ Usually whether the slave originated from within or without the social formation, they were assimilated to a kinship or similar status. For example such terms as the following are used in the works cited to compare or identify a ‘slave’ status: poor son-in-law, impoverished patrilineal kinsman, unmarried, adopted or illegitimate children, concubine, as well as such other English language terms as debtor, semi-permanent debtor, debtbondsmen, serf etc. As noted by Edmund Leach:

the process by which a Kachin *gumsa* [aristocratic lineage in a ranked system] chief tries to give himself the status of Shan *saohpa* [hereditary aristocratic chief] involves reducing his subordinate tenants from the status of son-in-law (*dama*) to that of serf or bond slave (*mayam*)...The first historical reference to *gumlao* [commoner or would-be non-ranked lineage] seems to make the word mean ‘slave’ in the sense of *mayam*. This is now understandable. Neufville’s informants [in the 1820s] were *gumsa*, the *gumlao* against whom they were at feud were their relatives. But before they had become *gumlao*, they had been relatives in a status approaching that of *mayam*. From the *gumsa* point of view the *gumlao* had formerly been their ‘slaves’.³⁴

While there are undoubtedly important and interesting variations and differences, the comparability is evident, Kachin slavery resembling the traditional Burmese system and that of the Central Chins (*tefa* system), the Lakher (*sei* system), the Lushai (*boi/bawi* system), and the Sema (*mughemi* system).³⁵

Jonathan Friedman’s structuralist interpretation of the processes of accumulation of slaves and wealth through trading in slaves, remains cogent:

the size and nature of the slave class is a variable dependent on a number of infrastructural contradictions. *Mayam* are generated by the hierarchical strains in the system. They do not form a primary category but are rather a secondary product of the operation of the system over time. *Mayam* tend to become commoners in the long run and the class can only be maintained on a large scale by importing outsiders [*ngong mayam*, or external *mayam*]. On the other hand, slavery, as a product of the Kachin economy, is extremely important in the expansion process and may develop into class exploitation in areas where the technological base is transformed.³⁶

A commoditized slave-trade, in which a significant proportion of new human goods originated in violent capture, can be hypothesized as having increased *pari passu* with commoditization and expansion of trade in South-East Asia, a region which participated in, and was constituted by its involvement in both Indian Ocean and East Asian oecumene. We can further assume a special boost to the trade in the Tai world, both in Bangkok and in the northern ‘Siamese Shan’ or Lanna states. Both regions were rebuilding their cities, dynasties and kingdoms from about 1780 to 1810, a progressive reconquest after successive defeats by the Burmese.

In the North this reconstruction was approximately coterminous with the reign of King Kawila, founder of the new dynasty (1782–1816), and is known as the period of *kep phak sai saa kep kha sai müang*, a phrase that translates as ‘gather vegetables and put into baskets, gather *kha* and put into *müang*’. Despite the fact that Kha peoples were caught up in the practice of *kwat torn* (‘sweeping’ raids), the saying adopts the milder and at the same time naturalizing term *kep*—denoting the gathering of forest or garden produce—instead of the harsher, perhaps more realistic, military image of ‘sweeping people up’ into *müang*. Sethakul Ratanaporn records the telling phrase *kha lak pai tai lak ma* (Kha leave stealthily, Tai arrive stealthily, or unnoticed) used in the chronicles to indicate spontaneous population movement within and between *müang* which is uncontrolled by and confusing to the authorities.³⁷

In Bangkok, John Crawfurd noted an increased demand for labour that led to a tripling of the price of slaves in a few years up to 1822.³⁸ This was likely to have been both ‘productive’ labour and for consumption through display, lifestyle etc. of a newly rich mercantile class of nobility, traders etc., a kind of proto-bourgeoisie who still consumed and accumulated in an aristocratic manner.

In a wider and longer perspective, we need to consider the place of Islamization and the need to bring non-Islamic peoples into the Malay world as slaves. In the shorter term the effects need to be considered of the introduction of a kind of *pax Britannica*. This was partial, starting from 1826—but strongly influential in the opinions of British officials at Moulmein—up to the final, and not so peaceful, annexation of all Shan, Karen, Wa states and territories by about the end of the nineteenth century. In the short period I have considered here, the British presence may have been a net contributory factor to an increase in the trade, despite official ‘abhorrence’ and the illegality of the trade in Moulmein, where slaves are said to have arrived seeking their freedom. This may have been by providing a springboard in Moulmein for traders from the Indian sub-continent, as well as favouring the Karen by keeping the Burmese off their backs in much of the frontier cordillera.

Another theme, or set of themes, that emerges from this are the ‘unintended’ social consequences of violent capture for exchange, within the overall ‘men-catching’ syndrome. These might include possible long-term cultural and even psychological effects of the fear, uncertainty, short term horizons, and other depressing factors.³⁹ They led to an additional amount of ‘voluntary’ or

indirectly coerced, displacement of a ‘refugee’ type, in order to achieve greater security or a lower level of taxation and exactions. It led in some cases to a double taxation, or even a triple taxation, say of a given Shan population to Shan lords, Burmese overlords, and Karen freebooters. A tremendous amount of labour would have been spent in fortifying, with earthworks, bamboo and wooden stockades etc., and guarding settlements and working parties.⁴⁰ At the same time, villagers paid less attention to building good houses or accumulating wealth, far less to displaying any signs of wealth, or to planting trees and other useful plants around their houses. Richardson and McLeod tend to note as exceptions those villages that have fruit trees and gardens. All of this was of course very disappointing to the mercantile aspirations of the British at Moulmein. The gainers were centres such as Bangkok, benefiting then still, as they have for a long time since, from patterns of centralization and downstream accumulation.

NOTES

1. See the following works by David Richardson: ‘An account of some of the Petty States lying to the north of the Tenasserim Provinces, drawn up from the Journals and Reports of D. Richardson Esq., Surgeon to the Commissioner of the Tenasserim Provinces’, compiled by E.A. Blundell, Commissioner, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 5, 58 (1836), pp.601–25; 5, 59 (1836), pp.688–96, 696–707; ‘The History of Labong [Lamphun] from the Native Records consulted by Dr D. Richardson, forming an Appendix to his journals published in the preceding volume’ *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 6, 61 (1837), pp.55–7; ‘Journal of a Mission from the Supreme Government of India to the Court of Siam’ *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 8, 96 (1839), pp.1016–36; 9, 97 (1840), pp.1–3; 9, 99 (1840), pp.219–50; ‘Dr. Richardson’s Journal Of a Fourth Mission to the Interior of the New Settlements in the Tenasserim Provinces, Being to the Chief of the Red Karen, to the Tso-Boa of Monay, and thence to Ava’, in *East India (McLeod and Richardson’s Journeys. Copy of papers relating to the route of Captain W.C. McLeod from Moulmein to the frontiers of China, and to the route of Dr Richardson on his fourth mission to the Shan Provinces of Burmah, or extracts from the same)* (London: India Office, Political Dept., 1869), pp.1–13, 104–17.
2. W.C. McLeod, ‘Captain McLeod’s Journal’ in V. Grabowsky and A. Turton, *The Golden Road: Diplomatic Missions to Tai States in 1837* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm, 2002), pp.260–455.
3. D. Richardson (trans.), *The dhamathat or the laws of Menoo* (Moulmein: American Baptist Mission, 1847).
4. Grabowsky and Turton, *The Golden Road*.
5. See Boomgaard article.
6. The *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968) has: ‘**Razzia**...1845. [a.F., ad. Algerian Arab. *ghaziah*, var. Arab. *ghazwah*, *ghazah* war, raid against infidels.] A hostile incursion, foray or raid, for purposes of conquest, plunder, capture of slaves etc., as practised by the Mohammedan peoples in Africa; also *transf.* of similar raids by other nations.’.
7. See Delaye article.

8. A.Turton: 'Thai institutions of slavery', in James Watson (ed.), *Asian and African Systems of Slavery* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), pp.251–92; 'Thai institutions of slavery', in G. Condominas (ed.), *Formes extremes de dependence: contributions à l'étude de l'esclavage en Asie du Sud-Est* (Paris: EHESS, 1998), pp.411–57; 'Social identity in Tai political domains', in A.Turton (ed.), *Civility and Savagery: Social Identity in Tai States* (London: Curzon, 2000), pp.1–31.
9. Subjects covered to some degree in my publications cited above (note 8).
10. Siamese Law Code (1805), cited in S.Nunbhakdi, 'Etude sur le système sakdina en Thailande', in Condominas (ed.), *Formes extremes de dependence*, pp.459–81.
11. The Laws of King Mangrai, an early Lanna law code—various editions; see A.Wichienkeeo and G.Wijeyewardene (eds.), *The Laws of King Mangrai* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1986).
12. See note 3.
13. G.Bühler (trans.), *The laws of Manu* (New York: Dover, 1969), Book 8.415, p.326.
14. J.Ivanoff, 'L'esclavage ou le prix de la liberté nomade', in Condominas (ed.), *Formes extremes de dependence*, pp.45–100.
15. Richardson's Journal (entry: 26 Jan. 1837), in Grabowsky and Turton, *The Golden Road*, p.465.
16. See Grabowsky and Turton, *The Golden Road*, pp.150 ff.
17. C.Notton (ed. and trans.), *Annales du Siam*, Vols.1 and 2 (Paris: Charles-Lavauzelle (1926 and 1930) and Vol.3 (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1932).
18. This discussion is developed at length in Turton, *Civility and Savagery*, pp.1–31.
19. *mail* is an old historical term for rent or tribute, see *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* which dates the use of the term black mail from a written reference in 1552; see also Jules Harmand, 'Le Laos et les populations sauvages de l'Indochine' [1877], in Edouard Charton (ed.), *Le Tour du Monde: nouveau journal des voyages*, Vol.38 (Paris: Hachette, 1879), pp.6, 8.
20. D.Richardson, 'An account of the petty states lying north of the Tenasserim Provinces', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 5, 58 (1836), p.622; see also pp.601–25 and 5, 59 (1836), pp.688–70.
21. McLeod's Journal (entry: 26–7 April 1837), in Grabowsky and Turton, *The Golden Road*, p.420.
22. Richardson's Journal (entry: 14 Feb. 1837), in Grabowsky and Turton, *The Golden Road*, p.481.
23. D.Richardson Journal (entry: 27 May 1839) in *The Burney Papers*, 4, I (1913), p.46, Bangkok: Vajirana National Library.
24. Richardson's Journal (entry: 21 April 1837), in Grabowsky and Turton, *The Golden Road*, p.524.
25. Cited in S.Mangrai, *The Shan States and the British Annexation*, (Ithaca, NY Cornell Southeast Asia Program, Data Paper no.57, 1965), p.181.
26. V.Grabovsky, 'Forced resettlement campaigns in northern Thailand during the early Bangkok period', *Journal of the Siam Society*, 87, 1/2 (1999), pp.45–86.
27. See Boomgaard article.
28. A.Reid (ed.), *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia* (St Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1988), p.29; see also *ibid*, p.32.
29. See G.T.Bayfield, 'Narrative of a journey from Ava to the frontiers of Assam and back, performed between December 1836 and May 1837 under the orders of Col. Burney...', *Selected papers regarding the hill tracts between Assam and Burma*

- and on the upper Brahmaputra* (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1873); Edmund R.Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (London: Athlone, 1954).
30. See H.N.C.Stevenson, *The Economics of the Central Chin Tribes* (Bombay: Times of India Press, 1943).
 31. Watson, *Asian and African Systems of Slavery*, Reid, *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia*.
 32. See, for example, Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma*, p.301
 33. Ibid., p.294.
 34. Ibid., p.257.
 35. Ibid., p.160.
 36. J.Friedman, *System, Structure and Contradiction: The Evolution of 'Asiatic' Social Formations* (Copenhagen: The National Museum of Denmark, 1979), pp.123–4.
 37. R.Sethakul, ‘Tai Lue of Sipsongpanna and Müang Nan in the nineteenth century’, in Turton, *Civility and Savagery*, pp.319–29.
 38. J.Crawfurd, *Journal of an Embassy to the Courts of Siam and Cochinchina* [1828] (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1967).
 39. See K.Endicott, ‘The effects of slave raiding on the aborigines of the Malay peninsula’ in Reid, *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia*, pp.216–45.
 40. Something of the scale of this can be found in Stevenson’s valuable book on the Chin, where he compares the sexual division of labour before and after the decline in endemic warfare among the peoples of the Chin Hills: Stevenson, *The Economics of the Central Chin Tribes*.

Human Capital, Slavery and Low Rates of Economic and Population Growth in Indonesia, 1600–1910

PETER BOOMGAARD

Introduction¹

In 1811 the slave-trade was banned in European controlled areas of Indonesia. Although officially abolished in the Netherlands Indies on 1 January 1860, slavery continued in most (about three-quarters) of what is now Indonesia as it was then free of Dutch rule. Only from around 1910 did Dutch colonial rule cover the entire region. Slavery also survived in many Dutch controlled areas of the Archipelago, in some regions until at least the 1940s. Some local peoples still distinguish between those of slave and those of non-slave ancestry. Nevertheless, after 1910 slavery was no longer a major issue among policy makers. This helps explain why, during the late colonial period, so few monographs were written on the topic, although possibly the reluctance of colonial civil servants to admit to its continued existence also played a role.

The first detailed study of slavery in Indonesia, by A.H.Ruibing, appeared in 1937, followed in 1950, shortly after independence, by Bruno Lasker's work on bonded people in South-East Asia that incorporated data on Indonesia. Interest in slavery in the region has recently grown. A volume edited by Anthony Reid that included a significant number of studies of Indonesia appeared in 1983, followed in the 1990s by three works similarly containing contributions on Indonesian regions.²

However, slavery in Indonesia has also featured in historical monographs on cities where slavery was prominent and for which there exist rich historical sources.³ Strangely, labour history, a subject those interested in slavery would intuitively turn to, turns out to be an almost empty category as far as Indonesia prior to 1870 is concerned, apart from the many studies on Java under the so-called Cultivation System. This might stem from the almost universally held supposition that Indonesians prior to 1870 were all peasants. Therefore most scholars dismissed 'labour', which they considered to apply chiefly to non-agricultural wage-labour, as a meaningful analytical category.⁴ Moreover, James Warren's classic work on piracy and slavery in the Sulu zone has unfortunately failed to spark more interest in slavery from subsequent historians of piracy in the region.⁵

Although progress since the early 1980s has been slower than might have been expected, perhaps someone should now attempt to write a book-length monograph on slavery in Indonesia. In this article I present a number of pointers for such a study. Hypothetical in nature, and combining elements from my earlier publications with more recent insights, they are here presented for the first time as a coherent ‘model’ of Indonesian slavery in the Early Modern and Early Colonial Periods.

The Demand for Slaves

Most scholars hold that slavery in the Indonesian Archipelago predated the arrival of the Europeans. They also concur that during the period of the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* ('Dutch East India Company', hereafter 'VOC') in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and that of the Dutch Colonial State (1800–1949), slaves were being employed in both the indigenous and the 'Western' sectors. Support for the existence of slavery prior to the arrival of Europeans is given by the Portuguese writer Tomé Pires who visited the Archipelago around 1515.⁶ He mentioned not only slaves, but also pirates or 'sea-robbers' who dominated the regional slave-trade, supplying slave markets in the Lesser Sundas (Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa), Southwestern Sulawesi (Macassar, Bugis), along the coast of Sumatra, and to a lesser extent Java where slavery appears to have been more characteristic of coastal regions than of the interior.

This picture of an Indonesian Archipelago hardly touched by Western influence highlights a society in which slavery was important and sea-robbers furnished newly captured slaves, of Indonesian and foreign origin, for regional markets and for export. Moreover, the system remained surprisingly constant until the early nineteenth century with the exception of Java, where slavery almost disappeared outside the coastal cities between the visit of Pires in circa 1515 and the early seventeenth century: As around 1600, slaves accounted for probably 50 per cent of Java's urban population, which in turn was not more than 3 per cent of the total population, only approximately 1.5 per cent of Java's inhabitants were slaves.

What Pires did not tell us is what these slaves were being used for. Information is sparse for the period prior to 1600 and even after that date, most information derives from European sources, which concentrate on urban rather than rural areas. Nevertheless, this serves scholars well as slavery, in both European and indigenous areas, was very much an urban phenomenon. There is reasonable information about slavery in the indigenous cities of Aceh on Sumatra and Banten in Java, and also in the cities of Batavia (now Jakarta) in Java and Amboin in the Moluccas, both of which were ruled by Europeans but populated in the main by indigenous peoples. In all probability about half the population of these cities consisted of slaves.

How were all these slaves employed? In Batavia and other 'Dutch' towns the VOC employed large numbers as carpenters (for both ships and houses),

caulkers, blacksmiths, stonemasons, bricklayers, canon-foundry workers, and many other kinds of artisans. Slave numbers fluctuated, sometimes sharply, as when it was cheaper to hire labour, either slaves of other people or ‘free’ (voluntary) wage-labour, the Company sold a certain percentage of its slaves.

Although hired labour, termed ‘coolies’, are mentioned in the sources from the 1670s, it has too often been assumed that almost all labour for the indigenous aristocracy was corvée or statute labour (and that there was no free wage labour in Indonesia prior to 1870).⁷ In consequence, scholars have traditionally held that slavery played a minor role in Indonesian history and that Early Modern Indonesian society was dominated by landholding peasant-cultivators who either worked for themselves or as statute labourers for their rulers. However, as I have demonstrated in previous studies, this traditional view is clearly ahistorical.⁸

I here restrict myself to the systems of slave labour and serfdom. In Batavia, the private individuals from whom slaves were hired were often high-ranking VOC, or former VOC (*vrijburgers*), officials. The highest ranking and richest could own up to 300 slaves. However, even simple citizens and artisans often had six to ten slaves whom they hired out for a living. It is therefore clear that both the VOC, as a company, and its wealthier officials, had a vested interest in the existence and continuation of slave labour. As early as 1645 it was noted that neither the VOC nor the European community in the Archipelago could survive without slaves, while in 1757, more than a century later, it was argued that without slavery most inhabitants of the colony, whose capital consisted largely of newly enslaved people, would be ruined.⁹

From their arrival in the Archipelago, Europeans largely adopted indigenous forms of slavery, as they did many other forms of economic activity. The earliest Dutch and English records note the wealthy urban elite, comprising indigenous rulers, aristocrats, and foreign (Arabs, Indians, Chinese) merchants, often possessed hundreds of slaves. Many were employed as retainers and soldiers, but also in periods of peace there were numerous slaves, who were expected to generate an income for their masters, working as artisans (spinning and weaving), sharecroppers in their master’s fields, fishermen and, in the large ports, as prostitutes. Owners claimed a prearranged sum, the slave retaining the remainder of his or her earnings.

However, it is clear that some aristocrats kept slaves chiefly for status, rather than for their economic utility and some Europeans followed their example. This explains why, despite the fact that the wealthy often invested all their earnings in slaves, owners often failed to make the slaves pay for more than their own upkeep.¹⁰ Thus it was reported of Banten around 1600 that many lords were poor because of the many slaves they owned, while in 1689 the Governor-General was highly critical of those Europeans in Batavia who owned slaves purely for reasons of ‘splendour, exuberance, pride and improper display of wealth’. From the nineteenth century there are many examples, from a variety of indigenous groups, of slave keeping for status.¹¹

As noted, slaves were not necessarily a sound economic investment. Not only did the wealthy have to house, clothe and feed fairly large numbers of retainers who possessed no productive function, but slaves could and did run away. In Batavia, Banten, Banda and Ambon they did so in reasonably large numbers. Slaves also experienced generally higher mortality rates than did the local population. Upon arrival, often after a long sea voyage, many were ill and malnourished. Most were prisoners of war, or had been purchased or sold themselves during a famine and/or epidemic, and were therefore in poor physical shape even prior to the voyage. Moreover, they were often imported into a new ‘disease environment’ to which, as they possessed no natural immunity, they proved highly vulnerable. Often miserably unhappy about their new situation, many committed suicide, murder, or ran riot—as frequently noted in the Batavia VOC *Daghregister* (Daily Journal).

However, slavery was not a uniquely urban phenomenon. Many slaves were employed in agriculture, often far from major population centres. This was the case on the islands of Ambon and Banda where, like many ‘free’ indigenous people, they cultivated respectively cloves and nutmeg for export and where slavery resembled closest New World slavery. Slave conditions were better in the Moluccas. Rulers, aristocrats and other *orang kaya* [rich people] in Sumatra and Kalimantan (Aceh, Padang, Jambi, Palembang, Lampung and Banjarmasin) employed slaves in the cultivation of pepper, an indigenous enterprise less well documented than nutmeg and clove production, but which generated a large and steady demand for slave labour. Slaves were also employed in mining, particularly gold and silver in Sumatra (Aceh, Padang) for, as elsewhere, whether under European or indigenous management, miners experienced high mortality rates and it proved extremely difficult to recruit free labour.

The investment of slave labour in these large export-orientated activities is no surprise. However, slaves were also employed in small-scale production for the local market. Probably only in the most egalitarian and/or nomadic communities was slavery entirely absent.¹² However, sources are largely silent on this issue until the nineteenth century when new data emerged due to a combination of imperial expansion and the emergence of new perspectives on indigenous society, including the rise of ethnography as an academic discipline. Finally, quite large numbers of slaves were used as human sacrifices, an embarrassing topic for those who argue that Indonesian slavery was relatively benign. For instance, when headhunting expeditions proved unsuccessful, slaves were often sacrificed to the gods.¹³

Slaves, then, were used almost everywhere and for all kinds of activities, as domestic servants for rich and poor owners, in cultivating crops (their own and their owners’), and in more ‘mobile’ tasks, such as looking after livestock and collecting non-timber forest products. However, even in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some rulers, as in Kisar (South Moluccas), Nias (Sumatra), possessed hundreds of slaves outside large-scale market production. A further and infamous example is Bali where rulers employed sometimes 300 slaves

as prostitutes.¹⁴ In summary, slavery was probably much more widespread than has generally been assumed. It flourished not only in urban centres, in export orientated agriculture and in mining, but was also ubiquitous in rural areas of the Archipelago where production for the international market was less important or even absent. The latter, data for which exists mainly in post-1800 sources, deserves more attention from researchers.

Slavery, Serfdom and Debt Bondage

It is also necessary to define the terms ‘slave’ and ‘slavery’. In Java, for instance, where slavery was rare, other forms of servile labour may have been more important. Thus in reference to the Cirebon-Priangan area of West Java, Mason Hoadley estimates that in c.1700, about five per cent of the population were in bonded labour. The latter category refers to debtbondage (Dutch: *pandelingschap*) or to a status between that of a slave and that of a debt bondman —a category for which Hoadley has no title. I suggest that we call these people ‘serfs’ (Dutch: *horigen*), people ‘bound to the soil’ or, in the Javanese context, to a person. We then have three categories of servile labour in Java: slaves, who can be bought and sold, serfs, who can neither be traded nor leave their masters, and debt bondmen and bondwomen who in principle can regain freedom by paying off their debts.¹⁵ Whereas slavery was rare outside the ports, in all likelihood there existed in Java an important group of debt bondmen and serfs. Sultan Agung, a famous ruler of Mataram in Central Java in the early seventeenth century, was probably instrumental in the creation of large groups of serfs. From various regions he conquered, large numbers of people were moved to the area surrounding his capital. This forced migration sparked off at least one famine, and created a serf-like population. Two centuries later these people still comprised a separate group. Sultan Iskandar Muda, ruler of Aceh, a contemporary of Sultan Agung, conducted similar forced migrations from conquered territory in Kedah in Malaysia.

It is generally assumed that slavery reflects, among other factors, labour shortage in a context of an abundance of accessible land (‘open resources’).¹⁶ It could be argued that as these conditions were absent in Java by around 1600, slavery would have started to disappear there naturally. It is possible that Agung, with the creation of serfdom in his realm, contributed to this development. At that moment, Mataram was still a young state. When, after the activities of Sultan Agung, Mataram’s reputation had been made, and the grip of the state on its subjects had been strengthened, rulers and aristocracy could probably get most things done by way of statute labour services. However, this did not apply to the urban centres where foreign merchants continued to rely on slaves. In Java, slavery in urban areas was restricted to non-Javanese, while from at least the late seventeenth century, it was also forbidden to hold Javanese bond-debtors in VOC territories. The latter ruling, which was frequently broken, was re-iterated until well into the nineteenth century.¹⁷

In other parts of Indonesia during the period under review, there also existed many people who the Dutch called ‘slaves’ but who in fact were neither ‘slaves’ nor ‘freemen’ and might most aptly be described as ‘serfs’.¹⁸ The phrase ‘free as a chicken’ rather than ‘free as a bird’, used by the Sumatran Minangkabau, comes to mind. Such distinctions reflect a need for historians to be precise where many sources are vague. For instance, Ruibing, author of the only monograph on Indonesian slavery, notes that from 33 to 90 per cent of the population of some groups (Gorontalo, Toraja, Borneo) were slaves. However, closer examination of his sources reveal that these were often serfs rather than slaves.¹⁹ However, the numerous gradations of status between ‘slave’ and ‘freeman’ made it easier for descendants of the slaves to blend eventually, often through intermarriage, into the free population. On the other hand, the existence of groups of serfs living outside their lord’s home and with minimal obligations towards him, in many cases led to the formation of separate clans. In such cases it was much more difficult to lose the collective ‘ex-slave’ label.

The Supply of Slaves

There can be no social formation even partly based on slavery if there is no regular supply of slaves and in Early Modern Indonesia a number of mechanisms ensured that supply; debts, conflicts (large and small scale), raids, fines, and natural or manmade disasters.²⁰ Some authorities consider that debt was the main cause of slavery and bondage. People who had accumulated debts too large to be paid back within an acceptable time-span became debt-bondmen and, eventually, slaves. Three factors contributed to the near universality of debt in Indonesia; frequent climatic anomalies, a propensity for gambling, and high interest rates. Fines can be regarded as a subcategory of debt, as people who proved unable to pay fines could be enslaved. Indeed, in some societies the penalty for certain crimes was enslavement. It would appear that some capital crimes, such as those committed against a ruler, murder, adultery and incest, over time became punishable by enslavement or by such high fines that enslavement was inevitable.

It was also a society prone to inter-group conflict. This could range from full-scale national war, such as those fought by Sultan Agung and Iskandar Muda against their respective enemies, to frequent skirmishes amongst small local potentates or tribes. While male captives were often killed, females and children were usually sold as slaves. It could be argued that raiding is just another form of inter-group conflict, but most scholars treat it as a distinct category for whereas the latter were undertaken for the explicit purpose of acquiring slaves, the former were not. Raiding manifested itself in two forms, pirate or ‘sea-robber’ attacks, and expeditions against ‘primitive’ upland tribes. Pirates regularly attacked vulnerable coastal populations, while coastal ‘Malays’ raided inland tribes like the Kubu, Dayak, Toraja and Papuans.

Disasters, such as wars, harvest failures, epidemics, volcanic eruptions and cyclones, could take people to the brink of starvation. Often they came in pairs,

as when epidemics followed wars, and volcanic eruptions provoked harvest failures. The sources reveal that many victims sold themselves, or their children and other members of their families into slavery. Some areas, particularly in what is now India, prone to a fifteen-year cycle of severe draught and harvest failure, proved fertile sources of slaves.

A major theme in the literature is the definition of a slave as an ‘alien’ or an ‘outsider’ from another group.²¹ This was often the case, as many slaves came from areas outside the Archipelago. VOC and Aceh traders purchased large numbers of slaves from India during famine years. The VOC also shipped slaves from Madagascar to the gold and silver mines of Salido near Padang in Sumatra, while Philippino slaves were sold in Borneo and elsewhere in the Archipelago. As already indicated, all slaves in Javanese coastal towns from 1600 were ‘outsiders’.

However, in some cases the point is highly debatable. For instance, could North Nias captives enslaved by a local potentate in South Nias be considered aliens, or Sumbawa neighbours captured by the ruler of Bima, also living on one island? Even more questionable was the situation in Bali where, at the end of the nineteenth century, members of a family whose head died without adult male issue became slaves of the ruler. Moreover, as Ruibing conceded in the 1930s, a debt bondman turned slave in his own community could not be considered an ‘alien’. Thus, if it is accepted that debt was the chief cause of enslavement, most slaves were not aliens—unless it can be proven that they were subsequently sold outside the community.

A Proposed ‘Unified Field Theory’

Given such issues, is it possible to find some kind of ‘unified field theory’ to explain enslavement in Indonesian society? This involves the search less for a monocausal explanation than for a number of features that underlie Indonesian society and the different processes of enslavement—warfare, raiding, gambling, debt and exorbitant interest rates. Fundamental to Indonesian society were the natural hazards that made for a high degree of uncertainty in day-to-day life. As I have noted elsewhere, such hazards profoundly affected the agricultural cycle and the choices available to the peasant-cultivator. Harvest failures, cyclones, and volcanic eruptions (Tambora) and the famines and epidemics following in their wake occurred far more often than is generally realized.²² To avoid starvation, many were forced either to borrow money, or more often food and so become debtors, a process that could lead to enslavement, or to sell themselves or members of their family into slavery. The frequency and uncertainty of natural hazards may also have contributed to the propensity of many Indonesian peoples to gamble (a practice often associated with cockfighting). One cannot discount cultural traits, but given the frequency of natural disasters, life itself was a gamble and frugal behaviour was not at a premium.

Natural disasters may also have indirectly promoted enslavement through warfare and slave raiding. Indonesia was characterized by ‘prebendal’ ('soft' or ‘contest’) states, in which the power of the ruler was related to the size of his following. Rulers maintained the support of their followers through the disbursement of the state’s taxable surplus. In bad years, they supplemented low tax revenue by launching military expeditions to pillage neighbouring polities. The VOC was also well versed in such tactics. Slave raiding by dissatisfied elements of the nobility often had a similar origin. In addition, prebendal states, unlike strong centralized states, failed to impose a monopoly of punishment and were thus incapable of preventing the substitution of enslavement for crimes previously punishable by fines and other penalties.

Finally, exorbitant interest rates were crucial in turning normal debts, incurred as a result of harvest failure, gambling and high bride prices, into virtually irredeemable debts. One reason for high interest rates was that many areas in the Archipelago were not fully monetized so that cash was always at a premium. As importantly, those with large quantities of money generally purchased slaves and cattle and hoarded the remainder by turning gold and silver into jewellery and by ‘burying’ it in hoards. All such purchases contained an element of ostentation, of status display, while hoarding removed money from circulation, which tended to drive interest rates up.²³

Alternative uses of money, such as buying land and constructing stone or brick houses as happened in Europe, were either unattractive or impossible in Indonesia. Often land could not be bought by individuals, at least in large quantities, as it was the property of lineages and clans. Landed property vested in clans is in part a feature of societies with a low population density, but a soft state would have reinforced this tendency. The lack of house construction is more puzzling, but can perhaps be explained, like gambling, by the uncertainty of life in face of natural catastrophes.

So, most slave-creating mechanisms were linked to three elements, the high frequency of natural hazards, low population densities, and the prevalence of soft states.

The Demographics of Slavery

Over the period under discussion, an annual average of possibly one to two thousand slaves were shipped to Indonesia predominantly from Madagascar, India and the Philippines. These are impressive numbers in terms of personal tragedies, but imported slaves made a negligible contribution to the Indonesian population, which in the mid-eighteenth century was probably around ten million. Moreover, a large percentage of slaves died en-route before reaching Indonesia. Slaves were also exported from Indonesia. In the sixteenth century Malacca and Patani had large communities of Javanese, mostly slaves and in the seventeenth century slaves were exported to Taiwan and the Cape. But again, these were negligible as a proportion of the Archipelago’s resident population.

Nevertheless I am prepared to argue that slavery on the whole had a negative effect on Indonesia's population growth rates. This is based on the following considerations. Although there exists little statistical evidence, there is a consensus that prior to the nineteenth century population growth rates in Indonesia were low, in the region of 0.1 or 0.2 per cent per annum. There is less agreement on the causes, some scholars emphasizing wars as the sole cause for low population growth rates, others arguing that wars in conjunction with the seventeenth century 'Little Ice Age' to be responsible, while yet others argue that additional factors such as natural hazards and epidemics should be taken into consideration.

I would add slavery as an important contributory factor to low population growth rates in pre-nineteenth century Indonesia. First, slave-owning societies have low birth rates. This is true both of slave-owners and of slaves themselves.²⁴ In fact, the need to have children who could be employed as workers is obviated by the possession of slaves. There are even cases where slavery shades imperceptibly into adoption, which makes the link between numbers of children and slaves even more plausible.²⁵ However, while slavery may have stopped some people from having (more) children, it may have kept people in the slave-exporting areas, such as Bali or Nias, from introducing (more) birth control measures. Indeed, many such areas, including in addition, Lombok, Bima, Macassar and the slave-exporting areas of India, also exported considerable quantities of rice (and cheap textiles?). These were signs of relatively high population densities and of mono-crop (rice), and therefore vulnerable economies. Could it be that in bad years these areas, instead of adopting birth control techniques, might have opted to export their population surplus?

Slaves also had high death rates. This was partly because they had been weakened by the trauma and voyage prior to reaching the market, and partly because once there, they entered a new disease environment. Indeed, as slaves often came from disease-stricken areas, they could themselves infect the resident population. There are, for instance, several cases of slaves introducing smallpox to their port of disembarkation. Slave raiding also entailed high mortality, as it was a widespread custom in the Indonesian Archipelago to kill most adult males encountered, and to enslave only women and children. This may help account for the higher cost there of male slaves.

At the same time, slavery may have kept alive people who otherwise would have perished. This was the case when people in famine stricken areas sold into slavery themselves and/or their family members. However, given the low productivity of slave labour, at least in the indigenous Indonesian context, this levelling mechanism probably made for lower agricultural productivity. This in turn made the general population more vulnerable during periods of climatic abnormality or warfare. Where slavery was perceived as a safety net during periods of dearth, the incentives for high productivity among the less well off may have been low.

Finally, there is a fascinating link between slave demography and high bride prices (*jujur*)—another under-researched topic.²⁶ In cases where slaves formed part of the bride price, the prospective son-in-law, too poor to pay such a price, often raided adjacent areas for slaves. High bride prices were a contributory factor to indebtedness, and made for late marriages, and therefore, supposedly, for adultery and prostitution. Adultery, if discovered, led to high fines and often to slavery, while prostitution, which established a demand for female slaves as prostitutes, also led to a higher incidence of sexually transmitted diseases. It therefore contributed to sterility and stillbirths, which in turn resulted in lower population growth-rates.

Epilogue

I would suggest that in the Indonesian case slaves were neither a good investment nor the path to capitalism. In sparsely populated areas, the powerful might require slaves to generate a surplus. However, they used that surplus to demonstrate their status by acquiring more slaves and holding celebrations (feasts of merit) where much livestock (often buffalo) was slaughtered and eaten. Sometimes some slaves would also be sacrificed. The higher status thus acquired enabled the powerful to ask a higher bride price for their daughters. To obtain the slaves that often formed part of the bride price, large sums of money had to be borrowed, or a slave-raid launched. Buffalo herds formed an integral part of such a process, and slaves were required as tenders of cattle, as herders, and occasionally even to feed them in times of drought and to round up groups of semi-feral buffaloes. I propose to call this complicated phenomenon, with its many feedback loops, the ‘wealth-slavery-buffalo-feasting-bride price complex’.²⁷

In sum, most capital was sunk in livestock that would be primarily used for large feasts, in slaves who had, on average, a rather high mortality rate, rather low productivity, and who did not reproduce and kept their owners also from reproducing more vigorously, and in ‘hoards’ that were economically speaking equally sterile. A high frequency of natural hazards, low levels of population density, and ‘soft’ states were conducive to these mechanisms and together they made for very low growth rates of population and income per capita.

NOTES

1. The first version of this article was written at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study (NIAS) in Wassenaar, the Netherlands, during the second semester of the academic year 1999/2000. I am deeply grateful to the NIAS staff who take great pride in creating a scholarly atmosphere conducive to reading, thinking and writing. Thanks are also due to Erwiza Erman, with whom I discussed the intricacies of Indonesian (mostly Sumatran) dependency relations in the past. I very much enjoyed the workshop in Avignon where the first version was

presented, a laudable initiative of Gwyn Campbell, our gracious host there. Finally, I owe a debt of gratitude to David Henley, my colleague at KITLV, who not only gave detailed comments on the first draft, but also provided me with important references for the rewrite.

2. A.H.Ruibing, *Ethnologische Studie betreffende de Indonesische slavernij als maatschappelijk verschijnsel* (Zutphen: Thieme, 1937); B.Lasker, *Human Bondage in Southeast Asia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1950); A.Reid (ed.), *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1983); M.Klein (ed.), *Breaking the Chains; Slavery, Bondage, and Emancipation in Modern Africa and Asia* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1993); G.Oostindie (ed.), *Fifty Years Later; Antislavery, Capitalism and Modernity in the Dutch Orbit* (Leiden: KITLV, 1995); G.Condoninas (ed.), *Formes Extrêmes de Dépendance; Contributions à l'étude de l'esclavage en Asie du Sud-Est* (Paris: EHESS, 1998). Most contributions in the Condominas volume in fact date from the late 1970s or early 1980s.
- In the four edited volumes cited above that date from the last two decades, nine articles were published on Indonesian areas, the majority in Reid, *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency*, which thus remains the best single buy for those interested in the history of Indonesian slavery.
3. For references to urban history studies up to 1991 see G.J.Knaap, ‘Slavery and the Dutch in Southeast Asia’, in Oostindie (ed.), *Fifty Years Later*, p.193. For works since then, see H.E. Niemeijer, ‘Calvinisme en koloniale stadscultuur; Batavia 1619–1725’, Dissertation, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 1996; R.Raben, ‘Batavia and Colombo; The Ethnic and Spatial Order of Two Colonial Cities 1600–1800’, Dissertation, Leiden University, 1996; and J. Talens, *Een feodale samenleving in koloniaal vaarwater. Staatsvorming, koloniale expansie en economische onderontwikkeling in Banten, West-Java (1600–1750)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1999).
4. I have explored the notion of non-peasant labour, including slavery, in Indonesia prior to 1900 in a number of publications—see the following works by P.Boomgaard: *Children of the Colonial State; Population Growth and Economic Development in Java, 1795–1880* (Amsterdam: Free University Press, 1989), pp. 109–35; ‘Why Work for Wages? Free Labour in Java, 1600–1900’, *Economic and Social History in the Netherlands* 2 (1990), pp.37–56; The Non-agricultural side of an Agricultural Economy; Java, 1500–1900’, in P.Alexander, P.Boomgaard and B.White (eds.), *In the Shadow of Agriculture; Non-farm Activities in the Javanese Economy, Past and Present* (Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute, 1991), pp.14–40; *Historicus in een papieren landschap*, inaugural lecture, University of Amsterdam (Leiden: KITLV, 1996), pp.18–23; ‘Geld, krediet, rente en Europeanen in Zuid- en Zuidoost-Azië in de zeventiende eeuw’, in C.A.Davids, W.Fritschy and L.A.van der Valk (eds.), *Kapitaal, ondernemerschap en beleid; Studies over economie en politiek in Nederland, Europa en Azië van 1500 tot heden. Afscheidsbundel voor Prof. Dr. P.W.Klein* (Amsterdam: NEHA, 1996), pp.500–505; ‘Introducing environmental histories of Indonesia’, in P. Boomgaard, F.Colombijn and D.Henley (eds.), *Paper Landscapes; Explorations in the environmental history of Indonesia* (Leiden: KITLV, 1997), pp.7–9.
5. J.F.Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768–1898; The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1981).

6. A.Cortesão, *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires; An Account of the East, from the Red Sea to Japan, Written in Malacca and India in 1512–1515* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1944), pp.139–227.
7. For a more detailed treatment of pre-1870 wage labour, see Boomgaard, ‘Why work for wages?’. For the traditional view, see e.g. W.F.Wertheim, ‘Changing Southeast Asian Societies: An Overview’, in W.F.Wertheim, *Comparative Essays on Asia and the West* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1993), p.20.
8. See Boomgaard, ‘Why work for wages?’ and ‘The non-agricultural side’.
9. W.P.Coolhaas et al. (eds.), *Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* 9 Vols. (‘s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1960–88), Vol.II (1964), p.269; P.A.Leupe, ‘Besognes der Hooge Regeering te Batavia gehouden over de Commissie van Paravicini naar Timor 1756’, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Landen Volkenkunde* 25 (1877), p.459.
10. Coolhaas et al. (eds.), *Generale Missiven* III, p.281; W.van Hogendorp, ‘Beschrijving van het eiland Timor’, *Verhandelingen Bataviaasch Genootschap* 1 (1779), p.296; J.A.du Bois, ‘De Lampongsche distrikten op het eiland Sumatra’, *Tijdschrift Nederlandsch-Indië* 14, 1 (1852), p.319; H.F.W.Cornets de Groot, ‘Nota over de slavernij en het pandelingschap in de residentie Lampongsche Districten’, *Tijdschrift Bataviaasch Genootschap* 27 (1882), p.458.
11. Coolhaas et al. (eds.), *Generale Missiven* V (1975), p.288; Ruibing, *Ethnologische Studie*, pp.38–42; W.Foster (ed.), *The Voyage of Sir Henry Middleton to the Moluccas 1604–1606* (Nendeln/Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1967), pp.95, 171; V.T.King, *The Maloh of West Kalimantan. An ethnographic study of social inequality and social change among an Indonesian Borneo people* (Dordrecht/Cinnaminson: Foris, 1985), p.53.
12. See e.g. A.C.Kruyt, ‘De slavernij in Posso (Midden-Celebes)’, *Onze Eeuw; Maandschrift voor Staatkunde, Letteren, Wetenschap en Kunst*, 11, 1 (1911), p.67.
13. Cornets de Groot, ‘Nota over de slavernij’, p.458; A.W.Nieuwenhuis, *Animisme, Spiritisme en Feticisme onder de volken van den Nederlandsch-Indischen Archipel* (Baarn: Hollandia-Drukkerij, 1911), pp.40–42; W.F.Funke, *Orang Abung; Volkstum Süd-Sumatras im Wandel*, Vol.II (Leiden: Brill, 1961), pp.277–81; Warren, *The Sulu Zone*, p.199; King, *The Maloh of West Kalimantan*, pp.53, 87–8.
14. J.Jacobs, *Eenigen tijd onder de Baliërs. Eene reisbeschrijving met aanteekeningen betreffende hygiene, land- en volkenkunde van de eilanden Bali en Lombok* (Batavia: Kolff, 1883), p.124; T.C.Rappard, ‘Het eiland Nias en zijne bewoners’, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 62 (1909), p.603; Ruibing, *Ethnologische Studie*, p.30.
15. M.Hoadley, ‘Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Pre-Colonial Java: the Cirebon-Priangan Region, 1700’, in Reid, *Slavery*, p.115. On *pandelingschap* see e.g. A.W.C.Verwey, ‘Iets over het contractueel pandelingschap en de bestrijding deser instelling in de Nederlandsch-Indische wetgeving’, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 42 (1893), pp.234–53.
16. The *opus classicum* here is H.J.Nieboer, *Slavery as an Industrial System; Ethnological Researches* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1900).
17. Verwey, ‘Iets over het contractueel pandelingschap’, pp.251–3; F.de Haan, *Priangan: De Preanger-Regentschappen onder het Nederlandsche Bestuur tot 1811*, Vol.III (Batavia: Kolff, 1912), pp.209–10, 442; J.Fox, “For Good and

- Sufficient Reasons”: An Examination of Early Dutch East India Company Ordinances on Slaves and Slavery’, in Reid, *Slavery*, pp.246–62.
18. Two terms are found in the Dutch sources on the Archipelago predating the nineteenth century, namely *slaaf* and *lijfeigene*, but there does not seem to be any difference in meaning between them.
 19. A.W.P Verkerk Pistorius, ‘Iets over de slaven en de afstammelingen van slaven in de Padangsche Bovenlanden’, *Tijdschrift Nederlandsch-Indië*, 3rd series, 2,1 (1868), p.437; M. Moszkowski, *Auf neuen Wegen durch Sumatra; Forschungsreisen in Ost- und Zentral-Sumatra* (1907) (Berlin: Reimer, 1909), p. 151; Ruibing, *Ethnologische Studie*, pp.32–8.
 20. There is a broad consensus on the points listed here, but the phrasing of these points is mine and might not please everyone.
 21. See e.g. Ruibing, *Ethnologische Studie*, p.7; Reid, *Slavery*, p.4.
 22. P.Boomgaard, ‘Fluctuations in Mortality in 17th-century Indonesia’, in Ts’ui-jung Liu et al. (eds.), *Asian Population History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp.191–220.
 23. For a more detailed discussion of these topics, see Boomgaard, ‘Geld, krediet, rente’.
 24. Although the evidence for ‘Malay’ societies is somewhat patchy. See Coolhaas et al. (eds.), *Generale Missiven*, IV (1971), p.554; G.J.Knaap, *Kruidnagelen en Christenen; De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie en de Bevolking van Amboen 1656–1696* (Dordrecht/ Providence: Foris, 1987), p.132; Raben, *Batavia and Colombo*, p.128; Kruyt, ‘De slavernij in Posso’, pp.91–2. For Africa and the Caribbean the evidence is better; see e.g. C.C. Robertson and M.A.Klein (eds.), *Women and Slavery in Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983); C.Meillassoux, *Anthropologie de l'esclavage; Le ventre de fer et d'argent* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1986); M.A.Klein, ‘The Demography of Slavery in Western Soudan; The Late Nineteenth Century’, in D.D.Cordell and J.W.Gregory (eds.), *African Population and Capitalism; Historical Perspectives* (Boulder/London: Westview Press, 1987), pp.50–61; B.W.Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807–1834* (Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984); A.van Stipriaan, *Surinaams contrast; Roofbouw en overleven in een Caraïbische plantagekolonie 1750–1863* (Leiden: KITLV, 1993), pp.333–40.
 25. Cornets de Groot, ‘Nota over de slavernij’, p.476.
 26. See Boomgaard, *Historicus in een papieren landschap*, pp.18–23 for a fuller treatment.
 27. The role of livestock in this complex is dealt with in P.Boomgaard, ‘The Age of the Buffalo; The Maritime Trade in Livestock in Asia, Particularly Indonesia, 1500–1850’, paper written for the panel ‘History of Foodcrop Production and Animal Husbandry in Southeast Asia’, London: Euroseas, 2001.

Forced Labour Mobilization in Java during the Second World War

SHIGERU SATO

During the Second World War, the Japanese military invaded and occupied most parts of South-East Asia. The aim of the invasion was, according to their rhetoric, to emancipate Asians from Western colonial powers that had subjugated them for centuries. In reality, however, the Japanese drafted many millions of local people as labourers under the slogan ‘Construction of a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere’. Their regime of forced labour, while not ‘slavery’ in the generally accepted sense of the term, involved deprivation of freedom and immense suffering for local people.

The forced labourers were called *romusha* in Japanese. Existing studies inform us that *romusha* were taken from Java to various parts of the Japanese occupied regions, including the Thailand-Burma railway construction site. The typical images of the draftees’ woeful plight can be seen exhibited in the National Monument in Jakarta and elsewhere. Although the images are well established, our knowledge of their experience is partial. The railway construction was but one of many great Japanese wartime projects, few others of which have been studied.

For most of us residing outside of Indonesia, the main source of information about Asian forced labourers is eyewitness accounts, particularly of Allied POWs forced to work alongside the drafted Asians. We are informed of the conditions observed or experienced directly by Westerners but are almost totally ignorant about the vast majority of cases that involved only Asians. This article attempts first to investigate the validity of the popularly held images of *romusha*, and subsequently to examine the overall structure of Japanese labour mobilization, its purposes, the methods, and the scale.

Javanese Labourers Overseas

Archival sources give little idea of the work engaged in overseas by the *romusha*. This section, therefore, examines a few concrete cases, revealed by the reports produced in Singapore in April 1946 by the Netherlands War Crimes Investigation Team, which interviewed a group of *romusha*, some of whom were sent to the Riau islands.¹ As the main aim of the investigation was to identify the Japanese individuals who committed brutality, the cases cannot be considered

representative, but they do cast considerable light on the nature of the relationship between ruler and ruled.

The draftees were mostly farmers who were ordered by their village chiefs to go to work for the Japanese. Some village chiefs indicated to the draftees where they were to be sent, some did not. The destinations, if stated, were often inaccurate. For instance, on 25 August 1942, in Magelang regency, Central Java, 468 men sent by various village chiefs assembled at the capital where the regent, accompanied by two Japanese, told them that they were to work for three months in Serang, West Java. Instead, they were sent via Jakarta and Singapore to the Riau islands, where they were forced to work until the end of the war. Farmers usually complied with the draft order not only for fear of physical punishment, but also because they felt they had no choice: One village chief proclaimed that those who refused would be expelled from the village. Other Javanese were directly 'impressed': Japanese in a truck picked up one farmer off the streets of Yogyakarta which he happened to be visiting.²

Once at their destination, *romusha* were restricted to their workplace and permitted no free days. When, in October 1942, *romusha* in oil-emplacement work on the island of Sambu wanted to take a day off to celebrate the Lebaran at the end of the Muslim fasting month, they were not only refused permission but were punished for making such a request: Most were forced to stand in the sun for three days surveyed by *Heiho*, local auxiliary soldiers employed by the Japanese. The *romusha* foreman, sentenced to seven days in the sun, was brutalized on the eighth day from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. by three Japanese who beat him with wooden sticks, kicked him, and made him sit on the ground with a wooden stick held behind the bent knees. He fainted around 10 a.m., and when he regained consciousness around 1 p.m., was beaten again with sticks. Subsequently unable to walk, he had to be kept in a clinic for three months.³

The investigatory team were less concerned with regular beatings than unusually severe, life-threatening violence. In many cases, such violence was used on weak or sick people. For example, in one case on Batang Island, one Japanese called Yama broke the femur of a Singapore Chinese labourer with a wooden stick, allegedly because the worker could not lift a log (although one testimony says that the beating was for an escape attempt). Seeing that the man was unable to walk, Yama ordered *Heiho* to bury the victim up to his neck in the ground. A few hours later (one testimony says after 30 minutes), he was unearthed and let free. Yama forbade anyone, under threat of death, from helping the man who, dragging his broken and bloody leg behind him, crawled to the barrack where he received neither medical treatment nor food. Several days later, they were all shipped to Tanjung Pagar, in Singapore. Halfway there, Yama ordered *Heiho* to cast the wounded man (no witness knew if he was alive or dead) into the sea.⁴

Life threatening violence was also meted out as punishment for 'crimes', usually theft of small amounts of food such as potatoes or beans. The reason for stealing was that *romusha* were hungry. Although they usually received two or

three meals a day, consisting of rice, vegetables, and occasionally some dried fish, the quantities dished out were so small that workers remained hungry. Indeed many forced labourers suffered ailments associated with malnourishment, such as beriberi and skin diseases. Malnourishment also increased vulnerability to dysentery and malaria, which were likewise widespread. Mortality was high. The oil-emplacement work on the island of Sambu originally had 200 labourers, of whom 138 died within one year. Of the 750 workers who in November 1944 were ordered to start harvesting timber on Sukijang Island, between 400 and 570 (the estimates given by witnesses varied) died in the nine months before the Japanese surrender, even though the site was served by a polyclinic equipped with medicines and a Japanese doctor. Malaria was a major problem, but only when over half the original number of men had died were the gang issued with mosquito nets.⁵

The following examples serve to illustrate punishment for theft of food. One morning in November 1944, the Japanese doctor of a clinic in Sukijang, punished Ba Sidin, a patient suffering from beriberi and pruritus, apparently for theft of potatoes from the clinic's vegetable garden. In front of the other patients, the doctor bound Ba Sidin's wrists and wrapped his torso in a mat to which he set fire. This caused the victim to hop desperately around. The fire died out, upon which the doctor hung Ba Sidin by the feet from a bough of a tree in such a way that Ba Sidin's hands touched the ground to support part of his body weight. The doctor then removed the burnt mat from Ba Sidin's body and left him in that position until about 4 p.m. Then, the doctor let Ba Sidin down, poured a bucket of seawater over him, and let him loose. For three days the doctor gave medical treatment to the victim, who was in great pain—his skin had turned yellowish and started peeling. On the fourth day, the treatment stopped and Ba Sidin died.⁶ In another case, on a timber site in Tanjung Pinang, a small amount of beans were stolen from the garden. About 300 workers and foremen were assembled and two Japanese and a couple of *Heiho* beat every one of them until the thief's identity was disclosed. He was beaten anew with rattan sticks, and tied to a tree in a sitting position with his hands tied behind the back, and left in that position for seven days and nights. He was given some drinks but no food. When freed, he had to be carried to the clinic, where he died about ten days later.⁷

Similar punishment was inflicted for the theft, or even suspected theft, of other goods, such as clothing, the supplies of which, like food, were inadequate. In one case, a *romusha* called Kartasan was wrongly suspected of having stolen a jacket he had in fact purchased from a friend. Osaka, his Japanese accuser, tied Kartasan's hands behind the back and hung him from a tree in such a way that his toes just touched the ground. Osaka then doused Kartasan's head with petrol and set it on fire. Only when Kartasan's head swelled and started bleeding was he taken down and untied, although Osaka continued the punishment, beating his victim's deformed face and pumping his stomach with water. Kartasan appeared to have survived his ordeal, but only after spending a month recuperating in the clinic.⁸

These cases support the widely held images of maltreated *romusha*. Some of the methods that appeared in the testimonies were familiar to many Japanese because, in order to persecute Christians and to torture suspected criminals, their samurai ancestors used methods such as wrapping a person in a mat and setting fire to it, hanging victims upside down, burying them up to the neck, or making them sit with a stick behind the knees. By copying the methods their ancestors had invented centuries earlier, some Japanese deliberately made history repeat itself, reinforcing the idea that the Japanese were brutal for cultural reasons. As suggested earlier, however, the above incidents cannot be considered representative. Moreover, evidence also exists of reasonable treatment by the Japanese. For example, a *romusha* called Roesmadi, moved successively from Banyumas to Kijang, Singapore, and Thailand, testified that ‘We received relatively adequate food, although there was no meat or fish. There were not many sick people. Problems were mostly wounds and skin rashes. Handling of labourers was reasonable.’⁹

These testimonies, nevertheless, reveal a number of characteristics of the labour mobilization under Japanese rule. One is that the Japanese recruited labour by requesting the indigenous authorities to supply certain numbers of labourers. These indigenous authorities, under the foreign military dictatorship, had little choice but to carry out such orders as, at the end of the scale, did the villagers who were drafted. Not only did few know where they were to be sent, they were not informed properly of the duration or the type of work they were to perform. Once they reached the destination, they were forced to work under threat of violence. They were given no opportunities to express complaints or grievances, and were deprived of any choice of rest days. Not all Japanese were brutal but the fact that many brutal individuals were left unpunished until the Japanese surrender reveals the nature of the Japanese rule.

Java and the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere

Romusha Mobilization within Java

The above testimonies reinforce the established view of Japanese brutality, held by scholars and the general public alike. The images supported by these testimonies are, however, somewhat misleading. While the Japanese conducted a ‘total mobilization’ of manpower in Java, those *romusha* shipped elsewhere in the region probably numbered about 300,000, or a small fraction of the total labour mobilized. Most reported cases of brutality come from isolated workplaces outside Java. There is no evidence to suggest that violence against those put to work within Java was common. There is considerable evidence of suffering and loss of lives amongst *romusha* there, but what mattered in Java was not so much raw violence as coercive recruitment, the enormity of mobilization, and a poor work environment with inadequate provisions of food, clothing, housing, wages

and medicines. We therefore need to shift our attention from brutal violence to the fundamental aims and methods of mobilization, and the reasons for the poor work conditions.

Labour was mobilized broadly for two purposes: military and civil. Military projects included construction of military facilities and the exploitation and transportation of strategic resources. The occupation authorities proclaimed that a ‘total mobilization’ of manpower was a *sine qua non* of the war effort. They equated labourers with soldiers, using rhetoric such as ‘a drop of sweat is as precious as a bullet’.¹⁰ It was, however, mere propaganda, since the vast majority of the forced labour was employed in civil projects. That was because, contrary to the propagandist image projected by the Japanese slogan of a ‘Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere’, the war and occupation had devastating effects on the economies of occupied regions. The occupation authorities had to mobilize labour to cope with the colossal problems that their invasion created. The majority (about 70 per cent) of the approximately 50,000 Japanese who settled in Java during the war, were also civilians. That was because the Japanese took over all aspects of the Netherlands Indies government, which required more civilian personnel than military men.

The economic downturn in the occupied land was due less to physical destruction or material exploitation, than to an alteration in trading pattern. In the century or so before the occupation, Java’s economy had become deeply integrated into the international economic structure constructed by the Western colonial powers. By dint of military might, the Japanese attempted to transform this structure, in the process creating on one hand, massive unemployment amongst workers in export industries that lost their markets and, on the other hand, a dearth of commodities that had been imported from outside the region. The occupation authorities had to find work for the unemployed, and start projects to produce import substitutes. This situation necessitated an industrial restructuring and labour relocation within Java.

Shortage of shipping was one element that crippled the regional economy. The shipping capacity in the occupied region plummeted even before the start of the Allied counter offensive because most large cargo ships operating in the region belonged to Allied countries. Of all the ships active in ports of the Netherlands Indies, those under the Japanese flag accounted for no more than four per cent in number and eight per cent in tonnage.¹¹ Most ships of the Allied nationalities pulled out when the Japanese attack became imminent, while the Japanese authorities subsequently commandeered most of the remaining ships to meet military exigencies. Paralysis of the maritime trading thus became unavoidable.

Mining Operations

The lack of ships also affected Java’s overland transport system. Java’s railways, for instance, relied on coal from Sumatra and Borneo but shifting coal from those neighbouring islands became extremely difficult even from the outset of the

occupation. To prevent paralysis of Java's economy, the Japanese therefore decided to establish six mines to tap the island's own hitherto-unexploited coal resources. Likewise, cessation of the import of Portland cement, fertilizers and pesticides necessitated new mining operations for extracts such as trass, lime, phosphate and sulphur. The number of mining operations in Java thus increased from 13 to 35 between 1941 and 1944. This helped boost production of mineral products, but at a level below that of pre-war imports and insufficient to meet demand, generated mostly by civilian projects.¹²

Given the lack of capital equipment, the Japanese used exceedingly labour intensive means to carry out mining operations, pouring in large numbers of inexperienced labourers and working them round the clock, adopting two or three shift systems. As the miners worked barefoot, they inevitably experienced cuts that frequently became infected; many developed tropical ulcers and gangrene. A Japanese mining company, Ishihara Sangyo, that managed a copper mine in Surakarta, supplied straw sandals to its workers who, however, disliked wearing footware, and quickly discarded the sandals. The company tried to introduce machines in order to compensate for the shortage of manpower, but the workers were also frightened of machines.¹³

Most workers were male adults but women and children, too, were involved. Compared with the size of the labour mobilization, output was extremely low.

The reconstruction of the Javanese economy also required a huge increase in human porters in a range of fields. For instance, new mines were often in the middle of the jungles, far from the railways or roads that could be used by trucks and carts. Mobilized labourers carried mined products on their backs and shoulders and walked along narrow mountain paths. A return trip often took a few days. Shortages of mining products became increasingly acute but some new mines proved economically unviable and in 1945 the Japanese decided to suspend operations in four of them.¹⁴ The largest coalmine that was opened in Bayah in West Java was about 100 kilometres away from the 'nearby' railway station. They therefore constructed a new railway line, in a manner similar to that for the Thailand-Burma railway, employing up to 55,000 men a day.¹⁵

Mining was but one of many fields in Java's economy that demanded urgent attention. The records show that in November 1944, approximately 2 million men and women were formally mobilized as *romusha*. Of those, 90.5 per cent were employed by the occupation civil administration, the rest being engaged by the Army and Navy.¹⁶ Soon after, however, economic conditions deteriorated so much that the occupation authorities decided to suspend all their military projects and to concentrate on civil projects.¹⁷ Whereas in the first half of the occupation period, unemployment was the most serious social problem, in the second half, the Japanese attempt to achieve economic self-sufficiency demanded a campaign of a 'total mobilization' of labour that created 'shortages' of labour throughout this densely populated island.

The Japanese authorities consigned the supervision of the new civil projects to 206 Japanese companies, which dispatched a total of 6,536 employees to Java.¹⁸

The Japanese mining companies, Ishihara Sangyo, Mitsui Kozan and Sumitomo Kogyo, were in charge of many of the mining operations. On civil projects, unarmed company executives usually supervised labourers in the ratio of 1:1,000. This helps explain why there are few testimonies of Japanese violence against *romusha* in Java. Another reason was that for labourers in Java, unlike those on some isolated work sites outside Java which were the source of most testimonies of extreme violence, the opportunities for escape were far greater. Even without violence, flight rates were constantly high and frustrated the Japanese economic projects. Overt violence would have instantly worsened the situation.

Provision of Food and Clothing

Production of food and clothing also demanded massive labour mobilization and had a direct impact on the day-to-day lives of most of the people. In the pre-war years, Java was more or less self-sufficient in food but completely reliant on imports for the supply of clothing materials. The whole of the occupied Southern Regions was in a similar situation. In the pre-colonial era, South-East Asia had its own textile industry. The arrival of Europeans in the sixteenth century had a negative impact as they brought quantities of textiles from India to exchange them with spice. In the course of the nineteenth century, mass-produced textiles and garments from Europe started inundating the whole area, all but wiping out the local textile industry. After the First World War, Japan became the region's main textile supplier but during the Second World War occupation, this supply suddenly dried up, in part because the Japanese textile industry had relied on raw cotton imported from the Allied territories, particularly British India and the United States.

The 'Co-Prosperity Sphere' produced (mostly in China) about 10 per cent of the world's cotton but consumed about 25 per cent.¹⁹ Establishment of self-sufficiency in clothing materials within the block meant that upward of 5 million hectares of land had to be converted to cotton fields. This could not be done within the space of a few years without severely undermining self-sufficiency in food. Soon after launching the invasion of South-East Asia, the Japanese Imperial Headquarters and the government adopted a document entitled 'What is to be done about the Empire's Resource Sphere'. Item six states: 'Demands by the people of Greater East Asia for wool and cotton as clothing materials could not be met even if production of wool and cotton were increased in Japan, Manchukuo, China and the South-Western Pacific regions. We shall need Indian cotton and Australian wool.'²⁰ The same day, however, Tokyo authorities in another meeting decided for strategic reasons not to include India and Australia in their 'Co-Prosperity Sphere'.

Thus emerged the impossible task of supplying the entire population in South-East Asia with clothing. Tokyo authorities considered the local people's economic well-being to be of only secondary importance, but they could not ignore it altogether. They therefore formulated a five-year cotton production plan

for occupied South-East Asia. For Java, their initial target was by 1945 for the island to produce one third of its pre-war consumption level, a project that alone would require an estimated 2.3 million workers a day.²¹

The cotton production plan, in conjunction with a whole range of other projects, deeply affected Java's economy, particularly the rural food production sector. As the cotton yield in non-irrigated fields was lower than on irrigated land, and planting was restricted to the rainy season, the authorities sought out irrigated terrain. However, such land was largely taken up with the cultivation of rice, the most important food crop for the people. Tokyo authorities assigned the difficult task of balancing food and cotton productions in Java to two Japanese companies, Tozan Sangyo and Mitsui Norin. Tozan Sangyo planned to use 59,345 hectares of land in 1945, of which 15,747 hectares (26.5 per cent) was irrigated.²²

Before the cotton cultivation scheme was implemented, production of food in Java had been barely sufficient to feed the population of 50 million. In order to grow non-edible crops without reducing food production, the occupation authorities took various measures. One was to extend cultivable land. This was not an easy task as 68 per cent of the land area was already under cultivation in 1940 (compared to 15 per cent in Japan). The Japanese tried to reclaim marginal land, including swamps, and cleared forests. They also attempted to intensify land usage by improving the water supply. This was expected to facilitate crop rotations and enable double cropping in rice. In the second half of the occupation, they implemented simultaneously 62 irrigation and drainage channel extension projects, each employing many thousands of labourers.²³

Work Conditions

Work condition for the *romusha* were frequently appalling. For instance, a female Indonesian communist activist commented of a project that involved the cutting of a drainage tunnel through a mountain:

Tens of thousands of people had to be drafted to Sinai and Ne Yama every day. These were called the 'Ne Yama *romusha*'. The number of deaths was horrifying. Hundreds of people a day died at that place. If a member of one of the five-man teams died, the remaining four had to shoulder their comrade to his place of origin on foot. The distance from Lodojo to Ne Yama was no less than 50 kilometres. Villagers were paid only five rupiah a day, enough for a single portion of rice. Any hopes that the workers had of returning home were diminished by the terminal food shortage and the constant pressure to keep hacking away at the mountain with adzes and hammers. Their bodies were thin and parched—bone wrapped in skin. Often those shouldering their comrades were so sick that they could not even support their own weight, so there were plenty of sick people or corpses left sprawled in the middle of the road and under the trees at the

edge of the jungle. Indeed it was a sign of the times that corpses were just like rubbish—walking skeletons no longer shocked people. Rows of people lined up along the river bank, not for rice but for a spoonful of boiled quinine bark. The swamps were infested with tropical malaria.²⁴

The above-cited observation does contain inaccuracies. More reliable sources indicate that for the first and busiest nine months of the project, an average of less than 7,000 labourers a day were mobilized. Thereafter, the scale of labour mobilization was much reduced. The death toll was probably lower than indicated, although no reliable statistics are available, while daily wages for unskilled *romusha* were only 20 cents a day (100 cents= one rupiah).²⁵

Nonetheless, the passage captures a variety of important issues. One is that, much of the drafted labour was employed for producing commodities essential for the local population, in this case food. Another is the recruitment method. Recruitment quotas were apportioned through bureaucratic channels downwards to newly created neighbourhood associations, each consisting of 10 to 20 households. Associations within the residency of the above-mentioned drainage construction site were, in rotation, each obliged to send five-man teams to the site, even those in villages far from it.

Another typical characteristic is that the site was malarial. Many villagers from malaria free areas were sent to construction sites in malarial areas, where they contracted the disease. When they were sent home ill, they often carried malaria with them, helping to spread it to previously unaffected regions.²⁶ Before the war, Java had enjoyed a near monopoly of cinchona, and thus of the manufacture of quinine, but production dropped during the occupation due to a shortage of chemicals necessary to process cinchona. Instead, *romusha* received cinchona infusion that was less effective and extremely bitter.

Most drafted labourers, except members of *kinrohoshitai*, an unpaid labour service corps, received wages. The 20 cents a day wages paid to labourers at the above-mentioned project were somewhat higher than the pre-war average. In part this was due to the Japanese desire to gain good publicity for their ‘total mobilization’ program. However, it also reflected wartime inflation; towards the end of the occupation, the nominal wages for unskilled labourers were about twice the pre-war level. Total mobilization also dramatically increased employment opportunities for the desperately poor rural population, amongst whom cash began to circulate abundantly. However, given the dearth of daily essentials, money quickly fell in value.

Cash income was vital for Java’s rural population. That was in part because landless peasants often constituted the majority of village population. They had to earn wages by labouring. Most landed farmers, too, sold much of their crop to earn cash, and bought processed rice from market. The typical villager, many of whom were deeply in debt, spent most of their cash incomes on food, yet still could afford only two meals a day.

During the occupation, food availability for the rural indigent dropped even further. Historians and the general public alike have attributed this to the Japanese exploitation, particularly the system of forced delivery of rice to the occupation government. The amount the Japanese secured for their own consumption was, however, statistically negligible. The true reasons for the food shortages were a sharp drop in food production and the change in the distribution pattern.

Food production dropped for a range of reasons. First, land and labour formerly devoted to food crops were steadily given over to the cultivation of non-edible crops. The second reason was climatic; in 1944 and 1945 the weather was not favourable for agriculture. Third, excessive harvesting of the forests (locomotive fuel and construction timber) resulted in extensive deforestation that exacerbated dry season droughts and rainy season floods. Also, the newly constructed irrigation channels remained useless during the dry season due to lack of water, and were often destroyed by increased floods in the rainy season. Finally, wartime inflation rendered the official purchasing price of rice so derisory as to act as a disincentive to the price-sensitive rice-growing farmers. Consequently, rice production in Java dropped from about 9 million tonnes in 1941 to about 6.5 million tonnes in 1945.²⁷

As for rice distribution, the Japanese inherited the system that, shortly after the outbreak of the European war in September 1939, the Dutch in Java started constructing in preparation for war in Asia.²⁸ The Japanese needed to secure a certain proportion of Java's rice partly to stabilize food distribution in the cities, and partly to feed themselves and their employees, including *romusha*. They modified the Dutch system and through bureaucratic channels apportioned delivery quotas to each village, in a manner similar to labour recruitment. From the outset, the system malfunctioned and the amount delivered to the government dropped every year. This is reflected in the steady fall in the amount of rice transported by rail between 1943 and 1945, during the main harvesting season from April to June, from 183,142 tonnes (1943) to 137,840 tonnes (1944), to 108,455 tonnes (1945).²⁹

A thriving black market to some extent alleviated the situation in the cities, but the village poor suffered bitterly. The authorities increased pressure upon farmers in order to secure more rice. Large land holders shifted their produce to the black market supplying the cities, while small farmers were forced to deliver much of their harvested crops to the government in exchange for cash that due to inflation was constantly diminishing in value.

The authorities thus failed to guarantee sufficient provisions for the *romusha*. In July 1945, *Jawashinbun*, the Japanese newspaper in Java, attempted to conceal this by claiming that: 'According to a recent investigation, the minimum calorie requirement for one day's labour by a *romusha* was 1,660 calories, considerably lower than the standard absolute need, that is, 2,500 calories.'³⁰ The Japanese worked *romusha* at two thirds of the minimum food requirement. Shortage of food and other essentials lowered the workers' stamina and their

work efficiency, and thus hindered the campaign for ‘production increase’. Worker absenteeism rose to as high as 60 per cent on some sites.

Inadequate clothing was also a serious problem. This was especially the case for the rural villager whose limited clothing was soon reduced to tatters. From the second year of the occupation, more and more farmers worked in the fields naked. Inadequate clothing in turn proved a major hindrance to labour mobilization. Japanese effort to locally produce cotton garments fell short of target due a variety of factors, including insufficient know-how, lack of insecticides, and bad weather. As an emergency measure, the authorities converted jute bags, which had been used for storing sugar, into clothes and distributed them to the draftees.

Java’s economy verged on total collapse. In 1945, when the Japanese suspended all military projects, *Jawashinbun* published a number of articles despairing of the effective management of labour upon which the economy depended. One even called for the treatment of labourers as ‘humans’, and not as ‘things’.³¹ Java’s rural indigent desperately needed help but help came from nowhere. The Japanese, for want of effective solutions, maintained the call for a ‘total mobilization’ that was counterproductive. Indonesian nationalist leaders were preoccupied with preparation for political independence of the nation that Japan had promised to grant them. Other leaders, too, were generally cooperative with the Japanese. Meanwhile, availability of daily essentials for the rural poor kept diminishing, and prices rose beyond their reach. For them to survive, there was no other way but to work more and earn more money. The more money they earned, the more currency inflation added fuel to price inflation, thus undermining the value of their earnings.

Concluding Remarks

Under the banner of ‘emancipation’, the Japanese drafted a great proportion of the local population as labourers. The aim of mobilization was not so much to augment Japan’s war potential but rather to cope with the problems that their invasion had inadvertently created in the occupied land. Japan’s much vaunted ‘Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere’ was fundamentally unworkable. The reckless launch of this scheme necessitated radical industrial restructuring and massive labour relocation in the occupied land.

For the Tokyo authorities it was not difficult to calculate the disasterous consequences the war effort might have on the local economy. They were, however, reluctant to contemplate such problems. Since the war, academics have likewise made few attempts to understand the economic impact of the war on local communities. The existing accounts of the forced labour still attribute the draftees’ suffering simply and simplistically to the wilful exploitation and brutality of the Japanese. Exploitation and brutality were symptoms, rather than the causes, of the problem associated with forced labour mobilization. Physical

violence against the *romusha*, although testified elsewhere, was not as widespread in Java as the generally held images suggest.

Some of the Japanese who were involved in various civil projects in occupied Java have produced memoirs, in which they commonly and unhesitatingly reminisce that they discharged their duties conscientiously in order to support the local communities.³² Also, many Indonesians, while adhering to the viewpoint that the Japanese were unbelievably cruel towards their compatriots during the war, state that the Japanese with whom they were closely associated, were truly admirable individuals.³³ In order to obtain a better understanding of the great hardship the local population endured, we need to analyse systematically how the failed Japanese attempt to promote an autarkic economy affected local communities in Java. A better understanding of the war's impact on the local level could help dispel the mutual ignorance and mistrust that to some extent still mars relations between the Indonesians and Japanese.

NOTES

1. ‘Procesverbaal van Getuigenverhoor: Affidavit’ [‘Official Report of Examination of Witnesses: Affidavit’], BUZA (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Hague) NEFIS/CMI, deel 1, 2240.
2. This paragraph is a summary of a number of affidavits in the ‘Procesverbaal’ cited above.
3. Affidavit of Kandar from Magelang.
4. Affidavits of Tarip from Rembang, Sajid from Purwokerto and Patmoredjo from Blora.
5. Affidavit of Wasijem from Kalikunin and several others.
6. Affidavits by Selamat bin Joenoes and Kariomin bin Said from Magelang.
7. Affidavits of Rebo from Solo, Wagijem from Klaten, and Pa Wiro Moelio from Sukosari.
8. Affidavits of Kasa Bin Santami and Dasroni bin Wirialaksana from Cilacap.
9. Affidavit of Roesmadi from Banyumas.
10. This and many similar slogans appeared frequently in Indonesian and Japanese newspapers and magazines published in Java such as *Asia Raya*, *Djawa Baroe* and *Jawashinbun*.
11. *Indisch Verslag 1941: Statistisch Jaaroverzicht van Nederlandsch-Indië over het Jaar 1940* (‘Nederlands- Indian Report 1941: Statistical Abstract for the Year 1940’ (Batavia: Het Centraal Kantoor voor de Statistiek van het Department van Economische Zaken, 1941), pp.392–9.
12. Tonai Kaku Kozan Gaikyo’ [‘Survey of the Mining Operations in Java’], BUZA NEFIS/CMI, bijlage 3, 2043.
13. *Jawashinbun* [‘Java Daily’], 17 July 1945.
14. ‘Yearly Report on Mining in Java’, BUZA NEFIS/CMI, bijlage 3, 2318.
15. See for more detail Shigeru Sato, *War, Nationalism and Peasants: Java under the Japanese Occupation 1942–1945* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin; New York, London: M.E.Sharpe, 1994), pp.179–86.

16. M.Fumio, ‘Gunsei Shubo’ [‘Notes on the Military Administration’], *Gunsei Shiryo*, No.90, The Defence Agency, Tokyo.
17. ‘Kokyo Shisetsu no Gaikyo’ [‘Outline of the Public Works’], BUZA NEFIS/CMI, bijlage 3, 1776 and 2048.
18. ‘List of the companies that have been operating in Java during the war, by order of the Japanese Military Administration HQ’, BUZA NEFIS/CMI, bijlage 3, 2398.
19. *Nanpo no Gunsei* [‘Military Administration in the Southern Regions’] (Tokyo: Asagumo Shinbunsha, 1985), p.224.
20. *Ibid.*, p.227.
21. ‘Resume van de Verklaring van den Heer Sangyoobutyoo ddo. 14/4–2065’ [Summary of the Explanation by the Head of the Department of Industry on 14 April 1945], BUZA NEFIS/CMI, deel 1, 1761.
22. ‘Niju Nendo Hanshu Yotei Menseki’ [‘Planned Area under Cultivation for 1945’], BUZA NEFIS/CMI, bijlage 3, 2178.
23. For the primary sources on irrigation works, see BUZA NEFIS/CMI, bijlage 3, 1776.
24. S.Melati, ‘In the Service of the Underground’, in Anton Lucas (ed.), *Local Opposition and Underground Resistance to the Japanese in Java 1942–1945* (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1986), p.200.
25. For more details, see Sato, *War, Nationalism, and Peasants*, pp.190–98.
26. The regency of Sukabumi in West Java, for instance, had been free from malaria but malaria and other diseases spread dramatically during the occupation. ‘Laporan tentang Daerah Soekaboemi Shi’ [‘Report on Sukabumi City’], BUZA NEFIS/CMI, bijlage 3, 1877, and ‘Report on the General Situation regarding the Health of the Inhabitants of Soekaboemi Area’, 19 Feb. 1946, ARA (The National Archive, The Hague) ASB 3371.
27. For the irrigation projects, see BUZA NEFIS/CMI, bijlage 3, 1774–89; BUZA NEFIS/CMI, deel 1, 1817. For production statistics of food crops, see Pierre van der Eng, *Food Supply in Java during War and Decolonization, 1940–1950* (Hull: The University of Hull, Centre for South-East Asian Studies, 1994), p.73. A report on each residency in late 1945 is also available as ‘Keadaan Tanaman di Djawa pada Tahoen 1945’ [‘Crop Situations in Java in 1945’], ARA ASB 5656.
28. For the Dutch food policy, see *Voedselproblemen en Overheidspolitiek op Java en Madoera* [‘Food Problems and the Government Policies in Java and Madura’] *Koloniaal Tijdschrift* [‘Colonial Review’], 29e Yaargang (Dec. 1940), and anon. ‘Rijstpellerijen in Midden-Java gedurende Japansche Bezetting’ [‘Rice Mills in Central Java during the Japanese Occupation’], *Economisch Weekblad voor Nederlandsch-Indië* [‘Economic Weekly for The Netherlands Indies’] 21 (1946), pp.161–3.
29. ‘The Survey of the Railway Affairs to be Succeeded’, NIOD (The Netherlands Institute for War Documentation, Amsterdam) IC 012510–13.
30. *Jawashinbun*, 8 July 1945.
31. *Jawashinbun*, 2 Feb. 1945.
32. See, among others, *Jawa Rikuyu Sokyokushi* [‘History of the General Land Transportation Bureau in Java’] (Tokyo: Jawa Rikuyu Sokyokushi Kankokai, 1976), and Eguchi, Tsuneo, ‘Senjichu no Jawa ni okeru Shokuryo Zosan’ [‘Food Production Increase in Wartime Java’], *Ajia Nogyo* [‘Asian Agriculture’], 1, 5 (1975), pp.34–7.

33. Several interviews by the author. The Indonesian communist leader, Tan Malaka, who looked after the *romusha* at Bayah coal mine in Java, made a similar statement in his autobiography in an attempt to dispel the myths about the Japanese brutality that developed quickly during the occupation. Tan Malaka, *Dari Pendjala ke Pendjala* ['From Prison to Prison'] Vol.II (Jakarta: Widaya, 1948), pp.158–9.

The Structure of Slavery in the Sulu Zone in the Late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

JAMES FRANCIS WARREN

Introduction

At the end of the eighteenth century, the world economic system came to dominate the Sulu Sultanate and its surrounding areas. The island of Jolo became an entrepôt and the Sulu Sultanate flourished. This prosperity was made possible by economic interconnections between British India, South-East Asia and China. At that time in England, tea replaced ale as the national drink. Most of this aromatic tea was cultivated in the mountains of Fujian, China. The south Fukienese people who controlled the Amoy trading network on the South China coast had maintained contact with the Sulu Sultanate and eastern parts of the archipelago since the beginning of the eighteenth century. Because of this contact, the dominant ethnic group, the Taosug, had an initial outlet for their marine and forest products, especially trepang, pearls and birds' nest, which the junks carried on the return trip to China. When the British realized that they could participate in the Sino-Sulu trade, they also sought these Sulu zone exports.¹

Among the richest sources of such products were the shores and wilderness along the northeast coast of Borneo. Kenyah and Kayan speakers of Borneo's east coast tropical forests and the Subanun of Mindanao's southern plateau were increasingly drawn into trade with the Taosug. They provided enormous amounts of wax, camphor and birds' nest in exchange for salt, textiles and other manufactured goods. At first, trepang was traded for cloth, clothing, iron and other metals; later, for gunpowder, musket and cannon. Guns, gunpowder and other imported products, including textiles and opium became very important to Sulu.

The efforts of ambitious *datus*, Taosug aristocrats, to participate in this burgeoning world-capitalist economy swelled the flow of global-regional trade and forced up the demand for additional labour, which was met by Iranun and Samal Balangingi slave raiders of the Sulu zone. From the end of the eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth centuries, South-East Asia felt the full force of these slave raiders who earned a reputation as daring, fierce marauders who jeopardized the maritime trade routes of South-East Asia and dominated the capture and transport of slaves to the Sulu Sultanate.² Tens of thousands of

captives from across South-East Asia were seized by these sea raiders and put to work in the zone's fisheries, in the sultan's birds' nest caves, or in the cultivation of rice and transport of goods to markets. More than anything else it was this source and use of labour power that was to give Sulu its distinctive predatory character in the eyes of nineteenth-century Europeans.

It was powerful economic forces, energized by world commerce demands for a range of products, that pushed the Taosug aristocracy to acquire increasing numbers of slaves. In order to trade, it was necessary for the Taosug to have something to give in exchange and the only way to obtain commodities was to secure more slaves by means of long-distance maritime raiding. In the early nineteenth century, the rate of growth of the sultanate's population had not kept pace with its expanding international trade economy. Since the labour of slaves made global-regional trade possible, slavery rose markedly from this time and became the dominant mode of production.

Slavery in the Sulu Sultanate

Slavery in the Sulu Sultanate was not as rigidly defined an institution as in the West where it was historically synonymous with property. Slavery in Sulu, as in other areas of South-East Asia, was primarily a property relation but not exclusively so. In this context, slavery must be understood to imply several possible statuses of 'acquired persons' who were sometimes forcefully transferred from one society to another.³ Taosug drew a distinction between chattel-slaves (*banyaga*, *bisaya*, *ipun* or *ammas*) and bond-slaves (*kiapangdilihan*). *Banyaga* were either the victims or the offspring of victims of slave raids; *Kiapangdilihan* were commoner Taosug whose servility was the direct result of personal debt.⁴ Between these two categories of slave there was a continuum of status and privilege in which social position was determined by factors often independent of their servile status.

In Sulu, *banyaga* could have family roles as husband or wife. They could own property, and they often filled a variety of political and economic roles—as bureaucrats, farmers and maritime raiders, concubines and traders —by virtue of which they were entitled to certain rights and privileges also accorded to non-slave members of the community. As such, slavery was a means of incorporating people into the Taosug social system. *Banyaga* were enrolled to provide political support for *datus* and to labour in the fields and fisheries to maintain the expansive redistributive economy. They were predominantly Visayan, Tagalog, Minahassan and Bugis speakers although almost every major ethnic group of insular South-East Asia was represented among their ranks. While some inherited their *banyaga* status, others were fulfilling tax or debt obligations. However, all *banyaga* or their descendants had been seized by slave raiders and retailed in communities throughout the Sulu chain.⁵

Capture in raiding was the principal mode of recruitment, but debt and fine obligations among the Taosug themselves provided a significant number of bond-

slaves. Convictions for criminal offences such as stealing and acts of sexual impropriety, particularly adultery, were punishable by heavy fines.⁶ Debts were also incurred by gambling and pawning. Inability to pay or offer some form of security reduced people to the status of *kiapangdilihan*.

Kiapangdilihan were an integral part of a creditor's following, but with a lower status than commoners who had voluntarily attached themselves to a leader. The creditor, while claiming rights over the economic services of *kiapangdilihan* was, in theory, not allowed to harm the person physically. In return for food, clothing and shelter, a *kiapangdilihan* was obliged to work for the creditor but these services did not generally count towards repayment of the debt. Many *kiapangdilihan* became dependents for life and their families could remain obligated for several generations. Debt bondage, as an economic institution in Sulu, was most fully developed at the end of the nineteenth century, when the Taosug could no longer rely on Balangingi raids to supply sufficient numbers of *banyaga* for their retinues. At this time, the amount of tribute ordinarily collected from clients was increased and fines in the legal codes were made prohibitive.⁷

In the Sultanate of Sulu, the legal position of a *banyaga* was determined by the Sulu code—a body of law codified from custom, precedent and Islamic law.⁸ In theory, as defined in the Taosug codes, a *banyaga* had no legal personality,⁹ and was left absolutely in the power and possession of their owner. A *banyaga* could not hold property and could be transferred, bought, or sold at will. An owner held the power of life and death over a *banyaga* who could be punished for the slightest infraction of the law. Punishments were much more severe for *banyaga* than members of other social classes and are exemplified in the scale of penalties and fines in the codes for the offences of murder, adultery, theft and inheritance. If a male *banyaga* had sexual intercourse with a free woman, he could either be killed outright or be severely punished and become the property of the woman's husband or family.¹⁰ On the other hand, if a free man had sexual relations with a married female slave he need only pay a fine of twenty lengths of cotton cloth.¹¹ Less severe penalties for adultery between *banyaga* derived from their inferior social status.

Although these laws provide institutional opinion on the debasement of people, *banyaga* were often socially and economically indistinguishable from commoners and were, in some respects, more secure. The actual life situation of many *banyaga*, as revealed in their testimonies, contradicted their legal status as a group. *Banyaga* were permitted to purchase their freedom and assume a new status and ethnicity; the children of a female *banyaga* and a freeman inherited the status of their father; some *banyaga* could bear arms; any slave could own property, which reverted to their owner at death.

The basic difference between slavery among the Taosug and slavery as it was generally understood in the West was the variability of social distance that existed between slave and owner. William Pryer stated that on the east coast of Borneo the relation was that of follower and lord rather than slave and master.¹²

The power and wealth of a *datu* was commensurate with the number of slaves he owned which in turn was reflected in the number of people willing to seek security within a particular *datu*'s settlement in return for services. *Banyaga* were often well-clothed, carried fine *kris*, and were entrusted to undertake long journeys for their owners.¹³ The personal and economic ties of slaves in the Sulu Sultanate 'provided a sense of security which bound them to their masters and gave them an identity and reason to labour'.¹⁴ A slave's individual status was enhanced by the prominent status of an acquiring owner. Alternatively, when a powerful slaveholder suffered a serious loss of prestige, the slaves' worth as human beings also diminished.

An owner was constrained to feed and clothe the slaves or give them sufficient opportunity to earn a living; otherwise the slaves might demand to be sold.¹⁵ It appears to have been a common practice in the Sulu Sultanate to allow a *banyaga* to change owners rather than risk desertion. Nevertheless there are also statements of fugitive slaves and other reports which present a much less 'benign' view of the owner-slave relationship. In principle, the master's ownership and authority were absolute and unbounded. A *banyaga* could suffer physical cruelty, be put to death, sold, bartered or given away if it served the owner's interests.¹⁶ *Banyaga* who repeatedly tried to escape were put to death, but it was far more common for them to be disposed of—in most cases to the Segai-i of east Borneo.¹⁷

While there is evidence of contrasting degrees of benevolence and material deprivation in the sultanate, the fact that power was defined in terms of the number of *banyaga* a *datu* possessed, and that *banyaga* were able to flee to another *datu* or attempt to escape to Zamboanga or Menado, were important constraining considerations. A purely antagonistic relation would little benefit an owner's self-interest since the successful exploitation of Sulu's natural produce hinged on the large-scale organization of the goodwill and cooperation of slaves and their dependents. While an owner was liable to neglect or mistreat a *banyaga* who was remiss, statements and travel accounts of observers reveal that some slaves, especially those with knowledge and skills, had good relations with their owner and were not easily distinguished from other followers.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the impact of the West's commercial intrusion into China was a watershed in the formation of the Sulu state. At this time, slaves who were valuable for the variety of their labours came to play a more avowedly important role in Sulu. *Banyaga* were used in trading ventures and diplomatic negotiations. They were slave raiders, concubines, wet nurses, tutors, craft workers, peasants and fishers,¹⁸ and there was a clear division of labour between the work of male and female *banyaga*. Heavy work was performed generally by male slaves— clearing virgin forest, ploughing, harvesting timber, building and maintaining boats, and hauling water.¹⁹ Male *banyaga* also laboured in the fisheries, manufactured salt, accompanied their owners on trading expeditions and, when occasion demanded, sailed as crew on Balangingi raiding *prahus*. The crew of such vessels invariably included

banyaga, who were previously captured from coastal settlements and from fishing and trading boats, because of their seafaring skills and local knowledge of target areas, and to replace members of the raiding communities lost to battle, storm and illness on the high seas. Among the major tasks of female *banyaga* were sowing and weeding in rice farming, pounding and threshing of rice, and gathering and preparation of strand products.²⁰ Female *banyaga* were also included in the entourage of their female owners as attendants, and some were the concubines of leading *datus*.

Slavery played an essential role in the economic and military organization of the Sulu Sultanate. *Banyaga* were encouraged to participate in the economic life of the state through a system of incentives, which some used to advantage thus enabling them to rise in the social hierarchy. J.Hunt noted that the Taosug employed slaves in *their prahus* not only as crew, but also as traders.²¹ In the 1830s, slaves regularly traded from Jolo to Balangingi and Palawan on behalf of their owners.²² Those who exhibited initiative and energy were employed in trading excursions to the northeast coast of Borneo. Noble women, by virtue of their station were constrained from leaving their quarters to barter goods. Nevertheless, aristocratic women used *banyaga* to assist them in their business activities—primarily local marketing.²³ Indeed, by the mid-nineteenth century, some of the leading local traders in Sulu were women, and slave hawkers were an important source of their wealth.

Ordinarily, the vending of cloth, vegetables, and other trade goods in villages, at the open market, or to foreign vessels was done by *banyaga*. On the arrival of a European vessel, it was common for Taosug women to send one or two Spanish-speaking slaves into the roadstead in small canoes.²⁴ The boats carried fruits, vegetables, coils of *tali lanun* (cheap local rope of excellent quality), weapons and curiosities. In 1834, an American sailor described the boats of slave vendors at Siassi as being full of ‘poultry, eggs, coconuts, bananas, turtles, monkeys, and parrots’.²⁵ The *banyaga* were instructed to barter a specified minimum amount of produce by evening in exchange for which they accepted cups and saucers, scissors, buttons, nails, empty bottles, tobacco and opium from European sailors.

Those *banyaga* employed in agriculture contributed towards the community sustenance, thus freeing *datus* from subsistence pursuits, and allowing them to pursue trading and maritime raiding.²⁶ Small, dispersed farming communities of *banyaga* dotted the interior of the larger fertile islands—especially Jolo, Tapul and Pata. *Banyaga* were allotted a farm plot and a bamboo hut large enough to accommodate a single family, which were scattered over large tracts of land. In some cases these agricultural settlements were homogeneous in language and religion, as exemplified by the fact that most *banyaga* who were settled in Datu Tahel’s community in the hinterland of Jolo Island were Bugis and ‘Malay’. Other communities were settled almost entirely by Visayans.

Agricultural slaves were expected to provide for their own wants from the fields they tilled. They were obligated to remit a fixed minimum portion of

produce to their owner through the agency of the village head, who could be of slave or non-slave origin. Farming was their major economic obligation, but *datus* also demanded that villagers near the coast collect trepang and pearl shell, for which they received barter goods. All were liable to be called upon for military services.²⁷ While, for farm slaves, opportunities for social advancement were few, to many Filipinos the Taosug system of sharecropping and reciprocity was a less harsh form of exploitation than the poverty and social injustice they had previously endured under the *tributo* system of the Spanish Government.

The prosperity of the Sulu Sultanate depended to a large extent on the labour of *banyaga* who crewed the *raiding prahus*. The *banyaga* augmented the strength of client communities that specialized in slaving through active participation in maritime raids. In this way, owners, who exercised an enforceable claim on the wealth their *banyaga* received when hired out on raiding vessels, were enriched.²⁸ Undoubtedly *datus* were constrained to reward such *banyaga*, who might otherwise have been reluctant to participate in such hazardous undertakings. Nevertheless, raiding seems to have provided slaves with opportunities for modest social advance, especially if they showed a talent for fighting.

Differences in wealth, status and privilege among *banyaga* were reflected in the diversity of occupations they pursued. Obviously, *banyaga* of unusual talent or considerable ability and training who could not readily be replaced commanded more prestige and rewards than those with few skills. In prominent trading centres like Jolo, Parang and Bual, where agriculture was of secondary importance, talented *banyaga* included bureaucrats, tribute collectors, artisans, musicians, scribes and commercial agents among their numbers. *Banyaga* recruited by the sultan's office-holders enjoyed considerable power and prestige. The interests of these *banyaga*, by virtue of their elevation to political office, lay unquestionably with the sultan, and they made loyal followers. *Banyaga* played leading roles as bureaucrats on the Samal islands, acted as tribute collectors throughout the zone, and staffed tariff stations on Bornean rivers.²⁹ The sultan also made use of *banyaga* to exercise control over dependent groups on the northeast coast of Borneo.

As Taosug trade became more complex, and the political problems posed by the West grew, so literacy skills became important. The use of written documents was no longer confined to records of the genealogy of the sultan, the appointment of officials and the collection of tribute and legal fees. After 1768, writing was required for diplomatic and trade correspondence with the Spanish, Dutch and English; for recording grants of land and the terms of treaties of various sorts with the West; and to keep track of the accounts of *datus'* commercial enterprises.

Paradoxically, few Taosug aristocrats could read and write and *banyaga* with education who could serve as scribes, interpreters and language tutors were much sought after.³⁰ As Charles Wilkes commented. 'Few if any of the Sooloos can write or read, though many talk Spanish. Their accounts are all kept by the slaves. Those who can read and write are, in consequence, highly prized.'³¹ Most

of the scribes were male slaves drawn from different parts of the Malay world, but female Filipino slaves and the occasional deserter from Zamboanga all served as the sultan's secretary at different times.³² While most other slave specialists—artisans and craftspeople—were more or less expendable, the skills of the educated *banyaga* could not easily be replicated by others and were considered indispensable to the *datus*. *Banyaga* who could speak or write one or more foreign languages were employed as trading agents by *datus*, enabling them to amass considerable personal wealth—which reverted to the owner on their death.³³

The number of slave artisans—goldsmiths, silversmiths, blacksmiths and weavers—was never large and comprised a fraction of the total slave population. Gifted *banyaga* were full-time artisans transforming raw materials, brought by trade or tribute, into jewellery, tools, weapons and armour. Less talented others pursued their occupations on a part-time basis. Not surprisingly, the arbitrary distribution of *banyaga* left some talents wasted. Jose Ruedas, a silversmith, spent three years as a fisher and gatherer of pearl shell before being exchanged for a bundle of cotton cloth at Jolo, where he resumed his craft.³⁴ While some *banyaga* found their skills superfluous in a particular island's economy, others appear to have had the opportunity to acquire training in critical occupations—especially as blacksmiths and armourers.³⁵

It is clear from the accounts of Thomas Forrest, J.Hunt, Dumont D'Urville, and Charles Wilkes that slaves were called upon to recite Visayan poetry or to perform instrumental music and song recitals for religious festivals and when Europeans visited Jolo.³⁶ Under such circumstances, there was ample opportunity for *banyaga* with musical talent to improve their material condition. Furthermore, some *datus* played the flute, violin or guitar and all were fond of Spanish songs and dances. Filipino slaves could and did act as both music instructors to *datus* and entertainers at night. *Banyaga* who were talented musicians could expect to be transferred from one office-holder to the next.³⁷

Banyaga with medical knowledge were perhaps most scarce. The experience of Captain C.Z.Pieters among the Balangingi illustrates that slaves who claimed even a rudimentary understanding of medicine and medical practice could enjoy a privileged position. As he wrote,

One day my master and his wife asked me to what kind of work I was accustomed. I said...that my former master had only employed me in looking after his goods, accounts and dollars, and giving medicine to sick people. When they learnt this from me, my master went and told everyone that he had a slave who could cure all kinds of sickness. The consequence of this was that on the following day many persons came and asked me to tell them...what was the matter with them.³⁸

As concubines (*sandil*), women achieved a high status. Concubinage was an important part of the traditional social structure in Sulu. It was a key means of

producing wealth and maintaining rank since concubines could be offered to men as mistresses or wives. In theory there was no limit to the number of concubines that a sultan or *datu* could acquire for his retinue.³⁹ When Forrest visited Cotabato, the sultan had one wife and fourteen or fifteen concubines.⁴⁰ In Sulu, *datus* rarely had more than a few concubines. Many of them were *kiapangdilahan*; others were purchased; some were given to the sultan and leading *datus* as potential wives in the hope of forging political alliances through the kinship bond.⁴¹ Concubines had a recognized status and one who bore a child to her master could expect to be manumitted. The child of a concubine could not inherit the status of the father but was given a lesser title and incorporated into his following.⁴² Indicative of their higher status was the fact that some Filipino women willingly became concubines.

The boundaries between segments of the retainer class (commoners who voluntarily attached themselves to *datus*) and slaves were not clear-cut. There was considerable mobility for talented members of dependent status groups within and between all classes and strata. Among the hierarchy of *banyaga*, those who functioned as bureaucrats, craftsmen, scribes and concubines often had a greater degree of power and privilege than Taosug commoners. For most slaves, however, opportunities for advance were modest. Dramatic advance depended largely on historical circumstance, good fortune, skills and personal character, and were associated with occupations that provided access to wealth and power. There is some evidence illustrating that in rare instances *banyaga* of remarkable talent rose to the rank of *orang kaya*, a man of some means, and *datu* as protégés of their owners.⁴³

Manumission, Ransom or Escape

Manumission was an important feature of the Taosug social system and was commonly practised in the Sulu Sultanate when freed slaves were merged into the general population, by assuming a new ethnicity and status.⁴⁴ For *banyaga*, conversion and/or marriage were prerequisites to manumission. The process of manumission in the Taosug social system occurred primarily among *banyaga* who were in close contact with their owners, and tended to be gradual with an implicit understanding of cultural incorporation.⁴⁵ A Tagalog or Visayan who altered ethnic identity by becoming a Muslim and was manumitted found a new range of opportunities open as a ‘Taosug’ and a free person. It is not clear whether captured Muslim slaves could be manumitted and then rise in status more easily than renegade Filipinos. However, groups, like the Bugis, who took pride in their cultural heritage, found the process of assimilation more difficult.

Manumission was easier for women than men. It was not necessary for a female Filipino slave to renounce her faith to be manumitted. Whether or not she adopted Islam, her children were raised as Muslims and were absorbed into Sulu society. Marriage played an important role in the Sulu social system. The provision of wives was a basis on which followings were built and retained. For

the upwardly mobile captive, an arranged marriage was closely linked to status advancement or manumission.

In the Sulu Sultanate, *banyaga* could purchase freedom.⁴⁶ Indeed, the steady leakage of manumitted slaves increased *datus'* political authority and prestige by swelling their retainer ranks. The likelihood of manumission was essentially a function of occupation. *Banyaga* who provided immediate and indispensable services to their owners, who served in their households or on their trading *prahus*, had better chances of manumission than those who laboured in the fields or fisheries.

The Iranun and Balangingi sometimes permitted people they seized to redeem themselves by ransom. Often this was done immediately after their seizure, but *banyaga* were also ransomed from the Taosug, sometimes after having spent a considerable period in captivity. When away on cruises, slave raiders went out of their way to take captives for whom ransoms might be obtained—and a *banyaga* was always entrusted to fetch the ransom. Züñiga observed that only certain types of persons could be ransomed. By 1800, there was a standard scale of ransom fees. A friar was valued at about 2000 pesos, a European at 300 pesos, and a male Filipino slave at 30 to 50 pesos. Lascars taken from English ships were ransomed at 100 pesos each.⁴⁷ Given the magnitude of slavery, it was inconceivable for the Church to ransom Filipino slaves generally, but villages were sometimes expected to raise the money for the ransom of friars, and were left impoverished as a result.⁴⁸ Since it was not a widespread practice for Malay royalty to obtain the release of their kindred by negotiation and ransom,⁴⁹ the heavy ransoms offered for friars meant that they were especially coveted by the slave raiders.⁵⁰ The ransoming of priests and other Europeans at Jolo was a common practice in the eighteenth century, and the sultan took an active part in such negotiations, especially in cases that involved the Governor of Zamboanga.⁵¹ By 1830, however, the Sultan of Sulu no longer condoned the seizure or ransom of priests. He did not consider it advantageous from the standpoint of trade and politics to permit Europeans, particularly priests, to be brought to Jolo where their presence could become a *cause célèbre* and jeopardize relations with Western powers. This became a source of some of the resentment and conflict that developed between the Taosug and Balangingi after 1835. The Balangingi refused to yield the religious and Europeans among their slaves to the sultan, to be turned over to the Zamboanga authorities, and defiantly pressed for their ransom.

Before 1850, European slaves in Jolo were regularly redeemed by ships' captains who traded there. Some ships' captains took advantage of the fact that they held out the sole opportunity of redemption for Filipinos. Merchant-traders considered them a cheap, convenient source of labour, and redeemed Filipino slaves had to work the ransom price off in passage. As crew members, their indenture was apt to last up to a year and take them increasingly further away from their villages.⁵²

For many *banyaga* escape remained their central ambition. This was particularly the case of Filipino men who had been separated from their families, or who had clung to their faith.⁵³ Age was also a factor. Slaves who had been seized in their youth were more easily assimilated to the Taosug social system,⁵⁴ while *banyaga* who retained memories of another home were more prone to escape. It was during the early years of captivity that the desire to escape was greatest. From a total of 50 slaves who escaped to the Spanish fleet visiting Jolo in 1836, 38 had been in captivity fewer than six years; 7 for between six and eight years; and the remainder for more than a decade. In 1847, the number of newly acquired Filipino slaves who either escaped or were ransomed to the captain of the brigantine *Cometa* was even higher; 43 out of the 45 slaves had been in captivity fewer than six years. Of this number, 25 had been in captivity less than a year, 7 for two years, 8 for three years, and 3 for five years. Similarly, between 1845 and 1849, of the 26 Dutch subjects who escaped to Menado by small sailboat, 17 had been in captivity for fewer than three years.⁵⁵

The Taosug system of bondage and dependency was such that coercive control was difficult to apply. One to two hundred *banyaga* fled annually to foreign vessels at Jolo, to the interior of an island in the Jolo archipelago, or to Zamboanga and Menado.⁵⁶ Once the decision was made to escape, a *banyaga* often sought out another slave from the same ethnolinguistic group or province with whom to make plans. This *banyaga* could belong to the same owner or live in a contiguous settlement. Obviously, common heritage was important in maintaining secrecy and the cooperation necessary for a successful escape.⁵⁷ This seems to have been especially so for *banyaga* who attempted the long and difficult journey to Menado.

Escape from Jolo and neighbouring islands to Zamboanga was relatively easy. Zamboanga's proximity to, and commercial dependence on, Jolo offered *banyaga* ample opportunities to reach the *presidio* on trading *prahus* or by small canoe. Prospects for escape diminished the further away from Jolo a *banyaga* was sold.⁵⁸ This was especially the case for *banyaga* retailed on the northeast coast of Borneo where some waited 18 years before a chance to flee presented itself in the form of a punitive expedition or the visit of a European trading boat.⁵⁹ Escape by small boat to the Visayas or Menado was a hazardous undertaking. Unpredictable winds and strong currents could take a small canoe far from its destination, or it could break up and sink in choppy seas. The voyage to Menado took at least ten days and required an outriggered sailing boat large enough for at least two people, but such attempts often required three to five *banyaga*. The difficult nature of the voyage to northern Celebes is apparent from the small number of slaves who were successful. From 1845 to 1849, those slaves to successfully reach Menado were: 1855, fifteen; 1857, twenty-one; and 1858, seven.⁶⁰ Women were less frequently in a position to escape, and when they did it was usually in the company of their husbands.

A far easier mode of escape for *banyaga* in Jolo, and one which could be accomplished alone, was to swim or row out to a visiting European vessel. The

usual plan was ‘to sneak alongside at night, cling hold of the chain plates, kick the canoe adrift, which they had in all probability stolen, and then make a noise until helped up the side’.⁶¹ The timing of the venture was crucial to its success. *Banyaga* escaped to merchant vessels only at the close of the trading season, as their chances of being granted asylum were greater when their presence was less apt to become an issue and disrupt trading.⁶² Despite such precautions, *banyaga* sometimes were turned away or given by traders—European and Chinese—to another *datu* as a ‘gift’.⁶³

After the 1830s, when Spanish warships began to frequent the area, larger numbers of *banyaga* risked escape. In contrast to the uncertainties of escape to trading vessels, fugitives were assured protection on European warships. In 1836, more than fifty Filipino slaves from every island group in the archipelago were taken on board the vessels of the Spanish fleet that visited Jolo.⁶⁴ The longer the war vessels remained in the Jolo roadstead, the more *banyaga* risked escape. When *datus* became aware that *banyaga* had gained freedom by setting foot on a warship, they began to take precautions. Newly acquired *banyaga* in particular were herded together and locked up at night, or marched into the interior until the departure of a squadron. In 1836, all small canoes were taken off the beaches and sentinels patrolled the shore after dark. *Banyaga* who failed in a bid to escape could be in danger of being beaten or killed, though it was more usual for them to be sold.⁶⁵

Few fates can have been as cruelly deceptive as the one experienced by the *banyaga* who escaped to Zamboanga. Most *banyaga* who fled one form of servitude were forced to remain in Zamboanga and enter a ‘second captivity’. It was a standard practice of the Governors of the *presidio* to delay the return of Filipinos to their villages for years at a time in order to exploit their labour.⁶⁶ Denied any opportunity to practice a trade in Zamboanga, Filipino fugitives from the Sulu archipelago were integrated into the lowest stratum of Zamboanga society as a residual source of labour power—along with criminals, deserters and *deportados*. These escapees were forced to labour on the fortifications, manufacture salt, collect firewood, and tend the carabao. They also toiled in the fields beside the women—some of who were forced to become prostitutes for the garrison and coastguard force.⁶⁷

It was a commonly held opinion among Filipino slaves that the nature of the servitude experienced in Zamboanga was far worse than among the Taosug.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the arrival of many *banyaga* at Zamboanga gave rise to an interesting social situation. The fugitives established themselves with impoverished Chinese and vagrants in a community situated some distance from the *presidio*. Originating from different parts of the Philippine archipelago and lacking a common language, these *degradados* developed their own Spanish-Creole dialect—Chavacano. By the end of the nineteenth century, a large percentage of the rural population surrounding Zamboanga were descendants of fugitive slaves who had lived on the margins of the *presidio* as social outcasts.⁶⁹

Very little is known about the fate of those Filipinos who actually managed to return to their villages. Published records concerning repatriation are rare. After 1838, the vessels of the *Marina Sutil* and private traders were instructed by the Government to assist fugitive *banyaga* in Zamboanga to reach the Visayas. The passage scheme was never properly implemented and fugitive slaves were entirely dependent for their welfare on the goodwill of Spanish administrators and ships' captains who did not hesitate to exploit them. Undoubtedly, a Filipino sometimes reached home to find altered circumstances: some or all of his family dead; his wife remarried; and outstanding debts and reciprocal obligations unfulfilled.⁷⁰ Many who escaped were left to make a new life, the reality of which was more severe than the one from which they had fled as *banyaga*.

Conclusion

The rate of upward social mobility for *banyaga* in early nineteenth-century Sulu was greater than that in the Christian Philippines or other parts of colonial South-East Asia at that time. In Jolo and elsewhere, slaves could have family roles as husband or wife; they could own property—including other slaves. They often filled a variety of political and economic roles—as bureaucrats, interpreters, warriors and farmers, as concubines and traders—by virtue of which they were entitled to certain rights and privileges accorded to other members of the dominant society.

In the Sulu zone, *banyaga* could purchase their freedom and the likelihood of manumission was essentially a function of occupation. *Banyaga* who provided immediate and indispensable services to their owners had better chances of manumission than those who laboured in the forests or fisheries. Certain segments of the maritime-military and local administrative elites in the zone were recruited from the Christian male slave population. Adolescents selected on the basis of their abilities were given a thorough education by their Taosug owners and required to turn Muslim. Conversion to the dominant religion of the zone cut these slaves off from their cultural roots, making them even more dependent on the sultan.⁷¹

'Slavery' in this sense was a means of incorporating people into the social and economic system of the zone. I have argued elsewhere that 'open' systems of slavery, such as the Sulu Sultanates, were those which acquired their labour through capture or purchase of slaves, and assimilated them as 'insiders' into the dominant group.⁷² The most recently acquired slaves were those most clearly demarcated from other dependent groups and the wider society. But within the first generation, those individuals most likely to be incorporated in an 'open' system were female slaves, adolescents and children.⁷³ *Banyaga* were strategically enrolled in the following of *datus* for political and economic support, but far more than anything else they were essential labourers in the forests and fisheries and maintained an expansive redistributive economy and the flow of global-regional trade. They were predominately Visayan, Tagalog,

Minahassan and Bugis speakers, although almost every major ethnic group of insular South-East Asia was to be found among their ranks. Some inherited their status; others were obtained in fulfilment of debt obligations. But all *banyaga* or their ancestors had been seized by professional slave raiders and retailed in communities throughout the zone.

The formation and prosperity of the Sulu zone was based above all else on slaves. It was the role of the Sulu state, within its large trading zone, to maintain the material and social conditions for the recruitment and exploitation of slaves. Equally important, the political and commercial growth of the Sulu zone was reflected in the enormous increase in war stores in the Jolo market at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Taosug aimed at monopolizing control over the exchange and distribution of these goods which, with slaves, enabled the reproduction of the social formation. European firearms supplied by global-regional trade enabled coastal-dwelling Taosug to advance their commercial interests in the intersocietal network, promote maritime raiding on a large scale and keep the zone free of undesirable intruders and competitors. The Sulu state was geared to continuous acquisition of slaves and slave raiding as a consequence of the intersections between the China tea trade and the world capitalist economy. By the mid-1850s, the problem for the Taosug was that this kind of preying on peripheral communities could not be sustained. When the autonomy of traditional states and slave raiding both declined under the combined pressure of modern colonial navies, the Taosug economic and political system began to disintegrate and even aspects of the social structure began to change, along with the shape and character of the zone. The total collapse of an economic system, based on violence for gain, and commodity production by slaves and political clients, only came with the concerted effort of Spain to end Sulu's autonomy. By 1878, the demise of the trading-raiding system stripped the sultanate of any trace of its former importance as a major entrepôt in the global-regional economy of eastern Asia and Chinese commercial interests assumed the monopoly of trade in the commodities that once sustained it.⁷⁴

NOTES

1. See J.F.Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768–1898, The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1981); J.F.Warren, *The Sulu Zone, The World Capitalist Economy and the Historical Imagination* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1998).
2. Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768–1898*, pp.147–211.
3. See A.Reid (ed.), *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1983); J.L.Watson (ed.), *Asian and African Systems of Slavery* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980); J.F.Warren, ‘Slavery in Southeast Asia’, in S. Drescher and S.L.Engerman (eds.), *A Historical Guide to World Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.80–87; on the problem of

- defining slavery see E.R.Leach, ‘Caste, Class and Slavery: The Taxonomic Problem’, in A.de Reuck and J.Knight (eds.), *Caste and Race: Comparative Approaches* (London: J. and A.Churchill, 1967); see also, S. Miers and I.Kopytoff (eds.), *Slavery in Africa Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977).
4. M.Mednick, ‘Encampment of the Lake: The Social Organisation of a Moslem Philippine (Moro) People’ (PhD thesis, University of Chicago, 1965), pp.60–61; T.Kiefer, The Taosug Polity and the Sultanate of Sulu: A Segmentary State in the Southern Philippines’, *Sulu Studies*, I (1972), p.30; T.M.McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) pp.48–51.
 5. Diary of William Pryer, 25 Nov. 1878; 26 June 1879, Colonial Office, Public Records Office, London (hereafter CO-PRO), 874/68.
 6. BH-PCL (Beyer-Holleman Collection, Philippine Customary Law), The Library of Congress, Washington DC. (hereafter LC), Vol.VI, paper 162, No.16; A.Gunther, ‘Correspondence, Papers and Reports Relating to the Sulu Moros’, Jolo and Manila (1901–1903), pp.10–12; paper 162, vol.VI, No.25, Emerson B.Christie, ‘The Non Christian Tribes of the Northern Half of the Zamboanga Peninsula’ (1903) p.87; paper 163, Vol.VI, No.28; L.W.N.Kennon, D.P.Barrows, J.Pershing and C.Smith, ‘Census Report Relating to the District of Lanao Mindanao’(1903), p. 4; N.Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion* (Manila: Bureau of Public Printing, 1905) pp.92–3.
 7. Scott to Governor, 30 June 1904, H.L.Scott Papers, Container 55, LC; Otis to Bates, 11 July 1899, U.S.Senate Documents, 9; Otis to Bates, 11 July 1899, U.S.Senate Documents, 9, document 136, p.15, LC; Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History*, p.94.
 8. Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History*, pp.65, 81, 89.
 9. Ibid., pp.76, 86–7.
 10. Ibid, pp.71, 83, 93; No.139, El Gobernador de Zamboanga a Gobernador Capitan General (hereafter GCG), 12 Feb. 1845, Philippine National Archives, Manila (hereafter PNA), Mindanao/Sulu 1836–97.
 11. Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History*, p.93.
 12. Diary of William Pryer, 14 March 1878, CO-PRO, 874/68.
 13. W.Pryer, ‘Notes on Northeastern Borneo and the Sulu Islands’, *Royal Geographical Society Proceedings*, 5 (1883), pp.92–3.
 14. J.K.Reynolds, Towards an Account of Sulu and its Bornean Dependencies, 1700–1878’ (M.A.dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1970), p.81.
 15. Pryer, ‘Notes on Northeastern Borneo’, p.92.
 16. T.Forrest, *A Voyage to New Guinea and the Moluccas from Balambangan: Including an Account of Magindano, Sooloo and other Islands* (London: G.Scott, 1779), p.330.
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Slavery and Colonial Representations in Indochina from the Second Half of the Nineteenth to the Early Twentieth Century

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On 27 April 1848, the Provisional Government of France proclaimed the abolition of slavery. In all French possessions, the principle that ‘French soil frees the slave who touches it’ was consequently to be applied. The subsequent Second Empire and Third Republic having taken upon itself the ‘mission’ to fight against slavery, found here an ideal justification for a new colonial expansion, including in South-East Asia, where the French progressively extended their domination of Indochina. Following a ‘Government of Admirals’ generally in favour of respecting traditional institutions, Le Myre de Vilers, who in 1879 became the first civil Governor of Indochina, introduced the French Penal code and consequently officially abolished slavery. However, there like elsewhere, slavery persisted. Far from France, colonial civil servants in Indochina were sensitive to the local situation and from the 1848 proclamation onwards attempted to reconcile directives from France and local realities through convenient compromises. From the moment that the French began to address and condemn this phenomenon by giving themselves the right to manage the administration and laws of the States of this area, Indochinese slavery became encompassed, as a full part in French colonial history.

Nevertheless, the persistence of slavery has remained a largely taboo subject in France because of a refusal there to contemplate the possibility that it could have continued after official abolition. For a long time, certain historians of colonization,¹ regarded this slavery simply as an ‘ancestral habit’, which did not require detailed study or assessment. Indeed, the continued existence and the nature of this phenomenon are still largely ignored in academia. Most contend that any slavery that persisted was ‘minor’, although no substance is given to argument which rests largely on the subtleties of linguistic interpretations.² It is true that defining slavery is a difficult task given, on the one hand, the many different forms of bondage, and the various terms for them in local languages and, on the other hand, the ‘catch-all’ meaning in the contemporary West for ‘slavery’. The contemporary Western concept of slavery did not have the same ideological significance for either European or indigenous peoples in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Indochina. Semantic wrangles as to its meaning, its taboo character, and the multiple social, political and economic implications of ‘slavery’ have all helped to impede academic historical research

into slavery in the French empire. Finally, there is the problem of historical sources, the rather the partial nature and poor quality of them—as is nominally borne out by the paucity of information revealed in the French colonial archives of Indochina by searches under the word ‘slavery’.

This study is an attempt to break the academic taboo and open up the subject of the existence and nature of slavery in the French empire after the official abolition of slavery. Here, slavery is defined as the condition whereby a human is reduced to the state of being the property of another. The discriminating criterion is therefore not that of constraints, of harsh treatment or the burden of work, but the status itself of the enslaved person. The study is limited to indigenous slavery practised on the Indochinese Peninsula in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is based less on the limited revelations of the colonial administration, than printed works and especially the accounts of French explorers who, in the second half of the nineteenth century and first decade of the twentieth century, travelled all over a still virgin Indochina.³ One can also find in newspaper articles and general or specialized studies (e.g. on law or ethnology) interesting though sporadic commentary on indigenous slavery.⁴

While taking into account the contention that these explorer accounts are limited by a western perspective or ‘euro-centrist’ subjectivity, it is here argued that it is possible to articulate the insights they give into Indochinese slavery precisely because these accounts fit fully into the colonial context and because the explorers were the first, from the 1850s onwards, to have truly highlighted the existence of this slavery. They constituted, at that time, the beginning of an intellectual chain that permitted the emergence of a body of information about indigenous customs, and the dissemination of such information, complete with its subjectivity and prejudices. At the same time, through an analytical and critical comparison of the sources, it is possible to demonstrate the complexity of the slave phenomenon in Indochina. Finally, the paper will examine the way in which the perception of indigenous slavery changes, from the time it was first noted to the way it was subsequently interpreted both in Indochina and in France.

The Victims of Slavery

There are no reliable and complete censuses allowing the number of slaves for the whole of Indochina to be determined. However, one can advance some partial figures provided by observers of the time. After travelling through the country, Quesnel, a civil servant, expressed the view that according to the list of people exonerated from personal tax in Laos, ‘slaves of all categories constitute more than one third of the Lao population’.⁵ According to a more precise evaluation by Jean Moura, Representative of Kampuchea Protectorate: ‘On 24 March 1877, there were 3015 Comlas and 6580 Pols in the kingdom, not including women and children’—Comlas and Pols being ‘state’ slaves.⁶ Working on the assumption that these men were generally married and fathers of families, one

could undoubtedly multiply this figure by three. This would then give roughly the same figure as that estimated by Ea Meng Try who, adding the slaves of private individuals, arrived at a total of approximately 10 per cent of the population.⁷

These figures are probably an underestimation, upper class Kampuchean or Laotians not having any interest in declaring the number of their slaves to the French, who sought information on this practice in order to eradicate it. Moreover, as slaves could not be physically distinguished from free men, it was difficult to identify and enumerate them. In giving instructions on slavery in Kampuchea in 1885 to the Governor of Cochinchina, the French Ministry for the Colonies proposed ‘a preliminary operation, namely that of a census of slaves’ but as such a census ‘would have created considerable irritation against us’,⁸ it was never carried out. With regard to slavery in what is present day Vietnam, there are no estimates except that of 1910 that ‘the number of slaves is unfortunately considerable in the province. According to information collected everywhere, they would form about one-third of the total population’.⁹ This lack of information is explained by the fact that according to Vietnamese law codes, slavery was not, as in Kampuchea or in Laos, a generalized official institution but ‘existed’ only in the event of legal judgment. Moreover, it was difficult to admit and detail the persistence of a phenomenon directly contrary to the principles of the Republic.

According to the sources, slaves in French Indochina originated from all parts of the entire Indochinese region. However, there is no indication of the presence of slaves from China or Siam, less sources of supply than countries that absorbed slaves or acted as middlemen. Also, political hegemony was exerted by China over the Vietnamese provinces and by the Siamese over certain Laotian and Kampuchean provinces. Thus Tonkin, long under Chinese domination, was ‘a favourite source of human flesh’¹⁰ for China. In addition, racial prejudice had an influence; e.g. the Annamite ‘race’ was largely denigrated in the Middle Empire, while the Siamese proudly asserted their status through the appellation ‘Thai’, meaning ‘free man’ or ‘released from slavery’.¹¹

Mountain populations were particularly vulnerable. Explorers generally called them, ‘savages’ or used local terms, ‘Mols’ in Annam, ‘Kha’ in Laos, or ‘Stieng’ in Kampuchea, all of which corresponded in the local languages to ‘slave’. Other peoples regarded them as inferior. For instance, Paul Neïs remarked that Annamites considered Mols to be ‘like animals and not men’.¹² Slave raiding expeditions were mounted against them, as noted by the explorer J.Harmand:

Laotian mandarins organize raids against the savages. One therefore goes, under an unspecified pretext, to establish a camp in a favourable place, and from there one makes incursions on the villages that one hopes to encircle or surprise: it is, quite literally, a veritable hunt.¹³

However, the mountain tribes also engaged in slave raiding, both against village communities, in the form of internecine warfare in which defeated villages were plundered and their inhabitants taken away as slaves, and sometimes against Annamites. It was also common to kidnap women and children for sale. According to Alfred Barbou, there existed true ‘child robbers’ who acted as intermediaries for slave-traders.¹⁴ Another factor underlying child slavery was the traditional right of a family head to divest himself of his children; many slaves bought by private individuals were sold by their own parents. This practice, often originating in famine or in gambling debts, appears to have been particularly widespread in Vietnam where contracts of slavery were established between debtor and creditor.¹⁵

By extension, another reason for slavery appears to have been judicial. Someone condemned to pay a pecuniary fine could also be the subject of a confiscation order, meaning that he could be sold in order to pay the judge or victim of the crime. Indeed, in the Khmer language ‘to condemn’ can also mean ‘to sell’.¹⁶ Thus, in Kampuchean or Annamite law, those found guilty of robbery, adultery, murder, treason and other crimes or sacrileges, could—along with their family members if they were also implicated in the crime—become royal or pagoda slaves. ‘Complicity’ was legally applicable to include family members seven degrees removed from the guilty party, so that the numbers thus condemned to slavery could be considerable.¹⁷ Prisoners of war were also obvious victims. They became state slaves, belonging to the King who could distribute them as rewards to deserving officers and mandarins. Internecine warfare, traditionally a primary source of slaves, was suppressed in the late nineteenth century by the imposition of colonial law and order.

There existed further special categories of human being subject to enslavement. Until the late nineteenth century these included twins and children born crippled or malformed (e.g. dwarfs and albinos) who, upon reaching puberty, were taken from their parents by royal envoys as slaves of the king.¹⁸ Another source of slaves were those condemned as ‘witches’. B. Guerlach commented that these comprised:

individuals accused of deng, i.e. to throw evil spells... Many abuses take place after such a denunciation, and poor girls often become the prey of stupid savages who sell them as witches, although they are no more witches than you or me.¹⁹

Thus a number of factors, including not least ethnic prejudice, naivety and poverty, could lead to the transformation of free men and women into slaves. Moreover, the condition was hereditary: a child born of slave parents was ascribed the status of slave. In addition, the marriage a free person who married a slave by that act became a slave to the same master.²⁰ Slave sources were thus multiple and the victims of enslavement numerous.

The Slave-trade

The slave-trade included the forced displacement of victims and their marketing. The men undertaking this were generally designated by the rather ambiguous term of ‘traitant’ (historically a ‘financier’ who through an agreement with the court obtained the right to levy certain rights or taxes) or that of ‘pirate’. There were various kinds of retailers of slaves, constituting an entire chain of intermediaries organized in networks. Thus, mountain tribes often exchanged their slave booty through Laotian dealers, implying a true complicity between ethnic groups of the mountains and merchants of the plains.²¹ Kampucheans ‘pushed by Laotians to which they are always sure of selling their captives’²² also participated. So did Annamites—although their code prohibited slave transactions—who captured Mots to resell them to other brokers, often ‘pirates’ of Chinese origin specializing in the smuggling of opium, alcohol and weapons as well as of women and children.²³ The diverse nature and origins of agents demonstrated the significance of this trade throughout Indochina.

Slaves were, in general, resold far from the place of their removal, due to slave-trade prohibitions²⁴ and for fear that otherwise the victim might attempt to flee, or be sought by relatives. Such displacement was facilitated by the fact that ‘not only do these goods [i.e. slaves] transport themselves, they even help to carry others’.²⁵ Slaves were chained or placed in a ‘cangue’, a kind of heavy wooden yoke which enclosed the neck and wrists, and had their eyes bandaged so that they could not find the road.²⁶ Slaves transported by rivers or in the gulf of Tonkin were hidden below deck during transit. As noted by the officers of the boat *du Couëdic*:

They are led to the sea junk on which they will be shipped and taken into slavery; care is taken to mix with their food some powder which drugs them; usually a ‘plug’ of betel...on the junk a purpose built, carefully enclosed, compartment, is installed to house them; the victims remain there until the day of their arrival.²⁷

To avoid trouble from the authorities, traffickers sometimes disguised their victims: by shaving the heads of Annamites in Laotian fashion, or by dressing the small girls as Chinese and pretending to be their parents. Also, notably at Monkay, there existed education centres for especially Annamite victims of the slave-trade, to teach them the Chinese language and customs.²⁸ Such precautions have been effective in hiding much of the historical evidence for slavery.

While it is difficult to ascertain with precision the main slave routes, it is possible to locate certain points of passage and the principal crossroads. All accounts recognize the pre-eminence of Phnom-Penh and Bangkok, two major slave markets and destinations for most slave convoys. Other, regional centres on the main slave-trade route included Attopeu, Kratie or Stung-Treng, at the confluence of the Mekong and Se Kong.²⁹ Borderlands were also important for

the trade as zones of contact and exchange. A considerable proportion of slaves were intended for export to southern China and the large hubs of the Asian trade, notably Hong Kong, Macao and Shanghai, although Singapore is also mentioned—confirming the presence of Malaysians dealing with Kampuchean. In all the above, which were major commercial centres in their own right, the traffic in slaves was taxed like any other trade, while it was commented that ‘On the Annamese side... the collectors take commissions to such an extent that the business has to be concentrated on easily transportable articles of a certain value’.³⁰ A slave answered these requirements well, as a high value commodity involving low transport costs that allowed, even with taxes, significant profit margins. In all cases, ‘good bargains are concluded, human freedom being the raw material’.³¹

In order to have a better idea of the profits generated, it would be necessary to estimate the market price of slaves in Indochina. However, it is difficult to establish an average price range, because the price of a slave depended on several criteria, including the slave’s physical qualities, like race, sex, age and well being, and ‘moral’ qualities such as education (and virginity), and external factors such as demand (scarcity) and the place of exchange. Sources indicate that women generally sold at higher prices. More flexible and as industrious as men, they were in addition likely to be taken for second wives. In this respect, the Chinese ‘houses of education’ for stolen Annamite women significantly increased their value on the market.³² By contrast, in Cambodian markets a mountain ‘savage’ slave was preferred to Annamites as the latter were considered less flexible.³³

Slaves were traded for a variety of goods, including paddy, salt, cattle and weapons,³⁴ while in the slave-trading countries slaves were also exchanged against other slaves. The price of an elephant was sometimes expressed in ‘heads of men’, a pachyderm being worth from 4 to 10 people—which indicated that a slave was ranked second in value, below an elephant but above a buffalo.³⁵

Slave Functions and Conditions

The primary role of slaves in Indochina was in domestic services such as housework, cooking and childcare, for the Master with whom they lived. Slaves were also status symbols to be ostentatiously displayed by dignitaries as an indication of their position in the social hierarchy. As noted by Mouhot at one public function:

I continually encountered mandarins in a litter or net, followed by a crowd of slaves each carrying something: one, the parasol...another, the areca box, or betel, etc. Often, I also came across horsemen... moving wonderfully, while a ‘flock’ of slaves, covered in sweat and dust, were obliged to follow them like a herd of animals.³⁶

The female slave could also be used as a concubine.³⁷ European explorers, in Indochina as contemporaneously in the Ottoman Empire, endeavoured to discover the existence of true harems containing hundreds of women.³⁸ In reality, there was often but one step from concubinage to prostitution for which, as some officials reported, female slaves were often procured: ‘I have the honour to draw your attention to a trade which is carried on openly in China [or in Bangkok] and which has as its object Annamite woman and small girls removed from Tonkin to be sold and delivered into prostitution’.³⁹ Women criminals too could be condemned to service in the army, as slave prostitutes.⁴⁰

Other categories of slaves included temple slaves and those attached to the court. Those attached to pagodas carried out domestic functions, notably maintenance of the temple buildings, but it was formally forbidden to employ them for personal work. Royal slaves each had specialized functions, from carriers of the royal reef tackle, or guards, to keepers of the King’s shoes, or court musicians, dancers and other entertainers.⁴¹ Their services were only intermittently required, most such slaves only being in demand from three to six months per annum. Other royal slaves worked in agriculture. Unlike slaves on private farms, some royal farm slaves worked part of their time for the king while others had to provide a yearly rent in kind. Here also the work was specialized, different groups, constrained to a certain area and occupied in fisheries, in rice, cardamom or gum plantations, or caring for royal elephants. They worked full-time, the court furnishing them with any necessities outside their own production.⁴² Lastly, there were military slaves. In Annam, criminals were sometimes condemned to life as slaves of border soldiers.⁴³

The legal status of slaves did not necessarily dictate their functions or working conditions, which varied widely. However, by establishing rules governing the slave as a ‘good’, the law did recognize that the slave possessed rights that gave him a legal status close to that of a free man.⁴⁴ There also existed the possibility of emancipation, notably for those enslaved for debt, as the Kampuchean Codes, just like the Siamese law predominant in the Laotian provinces, obliged a master to free any slave who paid the totality of the sum due for his repurchase.⁴⁵ That remained difficult, however, because after deducting the cost of food, clothing and care provided for the maintenance of his slave, the value of the work provided by the slave generally corresponded only to the interest on the loan. The initial debt could even be increased by the birth of children, considering the additional costs of maintenance that ensued for the master. The unwritten rule that everything broken or lost in the house was to be paid for by the slave similarly increased his burden.⁴⁶ Under these conditions, emancipation was generally only granted by a master in recognition of good and faithful service, or as a means of gaining divine favour of God. Otherwise, it might be granted by a tribunal should a Master have committed a fault against his slave, or if the slave fulfilled funerary rites for his master. By contrast, pagoda slaves, who were supposed to belong only to Buddha, could not be redeemed. Again, should a

master rape a female slave, or make her pregnant, the slave would in law be freed.⁴⁷

As indicated above, the slave had legal rights that limited their owner's powers over them. In Kampuchea, a master could even be condemned to death or slavery should one of his slaves die as a result of a beating inflicted by him. However, provided he did not wound his slave, the master could freely strike him with a fist or cane, and yoke him in a *cangue*. Moreover, the law could only be applied if a 'free' witness laid a complaint against a master, for slaves could not officially complain or take action against their master as their relationship was viewed, at least in the Kampuchean Codes, as that of child and parent. Nevertheless, most domestic slaves appeared nominally as a member of the master's family and was generally well treated. Apart from enslavement for debt, slavery in Indochina thus corresponded more to a state of social subjection than that of economic degradation, and even if it frequently exceeded the bounds of legality, exploitation of slaves was limited by legal codes that specified their status.

Colonial Propaganda: Representations and Repercussions

An analysis of explorer discourses on Indochinese slavery reveals their common education and objectives, which in turn give rise to the 'colonial' representation of slavery. Explorers' accounts sought to be simultaneously scientific and literary. As their missions of exploration were often financed by the colonial State, which wished to gain a better understanding of the territory it planned to dominate, explorers sought to convey valid and precise geographical, economic and ethnographic data. However, they did so in a way also calculated to reach and convince a wider audience in the event of publication.

Common to the structure of their writings was a systematic attempt to classify and categorize. This could be seen in terms of an attempt to justify colonial expansion, to reveal a divided indigenous society in order to contrast it with the concept of unity that France wished to project. Many created typologies of the Indochinese slaves, a process which according to Maurice Comte, led in accounts of late nineteenth-century Kampuchea to a certain standardization of statuses. There was a special tendency to judge by analogy. Explorers frequently referred to ancient and medieval, or American forms of slavery to evaluate the nature of Indochinese slavery. Thus the Prince of Orleans stated: 'do we not recognize a citizen of Athens in this Laotian, independent of mood, educated, a brilliant orator, and idle...while his slaves the Khas, less unhappy than the Ilotes of Sparta, turn the soil for him?'.⁴⁸ Many writers also agreed that 'the condition of the "savage" slaves of the Laotians and Kampuchean is not comparable with that formerly experienced by Negroes in the European colonies' or even in Africa.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, they considered that the origin of traditional slavery in America and Indochina appears to have been largely similar; (e.g. indebtedness, raids, and sale by the parents), as were the general conditions of slavery.

However, it is important to note that the employment of the term ‘slave’, with all its connotations, rather than the indigenous terms that did not have the same density of meaning, and the use of moralistic adjectives such as ‘odious’ and ‘infamous’ when describing the slave-trade, reveals a tendency to move from a scientific approach to one that is didactic and emotional. In overall terms, it is possible to discern the political, economic, diplomatic or religious aims of the writers obstructing a true analysis and assessment of slavery in Indochina, ones that contributed to a propagandist image that supported French colonial ambitions there. This portrayed slavery as a ‘barbarian’ custom, and those practising it as a benighted people, living in an inferior material and moral state. By contrast, Westerners were portrayed as enlightened liberators.

Precisely because traditionally, the mountain populations were regarded as ‘inferior’ and tribal, a contrast to the ‘races’ that inhabited lowland regions, European explorers took their part, considering that France had a duty towards them. Jules Harmand declared that their inferiority was not innate, but one of contingency, slavery being its principal cause:

Why is it that these men who...do not seem deprived of intelligence, who possess craniums certainly as well formed, if not better formed, than those of Laotians, remain so very inferior to them? This degradation is indubitably only the effect of the fear that constantly weighs down their soul, a fear that comes especially from the habit of slavery...Who knows, should this odious traffic disappear, if they would not rise little by little up the scale of humanity?⁵⁰

Their goal was also to definitively remove power from indigenous authorities who tolerated or were unable to put an end to this barbarous state of affairs. For the explorers, the corollary of barbarity was anarchy, which itself created the conflict and insecurity that generated slavery, which served only to accentuate disorder. Moralizing accusations against Indochinese authorities resulted.⁵¹ However, explorers found themselves in the embarrassing situation for they were in large part dependent upon the assistance of local authorities, and did possess sufficient personal funds to redeem slaves, a strategy employed by some missionaries.⁵² They therefore called, in the name of the benighted victim of slavery, for increased colonial intervention, administrative and military.

It should be noted that in these and other sources (illustrated newspapers, reviews and works), there is a striking absence of iconographic representations of Indochinese slavery that contrasts with those sources portraying American slavery. This in part reflects the difficulty of distinguishing slaves from others in Indochina. Possibly, also, the power of the image itself aroused fear. In addition, images of the reality of slavery would have directly confronted the official idealized portrayal of Indochina. The result is that one has to depend upon textual descriptions, the objectivity of which was questionable. Certain explorers not only failed to condemn slavery, some even ignored its existence, although

both they and French colonists sometimes benefited from it—notably in the form of slave porters⁵³ and mistresses.⁵⁴

The Impact of Explorer Accounts

Upon their return to France, explorers submitted reports to their funding bodies, varying from the French government to learned societies. Geographical societies published accounts of their discoveries, as did more popular reviews like *Le Tour du Monde*. The prestige gained by the explorers, and the innovative nature of their voyages, ensured that such publications influenced both the public and those in power, and so inspired the creation of a French colonial mythology.

Nevertheless, studies of the Far East represented only a very small minority of articles published in the scientific and colonial publications of the time, and the amount of space devoted to the topic of slavery in Indochina was even more limited.⁵⁵ In January 1880, an open letter by ‘a former magistrate of Saigon’, published in the newspaper *La Lanterne* under the provocative title ‘A Slave Colony’, attacking the colonial authorities in Indochina for their inaction on, or complicity in, slavery and the slave-trade, provoked considerable public debate.⁵⁶ The popular press divorced the issue from its groundings in reality so that French public awareness of slavery in Indochina remained poor, but it was debated in parliament and in the local colonial press.⁵⁷ The publicity meant that the colonial authorities could no longer ignore the phenomenon. Le Myre de Vilers, governor of Cochinchina, asked Étienne Aymonier, a former explorer and ‘expert’ on Indochina, who in 1880 was Representative of the Protectorate in Phnom Penh, to provide him urgently with a detailed report on slavery in the colony.⁵⁸ Despite Aymonier’s attempts to downplay the local importance of slavery, de Vilers acknowledged that the article in *La Lanterne* ‘is all the more dangerous as the facts reported are in part correct’.⁵⁹ Whereas initially the French were satisfied to pressurize local authorities into themselves taking largely ineffective measures, such as the 1877 abolition issued by the king of Kampuchea, they were from 1880 forced to take a more direct role. In this, they were pushed by rivalry with Britain which in 1880 Vilers accused of tolerating a vast traffic in slaves, notably prostitutes, in its colony of Hong Kong.⁶⁰ They also became increasingly aware of the financial advantages of emancipation, which they argued on moral grounds was enforceable without compensation being paid to former owners, but which allowed them to impose taxes on former slaves. In 1884, they announced, as part of the renewed protectorate treaty, the abolition of slavery throughout Cambodia. However, this too was ineffective, abolition becoming effective with the act of 1897—but even then only partially.⁶¹ Effective measures against slavery and the slave-trade started with direct monitoring and repression of the trade and, more particularly, of pirates who, since a ‘rebellion’ in 1880, the French associated with ‘political’ resistance to colonial rule and who they believed to be at the heart of the traffic in women, itself associated with opium and alcohol smuggling.

Conclusion

This paper studies slavery in late nineteenth century Indochina through the eyes of explorers who forged the dominant European representations of that practice. While their observations were largely determined by colonial ideology, they also influenced official French policy on slavery. Other sources, including missionary and diplomatic archives, need to be thoroughly researched before anything like a comprehensive picture of slavery in Indochina can be built. Nevertheless, explorers' publications reveal much of the basic structure and function of slavery and the slave-trade. A notable feature of this was the practice, common throughout the South-East Asian region, of poor parents selling their children into slavery. This theme persisted into the twentieth century, fed notably by indebtedness into which former slaves, newly emancipated, often fell, which in remote mountain areas was, as late as 1941, still a source of enslavement.⁶²

A longer version of the paper on which this article is based has been published in French as 'Esclavage et représentations coloniales en Indochine de la seconde moitié du XIX^e siècle au début du XX^e siècle', in *Outre-Mers, n° spécial: Traites et esclavages: vieux problèmes, nouvelles perspectives?*, 2^e semestre 2002, n° 336–337, pp.283–320.

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Slaves and Forms of Slavery in Late Imperial China (Seventeenth to Early Twentieth Centuries)

ANGELA SCHOTTENHAMMER

Introduction

The term ‘slave’ (*nubi* or *sishu*) appears repeatedly in Chinese sources over the last 2000 years. However, most Western sinologists consider that chattel slavery, while possibly of some significance between the Han (206 BCE–220 CE) and Tang (618–906 CE) eras,¹ never played a major role in the Chinese economy. As a result, few have investigated the role of slavery in any depth,² and most are reluctant to use the term. An exception is the research into the trafficking of women.³ By contrast, Chinese Marxist historians claim that a slave-owner society developed in China during Shang dynasty from the sixteenth to eleventh centuries BCE. However, the term ‘slave’ as first used by Guo Moruo (1882–1978), is problematic as he failed to define the precise legal status or economic function of slaves.⁴

From the Han dynasty onwards there is ample evidence for a group called ‘*nubi* or *nu-pi*’ defined as property who could be bought and sold, legally distinct from free men (*liang*).⁵ By the start of the third century BCE, large land-owners often possessed several thousands of slaves,⁶ by the ninth century, Buddhist institutions are reputed to have employed 150,000 slaves,⁷ and prominent Song dynasty (960–1279 CE) officials possessed thousands of slaves.⁸ Slaves comprised condemned political prisoners, war captives, kidnap victims, and people who sold themselves or family members to pay off debts.⁹ In addition, Tang literature refers to *Kunlun* or Black African slaves, a rare luxury item of no economic importance.¹⁰

Nevertheless, slaves formed a small percentage of the Chinese population—under one per cent in Han times—and played a minor role in production.¹¹ Most slaves became ‘domestic’ workers, including concubines.¹² Moreover, slaves in China cannot be defined in the classical Western sense of ‘chattel’. Asian terms for ‘slave’ can, depending on the context, also mean ‘debtor’, ‘dependent’ or ‘subject’.¹³ Under Tang legal codes, one category of slaves were considered property that could be freely bought and sold but another, comprising ‘subjugated individuals’ (*buqu*) and ‘housemaids’ (*kenü*), of slightly higher

status, was not defined as ‘property’, although they could be ‘transferred’ from one master to another.¹⁴

In examining sources on slavery from the seventeenth to early twentieth century this paper attempts to contribute to the debate by elucidating the nature of slavery and clarifying the legal, social and economic status of slaves in late Qing society.

Origins of Slavery

As T’ung-tsu Ch’ü has shown, probably the majority of slaves originated as indentured servants, who could regain their freedom if able to repay to their master the sum stipulated in their contract. However, after three years of service, and if granted a wife by his master, the servant’s status normally changed to that of a permanent slave.¹⁵

Wei Qingyuan, Qu Qiyan, and Lu Su distinguish three other basic sources of enslavement.¹⁶ The first comprised males from a wide variety of backgrounds seized by the victorious Manchu invaders in the period 1645 to 1647 and forced to serve in the Manchu army,¹⁷ on *quan*, agricultural domains created from expropriated Chinese farmland, on which they employed great numbers of slaves, or in construction projects.¹⁸

The second were those who sold themselves to pay off debts (‘debt-slavery’). Most were peasants forced into debt because of high rents (in the case of tenants) or land taxes (in the case of independent farmers—the ‘*zigeng nongmin*’), and unable to pay high interest rates. Consequently, they sold themselves or family members as slaves. A similar fate could befall craftsmen, artisans and small merchants. Qing law recognized this category by authorizing the sale of slaves already born into slavery and the sale of ‘commoners’ who had sold themselves.¹⁹ From at least the eighteenth century, strict legal procedures were applied to voluntary enslavement, as demonstrated by the following contact drawn up in 1782:

Li Du sells his own son, Wang Shunkei. Because at present he urgently requires (money), he himself is willing through a middleman (*mao*) to offer his own son, called Lianxi, 12 years old, for sale as a servant with the name of Wang. On the date agreed upon, he will receive a price for (his son’s) body of just 3 *liang* of 97% (pure) silver. He will immediately receive the silver in full, when his son Lianxi agrees to change his name to be employed. After the sale, supposing that he [Wang] might flee without a trace, steal or the like, he [Li Du] will personally have to pay for all the expenses; it is not a matter of the master. Supposing that his [Wang’s] health be irregular, it is heaven’s fate. Now, because I am afraid that there may be no proof or evidence, (I) establish this contract, ‘Du sells his own son’, to retain as a proof.

46th year of the (reign period) *qianlong* (1782) in the 9th month.

Li Du sells his own son Wang Shunkui
 Witnesses Wang Yunzhang, Shi Liusao?
 Attorney (clerk in the Yamen) Ye Yuting.²⁰

Peasants also voluntarily entered bondage through ‘commendation’ to a master in order to conceal a background of indebtedness, although in sixteenth century Suzhoufu, a rich south-eastern county, this practice was being condemned as a ploy by ambitious peasants to use their master to gain wealth and government office.²¹

‘Debt-bondage’ was a related feature of Qing society, especially from the eighteenth century when instances of peasant bankruptcy seem to have increased sharply. It is in this context that the phenomenon of *dianshen* whereby individuals ‘mortgaged their body’ for a particular period of time, should be viewed. The legal and social status of these mortgaged people, who worked without remuneration for their masters, was little higher than that of slaves. They were mainly absorbed into the wealthier households of South-East China.²²

A third major category were kidnap victims, chiefly women, young girls and children, officially registered as slaves (*nuji*), and sold as concubines, wives or prostitutes. Further categories included criminals and delinquents condemned by the Qing Criminal Court to serve as slaves, sometimes of the people they had ‘harmed’. As the alternative was frequently execution, enslavement was considered an act of mercy.²³ Yet another category were wives and concubines, sold by men because of ‘adultery’, although it is not explicit that they were sold as slaves.²⁴

The Structure of Slavery

In law, a traditional distinction, maintained in Qing society, between *shidafu* ‘government officials’, ‘commoners’ and ‘slaves’, largely reflected a professional hierarchy. ‘Officials’ formed the ruling class. Commoners, comprising the bulk of the population, were officially termed *liangren* or ‘honourable people’ and despite internal distinctions of status, were treated the same by the law.

Beneath commoners were the *jianren* or ‘mean people’, a servile category that included slaves (government and private), prostitutes and government runners. On a regional basis, it also comprised ‘beggars’ and the indolent (in Jiangsu, Anhui and Zhejiang), ‘entertainment households’ (in Shanxi and Shaanxi) and boatmen (Guangdong).²⁵ However, under Emperor Shizong (r.1723–35), entertainers and boatmen were restored to ‘commoner’ status, in 1723 and 1729 respectively.²⁶ In Confucian ideology, these servile professions were considered non-productive, of the least social value and therefore of the lowest status. Moreover, whenever a commoner became an entertainer or a government runner, he entered the ‘servile’ category and lost all former privileges and status.²⁷ In the case of prostitutes, their servile status was visible as they were barred from wearing the same kind of clothes as commoners.²⁸

Confucian ideology strongly influenced sex roles in slavery. The former taught that, as the property of her master, a slave girl should obey him, and as a female should accept her lot in life. The traditional patrilineal kinship system also affected slave sex roles. James Watson has revealed that elite Hong Kong lineages possessed class hereditary, male slaves, purchased as children and kept in domestic service, who formed part of their master's patrilineal heritage. Such wealthy families also bought young girls as domestic slaves. However, because they were not members of their fathers' and later their husbands' lineages, they were treated in a more flexible manner than were male slaves, and were generally either married or sold as concubines around the age of twenty. Moreover, whereas the sale of young male slaves gradually disappeared towards the end of the Qing dynasty, the trade in slave girls continued.²⁹ Even today many Chinese males, especially single farmers, find it relatively cheap and consider it morally right to purchase a wife or child.³⁰

Slaves were divided into two main groups; 'official state slaves' (*guanbi*) owned by the imperial family, officials and government institutions, especially the army; and secondly privately owned slaves.

Official Slavery

State slaves comprised mainly war captives, people convicted of treason and their families, and other criminals.³¹ However, in pursuit of riches, officials also sometimes used their authority to enslave and sell people.³²

Political opponents of government committed of treason, and their adult male relatives, generally received a capital punishment, while female relatives and children aged under 16 years were given to 'meritorious statesmen' as slaves.³³ Lesser political criminals and their families were often sentenced to serve as slaves of government troops, or as slave soldiers.³⁴ Their treatment was generally harsher than that of ordinary slaves, and their slave status became hereditary. For example, in 1775, Emperor Qianlong rejected the request for manumission by the Lü Yiqian and Lü Fuguang, the grandson and great grandson of a certain Lü Liuliang, executed for treason in 1736, stating that as family members they were 'connected with rebels (*fanpan*)' and that 'It is not sufficient to demonstrate punishment and discipline, but repeatedly to proclaim the discipline of the law (*faji*).'³⁵

Members of the imperial court and top officials frequently owned hundreds of slaves. A popular saying states: 'in official families the young slaves are as many as (the trees) in a forest (*shihuan zhi jia tongpu cheng lin*)'.³⁶ However, the number of slaves permitted to government officials was regulated according to their rank. In 1799, upon entering official service, the renowned general Fu Chang'an is reputed to have had 358 slaves (*nubi*),³⁷ Governor-generals and Governors (*difu*) were allowed 50 servants (*jiaren*), while officials with a status below that of a Department Vice Magistrate (*zhoutong*; rank 6b) were permitted ten servants.³⁸ Until Ming times (1367–1644) forced labour was used in public

works, notably the building and maintenance of dykes along the Yellow River (Huanghe). However, such labour was inefficient and Emperor Kangxi (r.1672–1722) in 1673–74 switched to wage labour.³⁹

Private Slavery

Private slavery (*si nubi*) involved hereditary and purchased slaves belonging mainly to wealthy established merchant and land-owning families. To meet their demand, specialist slave markets developed. For example, the *Qian shu* reports:

The people of Wu (in Suzhou district) often sell men and women to distant places. The beautiful among the men they sell as actors, the ugly ones as slaves. The beautiful among the women they sell as wives, the ugly ones as slaves, [to as far away as] all the borders of the empire.⁴⁰

In order to satisfy the particular demands of the higher echelons of society, brokers, middlemen (*yaren*), and slave-traders specialized in finding and selecting desired ‘candidates’ for their future masters.

The sources often use terms such as ‘*nucai*’ (lit. ‘slave power or force’), a phrase also employed by Manchu officials when addressing the emperor, meaning ‘your humble servant’. As the *daoguang-edition* (1821–50) of the *Huizhou fuzhi* noted of private slave holding, ‘The ranks and obligations between masters and (slave) servants are always extremely strictly observed.’⁴¹

From the mid-seventeenth century (regulation of 1658, *shunzhi* 15), masters had to register their slaves with local authorities.⁴² The sources also mention red and white contracts (*hongqi, baiqi*). The former carried both the personal seals of the buyer, the seller and middleman, and the official red seal of the local authorities with whom the sale was registered. The white contract, which did not require an official seal or entry in the official slave registers, was nevertheless considered legal proof of sale, and a master could transform a ‘white contract slave’ after three years of service into a ‘red contract slave’. Slave girls were traditionally considered ‘red contract’ slaves until the 1730s, when the scholar and vice-president of the Board of Punishment, Zhang Zhao (1691–1745), changed the legal status of those for whom ‘red contracts’ could not be produced to that of ‘white contract’ slaves. However, this did little to improve the legal status of the latter who—due to reduced official supervision—also became more vulnerable to maltreatment by their masters.⁴³ The master had full legal right to punish his slaves for disobedience or neglect after registering the misdemeanour with the local authorities. If in the course of punishment, the slave unexpectedly died, the master would seldom be prosecuted but he did not have the right of life and death over his slave.⁴⁴

Hereditary slaves had a particular status. Should a family contract itself into slavery, or should a slave be granted a spouse by his master, any offspring of these groups would have slave status for life, unless manumitted or permitted to

purchase their freedom.⁴⁵ There were also regional groups of a hereditary servile category, who in 1727 were nominally classified as ‘free’. However, only in 1810 was real freedom granted to those amongst them who were neither kept by nor rendered service to a master, slave status being reaffirmed for those who were maintained by and served masters.⁴⁶

Some merchants during Qing times owned large numbers of slaves: A certain Fan Qingshong, the eldest son of Fan Yubing, the *huangshang* ('imperial merchant'),⁴⁷ who purchased commodities for the imperial family, employed several thousands of young servants (*tongpu*).⁴⁸ Many, notably imperial merchants, salt merchants and guild merchants, employed slaves in responsible business roles. Some handled large sums of money, goods and property and despite their legally subordinate status, enjoyed greater freedom than many commoners. However, such freedom was intended to promote the business of, and was dependant upon the slave's absolute dependence on, his master. Any ‘liberties’ he might have was directly linked to his status as his master’s slave and property.⁴⁹

Agricultural slavery came closest to the Western concept of chattel slavery. Unfree labour in China emerged before the Han dynasty, notably on large-scale land-holdings.⁵⁰ From Song times, the development in south-east China of large private estates at the expense of peasant holdings resulted in an increase in peasant tenancy and impoverishment, which in turn led to indebtedness and an increase in both bondage and slavery. During the Ming dynasty, the distinction between landlord-tenant and master-bondsman began to blur.⁵¹ By contrast, in north China, lower demographic pressure on land resulted in the emergence of peasant ‘labourers’ (*gumu* or *gugong*),⁵² but even there work conditions could be remarkably ‘unfree’.⁵³

On the Manchu estates, slave flight was of such proportions that it gradually undermined the *quan* system. Some landlords continued to employ agricultural slaves, but most leased their land to tenants or used wage labour. However, both tenants and hired labourers frequently suffered living and working conditions similar to those of slaves, and may be considered to have formed a ‘quasi-slave’ category. By contrast, the *baoyi*, a group of hereditary slaves of the Manchu princes who occupied positions of trust on their masters estates, were even allowed to upgrade their social status and acquire official positions through special payments or examinations.⁵⁴

The main type of slavery in late imperial China was certainly the *jianu*, ‘house’ or ‘domestic’ slavery. Slaves in rich households were employed in a variety of roles from domestic servants and personal attendants to the family, accountants, and rent or debt collectors. Some of these slaves themselves possessed slave-girls and maid-servants, and addressed them as low status ‘free’ folk in arrogant language. Hence the term *haonu* ('bullying underlings').⁵⁵

Some wealthier ordinary households also employed one or two usually female ‘servant-slaves’ whose degree of servitude is often difficult to ascertain, as Chinese sources usually refer to children but not necessarily adults offered for

sale as ‘slaves’. Common folk could theoretically own but could not buy or sell slaves. However participation in the slave-trade became increasingly common, especially in years of famine, when poor families sold their children in order to keep them and themselves alive.⁵⁶

Besides domestic work, female slaves were employed from early times as prostitutes and in entertainment.⁵⁷ In the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was extensive export of such females via Hong Kong to serve as prostitutes in overseas Chinese communities as widely dispersed as Singapore and San Francisco that were characterized by a heavy gender imbalance in favour of males. Although a minority emigrated voluntarily, intending to earn money for their families, most were sold into prostitution by impoverished parents, kidnapped or enticed away.⁵⁸

The Slave Import and Export Trade

During Tang times, many Koreans (*Xinlo*) were captured and imported as slaves by Chinese pirates, despite official government attempts to stop it.⁵⁹ East African (*Kunlun*) slaves were also imported into South China, probably by early Muslim traders. However, their numbers were few, they were regarded as a luxury, and they had little economic importance.⁶⁰ Qing sources rarely mention the existence of black slaves.

Chinese slaves were also exported, notably in the nineteenth century when China was considered by Westerners a vast reservoir of cheap labour. From 1821 to 1850, there are indications that British opium dealers also purchased Chinese women as prostitutes and males whom they sold as labourers in the New World.⁶¹ From the mid-nineteenth century a network developed for the export of ‘unfree’ labourers who were very often enticed, intimidated and kidnapped into servitude. They were commonly shipped through the ports of Xiamen (Amoy), Fujian and Shantou, north-east Guangdong, to the Peruvian silver mines, Cuban sugar plantations, or Californian gold mines (a Chinese name for San Francisco is *Jiujinshan*, or ‘Old Gold Mountains’). Many died *en-route* because of appalling conditions aboard the ‘floating hells’ that transported them.⁶² Those who resisted were often tortured and beaten.⁶³

Conclusion

There exists considerable debate over the existence and nature of slavery in late imperial China. I define slaves in China as ‘unfree individuals who were the personal property of a master, compelled to do forced labour’. There is a need to be aware of the specific forms and characteristics of slavery in late imperial China, which were not identical with the slave systems of ancient Greece, Rome, the plantations of America, or of African societies.

One important difference was the existence of ‘debt-bondage’ in which individuals voluntarily offered themselves or their children as slaves. Also,

slaves in the Qing era were not totally excluded from society. Rather, they were integrated into it, at least legally, as ‘mean’ people, much inferior to ‘commoners’, but nevertheless officially enjoying a particular social and legal status, together with certain rights. This points to the somewhat hazy boundaries of ‘slavery’ which, it could be argued, embraced slaves, other people of ‘mean’ or inferior status, and even some commoners. It is also affected by Confucian ideology in which women were more or less considered the property of males.

Thus there existed in late imperial China a profitable trade in human beings, only a part of whom were ‘slaves’ in the strict legal sense. It included the sale of young Chinese girls of non-slave status as concubines to wealthy Chinese land-owners, merchants, or officials. The lucrative and flourishing coolie-trade in the second half of the nineteenth century, and trafficking in female prostitutes that continued until 1949, are further examples. A clear distinction between slavery and ‘normal’ exploitation still needs to be made.

An examination of unfree labour in the Qing era clearly indicates that, as in previous dynasties, slavery generally did not play an important economic role,⁶⁴ although at certain periods, as after the Manchu conquest, large numbers of slaves were employed in agricultural production on Manchu estates (*quan*). These estates persisted to the end of the Qing dynasty (1911), but slave production on them was gradually undermined and replaced by tenant farming. Moreover, most Han Chinese enslaved by Manchus served as soldiers.

The dominant form of slavery in late imperial China was domestic slavery, mostly in the households of aristocrats (including members of the imperial court family), officials, land-owners and wealthy merchants. This demand was not dictated directly by the search for cheap labour, as such slaves were of minor *economic* importance, and any analysis of it should incorporate a study traditional Chinese ideology, notably in relation to gender.

NOTES

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10. Balázs, 'Beiträge zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte der T'ang-Zeit', p.13.
11. Kuhn, *Status und Ritus*, p.353.
12. Jaschok and Miers, *Women and Chinese Patriarchy*, p.266; Watson, 'Transactions in People', pp.223–50.
13. A.Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680. Vol.1: The Land Below the Winds*, (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1988), p.132. Watson, 'Chattel Slavery in Chinese Peasant Society', pp.361–75, 361; J.P.McDermott, 'Bondservants in the T'ai-hu Basin during the Late Ming: A Case of Mistaken Identities', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 40, 4 (1981), pp.675–701, 677–8, 685.
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19. Meijer, 'Slavery at the End of the Ch'ing Dynasty', p.330.
 20. Quoted in Qingyuan et al., *Qingdai nubi zhidu*, p.42; see also ibid, pp.40–41.
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Nobi: A Korean System of Slavery

BOK RAE KIM

Introduction

This paper analyses the Korean *nobi* or slavery system and examines the causes and effects of its abolition in 1894. The institution of *nobi* existed in Korea from early times but its significance has fluctuated over time. Some scholars consider that the *nobis* were slaves, others that they were serfs. *Nobis* can be generally divided into two categories: public (belonging to the government) and private (belonging to individuals). The latter can be divided further into interior *nobis* (domestic or resident) and exterior *nobis* (living a distance from their masters).

Under the *Chosun* dynasty (1392–1910) Korean society was stratified into three hierarchical groups. The first was the *yanban*, comprising nobles, government officials, the educated class and the social elite in general. They were exempt from taxes, military duty, and corvée, and could be tried only by a special tribunal. The second was the *yangmin*, or commoners, and the third the *chonmin*, or base people.

Wealth was measured by possession of *nobis* and land, and formed the most important element of wealth. As stated in *Annals of King Sejo*: ‘In general, if the land is a human life, the *nobi* is like a member of the *yangban*. Accordingly, both are the same importance for the *yangban*.¹ In consequence, rules on the inheritance of *nobis* were frequently contested and were often modified, almost never in favour of the *nobi*. Orlando Patterson, who delineated seven models of hereditary slavery, termed the Chinese model ‘*deterior condicio*’ because in law children inherited the status of the parent of inferior rank. However, in China the reality was often different, in contrast to Korea where the law was invariably applied.² This was noted as early as the mid eighteenth century by the Korean scholar *Yi Ik* (1681–1763) who, pointing out that prior to the *Koryo* dynasty (918–1392), *nobis* had not existed on the peninsula while in China their servile condition was not hereditary, criticized severely the Korean hereditary *nobi* system as ‘without parallel anywhere in the world’.³

There is considerable debate as to whether the Korean *nobi* system constituted slavery, serfdom or both. The scholarly consensus is that the *nobi* was a slave until at least the *Koryo* dynasty. However, there is debate as to changes in peasant

and *nobi* status under the *Chosun* dynasty with the development of a landed property system that altered the relationship between the dominant and subordinate classes. *Tokumithu Hukuda*, a Japanese economic historian and representative of the ‘colonial’ school, considered the *nobi* system under the *Chosun* dynasty as slavery rather than serfdom.⁴ By contrast, in the 1950s Korean Marxist historians of the ‘nationalist’ school followed a stereotyped periodization of history, divided into successive eras of ‘slavery’, ‘feudalism’ and ‘capitalism’. Defining a slave as someone deprived of the means of production and subordinated to extra-economic coercion, and a serf (even if he could not move freely) as possessing both the means of production and the labour necessary to produce his own means of livelihood, they identified the *nobis* as serfs. This interpretation has been accepted by most subsequent Korean historians.⁵

However, some Korean historians have translated the word *nobi* as ‘slave’, as have most Western ‘liberal’ historians. Orlando Patterson unhesitatingly classified the *nobi* system as the most advanced form of slavery in the Orient. Emphasizing the social, cultural and psychological aspects of Korean society, Patterson recognized the essence of a slave in the *nobi*’s ‘natal alienation’ or exclusion from the officially recognized community. ‘Socially dead’, slaves formed an inherently alienated and generally dishonoured people subject to permanent and violent domination by others.⁶ More recently, James B. Palais has given support to the argument that *nobis* were slaves, although he defines them more traditionally as property, the object of purchase, sale, donation and inheritance.⁷ The reality is probably more nuanced than allowed by any of the historical models outlined above.

The Mode of Existence of Nobis: Slave or Serf?

The *nobi* system peaked from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, when *nobi* numbers increased sharply. In 1478, *Sim Won* gave an exaggerated estimate of 8 to 9 private *nobis* to 1 or 2 commoners.⁸ The 1484 census effected by prime minister *Han Myong-hoe* (1415–87), indicated that *nobis* numbered possibly 3.6 million, 40 per cent of the total population (9 million). 3.15 million of these were private and 450,000 were public *nobis*, of whom over 1 million were on the run. The 1606, 1609 and 1690 censuses reveal that by then *nobis* had increased to about 30 to 40 per cent of the population. The question is, were these *nobis* slaves or serfs?⁹

The serfdom thesis is based largely on the work of the North Korean scholar, *Kim Sok-hyong*, who divided *nobis* into ‘resident’ and ‘non-resident’ groups. The former lived under the same roof as their masters, for whom they performed domestic and the greater part of agricultural labour. The latter dwelt far from their masters’ houses, cultivating land for which they paid rent to their masters, and possessed their own personal property. In reality, their situation was similar to that of tenant farmers. *Kim* therefore considered ‘resident’ *nobis* to be slaves,

TABLE 1
MASTER-*NOBI* ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS

Public <i>nobis</i>		Private <i>nobis</i>			
TRIBUTE-PAYING	CORVÉE	TRIBUTE-PAYING	<i>domestic</i>	CORVÉE 'resident', cultivating master's land	Agricultural Belonging to great estates Métayage: tenancy with a 50:50 share.

and 'non-resident' *nobis* to be serfs. As the latter group were far more numerous, he concluded that serfdom characterized *Chosun* society.¹⁰

More recently, several South-Korean historians reviewed the issue not from the viewpoint of 'residence' but from that of the *master-nobis* economic relationship in which the latter are divided into public and private *nobis* (see Table 1). Whereas under the *Koryo* dynasty (918–1392), private *nobis* were in the minority, under the *Chosun* dynasty (1392–1910) they enjoyed an overwhelming majority. Public and private *nobis* were divided further into tribute-paying and corvée groups, and the latter sub-divided into domestic and agricultural *nobis*. Domestic *nobis*, members of their masters' household, performed chores such as cooking, cleaning, gathering firewood, running errands, escort, and farm works. Some were celibate, totally dependent on their masters, but most received a monthly salary, supplemented by earnings gained outside their regular working hours, that enabled them to maintain a relatively independent family life.

Agricultural *nobis* were sub-divided into three categories. The first comprised domestic *nobis* who cultivated the domain directly managed by their masters. The second involved those who laboured on the great estates (*nongjang*) in return for use of their own land, which however was inalienable. The decline of great estates and the diminution of the *nobi* population led this kind of large-scale tenant system to disappear by the end of the seventeenth century. The third category worked in a métayage system, sharing the crop equally with their master, that emerged as the dominant agricultural system in the eighteenth century.

Besides cultivating his land, tribute-paying *nobis* theoretically had to pay their master an annual tribute of two rolls of cotton cloth, if male (*nos*) and 1.5 rolls if female (*bis*), some masters demanding more.¹¹ However, they were permitted their own houses, families, land and fortunes, and were registered officially as independent family units. In this sense, they most closely resembled commoners.

Indeed, in certain cases *nobis* enjoyed advantages over commoners. In some instances, they were richer, and unlike commoners *nobis* were exempt from military service. Otherwise, they were generally exempt from corvées, to the

degree that some commoners voluntarily committed themselves to domination by nobles in order to escape corvée. However, whereas women were ordinarily exempt from taxation, taxes were imposed on *nobi* women, to the extent that for the tribute *nobi* family tax burden was doubled. Moreover, the status of *nobi* meant that, at the moment of the master's succession, the *nobi* family could be divided among inheritors.

This still does not settle the question of whether the *nobis* were slaves or serfs. 'Slave' for H. Kreissig is *a priori* a judicial concept, applied to a person who is the legal property of another.¹² Legally, most fifteenth to seventeenth century *nobis* could be classified as chattel slaves. They constituted part of the moveable property of their masters, as is testified in inheritance settlements, where sometimes even the foetus of a female *nobi* was subject to division amongst heirs. Nevertheless, censuses from 1670 indicate a larger number of *nobi* listed as independent heads of a family, signifying the status of tribute or métayage *nobi* which, some have argued, approximated more to the condition of serf than slave.¹³

Here it is necessary to distinguish between legal status and practice. In law, the status of *nobi* remained largely unchanged from *Koryo* to *Chosun* times. However, unlike Greek, Roman or New World slave societies, where slaves were commercialized, and their value measured in money terms, in *Chosun* society, trade in servile humans was too small to encourage the emergence of a large-scale *nobi* market. For example, from 1687–90, only 14 of the 5992 *nobis* of ten townships of *Daegu* were sold.¹⁴

In reality, the *nobi* was more than a chattel. The *Annals of King Taejong* stated: 'The *nobi* is also a human being like us; therefore, it is reasonable to treat him generously' and 'In our country, we love our *nobis* like a part of our body.'¹⁵ The basis of the *master-nobi* relationship, like that between ruler and subjects, was power, but the exercise of raw power alone encouraged resistance. Hence the emergence of an ideology of patronage and mutual obligation. Like a feudal lord who regarded his serf as an annex to his landed property, the master considered his *nobis* as an extension of his own body, simultaneously objects of possession and people with which he had an intimate relationship, to be both nurtured and cared for when sick, and when necessary chastized, so as to win their voluntary and devoted service.¹⁶

Patterson defined the slave as someone 'socially dead', and enslavement as involving: (1) a symbolic rejection by the slave of his past and kinship, (2) a change of name, (3) the imposition of some mark of servitude, and (4) the acquisition of a new status in the master's family or economic organization.¹⁷ In *Chosun* Korea, *nobis* were often given derogatory first names, that alluded to a dog, filth, or an impersonal month of birth. Thus when, in 1456, in return for assisting *Sejo* (r. 1455–68) to usurp the throne, some public *nobis* were emancipated. Many immediately adopted new, higher status names. *Nobis* were also officially denied a family name, and thus any kinship affiliation. However, throughout the *Chosun* era, the same was true of other 'inferior' groups, like

butchers, prostitutes and entertainers, as well as of commoners, family names like *Kim* or *Yi* being the privilege of the *yangban* ruling class.

Further nominal marks of servile status were hairstyle and clothing. Traditionally, *nobis* wore their hair short (at least until the *Koryo* period), while a 1603 law reserved the wearing of silk for nobles, ordering that commoners and ‘inferior’ people (including *nobis*) dress in cotton or hemp.

Although proscriptions on hairstyle and clothing were little observed during the *Chosun* era, the social hierarchy of noble, commoner and ‘inferior’ people was strictly maintained. Nobles displayed contempt for all subordinate groups, who by contrast had to show politeness to the former and were disproportionately penalized for offences against a noble. Acknowledgement of superior status was also enshrined in Confucianism which only in the sixteenth century, with the advent of the *Chosun* dynasty, emerged as a powerful instrument of state. By law, should a *non-yangban* beat or insult a *yangban*, he would receive 100 cudgels/ three years imprisonment or 60 cudgels respectively, irrespective of whether he was a commoner or of the ‘inferior’ category that included *nobis*.¹⁸

Nevertheless, no distinction of social etiquette separated commoners and *nobis*. They worked together, ate at the same table, even from the same bowl, and participated in the same festivals. In 1600, *O Hui-mun*, a noble, noted that only he and his noble family excluded themselves from a popular spring feast held after the final weeding of rice paddies. Moreover, *nobis* sometimes enjoyed sexual relations with the (non-noble) master’s wife or daughter.¹⁹

In summary, on the economic, judicial and socio-cultural levels, it is evident that the *nobis* of the *Chosun* era were not ‘socially dead’ and that the *nobi* system at its zenith between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries may be defined as ‘a serfdom developed under slavery’.²⁰

The Disintegration of the *Nobi* System during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

From the eighteenth century, the *nobi* system declined for four principal reasons: a diminution in *nobi* numbers, a collapse in *nobi* prices, a change in the meaning of ‘*nobi*’, and legal reforms.

First, the traditional social hierarchy dissolved in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as the proportion of nobles in the population increased and that of subordinate groups, including *nobis*, sharply decreased (see Table 2).

From the start of the seventeenth century, the noble class was differentiated into two categories: a small number of governing *yangbans*, and the majority of whom were excluded from power. While certain *yangbans* were ruined or eliminated in political disputes, many *yangmins* or *chonmins* succeeded in acquiring nominal noble status through military exploits or economic power. At the same time, at times of financial crisis, the monarch was tempted to sell excessive numbers of noble titles which rich commoners and even members of

TABLE 2

KOREAN SOCIAL STRUCTURE: CHANGING PERCENTAGES OF YANGBANS,
YANGMINS, AND NOBIS

Place	Year	<i>Yangbans (%)</i>	<i>Yangmins (%)</i>	<i>Nobis (%)</i>
Dan Sung	1717	19.9	52.5	27.6
	1786	32.2	59.0	8.8
	1711	19.5	72.3	8.2
	1798	57.6	41.0	1.4
	1861	80.4	19.3	0.3
Dae Gu	1690	9.2	53.7	37.1
	1732	18.7	54.6	26.6
	1789	37.5	57.5	5.0
	1858	70.3	28.2	1.5
Ul San	1729	26.3	59.8	13.9
	1765	40.98	57.01	2.0
	1804	53.5	45.6	0.9
	1867	65.5	34.0	0.6

Sources: H.Yomo, 'Observation on Chosun Population according to Their Social Status'; Chong Suk-jong, *Research on Social Upheavals*, p.248; Yi Chong-bum and Choi Won-ku [in Korean], *An introduction to Korean Modern and Contemporary History* (Seoul: Hye An Publishing Company, 1995), p.38.

the 'inferior' *chonmin* group were eager to obtain in order to acquire status, exemption from military service, and enhance their wealth through exploiting those of subordinate social status. However, the net impact was to degrade noble status and prestige. Some nobles facing bankruptcy even provoked revolt against the state. For example, the *Chinju* Uprising of 1862 was led by a peasant of *yangban* origin.

The position of the nobles, almost exclusively the proprietors of *nobis*, was weakened further by the fall in the number of *nobis* which was due less to legal manumission, gained by finding a *nobi* replacement or through military enrolment, as through flight on a massive scale. In the sixteenth century, the estimated average annual flight rate for *nobis* was 20 per cent, a tendency which was encouraged by the disappearance of official documentation on *nobis* and general disorder during the Japanese invasion of 1592–98: in 1606, the estimated rate of *nobi* flight in *Dansung* was 51 per cent. In a vain attempt to stem such flight, nobles implemented a joint system of family control over *nobis* through splitting ownership over them at the moment of succession.²¹

Second, the price of *nobis* declined. At the height of the *nobi* system between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, *nobis* gradually replaced land as the dominant form of property and the trade in *nobis* prospered. However, the price of a *nobi* fell dramatically from an average of 100 *yangs* (equal to 20 to 30 sacks of rice) at the peak of the system, to 10 *yangs* by the eighteenth century.²² With reference to the golden age of the *nobi* system, it was stated in the mid-

eighteenth century: ‘Long ago, owning *nobis* signified a large fortune; nowadays, there is nothing but the land.’²³

In part, the fall in the price of *nobis* was due to increasing state restrictions over the buying and selling of *nobis*. This was due to official desire to minimize ownership disputes, and avoid social problems emanating from forced lifelong separations of the *nobi* family. However, the greatest impact of the state, through regulation and sale of titles, was to reduce the concentration of individual noble wealth. Smaller estates resulted in diminished demand for agricultural labour. Thus in the eighteenth century, the trade in male *nobis* (*nos*) stagnated, while that of female *nobis* (*bis*), who worked chiefly in domestic service, quadrupled. According to a statistical survey on the purchase and sale of *nobis*, the proportion of male *nos* to female *bis* in the 20 to 30 age group was 1:4. This fact reflects the increase of the luxurious demand of *yangbans* for the female *bis*. In general, the price of *bis* was higher than that of *nos* because of the possibility of reproduction of *nobi* population in the former case. However, in the early part of the eighteenth century, a 26 year-old *bi* was sold at 40 *yangs*, while the price for a 22 year-old *bi* with her one year-old son was only 13 *yangs*. In the nineteenth century, there was almost no traffic in *nos*, but mostly traffic in *bis*. Therefore, the traffic in *nobis* was not in need of labour force, but of domestic chores and other purposes (e.g. concubinage).²⁴

The decline in price accelerated a change in the *nobi* structure from the traditional hereditary to a fixed duration contract labour system. For instance, during the 1829 famine, a poor farmer sold his 14 year old son, *Kwan-chol*, to *Nam*’s noble family for six *yangs*, on condition that his servile status not be hereditary. Eleven years later, *Kwan-chol* was re-sold for eight *yangs* on the same condition. In theory he was a *nobi*, but in reality served more like a *gogong* or hired labourer. *Gogongs* in the early *Chosun* dynasty were commoners. However, as long-term (often unsalaried) employees, they were relatively subordinate to their employer, in contrast to China where *gogongs* served their employers, who gave them board and lodging, as fixed-term salaried employees. In years of famine, some of those aged under sixteen chose, in exchange for assistance, to become adopted by a wealthy person, whom they served for life. These long-term *gogongs*, who predominated in the early *Chosun* era, increased in number in the later *Chosun* period as small farmers evicted from their land or otherwise impoverished assigned their children aged 13 and less, under state supervision, to the wealthy as *gogongs*. According to *Annals of King Injo*, in the province of *Pyong An* (currently in North Korea) almost half the population were *gogongs*.²⁵

As their numbers increased, so their status gradually changed. By the latter half of the *Chosun* they had become short-term *gogongs*, free contract labourers who were hired in the busy farming season. They were not personally subordinate to their employer and were even sufficiently free to offer their services on the open market when wage labour developed. With ever dwindling numbers of *nobis*, the hereditary *nobi* system became restricted to the upper

nobility, and its primarily productive function faded. In consequence, *gogongs* played an increasingly important role in farm work and their inferiority to their employer decreased markedly.

This inevitably affected how *nobis* were viewed. In the earlier *Chosun* period, masters justified the existence of *nobis* and their involvement in sometimes degrading work, by terming them ‘descendants of criminals’, a stigma enshrined in the ancient law code of *Kija* (c.1122 BCE–323/194 CE). However, whereas the enslavement of criminals had been practised since at least the Old *Chosun* era (c.2333–108 BCE), there is no support for the assertion that this was the origin of the *nobi* system, nor that the latter was so ancient an institution that it could not be challenged.²⁶ By far the majority of *nobi* owners were members of the ruling elite, and it served their aim of maintaining the *status quo* to use the above arguments. Indeed, the state recognised the need to recognise the *nobi* system in order to keep the loyalty of the nobles, while the latter argued that the *nobi* system was essential to preserving social and political stability: ‘Saving our honour (more important than our life) by grace of *nobi* system, we (*yangban* class) have rendered devoted service to the Royal Court. Just for this reason, our country is highly reputed as the kingdom of courteous people in the East Asia’.²⁷

Masters also attempted to establish a link between the hereditary nature of *nobi* status and *nobi* loyalty to them. This was sustained by the myth of the faithful *nobi* that emerged forcibly in the heyday of the *nobi* system in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A celebrated case was *Sim Sokpyong*, a humble *nobi* born in the first half of the sixteenth century, and secretly liberated by his master in appreciation of his extraordinary talent. *Sim* passed the civil service examination, and served as governor successively of eight provinces before finally becoming a Cabinet member. Nevertheless, upon encountering the son of his old master, he unhesitatingly stopped, stepped down from a luxurious coach, and he bowed deeply. He subsequently entreated the king to confer his government post on the son, as a token of his gratitude to his old master—an act of fidelity applauded by all. This myth was further consolidated by Confucianism which taught that hierarchical social, familial and sexual relations were predetermined and respect for them was morally virtuous. *Nobis* who failed to respect this could be accused not only of personal disloyalty but also of intrigue against the state. This justified a life and death power over *nobis*, some of whom were lynched by their masters. King *Sejong* (1418–50) failed in his bid to legislate against masters who killed their *nobi* without reason because of the opposition of his ministers who claimed respect for masters was more importance than the life of a *nobi*.²⁸

The Japanese invasion of 1592–98 so weakened the Korean power structure that it permitted the emergence, for the first time, of systematic criticism of the *nobi* system, initiated by *Yu Hyong-won* (1622–73), an intellectual, who proclaimed that its hereditary nature was ‘completely contrary to reason’. Others went further, including *Yu Su-won* (1694–1755) who rejected traditional justifications for the *nobi* system and particularly condemned the *Koryo* ban on officials

acceding to a high-ranking post unless they could prove that there had been no *nobi* blood in the family for the previous eight generations. Should the contrary be the case, their children would be accorded slave status. Rather, *Yu* argued, ‘the state should love all people without discrimination.’²⁹

Such critiques received an appreciative hearing at a court that, under growing financial pressure, looked increasingly to public *nobis* to perform military service or contribute taxes in grain. It therefore launched a reform of the system. It first fixed the number of *nobi* per province, then reduced the tribute payable by public *nobis* before in 1774 abolishing tribute payments for female *nobis*, both public and private. It incorporated some private male *nobis* into the army, but suspended tribute obligations in times of famine, imposed ceilings on *nobi* prices, promoted the movement of *nobi* into commoner ranks, barred owners from hunting down runaway *nobis*, and protected the rights of the newly enfranchised. For private owners who traditionally relied on the state to back the *nobi* system, these were major blows.

Sources of Supply

Nobis were obtained through either natural reproduction of the *nobi* population (the children of *nobi* and of mixed *nobi*-non-*nobi* unions), through purchase, *commendatio* (commendation), naturalization or through ‘enslavement’ of war captives, criminals and debtors.

The application of *nobi* status to criminals and their family members was originally the main source of *nobis*. As the status was hereditary, the subsequent development of the *nobi* system relied largely on natural *nobi* reproduction. However, the key issue here was whether status was inherited along matrilineal or patrilineal lines. In the *Koryo* era, *nobis* could legally marry only other *nobis*, the status, role, and master of a child by a *nobi* being determined on matrilineal lines. However, nobles increasingly ignored this ruling and attached *nobi* status to all children born with one or both parents of *nobi* status, and the state formally recognised such practices by applying the law of *deterior condicio*, which determined that children inherited the status of the parent of inferior rank. Some scholars attribute the resulting increase in the number of privately owned *nobis*, as a principal cause of the collapse of *Koryo* dynasty. The law was applied with few exceptions. One of these was the case of *Lim-bok*, a private *nobi* who in the 1480s persuaded the court of *Songjong* (1469–94) to liberate him and his four sons only after upping by 1000 sacks his original offer to contribute 2000 sacks to the royal treasury.³⁰

The increase in the number of privately owned *nobis* through mixed *nobi*-*yangmin* marriages, the rate of which was estimated at 50 per cent of all *nobi* marriages in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, continued under the *Chosun* dynasty.³¹ The result was an increase in *nobi* numbers, as *yangmin* women who married *nobi* men acquired *nobi* status, as did the children of all mixed *nobi*-

yangmin marriages. This also meant a reduced *yangmin* population upon which to impose military service and taxes.

As in mixed *yangmin-nobi* marriages, most husbands were *yangmin*, the state changed the law, applying a patrilineal ruling to decide the status of children of such mixed unions, and thus augment the number of commoners. Noble opposition to such a move was such, however, that the paternal *nobi* law was abolished, and *deterior condicio* restored.

As a result, *nobi* numbers increased rapidly from 1636. The total Korean population almost doubled from 1636 to 1663 when it reached 809,000 families (equivalent to an estimated 4.1 million people). It grew again to 1,313,000 families (6.6 million people) in 1669 at which level it remained for about a century (the peak of 1,783,000 families, or 8.9 million people, was reached in 1750).³² Nevertheless, the decline in the number of commoners continued, accelerating due to the warfare, famine, epidemics and emigration that followed the Japanese and Manchu invasions of 1592 and 1636 respectively. War and the decline in the tax paying population had nefarious consequences for state defence and finances, eventually in 1731 forcing the state to re-instate the matrilineal *nobi* law.³³ This resulted in a decrease in the *nobi* and an increase in the commoner population, not least because rich *nobis* sought marriage with *yangmin* women in order to legally emancipate any children they might have.

Other legal measures further undermined the *nobi* system. In 1744, enslavement for debt, which in the main affected ruined commoners, was abolished. The state also interfered with the master's right to punish his *nobis*. According to the Ming Dynasty penal code,³⁴ should a *nobi* provoke a noble to the extent that the latter retaliated by killing him without prior authorization, the noble should receive 100 cudgels, but if the *nobi* was innocent, he should receive 60 cudgels and a year's imprisonment. In reality, the judicial system treated *master-nobi* relations as a private affair and did not intervene when abuses occurred.³⁵ However, from the late 1770s, central authorities started to enforce punishment for masters who murdered their *nobis*, while applying lesser penalties than capital punishment for *nobis* who, under alleviating circumstances, killed their master.³⁶ Also, in 1783, King *Chongjo* (1776–1800), abolished the system of the 'guilt-by-association' which forced all the family members of a prisoner committing a serious crime such as a treason against the state to become *nobis*.³⁷ This dealt a lethal blow to the system of hereditary 'enslavement' which was the hallmark of the Korean *nobi* system.³⁸ In 1801, the public *nobi* system was abolished, 66,000 public-tribute-paying *nobis* being emancipated.³⁹

Epilogue: The Final Collapse of the Nobi System

From 1801, the remaining private *nobi* system was steadily eroded by the growth of an independent small farmer class.⁴⁰ Traditionally, most *nobis*, notably resident *nobis* under the direct control of their masters, were very poor,

attempting to gain some revenue through night-time silkworm raising or spinning. A small minority of resident *nobis* had a usufruct of land and became small producers, but they were never fully autonomous because, upon command, they were obliged to provide statute labour in the master's domain.⁴¹

However, some *nobi* groups, while never being able to aspire to the same wealth as nobles, who held a virtual monopoly of lucrative official posts, were as able as commoners to acquire wealth through inheritance, and the clearing or purchase of small plots of land, and in addition sometimes received gifts from their masters. Those charged with great responsibilities by their noble masters, used his status to extract 'taxes' from his clients and subordinates, used his name to clandestinely run their own business ventures or during famines, lend out his or their own money or corn at extortionate rates.⁴² 'Tenant' *nobis* living at a distance could often easily pocket a considerable part of production originally earmarked for their absent masters. Some came to own their own *nobis*; in the late sixteenth century there is allusion to some owning up to 100 *nobis*.⁴³ Possession of private properties afforded them the opportunity to substitute corvée labour for rent in kind or money, and to acquire greater social status.

Moreover, growing commercialization of agriculture, with increasing circulation of money and peasant participation in lucrative cash crop cultivation, notably of tobacco and silkworms, led to the establishment of an independent small farmer class. In consequence, the percentage of *nobis* declined to 1.5 per cent of the total population by 1858 (it had stood at 37 per cent in 1690).⁴⁴ Its subsequent demise was not long delayed. In 1887 the hereditary *nobi* system, and in 1894 the entire *nobi* system, was officially abolished.

NOTES

1. S.Suk-joo, H.Myong-hoe, *et al.* [in Chinese], 'Sejo Sillok' ['Annals of King Sejo'], Vol.46 (1471).
2. O.Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp.141–4.
3. See Y.Ik [in Chinese], 'On the law aiming to replace freed ex-*nobis* in servitude', in *Sôngho sasôl* ['Collected Essays'], 9 (1740).
4. See T.Hukuda [in Japanese], 'Kankoku no Keizai Soshiki to Keizai Tan'I' ['Korean Economic Organization and Economic Unity'] in *Economic Studies*, 1 (1904).
5. L.Young-hoon [in Korean], 'The evolution and the characteristic of the *nobi* system in Korean history', in Yoksa-Hakhoe, *Nobi Serf and Slave: A Comparative History of Unfree People* (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1998), pp.304–8; A.Dirlit, 'The Universalization of a Concept: "feudalisme" to Feudalism in Chinese Marxist Historiography', in T.J.Byres and H.Mukhia (eds.), *Feudalism and Non-European Societies* (London: Biblio Dist Center (Totowa), 1985), p.208.
6. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, pp.7–14, 141–4.
7. J.B.Palais, *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), pp.208–70.
8. They were dubbed *sangmin*, but the more polite term is *yangmin*.

9. See L.Young-hoon, 'The evolution and the characteristic of the *nobi* system', pp. 363–6.
10. K.Sok-hyong [in Korean], *'The Structure of the Peasant Class in Chosun's Feudal Age'* (South Korea: Shinsuwon, 1993), p.89.
11. The Korean term '*no-bi*' corresponds to the Chinese compound word '*nu-bi*' (male/female servant), and the former is etymologically derived from the latter.
12. H.Kreissig, 'L'Esclavage à L'Epoque Hellénistique', *Formes d'exploitation du Travail et Rapports Sociaux dans l'Antiquité classique*, in *Revue trimestrielle: Recherches internationales à la lumière du marxisme*, 84, 3 (1975), p.99.
13. Y.Ik, *et al.* [in Chinese], *Sukyo Jiplok* ['Collection of Royal Orders'], Vol.8, 1743; L.Younghoon, 'The evolution and the characteristic of the *nobi* system', pp.413–5.
14. H.Yomo [in Japanese], 'Licho Jinko ni Kan suru Mibun Kaikyu betsuteki Kansatsu' ['Observation on Chosun Population according to their Social Status'], in *Chosun Keizei no Kenkyu 3 (Research on Chosun Economy)* (Seoul: Kyongsung Imperial University, 1938) p.406.
15. Ha Yun, Yu Kwan, *et al* [in Chinese], The second year of King Taejong's reign (the twentieth binary term of the sexagenary cycle), *Taejong Sillok* ['Annals of King Taejong'], 12 (1409–1413).
16. J.Sung-jong [in Korean], *'Research on Nobi Status in the Earlier Chosun Period'* (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1995), pp.299–307; see also Yu Hui-chun [in Chinese], 'Diary 4', dated 27 Feb., year of *Kapsul* (the eleventh year of the sexagenary cycle; the Year of the Dog) in set of 11 volumes (1567–77).
17. See Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, p.52.
18. K.Jae-ro, *et al.* [in Chinese], 'The Criminal Law Act', *Supplementary Volume of Kyongkuk Deajon* (Chosun Statecraft), 1746.
19. Y.Bang, Y.Jung-gu, *et al* [in Chinese], 'The first year of Prince Kwang Hae', *Diary of Prince Kwang Hae* (1633).
20. See L.Young-hoon, 'The evolution and the characteristic of the *nobi* system', p.401
21. Y.Yun-gu [in Korean], *Research on Status and Social Change in the later Chosun Period* (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1993), p.211.
22. In the early fourteenth century, a *nobi* was worth 150 rolls of cotton cloth, roughly equivalent to one-third of the price of a horse (400–500 rolls of cotton). In 1398, the price of a *nobi* was fixed at 400 rolls of cotton, and in the latter half of the fifteenth century, at 4000 bills (equal to 20 sacks of rice or 40 rolls of cotton—a horse being worth the equivalent of 30–40 rolls); see also K.Jae-ro, *et al.*, 'The Criminal Law Act'; C.Suk-jong [in Korean], *Research on Social Upheavals in the Later Chosun Period* (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1983), pp.177–233.
23. Unknown date archive [in Chinese], *Discourse on Vice of the Equalized Tax Law Office*, Ilsan Ko 605–3.
24. C.Suk-jong, *Research on Social Upheavals*, pp.206–7.
25. Y.Kyong-yo, *et al.* [in Chinese], 'The third year of King Injo's reign (the 36th binary term of the sexagenary cycle)', *Injo Sillok* ['Annals of King Injo'], 1653.
26. See Y.Jung-am [in Chinese], *Collection*, 6 (1736) (xylographic book).
27. See J.Sung-jong, *Research on Nobi Status*, pp.283–8.
28. H.Bo-in, K.Chong-suh, Chong In-ji, *et al.* [in Chinese], 'The 8th year of King Sejong's reign', *Sejong Sillok* ['Annals of King Sejong'], 1473.
29. See L.Young-hoon, 'The evolution and the characteristic of the *nobis* system', pp. 405–7.

30. Shin Sung-sun, *et al* [in Chinese], ‘The 16th year of King Songjong’s reign (the 9th, 13th, 14th, and 15th binary term of the sexagenary cycle)’, *Songjong Sillok* [‘Annals of King Songjong’], 1499.
31. See The Academy of Korean Studies [in Chinese], *Ancient selected works 3* (Seoul: The Academy of Korean Studies, 1986), p.366.
32. K.Tae-whan and S.Yong-ha [in Korean], ‘An essay on the estimated population during the period of Chosun dynasty’, *Tonga Munwha* (East-Asian Culture) 14 (1977). See the appendix table.
33. Editorial staff [in Korean], ‘The matrilineal nobi law’, *Doosan World Encyclopedia*, (Seoul: Doosan Donga, 2000).
34. The Chosun dynasty did not enact independent laws concerning the killing of *nobi* by masters. Such cases were therefore normally judged according to the ‘Ming Dynasty penal code’.
35. See K.Sok-hyong, *The Structure of the Peasant Class*, p.78.
36. H.In-ho and K.Hee-jo [in Chinese], *Old Law Reports* (1799) revised edition (Seoul: Ministry of Legislation, 1968), pp.40, 83–4, 162–3.
37. Y.Byong-mo, Y.Si-soo *et al.* [in Chinese], The 19th year of King Chongjo’s reign (the 23rd binary term of the sexagenary cycle), *Annals of King Chongjo* (1805).
38. See Lee Young-hoon, ‘The evolution and the characteristic of the *nobis* system’, p. 410.
39. Editorial staff [in Korean], ‘The public nobis’, *Doosan World Encyclopedia*.
40. See L.Young-hoon, ‘The evolution and the characteristic of the *nobis* system’, p. 411.
41. Y.Ho-chol [in Korean], *The Agricultural History in the Early Chosun Period* (Seoul: Hankilsa, 1986).
42. See C.Suk-jong , *Research on Social Upheavals*, pp.94–121.
43. C.Hun [in Chinese], *Literary collection* (1544–92); Suk-jong, *Research on Social Upheavals*, pp.196–9.
44. Yomo, ‘Observation on Chosun Population according to their Social Status’; Young-hoon, ‘The evolution and the characteristic of the *nobis* system’, pp.401–3.

A Theme in Variations: A Historical Schema¹ of Slaving in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean Regions

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A validly historical comparison of slaving—not slave ‘systems’—in its Atlantic and Indian Ocean contexts depends on establishing a common framework of change within which specifiable interests in both areas introduced varying numbers of aliens into specific political and economic contests. The characteristics of slavery practices within each of these, both masters’, and of those enslaved, derived from underlying confrontations over control of local populations. Circumstantial opportunities to add outsiders under the exclusive authority of the slavers, and the resulting demographics—ratios of helpless, dependent arrivals to native populations, all in varying degrees of dependency, including experienced and locally born veterans or heirs of prior enslavement, male: female slave ratios, and the degrees of concentration or dispersion and isolation of those enslaved—as well as momentary conjunctures of inherited culture and emergent novelties all contributed to thoroughly historical (i.e. momentary, particular, human-created, contested and dynamic) slaving strategies and practices of slavery. Legal institutionalization was rare and problematic, neither definitional nor determinative.

The shared framework of changes coursing through the Indian Ocean region (IOR) and the Atlantic from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries was an intensifying commercialization, as merchants consolidated a new global economy and governmental authorities² sought to integrate larger and increasingly imagined communities³ of insiders who seldom encountered one another. Throughout Atlantic Europe, Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist Asia, Muslim and non-Muslim Africa, and the Americas, they did so out of many different older, much more concrete ‘domestic’ communities—including households, domains and estates, peasant villages, ‘lineages’—arrangements distinguished by ethnographers but politically similar from the viewpoint of so-called ‘states’ in Europe before the 1600s. Economics explains the how and why of slaving; the partial consolidation of monarchical, then modern national states, explains the laws they decreed. Slaving was at the heart of the radical changes in both over the centuries sketched here as a primary means to achieve economic growth, though always at some cost to simultaneous efforts at political integration.

Slaving intensified in the Indian and Atlantic oceanic regions in contrasting ways. Three relatively similar regional contexts emerge along the continuum of

relative commercialization: (1) less commercialized mountainous mainland Asia and insular south-eastern Asia, parts of western, central, and eastern Africa, and most of native America, (2) the remaining partially commercialized parts of western, northeastern and eastern Africa and coastal and lowland Asia where Muslim (and other) merchant interests competed with local domestic communities and— primarily—strong military states, and (3) the maritime Atlantic and most of the Americas, where mercantile interests emerged unchallenged after c.1600. In all these, slaving provided a principal strategy by which merchants operating on scales that transcended local residential communities succeeded locally based agricultural, military, and religious interests in commanding the economic activity of populations they controlled. In this division of the consolidating global economy, Europe stood apart. There, merchants employed primarily financial means to consolidate control over working populations as wage earners, concentrating African and American gold and silver in Europe. In Africa they extended financial credit in manufactured commodities to intermediaries, military and mercantile, who covered their growing indebtedness with slaves exported; in the IOR, their bullion gilded their relations with political allies and financed the seventeenth- to eighteenth-century regional intensification of commerce. In consequence, local slaving intensified.

The differences in slaving along this continuum of commercialization, and among its local components within each region, were political. In the IOR they derived from the necessity of adapting slaving strategies inherited from centuries of power struggles over labour among local communities, military states, and merchant networks, by means that included corvée and debt bondage as well as by introducing enslaved outsiders. In the Atlantic, European merchants worked in a political *tabula rasa*, remote from the centres of increasing monarchical control in Baroque Europe,⁴ without significant opposition in the Americas, and with labouring populations (slaves) initially weakened by the recency of their arrival in the new world. In most of Africa, Muslim and non-Muslim, the counterparts of Europe's kings structured political struggles, initially between domestic communities and military intruders, both employing slaving to succeed or survive, and then between mercantile communities and the heirs of the founding generation of warriors, both again adapting slaving to their own purposes; domestic communities there also used slaving to adapt, and eventually reacted violently against the pervasive pillage of kidnapping, man-stealing, and—mostly—womanizing, if the modern sense of the term may be extended to earlier practices of direct seizures of females. Slaving as a theme in world history thus intensified out of specific political and economic contests, as economic contacts expanded to regional and interregional scales, and earlier communities on all scales competed for people to swim against the swift and rising tide of globalization, on this global stage, recurrent slaving produced practices of slavery in highly specific and momentary variations.⁵

What follows is less a history than an extended reflection on how historians might understand how marginal contenders in these local struggles participated

through slaving in a single process of transcending scale and duration. It explores the logic of slaving as history, from the perspective of a historian familiar with Africa and the Atlantic but inspired by contributions to this volume to set these relatively familiar stories in the broader perspective suggested by slaving in the Indian Ocean world.⁶ Local interests, usually figures marginal to established power, moved uprooted and socially isolated people made available through the broader commercialization that integrated the Indian Ocean and Atlantic economies between the sixteenth and early nineteenth centuries into vulnerable and unfamiliar environments to pursue primarily local advantage within varying regional historical contexts. The global process was inherently, primarily, local.⁷

Indian Ocean Region

The story in the IOR begins, as everywhere, with small, face-to-face communities, mostly agricultural, and ‘domestic’ (in contrast to the larger ‘imagined, and usually enforced, communities’ of strangers that emerged there as contestants for the loyalties and service of their members).⁸ By the late first millennium (CE), the principal mainland centres of population and agriculture from the Fertile Crescent in the west through northern India to the valleys of south-eastern Asia and on to China were all controlled by military aristocracies, the oldest reaching back thousands of years. Omitting the complex events leading to this recurrent resort to coercing local farmers, and the accompanying ideological obfuscations of the fact, the feature of these military ‘states’ most relevant to slaving was the limitation on their inability to intrude on the autonomy of populations within their reach—thereby rendered ‘peasants’—beyond a point that left them able to sustain themselves; other than limited tributes, often claimed in produce, they demanded direct corvée labour largely for seasonal or occasional purposes and only to degrees that did not disrupt the long-run integrity of these resident communities. Peasants thus left able to feed themselves, each one tightly integrated with his/her neighbours, were able to elude—even on occasion to resist excessive—demands from their overlords.⁹ The ‘state’, in environments predicated on the primacy of such face-to-face communities, was an outsider, a corporate entity of power and privilege not ‘of’ or ‘by’ its subjects. Power was never integrated and always negotiated, however asymmetrically.

Popular religion—primarily Buddhism in early south-eastern Asia—reflected the transcending scale of the imposed political communities but in a populist vein emphasizing pacifism rather than the militarism of the rulers, and seeking solace in other, or successor, worlds. Where Buddhist monastic orders had claimed political retreats from state military power, their estates and temple complexes became sanctuaries where peasants sought the exemption from state conscription and corvée that ‘slavery’ to a privileged individual or institution provided. Hinduism expressed similarly pacifistic, or passive, values but incorporated this-worldly rankings in less institutionalized idioms as senses of

embodied purity and contamination that rendered lower-ranking individuals vulnerable to subordinated incorporation through slaving in households higher in rank. In Asian polities conveniently designated as ‘composite’ (i.e. comprised of these multiple corporate entities) ‘slavery’ primarily signified the military aristocracy’s acknowledgement of exemption from its secular domain. In these non-participatory ‘states’, as throughout the world before the eighteenth-century North Atlantic, ‘social’ invisibility¹⁰ became disabling only once political life involved individual participation and responsibility. The state and its laws then became the agent of the masters, against the interests of those excluded, rather than the patrons of the slaves serving as protectors from the state.

Domestic entities—extended families or household networks, peasant communities and also descent-defined and/or kin-based ‘lineages’ in insular South-East Asia and mountainous regions of the mainland—in these composite polities included everyone. Such intimate communities were strongly patriarchal at all levels, often patrilineal, and affiliated with one another by exchanging women under numerous conditions from honourable, publicly acknowledged, formal, and enduring connections of ‘marriage’, to girls or other dependents ‘loaned’ collectively as ‘pawns’ against cash or other advances of credit, to personal ‘gifts’ and ‘cash purchases’. Females constituted the ongoing and fundamental premise of transactions in people among the lineages, households, and other collective entities of composite polities. Outsiders entered these human exchange circuits as ‘slaves’ in the conventional sense of isolated strangers generally only in small minorities.

However, the numbers of such slaves increased significantly from about the fourteenth century in the dialectic of political expansion and accelerating commercial growth and integration.¹¹ Military-aristocratic houses extended their personnel, prestige and power by incorporating outsiders from newly conquered areas as slaves, people without competing allegiances to rival households or accessibility to the state. The rivals particularly significant to slaving after the fifteenth century were (particularly foreign) merchants, who constructed regional networks, originally linking major political centres in the mainland but who by this era were independently acquiring sufficient wealth to challenge the military rulers. Chinese and Japanese traders extended their diaspora into South-East Asia as Muslim merchants (and some Hindu), often driven abroad by military aristocracies competing for the time and energies of domestic populations, also built commercial networks for profit in currencies and invested in peasant households to stimulate production of greater quantities of broader ranges of commodities.

Commercial credit from such foreign traders enabled merchant communities in the principal political spheres to extend investments in peasant production. Domestically, such regional merchants had undercut the coercive power of military rulers by loaning cash to peasants unable to meet the heavy taxes of the state, or to finance the marital exchanges on which every family depended for its prospects within its local community, or to cover occasional harvest shortfalls.

The resulting peasant indebtedness, accumulating interest at extortionate rates, burdened borrowers indefinitely, and—by prevailing doctrines of collective responsibility for an individual member's debts—was passed along to heirs through the generations. Debtors, or more likely their children—particularly girls—fell victims to foreclosure through consignment of their person(s) to a creditor for personal service in lieu of payment in cash, or for disposition to others to realize the cash value of the debt. This 'debt bondage', widespread in the more commercialized IOR areas, thus generated 'slaves', local in origin but subject to disposition abroad.

Although conventional modern economics contrast both such peasant indebtedness and 'slavery' as negatively 'unfree', compared to the normative (but often nominal) voluntarism of 'free wage labour', the relationship of bondage by cash debt was remote in practice in the IOR from the politically exclusionary aspects of enslavement. 'Debt bondage' involved claims on cash earning power as distinct from slavery's primary claim on the person, her or his loyalties and personal availability, rather than active service and certainly not commodity production for sale for cash. In political terms, indebted peasants were gruellingly subject to military states' claims to tribute and corvée, even taxes, through membership in the corporate entities constituting 'states', but debt to merchants was primarily individual and owed in currency rather than in personal service. The two sorts of claim posed an even more direct conflict: debts maintained through generations kept producers on the land, while enslavement through foreclosure on a debtor removed a cultivator from residence and accessibility by the state. Further, although debts ordinarily originated as contracts among males, unlike direct domestic transactions in females, failed debtors often consigned daughters or other dependents to creditors to try to maintain themselves as heads of households and earn their family's way out of its bondage. Still another contrast emerged from the diverging interests of regional and foreign merchants; while the former tended to distribute girls and women they received as slaves among local households, the latter tended to realize their value through sale beyond the domain of the state for cash.

Fifteenth-century consolidation of the global economy allowed all merchants to intensify enslavement from internal, as well as remote regional, sources. Locally, they first invested cash profits in loans of seeds or animals or equipment to expand agricultural production. As profits accumulated, they provided peasants with supplies and training and more costly equipment, all on credit. Prototypical Asian examples increased cultivation of cotton, or mulberry bushes to support silkworms, then intensified into dispersed, artisanal, home- or cottage-based dyeing and weaving. As such investment increased production, it also diverted peasants from subsistence agriculture. Debt stimulated over-production of saleable commodities but left village communities vulnerable to downturns in prices or demand for what they produced to cover their debts, and without food reserves to survive failed harvests. Foreclosure rates and the resulting loss of local females to enslavement thus increased.

The enslaved females ended up in the households of wealthy, rural landlords and newly prosperous urban merchants who promoted and profited from the growing exchanges of currency, commodities, and consigned dependents. Although initially human tokens of ongoing affiliation, in times of contraction in trade they could be sold for cash, or placed on the streets—hawking foods or domestic artisanry, or for public prostitution—to cover currency shortages in households dependent on cash incomes.¹² By the 1800s, commercial cities in the heart of the region attracted large diaspora of foreign single male merchants, notably Chinese, who bought these women and other enslaved victims of violence.

Direct merchant investment in financially integrated and centrally managed production marked a significant step beyond trading with independent producers in remote regions, or indebting local village agriculturalists and artisans. This usually major investment required funds, or credit, well beyond the means of IOR merchants, as well as the ability to gather labour on a long-term basis likely to assure future profits to repay substantial loans taken in the present; covering high financing costs also forced indebted owners of slaves to maximize production for sale, including by force, and to minimize cash expended on production in order to conserve earnings in currency.

This portentous step was usually taken first by intruders to a region, strengthened abroad by commercial contact with large export markets but weakened locally by lack of military power or exclusion from the debt networks that obligated most residents to local aristocrats or merchants. Mining—e.g. tin, in remote, otherwise unclaimed parts of the Malay Peninsula—presented the necessary conditions only by the eighteenth century. European trading firms, particularly the Dutch East India Company in Java, had earlier resorted to importing small numbers of Africans as slaves, primarily for skilled and domestic services that their local competitors met by foreclosing on local debts to obtain females. The British in India, wealthier and powerful enough to compete with local merchants and military aristocrats, financed local merchants and bought off neighbouring political authorities. Only on the remote, uninhabited western Indian Ocean islands of Bourbon (later Réunion) and Île de France (later Mauritius) did the French resort to bringing Africans in as slaves for purposes of large-scale (sugar) production, on the model of the Caribbean plantation.

The military monarchies of mainland Asia used comprehensive codifications of law to limit private slaving through commercial sources that built up personal retinues shielded from military conscription, taxes, and other state demands. These laws of slavery restricted the circumstances in which merchants could seize debtors.¹³ Thai kings competed further for access to local populations by penalizing criminals with enslavement (to the state), protected ranking members of the composite polity from enslavement for debt by specifying cash values for persons that increased with their political standing,¹⁴ and restored civic recognition and the protections of royal law to slaves who informed on their

masters' offences against the state.¹⁵ Monarchies wished less to offer slaves personal 'freedom' in any modern sense than to regain direct authority over them and avoid conceding dangerous numbers of them to private, and potentially competing, rivals.¹⁶

Military polities, particularly Muslim monarchies in South Asia (notably the Delhi sultanate and the Mughals), resisted these political challenges of commercial prosperity by employing their contacts in remote regions to assemble trained military corps ('*mamluks*') as royal guardians. This monarchical use of military slaves emerged early in the history of Islam, as soon as the seventh- and eighth-century Muslim conquerors began losing the initiative relative to the merchants who consolidated the extensive domains they brought within the *dar-al-Islam*. The ongoing contest between the propagators of wars and wares for political primacy subsequently marked the entire Muslim world.¹⁷ The prominent populist—or inclusive—aspects of Islam protected believing peasants from enslavement, or seizure for debt, and so rulers universally turned for slaves to areas inhabited by unbelievers. The military regimes in the Islamic heartland drew military slaves predominantly from Central Asia and south-eastern Europe, while their counterparts in northern India also imported Africans as slave soldiers via the Muslim-dominated western Indian Ocean trade. The more commercially based sultanates of the South-East Asian archipelago combined merchant alliances with military force and so faced no similar dilemma; they relied more on corvée and other direct methods of controlling local populations.

Slaves moved over long distances around the IOR were mostly transported along commercial channels that primarily carried commodities. Merchants carrying captives over longer distances by sea generally included small numbers of them among cargoes of commodities that largely paid the freight, so that few special shipboard accommodations distinct from the minimal comforts accorded crew and most paying passengers had to be made. Only when commerce intensified in the nineteenth century to the point of creating large urban markets for female domestics and other slaves for municipal services did marginal participants in the region's trade (e.g. '*sultans*' in the eastern Sulu archipelago and in Zanzibar in the west) support themselves from piracy and sales of the captives and commodities they seized.

IOR slaving—domestic and local, distant and commercial—thus intensified between about 1500 and the early 1800s, as merchants contacted, and latterly directly raided, remote populations. The captives, mostly women, went primarily into the domestic households of growing cities across the region. Locally on the mainland, peasant families fell increasingly victim to seizure for debts contracted as they attempted—on consistently disadvantageous terms of financial dependence—to join the ongoing commercialization as producers and processors but then found themselves both increasingly indebted and unable to maintain agricultural self-sufficiency. Where foreclosures produced slaves locally, military monarchies attempted to deploy public laws limiting these challenges, and monastic establishments gained residents by protecting refugees from

elephantine struggles between the rich and mighty. In the Islamic world, everyone contended by bulking up their households with slaves, females privately and males in the public sphere of the ruler. However, ultimately long-distance slave trading grew faster than local seizures, owing to the legal constraints that strong monarchies placed on local merchant strategies of slaving. The growing presence of Europeans, excluded from, or insufficiently wealthy to compete with, local networks through which powerful interests exercised claims on resident peasants, added to the imports, particularly from Africa. By the early nineteenth century, European authorities implemented direct colonial rule by pressuring local households and political authorities to conceal the intense traffic in females on which they depended. The commercial and increasingly military strength of the Europeans also positioned them to take advantage of the growing distress placed on peasant communities by commercial credit for rural production. Paying cash in return for labour contracts produced the ‘indentured’ migrant labour flows of the nineteenth-century.¹⁸ The growing European political presence also generated convicts, some sent abroad for similar purposes of working to support colonial investments in tropical production.

Europe

In Europe the story starts somewhere in the Middle Ages between the Mediterranean-centred empires of antiquity and the modern global ones. Unlike Asia, where composite military monarchies had long before incorporated land-holding entities among their political components, aspiring thirteenth- and fourteenth-century European monarchs had to overcome entrenched, militarily powerful local (‘feudal’) aristocracies who claimed peasant cultivators as ‘serfs’ or held them in other positions of dependence that shielded them from mercantile intrusions via commercial debt and from direct claims by overlords. Christian canon law and theology, like Islamic law, protected believers from enslavement, and emergent rulers extended political recognition to peasants on feudal domains by making them subject to the remote protection of kings (termed ‘liberties’ in England). Merchants, mostly foreign, but also local in politically fragmented central Europe, established enclaves in the commercial cities, where currency circulated and where individuals might flee rural fealties to seek the ‘freedom’ of supporting oneself from wages paid in media of exchange controlled by others; in practice, apprenticeship and clientage prevailed, but in highly commercial forms.

In the Renaissance Mediterranean, slaving and ongoing post-Crusades religious warfare supplemented the same needs for staffing municipal services and—primarily—for female domestic service. Eastern Italian, particularly Venetian, merchants purchased females on the Dalmatian coast just across the Adriatic Sea, many conceded by rural families too impoverished to support daughters. Some intruded via the eastern Mediterranean islands (Crete, Cyprus) and the Black Sea on longstanding Muslim sources of captives in Slavic-

speaking Eastern Europe.¹⁹ In part they also sought to cover indebtedness to Muslim merchants from whom they purchased south-eastern Asian spices. Enslaved Slavs also accompanied growing Italian commercial penetration of the western Mediterranean, all financed by the portentous development of collective methods of assembling and deploying capital, backed by civic authority and armies, in the prosperous communes of northern Italy, and in the seaports of the western Mediterranean—Marseilles, Barcelona, Valencia, the Balearic islands and Lisbon. Merchants there also supplemented these supplies with captives taken in the endemic warfare between Christians and Muslims in Europe and northern Africa.

Italian mercantile strength posed a political threat to the military lords of the late *Reconquista* in Iberia. The emergent thirteenth-century Castilian kings turned to the powerful Christian Church as ally and also drew on the Roman fabric of secular law to contain other warlords threatening to establish similar independence out of the conquests then driving Muslim rulers from Iberia. A Castilian codification of monarchical law, the *Siete Partidas* (c.1284–1348) marked a defining moment in the process of monarchical consolidation in what would become ‘Spain’. It extended both canonical and secular legal recognition to local ‘Moors’ and to imported Slavs (and a few Africans). This legal move, backed by military power, followed the strategies of contemporary Asian monarchies under similar threat from aristocratic rivals and—particularly—increasingly wealthy merchants, and paralleled the contemporaneous recognition accorded peasants in England, later in France, and in growing municipalities in central Europe, the Italian communes, and in other emergent commercial networks in regions not moving toward monarchical absolutism.

Slaving, particularly of eastern Europeans—who left their masters’ ethnic designation of them as ‘Slavs’ as the term that succeeded Latin *servus* as the word for slaves in all central and southern European languages²⁰—became a principal strategy whereby merchants mobilized foreign labour to staff commercial expansion without competing directly for local peasant services. In this fifteenth-century context, Italians with contacts in Tunisia and Algeria began buying gold (and Africans) reaching Muslim northern Africa via long-established trans-Saharan trading routes. Other Italians in Atlantic-facing Portugal financed the royally sponsored open-ocean ventures along the Western coast of Africa, championed by Prince ‘Henry the Navigator’. Henry sought direct access to gold from the sub-Saharan ‘lands of the blacks’ (*sudan*) to Arabic-speaking North Africans), and the Italians found the prospect alluring. His captains then covered some of their voyage costs by *ad hoc* purchases of enslaved Africans.

Most of the Africans they bought went to growing Iberian cities, their transport costs sustained by gold from far-western Africa and the Gold Coast. The sex ratio among these captives is unknown, but by the early 1500s substantial African communities in Lisbon, Seville and Valencia attracted official notice. However, their owners were aristocrats, or foreigners easily controlled by the monarchy, so—unlike in similar Asian contexts of rising commercial challenges

—they did not constitute a political threat beyond what the *Siete Partidas* might contain.

More far-reaching changes occurred on Madeira and the Canaries, where Italian backers of the royal venturers, largely excluded from the king's monopoly on gold, underwrote large investments in land improvements, equipment, and labour forces for cultivating sugar cane. Italians and others had planted cane on much smaller scales on the manorial estates of the eastern Mediterranean but had used local labourers. But on the Atlantic islands merchants faced no aristocratic or ecclesiastical competitors and were sufficiently remote from Iberia not to constitute a potential threat to still-consolidating Iberian monarchs. The political 'problem of slavery'²¹—excluding badly needed potential subjects from access by royal tax-collectors, army recruiters, and police—that in both the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean worlds had limited, or confined slaving to largely non-productive urban functions, in the Atlantic islands did not inhibit unrestricted claims to even large labouring forces by holders of crown-granted estates.

However, as aristocrats the land grantees lacked liquid capital to develop sugar production sufficiently to satisfy the huge European market for sweeteners. As in Asia, merchants stepped in as bankers—Italians in Portuguese islands, Germans in Spain's Canaries—and loaned cash to buy equipment and some African slaves. Under these debt arrangements, it was necessary to consolidate indebted planters' 'property' rights over the entire complex estate, including its labour force, firmly enough to serve as collateral for the heavy loans that financed the start-up phases of the Atlantic industry devoted to producing sugar. Although their organization was rudimentary by the sophisticated standards of eighteenth-century Caribbean 'plantations', these commercial adaptations of the heritage of Mediterranean domestic slavery launched Atlantic slavery on a distinguishingly commercial trajectory.

First, the enslaved were primarily males; males were more available on the neighbouring African mainland, and better suited for the heavy lifting of digging ditches and hoeing and cutting cane. This complemented demands mostly for women around both the Muslim and Christian Mediterranean. In theory, ships carrying captive Africans on their return to Europe could pause at the islands to acquire provisions for their human cargoes, selling male slaves to pay for them, and continue to Iberia with females. Second, unchallenged dominance of commercial considerations accented on the proprietarial—or fungible, exchange-valued—aspect of the masters' interest in slaves. Third, the large numbers of the male captives that Italian merchant banking houses financed lived in isolated barracks and could sustain themselves as nascent communities. Fourth, because slavers relied exclusively on Africans, Europeans tended to identify relatively darkskinned aliens by somatic stereotypes that collapsed the many African domestic identities into a single identification of 'slave' with *negro* or 'black'. The seeds of transition from Old World ethnic stereotyping of slaves toward New World racism had been sown.

Slaving in the Atlantic thus moved definitively toward what became modern proprietarial, government supported (rather than stateinhibited), publicly regulated (rather than privately maintained), male (rather than female), and production- (rather than service-) oriented practices of slavery. The emphasis fell largely on continuous, maximum application of effort to cash-earning/cost-avoiding labour to cover the slaves' owners' large investments in their enterprises and to glean the greatest attainable cash profits. Slaving was reborn thoroughly commercialized in the Atlantic, backed by the growing wealth and expansive financial strategies of the leading fifteenth-century Mediterranean, and secondarily central European, merchants. The merchants' unprecedented capacity—and vast unmet fiscal needs—to finance growth with commercial credit then became a catalyst to subsequent slaving in Africa and to slavery in the Americas, at some risk to monarchical and aristocratic interests on both continents.

The Americas

Slaving in the Americas started with the sixteenth-century conquest of tropical native populations, supplemented by relatively small imports of Africans for skilled domestic and urban employments; Portuguese adaptations of domestic Mediterranean slaving arrangements followed in early seventeenth-century Brazil, and finally the Dutch, English and French converted to thoroughly commercial organization of it (the classic West Indian 'plantation') in the eighteenth century.²²

North America was initially a relatively poor, and quite atypical, variant of the last, but in a unique political environment of English settlers pursuing ideals of personal 'liberty' that shifted populism from the spiritual to the worldly realm. Mainland colony politics, and parallel secularization of British evangelical Christian energies, generated an ethos of civic inclusiveness and direct political participation that rendered the 'social' or civic²³ exclusion of co-residents, even enslaved aliens, anathema to gathering feelings of civic and public, not private and parochial, political and religious, collective identity. In the United States, growing populations of free European immigrants faced slave masses, increasingly of American ancestries antedating their own, using family connections and other communities to seek political inclusion and personal autonomy. Emancipation movements vacillated between old religious and new political idioms of popular participation, to emerge in the nineteenth century as government policy in modern northern Atlantic nations.

Sketched in terms derived from Asian strategies of commercialization, slaving in the Americas was driven by the growing financial capability of foreign merchant-investors from Europe. Spanish silver fleets and Dutch and English privateers brought European bankers vast quantities of bullion from Spain's mines in central and southern America. Simultaneously, the Dutch, then the English, succeeded Italians in creating ever-more public banking and financial strategies that multiplied the specie base of the emerging commercial economy to

support growing and highly capitalized investments in large-scale production. Earlier in Europe, but continuing in the IOR, merchants retained fewer specie resources, losing bullion to military aristocrats and others who hoarded and displayed it, investing currencies primarily in further commercial connections, and extending credit to small peasant debtors.

However, in the 1500s Atlantic merchants still possessed only marginal financial resources relative to the vast scale of the Atlantic oceanic region, its undeveloped commercial potential, and the much readier gleanings from the richer, more integrated, IOR commercial infrastructure. Specie was at a premium, and they seized every opportunity to reduce cash costs. In the eastern Atlantic, they had first sought African gold, and then capitalized labour on adjacent islands to collateralize investments in sugar. In the Spanish Americas, Castilian military adventurers predominated during the early 1700s, enslaving at little cost most indigenous Caribbean and lowland mainland peoples, and plundering the Aztec and Inca highlands of gold and silver.

However, freebooting conquistador control of vast, remote domains, and their resident populations, threatened Carlos I of Spain with loss of the American dominion the Spanish monarchy claimed through them. Slaving created for these monarchies the same threat of excessive private control over resident populations that Asian monarchs faced but dangerously beyond the reach of monarchical power. The Spanish Crown's response—the 'New Laws' of 1542, similar to that of rulers in Asia—brought military adventurers under state bureaucratic control by excluding Native Americans from enslavement. Subsequent decrees limited the numbers of Africans delivered to the Spanish Americas as slaves, at relatively high prices that only wealthy urban households could afford in significant quantity, via foreign merchants subject to strict regulation (the *asiento* contracts). These strategies limited slavery in Spain's colonies to benign American extensions of Old World domestic arrangements, so that Vera Cruz and Lima were more like Valencia than Bahia or Barbados. The principal production-oriented exceptions to the prevalence of consumerist domestic slavery in Spain's domains were plantations owned by Jesuit and other ecclesiastical orders—the Crown's closest allies.

Merchants, however, prevailed in Portuguese captaincies in southern America, mostly in Bahia and Pernambuco in the northeast corner of the continent. Finding no precious metals, the much weaker Portuguese monarchs attempted to transfer there the success of sugar in their eastern Atlantic islands. Their initial solution paralleled that of the Spaniards in the sixteenth century. They reduced start-up costs by capturing Native Americans to work the canebreaks, using Jesuit missionaries to inhibit the untrammelled rapacity of desperate would-be planters. Spanish treasure then easily outbid New World sugar for African slaves, who were much more expensive than native Americans to acquire and transport, while shortages of specie and credit postponed debt bondage to much later eras, and then only in more populous Central American regions.

As in the Indian Ocean, the first few Africans enslaved did not bear their own freight costs. Lisbon merchants excluded from the African gold²⁴ and Indian Ocean spice trades focused on Spanish silver, by carrying Africans for whose delivery to the Americas the kings' agents in Seville contracted under the *asiento*. The subsequent profits funded the high costs of working out techniques of transporting large numbers of captives across the Atlantic. The definitive turn toward sugar and Africans as slaves came only early in the 1600s, when Netherlands-based refiners and merchants succeeded Italians as the major investors in Portugal's Atlantic possessions. The organization of this initial large-scale sugar production in the Americas blended Iberian urban slavery with continuing enslavement of Native Americans captured in the south (São Paulo) to produce manioc and other provisions for workers in the canebrates of the northeast at minimal cash expenditures. Less than fully integrated small cultivating units distributed the costs of growing cane for central grinding.²⁵ Undercapitalized Brazilian slavery thus retained this Iberian tone of domestic intimacy, particularly in coastal towns, even as later English merchant investors attracted by the eighteenth-century gold and diamond boom in Minas Gerais and other commercial interests created large, anonymous African male slave gangs controlled by Portuguese-descended, but increasingly Brazilian-born, miners and planters.

The power of European financial capital to organize slaving around large, fully integrated, highly mortgaged plantations attained its purest, least politically challenged, and misleadingly paradigmatic expression in the eighteenth-century Caribbean. There plantation factories produced the drugs and stimulants consumed by Europe's growing wage workforce -sugar, cocoa, tobacco and coffee. This sequence started in Barbados (1650s–60s), where English investors succeeded the Dutch as premier financiers of an almost entirely commercialized form of slave-worked mass production. The overwhelming majorities of male Africans imported to cultivate, cut and crush cane became publicly visible and able to comport themselves collectively with an audacity that demanded public regulation. In British colonies local legislative councils, led by Barbados, took the initiative in drafting police statutes that generated a new realm of public law regarding slavery. However, they brought the slavery question within the purview of laws made by masters, not monarchs.

France, caught between the Caribbean reality of containing unruly masses of angry males and a stronger effort by a consolidating monarchy to control New World claims at a time when an articulated theory of 'colonies' was only formative, met the challenge in the *Code Noir* of 1685. This comprehensive monarchical codification exemplified royal concerns with unregulated commercialization by embedding strong colonial-initiated police regulations and property guarantees in a framework of metropolitan ethical and religious concerns derived from the Old World heritage of domestic slavery. It thus provided legal ground for royal intrusion on ambitious, potentially wayward, commercial planters; it was subsequently enforced selectively, if at all. The

sequence of institutionalized (codified) ‘slavery’ in the Americas, from Spanish monarchical containment in the 1540s through near-full concessions to commercial interests in Brazil in 1600 to the mercantile triumph in Jamaica and Martinique by around 1700, thus paralleled the slaving-supported struggles between Asian merchants and monarchists.²⁶

By the mid-eighteenth century, the question had been settled in favour of commercialized modernity. By then the distinctively participatory politics of post-Restoration England, particularly in its North American colonies, began to re-define slavery as anomalous, even abominable. This populist agitation initially tapped the inclusive overtones of Christian theology, but politicization of these formerly private issues of ethical responsibility²⁷ followed from the emergent, publicly visible, government-regulated and -supported ‘problems of modern slavery’ through its guarantees of private property, even in human beings, needed to support Atlantic-scale investments in commercial production. Masters of large numbers of people ‘owned’ exclusive of any civic access to them became a concern both of the monarchy and of ‘citizens’ and ‘subjects’ who felt that governments belonged in a particularly urgent sense to them. The ‘liberties’ granted by the British crown, and the ‘rights’ and ‘freedoms’ claimed by colonial subjects in North America, made allegiance to the public sphere of constituted government the equivalent of the European, Mediterranean and Indian Ocean political protections through patronage. Slavery was no longer one sort of subordination to personally known masters but rather an invisible anonymity—‘social death’, where ‘social’ had become equivalent to civic—and subjugation to masters held to no countervailing standard of personal responsibility, who saw slaves in terms of saleability rather than sentiment.

Particularly in North America, and with unmanageable intensity in the new United States once a proto-nationalist identity emerged by the 1820s and 1830s, the presence there of millions of native-born, English-speaking, increasingly Christian, often blood-relatives subject to personal abuse as slaves made ‘slavery’—at least as abolitionists and pro-slavery defenders institutionalized it legally and ideologically²⁸—an abomination that men were willing to die to defeat, or defend, with religious fervour. The increasingly effective resistance of the enslaved themselves, particularly native-born Americans, tipped the balance in favour of the abolitionists. In the United Kingdom abolition (of slaving in Africa) and emancipation (of slaves in the West Indies) followed a different, but similarly populist and incipiently nationalist course. In France, in the republics that succeeded Spain’s colonies in the Americas, and eventually in Brazil emancipation flowed from more explicitly nationalist politics. This unique nineteenth-century Atlantic turn to ending slavery—which reached the Indian Ocean also after the 1840s as part of the ideology justifying imperial conquest and consolidation, just as it had served Spanish monarchs in Mexico in the 1540s, or the Thai monarchy in non-abolitionist registers—had arisen almost immediately and unproblematically as mass, male, productive slaving in the Atlantic attained its ideological definition in the mid-eighteenth century.

Africa

Africans entered the early, specie-based phases of global maritime commercialization through exports of gold from the Sudan slaves used to cover balance-of-payments deficits in the six centuries or so before c.1500. Further intensification of trade in both the Indian and Atlantic Oceans gradually shifted the coverage from currencies to captives from then through to the early nineteenth century. The process, which developed incrementally on Africa's Indian Ocean flank on the east, proceeded in the Atlantic on the west with overwhelming intensity and speed. Ambitious men seized the personal opportunities of mercantile credit in communities with varying prior experiences with, and adaptations to, commercial relationships of production and exchange. However, most drew on similarly framed heritages of the collective (communal) ethos of domestic economies. By this domestic ethos, prevalent in less ideologized forms also in Asia, group integrity and continuity took the primacy that commercial environments around them accorded individual self-realization; membership in and integration into the group were the social and political equivalents of civic protections—i.e. government-recognized ‘liberties’ of subjects or ‘freedom’ of citizens—in nineteenth-century Great Britain and the United States.

According to the aphorism well known to students of Africa, ‘people were wealth, and people were power’. Ambitious individuals, often older males, accordingly sought personal advance ahead of their years or standing by gaining obligations of respect from as many lesser-ranking clients (usually males), wives, descendants and slaves as possible. Land, unlike in Asia or in the Atlantic world, was held on behalf of often-strongly corporate groups of kin claiming descent from shared ancestors believed to have lived on it. ‘Slaves’ were individuals, isolated from the lands and collectivities of their birth, taken in alone by others with whom they shared no common descent. They suffered all the disabilities of finding places for themselves without allies in cultures in which one survived only by affiliation and in utter ignorance of the cultural environment in which they had to function.

Politics in this domestic ethos operated in terms of negotiated collaboration among domestic collectivities, which constituted, and usually contributed representatives to, mutually agreed compound polities—more ‘networks’ than ‘states’.²⁹ Polities there seldom resembled integrated, even intrusive, ‘states’ in the monarchical sense of Baroque Europe (and even less personally participatory modern ‘nations’) or the strong composite military monarchies of mainland Asia. Nominal heads of such networks might represent the political whole to outsiders, including ancestors, but within it such ‘kings’ were themselves explicitly outsiders to the domestic units within which people primarily sought support and protection. To the degree that such ‘rulers’ exercised secular power, they employed slaves, the only other people in composite polities similarly isolated and thus devoid of conflicting loyalties to the constitutive collectivities.

In economic terms, this ethos of domestic autonomy, collective wealth in people, and highly personalized patron-client political networks corresponded to an emphasis on fertility, both of the land and of the groups' women, rather than material productivity in a commercial sense. Exchanges occurred in terms of people, rather than commodities, and among communities rather than between individuals. Such transactions linked groups in enduring relationships, and material tokens entered them primarily as collateral held against debts thought of as repayable in future girls and women, daughters or nieces of the group, given in marriages. Successful affiliations by this means were intended to be ongoing and might endure for generations.

These and other communal qualities contrasted with the individuating essence of exchanges within more commercialized spheres like the Indian Ocean world of slaving and inverted the 'economics' of material production and consumption that expressed the anonymity and individual autonomy of 'markets', 'wages', and other conventions of the commercialized Atlantic.³⁰ There currencies exchanged against commodities concluded transactions, severing any relationship between the parties to contracts of 'sale' and 'purchase', rather than sustaining them. They thus left individuated economic actors to go their own ways, as the axioms of liberal economic theory explicitly specified in describing 'markets' composed of rationally optimizing individual self-interests. Domestic economies were no less calculated, and exhibited features equivalent to every aspect of the transactional behaviours described as 'economic' in the ethos of commercialization, but the objects of optimization were collective and self-sufficient at the group level.³¹ Value inhered in utility rather than being 'realized' in exchange.

Commercial communities thrived in the 1600s along the southern margins of the Sahara Desert and on the northern Indian Ocean coast of Africa, though always as outsiders. They often converted to Islam, and its commercial laws, to facilitate their trading contacts with Muslim merchants who introduced commodities on credit in quantities seldom available in domestic economies. These communities thus brokered exchanges between two fundamentally contrasting, but also complementing economies, one the growing maritime, Indian Ocean commercial environment rich in goods but relatively short of people as both producers and consumers of commodities, and the other a domestic environment rich in intimate, complex and multiple human relations but relatively poor in material wealth, and unconcerned to construct, even devise, the costly infrastructure of single-dimensioned commercial relations among strangers.

The resulting tendency to borrow relatively plentiful trade goods from merchants on terms of repayable commercial credit and then 'loan' them on non-repayable terms to others in the domestic networks of affiliation contributed significantly to persistent shortages of commodity exports—minimally processed ivory, aromatic gums, hides and furs, dyestuffs, and other goods—needed to pay for virtually unlimited imports of textiles, porcelain, metal wares

and other manufactured goods. Except in the few areas where gold could be mined to cover these deficits in commodity payments (e.g. Ethiopia and Great Zimbabwe) broker communities took local profits in ‘slaves’, some of whom they sold to cover their commercial debts abroad. This tendency to generate debt out of the differing ethos of the domestic and mercantile economies and to concede slaves to avoid looming foreclosures paralleled the seizure of dependents of indebted peasants in the peasant economies of Asia. Where people accumulate wealth in relationships of dependency, they have only dependents to seize to pay their debts, and they seize the advantage of their seniority, or power, to displace the consequences of their own miscalculations, or bad luck, onto those whom they control.

Eighteenth-century commercial expansion in the Indian Ocean brought textiles to eastern Africa south of Kilwa in vastly increased quantities.³² Zimbabwean gold had largely played out by then, and mercantile interests needed substitute exports to pay for imports that they consumed and distributed. The dispersed agricultural communities in the interior of what is now northern Mozambique, working through Swahili and other coastal contacts, reorganized themselves around hunting, and then transporting, ivory. In doing so, they decimated herds of elephant nearer the coast, generating an ivory-hunting ‘frontier’ that they pushed steadily inland. By the 1750s, the manpower needed to lug heavy tusks back to the coast exceeded the human capital whom the hunters and traders controlled. Like expanding mercantile communities elsewhere, they recruited new resources by slaving, buying people from villages wherever they pursued the elephant they primarily sought, and then seizing them by force, to carry ivory to the coast. There it was a minimal extension of this infrastructural strategy to sell no-longer-needed captive bearers to coastal merchants as slaves.

The ivory continued on to Asian markets, accompanied by a few of the enslaved Africans, but after 1763 French slavers extended their Atlantic operations into the Indian Ocean to add Bourbon and Île de France, the two small islands east of Madagascar, to the Atlantic Antilles as producers of sugar. Their demand for captives turned the ‘ivory frontier’ in eastern Africa into a ‘slaving frontier’ of consuming violence that—exacerbated by drought at the end of the eighteenth century—disrupted domestic communities as far west as the very centre of the continent and south to the margins of the Kalahari Desert. Warlords surrounded themselves with captives (e.g. the ‘Nguni’/‘Ngoni’ of the so-called *mfecane*), merchants (e.g. the Yao) built up communities—really enterprises—populated by slaves, and lineage elders married slave women.

A portion of those displaced within Africa were sent to the coast, where by the 1790s some ended up on Portuguese vessels bound for Brazil that sometimes dropped off numbers of their human cargoes at Cape Town. Most were transported across the Mozambique Channel to meet the labour demands of the Merina political elite in Madagascar from the 1830s and for trans-shipment to other French western Indian Ocean island plantations.³³ So intense grew the Merina demand for corvée labour to maintain state autonomy as wars diminished

as sources of captives and as commercial activity intensified all around them that peasants (as in Buddhist Asia) preferred enslavement to private patrons to subjugation to the desperate demands of a fading military aristocracy. Slaving as a means of commercialization within Africa thus paralleled slave uses in the IOR and the Americas but was intensified by the competitiveness generated by the power of commercial credit in domestic economies and by economic strategies pursued in terms of people rather than currencies.

European merchants in the IOR before c.1800 largely concentrated on commercially peripheral areas, like Bourbon and Île de France, unlike in the Atlantic where, as the only players, they were able to extend credit into Africa at rates of increase that exceeded the abilities of established overlords and domestic communities to cover their debts with commodities of value to the Europeans. The ‘gold exception’ applied there also, but the Portuguese (then the Dutch and English) bought specie on the Gold Coast in amounts that strained the productive and political institutions of western Africa to a breaking point that by about 1670 also yielded slaves. The huge eighteenth-century American markets for slaves, and the much larger commercial capacities of Europeans seeking captive men along African shores, generated a similarly extremely violent ‘slaving frontier’. This process started in Kongo (1520s), spread to Angola (1580s), gathered momentum in the Slave Coast (modern Bénin) in the early 1600s, finally replaced gold along the Gold Coast after the 1670s, and then moved steadily inland in both western and central Africa.³⁴

The political-economic results in Atlantic Africa were the same as on its Indian Ocean shores, except earlier. By the 1620s, warlords were seizing and surrounding themselves with captives, mostly women; the classic military monarchies (Asante, Dahomey, Fuuta Jallon, Segu, Lunda and others) followed, all by around 1700. Merchants built commercial infrastructures of caravans and canoes manned increasingly by enslaved men to transport captives they seized in relentless wars. Domestic communities, or their central lineages, sought to protect themselves and to expand their numbers by acquiring and retaining women. Coastal ‘broker’ communities—some ‘European’ and others ‘African’ in character—all filled with slaves. Africans thus reorganized themselves by moving people and developing new collective identities built around commercial entities (‘trading houses’, shrines, *Sufi* orders, cults of affliction), military states organized to capture the people who flowed along intensifying channels of commerce, and villages led by men wealthy in conventional domestic terms of people but filled with enslaved women and their children rather than with kin/affines and clients. Great violence attended these changes. Perhaps only one half? —a third?— of the people isolated, individuated, abandoned, and displaced found themselves consigned as slaves to Europeans. The rest remained in Africa as human ‘profits’ in the hands of ever fewer, and increasingly more individuated and hence arbitrary, masters.³⁵

In non-Muslim areas the communal ethos of domestic communities remained the proclaimed ideology of the collectivities reconstituted out of uprooted

individuals. Those enslaved, or relatives and affines disadvantaged by the successes of those who turned trade goods taken on credit from European merchants into competing, independent, retinues of their own, understood the process of capitalist material accumulation— wealth and power without evident, familiar human sources—as witchcraft, whereby individuals appearing by day to belong to the community by night sucked their ill-gotten gains from its very life-blood, its children. ‘Eating’ became a near-universal metaphor for such consuming greediness, and European traders were correspondingly ‘cannibals’. Imported goods were magically rendered from the bodies of people the Europeans bought and took away; cowry-shells used as a Slave Coast currency grew on the submerged bodies of dead captives thrown into the lagoons around trading towns. Commerce and personal aggrandizement arose from and brought only evil.³⁶ In Muslim areas, those enslaved sought social as well as religious redemption by joining the highly populist *Sufi* orders, where they found places independent of their lack of recognized descent and also often economic survival. From the late seventeenth century, particularly in the latitudes just south of the Sahara, they also rallied to Muslim warlords calling the oppressed to defend Islam against unbelievers, and also arousing masses of those vulnerable to capture and enslavement to efficacious self-defence.

Africans thus participated in global commercial integration, marginally in most areas in the 1500s and 1600s, but definitively in the 1700s, in ways parallel to processes elsewhere in the pan-Indian Ocean and pan-Atlantic regions. They did so in terms of the ‘domestic’ dynamics of their own ideological, political, and economic strategies, which centred on capturing and retaining people as followers, rather than on more commercialized processes of indebting peasants to control their agricultural or artisanal output to accumulate cash, or investing financial capital in large American mines and plantations. Because people constituted wealth in Africa, the commercial credit invested there yielded returns claimed in slaves, particularly reproductive women. Some of the captives—in the Atlantic mostly able-bodied males—were sold abroad against securing further credits and future profits in children and females at home in a process parallel to the sexual segregation of failed debtors’ families in Asia. In the IOR those women joined ivory and other commodities flowing from Africa along maritime trade routes and ended up mostly in household slavery—‘harems’—in cities and palaces in Asia. In the Atlantic, men became the human collateral that helped to fund massive investments in New World enterprizes, working off their owners’ debts in the slavery that subsequently became paradigmatic of the ‘institution’ worldwide.

In Lieu of Conclusions: The Atlantic Paradigm in Asian (and African) Perspective

But this modern paradigm was—like all ideologies—illusive. The theme of slavery pervades world history. Although most of the literature seeks to define it

as a single ‘institution’, often lumped negatively and misleadingly with other forms of ‘unfree labour’, it does so in terms derived from the recency, modernity and political sensitivity of the highly commercialized uses of slaves for production and as collateral in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Americas. This civic, public Atlantic notion of proprietarial slavery spread around the world with the imposition of European colonial regimes in the late nineteenth century. Abolitionists, in the wake of imperialist merchants and military men, justified European conquests in the name of using their power to abolish the slaving practices that their predecessors had done so much to enable. In Africa, transfers of people were routine ways of reciprocally and responsibly affiliating the communities from which they came, and the personal independence of social accountability that individuals achieved by slaving was anathema. In the North Atlantic, the celebration of individualism and personal civic presence made all these forms of dependency abhorrent. What had changed in Africa and Asia was that the colonial rulers brought capital and machine guns to bear on the age-old political tensions between central rulers and the heads of private retinues of slaves. Wages and weaponry triumphed over wealth in people.

Slaving had previously enabled slavers thus to achieve the profound changes attending commercialization worldwide. Figures marginal to emerging present—political struggles in Asia and in Europe merchants under military rule or constrained by aristocratic and ecclesiastical claims on land and peasants, or in much of Africa younger men in communities built around respect for seniority and progeny—reached beyond the communities within which they were thus disadvantaged to pursue their personal ambitions by bringing in outsiders as slaves. The proprietarial idiom of commercial transactions in the Atlantic was present in much of the IOR but only momentarily so in the lives of the people enslaved there; it was an atrocity in much of Africa. ‘Freedom’ in the North Atlantic meant political participation and recourse to public, government protection; protection and security elsewhere came rather from private, highly personal relationships of belonging—belonging *in* the group into which one was born, or belonging *to* a powerful patron or master.

The historical process throughout was a political-economic dialectic, in which consolidating warlords provoked resident merchants—or, in Africa, domestic communities—to defend themselves by acquiring slaves. As wars played out as sources of political strength, merchants gained, and the heirs to the conquerors clung to power by surrounding themselves also with slaves. Both sides of the conflict inherent in commercialization used slaving, with the consequences in the great displacements of people that followed in both the Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds. In the United States, where the slavers were British foreigners, early Republic financial interests yielded to an unprecedented popular nationalism as the driving force behind state centralization, which rode to ascendancy in significant part in opposition to ‘slavery’ as metaphor, as political ideology, and as economic fact. The process of early commercialization, not the attained condition of modernity, collateralized people against the debt needed to

finance the start-up phases of its growth. Those enslaved paid the price in their isolation, derision and abuse, and in the Atlantic and sometimes in the Indian Ocean also in their labour. Africans' characterization of 'pawnship' as interest on debt, like their recognition of the 'cannibalism' inherent in capitalism, put the point directly, in profoundly human terms.

It has been the intent of this essay to sketch, at least provocatively if not also plausibly, Atlantic processes of slaving in terms derived from Indian Ocean parallels. This sketch thus inverts the implicit view of the world exclusively through North Atlantic lenses of modernity that has dominated the still highly politicized, and therefore inevitably presentistic and teleological field of 'comparative (racial) slavery'. It then reverses the implicit comparison again by using financial terms familiar from the Atlantic world to describe how people in Africa participated in the global process.³⁷ The regional variations in slavery registered here in these terms reveal the ubiquitous theme of slaving around the world in promisingly historical terms. The final step in understanding slaving historically is to reverse the customary emphasis on slavery as the theme and instead to explain specific slaveries as outcomes of the varying times and places in which slavers, and their opponents, competed for power by seeking exclusive control of the outsiders they brought in as slaves.

NOTES

Abbreviations: **JAH**=*Journal of African History*

1. With appreciation to George E.Brooks for denoting thus a preliminary sketch intended to frame more thorough development of an argument; 'A Provisional Historical Scheme for Western Africa Based on Seven Climate Periods (c.9000 B.C. to the 19th Century)', *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 26, 1 (1986), pp.43–62.
2. 'Politics' or polities, as problematized in the following essay, requires phraseology more complex than 'government' or 'authorities', either of which might mislead readers into approaching the argument with premises based on modern 'states' or state ideologies.
3. B.Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991).
4. R.Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern* (London, New York: Verso, 1997).
5. Thus the opening phrasing of 'validly historical', in contrast to the dominantly—indeed often overwhelmingly—sociological, hence static, approach to slavery as an 'institution'. For elaborations of this central epistemological premise, see my 'History and Africa/Africa and History', *American Historical Review*, 104, 1 (1999), pp.1–32.
6. For specific references, see G.Campbell, 'Unfree Labour and the Significance of Abolition in Madagascar, c.1825–1949', in *Abolition and Its Aftermath in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2004). Aware of my vulnerability to challenge on specific manifestations of the broad tendencies

that I propose here, I look forward to reactions these exploratory hypotheses may provoke (jcm7a@virginia.edu).

7. With acknowledgement to C.Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), and many subsequent works.
8. See S.Miers and I.Kopytoff (eds.), *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977); C.Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).
9. J.C.Scott has focused cleanly on the political dynamics of non-modern polities in the *Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990) of how humble people who act, positively and efficaciously, but mostly privately, both with *Weapons of the Weak* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985) and *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); they appear on the public stage of politics only when authorities of unquestioned legitimacy in an accepted *Moral Economy of the Peasant* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), fail to keep their side of an implicit political bargain.
10. See O.Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), who takes ‘society’ in a relatively unconsidered sense as equivalent to modern polities through a logical slippage from inclusiveness of any ‘society’ to the civic ‘life’ of the modern ‘state’.
11. A.Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, Vol.1, *The Lands Below the Winds*, and— Vol.2, *Expansion and Crisis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988, 1993); K.N. Chaudhuri, *Asia Before Europe: Economy and Civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
12. For this and other insights into South Asian slavery, I am grateful to Indrani Chatterjee, ‘Abolition by Denial: The South Asian Example’, in Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*; and *Slavery and Law in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999); ‘A Slave’s Quest for Selfhood in Eighteenth-Century Hindustan’, *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 37, 1 (2000), pp. 53–86.
13. Authorities in the mid-first-millennium BCE eastern Mediterranean (Old Testament Israel, Solon’s reforms at Athens) adopted similar measures to protect local peasants from enslavement for debts.
14. Comparable strategies among post-Roman Germanic military monarchies in contact with commercialized Mediterranean merchants are better known, as *Wergeld*.
15. T.Aphornsuvan. ‘Slavery and Freedom in the Making of the Modern Thai Mind’, in *Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Thai Studies* (Chiang Mai, 1996), Vol.1, pp.19–45, and ‘Slavery and Modernity: Freedom in the Making of Modern Siam’, in D. Kelly and A.Reid (eds.), *Asian Freedoms: The Idea of Freedom in East and Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 161–86.
16. Political struggles of this order also informed the legal histories of slavery in Korea and China.
17. D.Ayalon, *Islam and the Abode of War: Military Slaves and Islamic Adversaries* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994); P.Crone, *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980); D.Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam: The Genesis of a Military System* (New Haven: Yale University

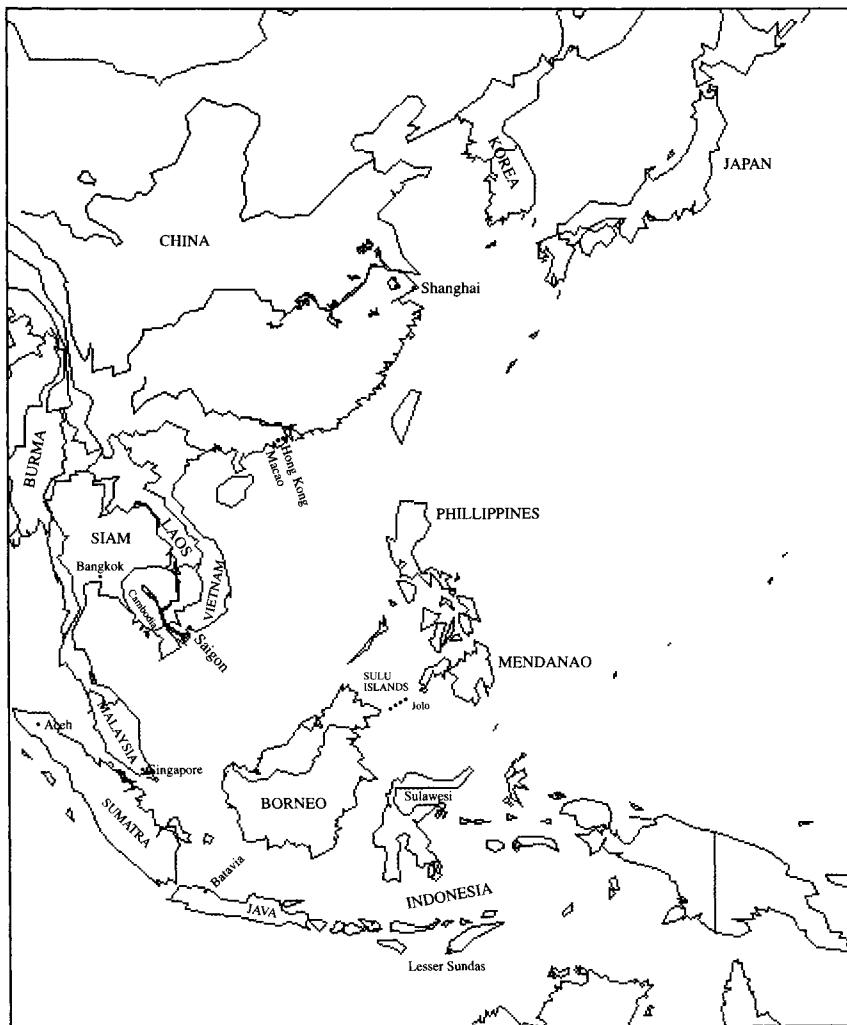
- Press, 1981); T.Miura and J.E.Philips (eds.), *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa* (London: Kegan Paul International, 2000).
18. See Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath*.
 19. See J.C.Miller, ‘The Historical Contexts of Slavery in Europe’, in P.Hernæs and T.Iversen (eds.), *Slavery Across Time and Space: Studies in Slavery in Medieval Europe and Africa* (Trondheim: Department of History, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2002), pp.1–57.
 20. Though not in *all* western European languages. E.g. in Welsh the word for ‘slave’ is *caethwas*, (*caeth*=‘captive’; *gwas*=‘man-servant’) —Gwyn Campbell, personal communication. Also in Scandinavian languages *praelahald*, *träldomens*, *trael*, and other variants of ‘thrall’ (in English) prevailed until modern times. These northern regions were sources, seldom recipients, of Slavs or other slaves.
 21. See D.B.Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).
 22. See J.C.Miller, ‘O Atlântico escravista: açúcar, escravos, e engenhos’, *Afro-Ásia* (Centro de Estudos áfro-orientais, FFCH-UFBA—Bahia, Brazil), 19–20 (1997), pp. 9–36.
 23. See note 10.
 24. The European cash value of gold carried from Africa exceeded the value of enslaved people until the late 1600s; E.van den Boogaart, ‘The Trade Between Western Africa and the Atlantic World’, *JAH*, 33, 3 (1992), pp.369–85; D.Eltis, ‘The Relative Importance of Slaves and Commodities in the Atlantic Trade of Seventeenth-Century Africa’, *JAH*, 35, 2 (1994), pp.237–49.
 25. S.B.Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society: Bahia, 1550–1835* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
 26. Blackburn, *Making of New World Slavery*, captures some of these dynamics in its subtitle, ‘From the Baroque to the Modern’.
 27. As Islamic law and theology handled the ‘problem of slavery’.
 28. An emphasis that I owe to Michael Salman, particularly *The Embarrassment of Slavery: Controversies over Bondage and Nationalism in the American Colonial Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), and his presentation to the International Conference—‘Slavery, Unfree Labour & Revolt in Asia and the Indian Ocean Region’ (University of Avignon, 4–6 Oct. 2001) —published proceedings forthcoming.
 29. See esp. S.Feierman, ‘Colonizers, Scholars, and the Creation of Invisible Histories’, in V.E. Bonnell and L.Hunt (eds.), *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp.182–216; F.Cooper, ‘What is the Concept of Globalization Good For? An African Historian’s Perspective’, *African Affairs*, 44, 1 (2001), pp.189–213; K.Kone, ‘review’ of R.A.Austen (ed.), *In Quest of Sunjata: The Mande Epic as History, Literature and Performance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), in *African Studies Review*, 44, 1 (2001), pp.156–58.
 30. Intriguing parallels: ‘debt bondage’ in Asia accounted ‘debt’ in currencies and was foreclosed in people; in Africa ‘pawnship’—the equivalent—accounted debts in people temporarily transferred as collateral against loans of trade goods—see P.E.Lovejoy and D. Richardson: ‘Trust, Pawnship, and Atlantic History: The Institutional Foundations of the Old Calabar Slave Trade’, *American Historical Review*, 104, 2 (1999), pp.333–55, and ‘The Business of Slaving: Pawnship in

- Western Africa, c.1600–1810', *JAH*, 42, 1 (2001), pp.67–89. Atlantic slavery inverted the relationships, so that cash pledges (e.g. bills of exchange) were given against people (enslaved Africans), and paid in commodities (e.g. sugar).
31. This analysis differs sharply from the material rationality attributed to Africans by many economic historians since the publication of A.G.Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973).
 32. See E.A.Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves: Changing Pattern of International Trade in East Central Africa to the Later Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).
 33. See the many studies of Gwyn Campbell, culminating in *The Rise and Fall of an African Empire: An Economic History of Imperial Madagascar 1750–1895* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
 34. For central Africa, see J.C.Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).
 35. See P.Manning, *Slavery and African Life* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); P.E.Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
 36. E.Isichei, *The Voices of the Poor in Africa* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002); R.Shaw, *Ritual Memories of the Slave Trade: Ritual and the Historical Imagination in Sierra Leone* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); R.M.Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade: Diola Religion and Society in Precolonial Senegambia* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
 37. A principle identified by Michael Salman as the 'reversibility of comparisons', in forthcoming proceedings of the third Avignon International Conference—'Slavery, Unfree Labour & Revolt in Asia and the Indian Ocean Region' (4–6 Oct. 2001).

MAP 1 INDIAN OCEAN



MAP 2 SOUTHEAST AND EAST ASIA



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Index

- abolition of slavery, 7, 44, 56, 58, 60, 129, 181, 183–4, 190
 in Indonesia, impact of, 44
- acculturation, xxi
- Advielle, Marie-Hélène, 13
- Africa, viii–xi, 6, 10
 (see specific countries) diaspora, 17
 history of slaving in, 185–91
 political structures within, 184–8
 slaving, 17–27
- Allen, Richard, 3, 54
- Alpers, Edward, 3, 25, 39
- American plantations (also see specific countries), xii, xiv, xxii, 3–5, 24, 138, 150, 159, 179–84
 British role in, 38, 40, 54, 180, 183
- Anderson, Claire, xxi
- Angola, 188
- anti-slavery ideology, 9
 sheltering of runaways, 56–7, 59
- Anti-Slavery International, 11
- apartheid, 9, 12
- Armstrong, James, 59
- assimilation, xviii–xix, 123
- Australia, 104
- Avine, Grégoire, 35
- Aymonier, Étienne, 139
- Bahrain, xviii
- Banaji, D.R., 42
- Bangkok, 69, 77–9, 134
- Barassin, Jean, 60
- Barbados, 182–3
- Barbou, Alfred, 132
- Barker, Anthony, 54
- Barth, Frederick, 58
- Bauss, Rudy, 19–20, 42
- Beaton, Patrick, 63
- Benin, 188
- Boivin, Michel, 5
- Boomgaard, Peter, xv, xxiii, 6–8, 76
- Borneo, 111, 114, 121
- Botswana, xii
- Braudel, Ferdinand, vii
- Brazil, 17, 22–5, 180
- Buddhist, 172, 187
 employment of slaves, 143
- Bunda, Nassib, 62
- Burkhardt, John, 57
- Burma, 69, 71–2, 80
 different social groupings within, 71–3
- Cambodia, 77, 134, 139
- Campbell, Gwyn, 5, 25, 33, 40, 61
- Cape Colony, 52, 54, 59, 64
- Cape Colony Model, 4
- Carlos I (of Spain), 181
- Carter, Marina, 42
- Chang'an, Fu, 147
- Chatterjee, Indrani, 6–7, 9
- Chaudhuri, K.N., vii
- children,
 child labour, 13
 enslavement of, 6, 10, 12–13, 43, 73, 92, 131–2, 144, 174
- China, ix–xii, xiv–xvii, xix, xxi, xxiii, 2, 5, 85, 129–51, 155, 172–3
 as slave traders, 133
 Board of Punishment, 148
 connection to Sulu, 111, 115, 122

- during World War Two, 104
 Han Dynasty, 143, 148
 Import/Export of slaves, 150
 labour camps, 12
 Manchu, 144, 149, 151, 165
 Ming Dynasty, xxiv, 165
 Official Slavery, 146–7
 Private Slavery, 147–9
 Qing Dynasty, 146, 150
 Song Dynasty, 143
 structure of slavery within, 145–50
 Tang Dynasty, 143, 150
 Ch'ü, T'ung-tsu, 144
 collective slavery, 9
 colonialism, 12, 84, 177–9
 as a form of slavery, 1, 12
 propaganda of, 136
 Communism, 2
 (see also 'Marxism')
 Comte, Maurice, 137
 Confucianism, 146, 150, 159, 163
 social stratification within, 163
 concubines, 4, 6–7, 118, 135, 145
 as status symbol, 7
 connection to prostitution, 135
 in the Sulu system, 118
 in the Philippines, 118–19
 Cooper, Fred, 56, 61–2
 Cox, Percy, 57
 Crawford, John, 79
 Crete, 177
 crime, 13
 as the basis of enslavement, xxi, 89,
 113, 135, 164
 Curtin, Philip, 35
 Cyprus, 177
- Dasgupta, Keya, 3
 debt bondage, xiii–xiv, xvii, 7, 12, 72, 87–90, 112–13, 132, 144, 148–9, 164, 173–5, 186–7
 emergence of, 173
 definitions of slavery, 1–14, 87–8, 155, 183–4
 academic definitions, 1–3
 need for a definition, 11
 overly broad classification, 1, 12–13
- politics of, 9–11
 relations to other forms of unfree labour, 3–9
 demographic,
 changes in India, 19
 demand for slaves induced by changes in, xxiii, 19, 37, 91–2, 132, 149, 160
 impact of disease upon, 37, 90, 93, 99, 105
 impact of famine upon, 38, 88, 90
 in Korea, 160–62
 mortality rates, 37
 of slaves, ix, xiv, 20
 diaspora, 45
 African, 17
 disease, 37, 90, 93, 99, 105
 Dutch, xv, 6, 53, 83–5, 88, 117, 181, 188
 colonial system, 107
 Dutch Colonial State, 84
 Dutch East India Company, 33, 84, 175
- economics
 economic situation of slaves, 11
 emergence of a global economy, vii–ix, 186–9
 in Korea, 160
 of Java, 101–9
 of repaying a bond, 136
 role of slaves in the operation of the economy, xx, 124, 170, 186–91
 statistics of the slave trade, 20, 23, 26–7, 34–6, 38–9, 76, 131
 of Sulu, 124
- Egypt, ix, xvi
 Eno, Omar, 5
 enslavement,
 of children, 6, 10, 12–13, 43, 73, 92, 131–2, 144, 174
 as a choice, 5–6, 43, 118–19, 145, 149
 comparison between techniques used by Europe and the Indian Ocean Region, 170
 connection to bride prices, 92–3
 different terms for, 75
 hereditary, xviii, 1–3, 71, 132, 147, 155, 163–4
 in Korea, 164

- origins of, 171–3
- purchase of freedom, 119
- for ransom, 129
- social blindness to the process of, 71
- through adoption, 12
- through indebtedness—debt bondage, xiii–xiv, xvii, 7, 12, 72–4, 87–90, 112–13, 132–3, 144, 148–9, 164, 173–5, 186–7
- through forced marriage, 12
- through law-breaking, xxi, 89, 113, 135, 164
- through violent capture/kidnap, 4, 43, 69–80, 89, 132, 149, 170–71
- through war, xiii, xvi, 71, 73, 88, 90, 132, 164, 172–3
- unified theory to explain, 90
- of women, 73, 92, 131–2, 145, 148–50, 171–2, 174
- escape, xvi, 51–65, 119–23
 - (see also ‘maroon scholarship’)
 - cultural reasons for, 63
 - grand marronage*, 52–3, 59–64
 - likelihood of escape based on region, 54
 - petit marronage*, 52–4, 64
 - policing of, 53
 - propensity of Malagasy slaves to, 53–5, 59, 63
 - propensity of Mozambique slaves to, 54–6, 61
 - propensity of Zanzibar slaves to escape, 56–7
 - refugee republics, 61
 - sheltering of runaways, 56–7, 59
 - strategies for avoiding, xvi
 - Vagrancy Acts, 54
 - Ethiopia, ix
- ethnicity,
 - as a dimension of slavery, viii, xxi, 9, 131–2
 - of the slaves, 35–6, 112–13, 124, 131–2, 150
 - as a source of loyalty, xxii
 - in the Sulu Sultanate, 111
- Eurocentrism, vii
- Europe (also see individual countries),
 - Christian European model, 3
- economic dominance of, viii, x
- history of slavery, 177–9
- practice of slavery, 3
- representation of, 137
- slaving as a comparative case for the Indian Ocean Region, 169–92
- Ewald, Janet, 64
- exchange value of slaves, 74
- explanations for the existence of slavery,
 - as status symbol, 7, 114, 135
 - economic versus uneconomic
 - explanations of slavery, xix–xx, 1–2, 86, 114
 - Orientalism, xix
- Filliot, 35
- forced labour, 12–13, 88, 97–109
- Forrest, Thomas, 118
- France, 12, 57, 63
 - Code Noir*, 183
 - demand for slaves, 25
 - French Ministry for the Colonies, 131
 - history of slavery within, 178
 - occupation of La Reunion, 53–4
 - role in the persistence of slavery in Indochina, 129
 - slaving, 22–3, 33–4, 39–40, 183
 - taboos about discussing slavery in France, 129–130, 137
- Frank, Andres, Gunder, viii
- Freitas, Jose Henrique da Cruz, 22–3
- Friedman, Jonathan, 78
- Fuguang, Lü, 146
- Fuma, Sudel, 53
- Gerbeau, Hubert, 42
- Germany, 62, 179
- gender,
 - breakdown of slavery, xi, 26–7, 169, 179
 - different roles cross-gender, xi, 121, 146, 148–50, 158, 164, 189
 - enslavement of women, 73, 92, 131–2, 145, 148–50, 171–2, 174
 - enslavement through forced marriage, 12
 - female circumcision, 12

- inequality as analogy to slavery, 2
the role of bride prices, 92–3
- Ghaleb, Sherif, 57
- Great Britain (see ‘United Kingdom’)
- Greater Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, 97, 101, 104, 108
- Greece, 150, 158
- Guerlach, B, 132
- Gujarati merchants, 17–27
- Habash*, x
- Harmand, Jules, 132, 137
- heredity,
as the basis of enslavement, xviii, 1–3, 71, 132, 147, 155, 163–4
as the basis of slave loyalty, 163
- Hinduism, 172–3
enslavement through the caste system (caste slavery), xvi–xvii, xxi, 44
- historiography of slaving, 34, 155–6
- Hjejle, Benedicte, 44
- Hogan, Michael, 24
- Hong-Kong, 134
- Hoyong-Won, Yu, 163
- Hukuda, Tokumithu, 156
- Human Rights activists, 1
- Hunt, J, 118
- Hutson, Alaine, 57
- Iberia, 178–9
identities of captors, 71–2, 77–8
- Ik, Yi, 155
- illegal slavery, 129
- indentured labour, 3, 43–5, 72, 144
- India, ix–xiii, xvi–xvii, xxi, xxiii–xxiv, 58, 91, 104, 176
African communities within, 20
British, xiii, 9–10, 58, 69–70, 104, 111, 175
Dutch East India Company, 33, 84, 175
East-India Company, 23, 70
escape in, 58–9
Madras European Regiment, 69
Madras Native Infantry, 69
Portuguese India, 17–27
possession of slaves, 85
slaves exported to Mauritius, 42
- Indo-China, 9–10, 129–40
different forms of slaves in, 131
Pagoda slaves, 7
Portuguese, 17–27, 58
statistics concerning slavery, 131
- Indonesia, xvii, 9, 57, 83–93
abolition of slavery within, 83
- Ingrams, Harold, 57
- international law, 1
- Islam, ix, xv, xxiii, 4, 173, 189
honour killings, 12
influence on the African population, 18
- Islamic slavery, 4–5, 10, 20
Portuguese fear of the power of, 18
sharia law, xvi, xviii, 177
slavers, 25
treatment of slaves, xvi–xvii
- Italy 177–9
- Jakarta (previously Batavia), 85–6
- Japan, 9, 173
Construction of a Greater Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, 97, 101, 104, 108
treatment of forced labourers, 98–101
use of Javanese forced labour, 97–109
- Jareer*, x
- Java, 83, 87, 175
Cultivation System, 83
forced labour by Japan in WW2, 97–109
mining operations in WW2, 102–3
provision of food and clothing in WW2, 103–4, 106–7
work conditions during for forced workers in WW2, 105–8
- Joubert, Jérôme, 13
- Kangxi, Emporer, 147
- Kampuchea, 139
- Kampuchean codes, 136
- Kampuchea Protectorate, 131
- Karen* slavers, 73–80
- Kassim, Mohamed, 5
- Kenya, 56, 61–2
- Khoja, 25
- Kilwa, Sultan of, 40
- Kongo, 188

- Korea, xii, xv, xxii, 8, 10, 164
 Chosun Dynasty, 155–6, 159, 162
 classification of *nobi*, 155–9
 disintegration of the *nobi* system, 160–
 66
 effect of invasion, 165
- Koryo Dynasty, 164
 master's obligation to *nobi*, 159, 165
 payment of Tribute within, 157
 supply of slaves to, 164
 system of slavery within, 155–66
- labour,
 forced, 12–13
 forced mobilization of, in Java, 97–109
- Laos, 77, 131–2
- Larson, Pier, 33
- Leach, Edmund, 78
- League of Nations, 1, 11–14
- League of Nations Temporary Slavery Commission, 11–12
 supplementary Slavery Convention, 12
- Le Meyre de Vilers, 129, 139
- Liuliang, Lü, 146
- McLeod, W.C., 69, 73–5, 80
- Madagascar, ix, xi, xvii, 5, 17, 24–5, 33–7, 39–40, 55, 59–60, 91
 emergence of slavery in, 9
 Imperial, xv, xviii, xxi–xxiii
 propensity for Malagasy slaves to escape, 53–5, 59, 63
 as site of 'refugee republics', 61
- manumission (see 'release of slaves')
- maroon scholarship, 51–2, 64–5
grand marronage, 52–3, 59–64
grand marrons, 59–60
 on La Reunion, 59–60
- maroon societies, 59
petit marronage, 52–4, 64
- Marxism, 1, 10, 156
 Communism, 2
- Mascarene Islands (Mauritius and Reunion), ix, xiv, 3, 17, 33–45, 53, 60–61, 63–4, 175
 British role in, 38, 40, 54
- use of slaves from Mozambique, 34, 38–9, 41–2, 45
- Maugham, Robin, 6
- Meddo*, x
- media, 13
- Meghaji, Amirchund, 24
- Meillassoux, Claude, xx
- memory of slavery, 7
- Merina empire, 8
- Mesopotamia, xiii
- Miers, Suzanne, xvii, 5
- migrant labour, 12–13
 forced migration, 88
 in the Mascarene Islands, 34
- Mjikenda*, x
- Milbert, Jacques, 35, 63
- Monteiro, 23
- Morice, Jean-Vincent, 40
- Moruo, Guo, 143
- Motichand, Laxmichand, 22–3
- Moura, Jean, 131
- Mozambique, 17–27, 187
 propensity of slaves to escape from, 54–6, 61
 role of the Portuguese in the slave-trade,, 17–27, 55–6
 slaves sold to Arabia, 19–20
 slaves sold to India, 17–27
 slaves sold to the Mascarene Islands, 34, 38–9, 41–2, 45
- Muda, Sultan Agung, xv, 88–9
- Muda, Sultan Iskandar, 89
- Mwanakingwaba, Chief Saleb, 56
- Napoleonic Wars, 26
- natural disasters, xxiii–xxiv, 91–2, 132, 149
- Neïs, Paul, 132
- Netherlands, 97, 101–2
 War, 97
- Newitt, Malyn, 55
- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), 12
- Oman, 57
- Oogi*, x
- Orientalism, xix

- Orleans, The Prince of, 137
 Ottoman Empire, 135
 Owen, W.F.W., 54
- Palais, James B., 156
 Patterson, Orlando, 156, 159
 Pemba, 56
 Persian Gulf, 5, 26
 Peru, 150
 Philippines, xv, xvii, 9, 91, 118–22
 comparison to Sulu, 123
 relation to the US, 9
 use of concubines in, 118–19
- Phnom-Penh, 134
 Pinto, Celsa, 20
 Pinto, Jeannette, 19–20
 piracy, 83–4
 Pires, Tomé, 84
 Portuguese, 179, 180, 182, 188
 (see also ‘Iberia’)
 attempt to limit ownership of slaves by
 Muslims, 18
 India, 17–27, 58
 role in slave-trading in Mozambique,
 17–27, 55–6
 praedial slavery, 44
 Price, Richard, 52, 59
- Qianlong, 146
 Qinghong, Fan, 148
 Qingyuan, Wei, 144
 Qiyan, Qu, 144
 Quelimane, 22–4
- Rae, Kim Bok, 8, 10
 Ray, Charu Chandra, 42
 refugee republics, 61
 Reid, Anthony, xiv, xxii, 76, 83
 release of slaves, 37, 56–7, 64, 119–23,
 146, 161
 religion, xxi
 Buddhist, 143, 172, 187
 Hinduism, xvi–xvii, xxi, 44, 172–3
 Islam, ix, xv, xxiii, 4–5, 10, 18, 20, 25,
 173, 177, 189
 representation of Europeans, 189
- representation of slaves, xvii–xviii, 135–8,
 149
 as children, 10
 impact of the representation, 138–9
 in Europe, 180
 in France, 129–30, 137
 in Korea, 163
 in Thai, 72–3
 Richardson, David, 69, 72, 74–6, 80
 Rome (Imperial), 2, 150, 158
 Ross, Robert, 53
 Ruibing, A.H., 83
 Russia, 12
- Salman, Michael, 9
Sankadhuudhe, x
 Sarkar, Tanika, 43–4
 Sato, Shigeru, 9
 Saudi Arabia, 5, 10
 abolition within, 57
 the Arabian Gulf, 26
 serfdom, xv, 7–8, 12
 difficulty of distinguishing from
 slavery, 155–6
 Serjeant, R.B, 57
 servile labour,
 different forms of, 87
 institutionalised servitude (domestic
 servitude), xvii
 relative position of slaves to non-slaves,
 xi–xii, 5, 116
 sex industry
 (see also ‘concubines’)
 forced prostitution, 9, 12–13, 93, 149,
 151
 sexual relations with slaves, xvii–xviii,
 xix, 5–7, 159, 164
 Seychelles, 3, 40, 54, 61, 64
 illegal slave-trade to, 34
 Sheriff, Abdul, xvi, xviii, 5, 26
 Shia, Bohora, 25
 Shizong, Emperor, 146
 Siam,
 British involvement with, 69–72, 77
 King of, 69
 Law concerning the treatment of
 slaves, 136

- Singapore, 97–8, 134
 slavery,
 breakdown by gender, xi, 26–7, 169, 179
 classified as bonded, 112
 classified as chattel, x–xii, xxiii, 1–2, 10–11, 33–4, 42–3, 112, 143, 148, 158
 consciousness of (also see ‘identity’), xx–xxii, 7
 definitions of, 1–14, 87–8, 155, 183–4
 different forms of, viii–ix, 51, 87–8, 112–19, 131, 145–50, 155–59
 ethnicity of, 35–6, 112–13, 124, 131–2, 150
 as a form of social security, xxiii
 general history of in Europe, 177
 general history of in Indian Ocean Region, 171–7
- geographic patterns of, ix
 hierarchy within, xxii
 as human sacrifices, 87
 long-term history of, ix
 praedial slavery, 44
 roles employed by, xvii–xviii, xix, xxv, 19, 43–4, 55, 85–6, 115, 135
 as understood in Europe, viii, xxiii
 as understood in the IOW, x–xxvi
 slave soldiers, xx, 55, 57, 85
 non-use of, xvi
 power of, vxi
 Sok-hyong, Kim, 156
 Somalia, 62
 South Africa, ix, 59
 South-East Asia, 97–109, 111–24, 140, 176
 Souza, Teotino de, 42
 Sowchand, Shobhachand, 22–4
 Spanish, xv, 116–18, 120–21, 179, 181–2, 184
 (see also ‘Iberia’)
 as emancipators/enslavers of the banyaga (Sulu), 122–3
 Sri Lanka, 44
 state formation, xiii
 Su, Lu, 144
 Sulu, xv, xx, xxii, 5–6, 9
 comparison to the Philippines, 123
- different roles for the *Banyaga*, 111–20
 ethnic loyalty of, xxii
 incorporation into the world economic system, 111
 slave/master relationship, xi, 112–19
 structure of slavery within, 111–24
 Sumatra, 8, 84, 86
 Su-won, Yu, 163
- Tanzania, 56, 61
 Teelock Vijaya, 54
 Tennant, Alexander, 24
 Thailand, xiv–xv
 Timbuktu, 6
 Toussaint, Auguste, 39
 trafficking in persons, 12
 Try, Ea Meng, 131
- Unenville, Baron d’, 37
 United Kingdom, 5, 12, 35, 40, 56–7, 117, 188
 anti-slavery society, 11
 anti-slave-trade surveillance, 17
 East-India Company, 23, 70
 history of slavery within, 178
 in India, xiii, 9–10, 58, 69–70, 104, 111, 175
 in Mauritius, 38, 40
 in Reunion, 54
 in the Americas, 38, 40, 54, 180, 183
 Madras European Regiment, 69
 Madras Native Infantry, 69
 pax Britannica, 79
- United Nations,
 anti-slavery committees, 1, 9
 International Labour Organization, 13
- United Nations Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery (previously United Nations Working Group on Slavery), 12
- United States, 104, 116, 150, 180–81
 relations to the Philippines, 9
 slavers, 23
- Urville, Charles d’, 118
- Vietnam, 77, 132
 violence, xii, 1, 7

Board of Punishment, 148
by Europeans, xiv–xv
by Japanese, 98–101
enslavement through violent capture, 4,
43, 69–80, 89, 132, 149, 170–71
in China, 148–50
in Korea, 165
in response to escape, 53, 64
in Sulu, 114
protection from, 5
transportation of slaves, 133–4

Warren, James, 5, 83
Watson, James, xvi, 146
Wilkes, Charles, 117
Wink, André, vii
Wordon, Nigel, 3, 59
World War Two (WW2)
 in China, 104
 in Japan, 97–109

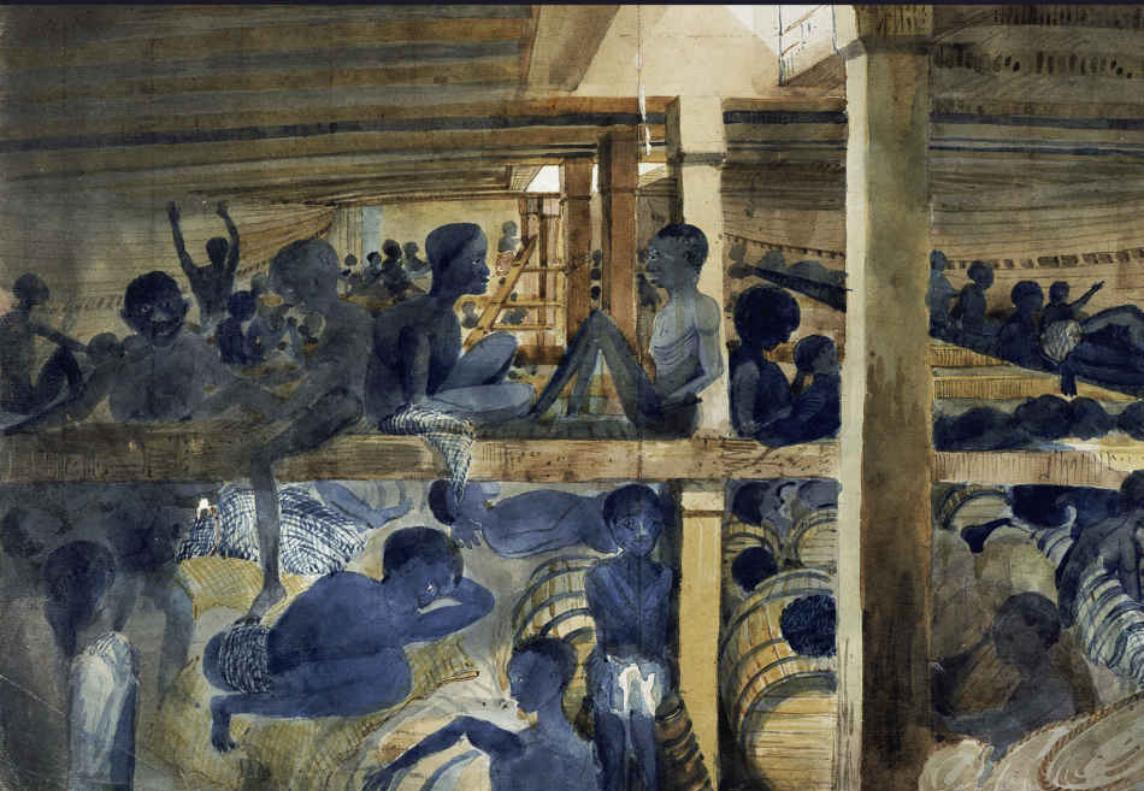
Yaha, Sherif, 57
Yiqian, Lü, 146
Yubing, Fan, 148

Zambesia, 55, 61
Zanzibar, ix, 51
 propensity for the escape of slaves, 56–
 7
Zhao, Zhang, 148
Zimbabwe, 187

THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

from West Central Africa

1780–1867



Daniel B. Domingues da Silva

The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa, 1780–1867

The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa, 1780–1867 traces the inland origins of slaves leaving West Central Africa at the peak period of the transatlantic slave trade. Drawing on archival sources from Angola, Brazil, England, and Portugal, Daniel B. Domingues da Silva explores not only the origins of the slaves forced into the trade, but also the commodities for which they were exchanged and their methods of enslavement. Further, the book examines the evolution of the trade over time, its organization, the demographic profile of the population transported, the enslavers' motivations to participate in this activity, and the Africans' experience of enslavement and transportation across the Atlantic. Domingues da Silva also offers a detailed "geography of enslavement," including information on the homelands of the enslaved Africans and their destination in the Americas.

Daniel B. Domingues da Silva is Assistant Professor of African history at Rice University.

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The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa, 1780–1867

DANIEL B. DOMINGUES DA SILVA

Rice University



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To Livia

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>List of Tables</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xv
Introduction	I
1 The Atlantic Slave Trade in the Century of Abolition	16
2 The Commercial Organization of the Slave Trade	38
3 The Origins of Slaves Leaving West Central Africa	73
4 The Demographic Profile of the Enslaved Population	100
5 African Patterns of Consumption	122
6 Experiences and Methods of Enslavement	142
Conclusion	167
Appendix A – Slave Origins Data	172
Appendix B – Slave Prices Data	176
Appendix C – Exchange Commodities Data	178
Bibliography	200
Index	223

Figures

1.1 Slaves leaving West Central Africa by national carriers, 1781–1867	<i>page</i> 30
1.2 Slaves leaving West Central Africa by port of embarkation, 1781–1867	33
2.1 Wind and sea currents of the North and South Atlantic	39
2.2 Lines of equal coefficient of variability of rainfall in Angola	69
2.3 Seasonal variations in the slave trade from Luanda, 1736–1808	70
3.1 Estimated number of slaves leaving West Central Africa by linguistic groups, 1831–1855	84
3.2 Estimated number of Kikongo slaves leaving West Central Africa by ethnic groups, 1831–1855	89
3.3 Estimated number of Kimbundu slaves leaving West Central Africa by ethnic groups, 1831–1855	90
3.4 Estimated number of Umbundu slaves leaving West Central Africa by ethnic groups, 1831–1855	91
4.1 A sugar mill, Brazil, 1816	106
4.2 African women working the fields near the Kwango River, 1881	110
5.1 Comparison between price and number of slaves leaving Luanda by decades, 1780s–1830s	124

Tables

1.1	Slaves leaving West Central Africa, 1781–1867	page 21
1.2	Slaves leaving West Central Africa by region of disembarkation (in thousands), 1781–1867	27
2.1	Percentage of slaves leaving West Central Africa distributed by region of departure and home port of the vessels that carried them, 1781–1867	41
2.2	Concentration of ownership of vessels embarking slaves at West Central Africa, 1781–1867	47
2.3	Number of slaves shipped by Anselmo da Fonseca Coutinho, 1768–1806	58
2.4	Size of Coutinho's slave shipments, 1768–1806	59
2.5	Structure of ownership in Coutinho's shipment of slaves (in row percentages), 1768–1806	59
3.1	Percentage of slaves leaving West Central Africa by distance traveled between their origins in the interior and their ports of embarkation (in kilometers), 1831–1855	86
4.1	Percentage of male slaves leaving West Central Africa by region of disembarkation, 1781–1867	104
4.2	Percentage of male slaves leaving West Central Africa by port of embarkation, 1781–1867	108
4.3	Percentage of slave children leaving West Central Africa by region of disembarkation, 1781–1867	116
4.4	Percentage of slave children leaving West Central Africa by port of embarkation, 1781–1867	117
5.1	Commodities imported at Luanda (in thousands of <i>réis</i>), selected years, 1785–1864	129
6.1	Koelle's interviewees, c.1847	145

A.1	Estimated number of slaves leaving West Central Africa by linguistic and ethnic groups, 1831–1855	172
B.1	Prices of slaves leaving Luanda as reported by colonial officials, 1780–1830	177
B.2	Prices of slaves leaving Luanda deflated by decades, 1780–1830	177
C.1	Commodities imported at Luanda by categories (in thousands of <i>réis</i>), 1785–1864	179
C.2	Commodities imported at Luanda by categories (in row percentages), 1785–1864	182
C.3	Alcohol imported at Luanda (in thousands of <i>réis</i>), 1785–1864	184
C.4	Apparel and notions imported at Luanda (in thousands of <i>réis</i>), 1785–1864	186
C.5	Asian textiles imported at Luanda (in thousands of <i>réis</i>), 1785–1864	188
C.6	European textiles imported at Luanda (in thousands of <i>réis</i>), 1785–1864	190
C.7	Foodstuff imported at Luanda (in thousands of <i>réis</i>), 1785–1864	192
C.8	Metals and metalware imported at Luanda (in thousands of <i>réis</i>), 1785–1864	194
C.9	Miscellany articles imported at Luanda (in thousands of <i>réis</i>), 1785–1864	196
C.10	Weapons imported at Luanda (in thousands of <i>réis</i>), 1785–1864	198

Preface

The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa, 1780–1867 traces for the first time the origins of slaves leaving West Central Africa at the peak period of the transatlantic slave trade. West Central Africa was one of the principal sources of slaves for the Americas. During the nineteenth century, the importance of the region as a supplier of slaves increased as a result of the suppression of the trade north of the Equator. Although some nations retreated from the business early in that century, others remained active, expanding their activities along the coast of West Central Africa. Some scholars of the slave trade claim that a quest for political power motivated Africans to sell one another into the transatlantic commerce as prisoners of war. They argue that the expansion of the slave trade from West Central Africa in the nineteenth century increased the incidence of warfare in the region, which in turn spread the enslaving frontiers further into the region's interior. However, as this book demonstrates, the rate of slaves leaving from West Central Africa remained relatively constant from the late eighteenth until the mid-nineteenth century, with slaves originating from places much closer to the coast than previously thought. Moreover, the book shows that cultural and economic motivations were also important factors shaping the participation of Africans in the slave trade. More Africans engaged in this activity than a handful of rulers and warlords, but their participation depended significantly on the ability of merchants in Europe and the Americas to deliver the goods required for exchanging for slaves.

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Columbia. His research focuses on the slave trade between West Central Africa and the Americas, especially Brazil and Cuba. It received funding from several institutions, including the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, and the Luso-American Foundation for the Development of Portugal. Domingues is co-manager of “Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database” and his research is available to the public in peer-reviewed journals in English and Portuguese, such as *Journal of African History*, *Slavery and Abolition*, and *Revista Afro-Ásia*.

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This book grew out of my Ph.D. dissertation, “Crossroads: Slave Frontiers of Angola, c.1780–1867,” developed with support from the Andrew W. Mellon, the Calouste Gulbenkian, and the Luso-American foundations, and presented at Emory University, Atlanta, in 2011. The book could not have been possible without the generous support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Research Council of the University of Missouri, where I held an appointment as assistant professor of African history until recently. I am also in debt to several colleagues, friends, and family members. I wish to thank first my mentors, David Eltis, Kristin Mann, and Clifton Crais, and my colleagues from the University of Missouri History Department, specially Mark Smith and Robert Smale, who read the manuscript, offered suggestions for improvement, and released me from part of my teaching obligations to revise the manuscript in 2015. My colleagues from the Black Studies Department, Afro-Romance Institute, and the newly established African Interdisciplinary Studies Hub, all at the University of Missouri, created an engaging environment for intellectual exchange.

The work of historians is often a lonely enterprise, but I am fortunate to have counted on the support and encouragement of many friends and colleagues. John Thornton, Walter Hawthorne, and Douglas Chambers read earlier drafts of the manuscript and offered important criticisms. Joseph Miller, Roquinaldo Ferreira, Mariana Cândido, Jelmer Vos, Stacey Sommerdyk, and Vanessa Oliveira lent their expertise in the field of West Central African history. Alex Borucki, Alexandre Veira Ribeiro, Ana Lúcia Araújo, Carmen Alveal, Kalle Kananoja, Paulo Teodoro de Matos, and Warren Whatley helped me test and publicize some of my

research findings in conferences, panels, and workshops in Brazil, Europe, and the United States. Conceição Neto, Fabrício Prado, Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, José Curto, and Paulo Silveira e Sousa shared valuable materials, references, and research tips. Phil Misevich, Nafees Khan, Olatunji Ojo, Badi Bukas-Yakabuul, Henry Lovejoy, Ugo Nwokeji, Yacine Daddi Adoun, and many others who go unnamed here (you know who you are), have always been a source of encouragement and intellectual motivation. English is not my primary language, but Suzan Eltis made sure the book was written as if penned by an English wordsmith.

I have been living abroad for a little over a decade now and, since my research is largely based outside my country of origin, I have had few opportunities to return and see my family. Although my life as a migrant is of course incomparable to that of thousands of Africans forced into the transatlantic slave trade, it allowed me to reflect on their experiences and on the lives of the people that they left behind. I am now acutely aware of not only the challenges of moving into a different culture, but also of the impact that the absence of a loved one has on those who stayed home. I am thus grateful for my family's understanding and support throughout these years. More difficult is to seek the understanding and thank the support of the person who followed me during this period with no guarantee of success. Livia, you left your family behind and abandoned an otherwise successful career to accompany me in this adventure. I am afraid I will never be able to repay you, but I will remain forever grateful for your sacrifice. This, my first book, is dedicated to you.

Abbreviations

AHI	Arquivo Histórico do Itamaraty, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
AHNA	Arquivo Histórico Nacional de Angola, Luanda, Angola
AHU	Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon, Portugal
ANRJ	Arquivo Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
BNA	British National Archives, Kew, England
BNRJ	Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Cod.	Codice
CU	Conselho Ultramarino, Lisbon, Portugal
Doc.	Document
FO	Foreign Office Series, London, England
SEMU	Secretaria de Estado da Marinha e Ultramar, Lisbon, Portugal

Introduction

In the 1840s, Nanga, a Kimbundu speaker from Libolo, near the coast of present-day Angola, was pawned by his mother. She used her son to free one of her brothers, who had been sold earlier for adultery, an offence in many parts of the region punishable by banishment, enslavement, or even death.¹ Africans in the region often pawned slaves or free family members as collateral, a way of securing quick credit to buy goods, pay debts, or invest in a business. The objective was to redeem the pawns within an agreed time period. In the interim, lenders could use the pawns for labor in several activities. If borrowers defaulted on their loans, pawned individuals, enslaved or free, could be further exchanged. Some clearly fell into the hands of creditors who foresaw selling them to traders rather than holding them as collateral.² This is what happened to Nanga. Although

¹ Details on Nanga's story come from Sigismund Wilhelm Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*, ed. P. E. H. Hair and David Dalby (Graz: Akademische Druck, U. Verlagsanstalt, 1965), 15. On adultery as a crime and form of enslavement in West Central Africa see Roquinaldo Ferreira, "Slaving and Resistance to Slaving in West Central Africa." In *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, ed. David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman, vol. 3 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 121–22; Roquinaldo Amaral Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World: Angola and Brazil during the Era of the Slave Trade* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 198; Mariana P. Cândido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World: Benguela and Its Hinterland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 230–32; Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730–1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 164.

² Toyin Falola and Paul E. Lovejoy, "Pawnship in Historical Perspective." In *Pawnship in Africa: Debt Bondage in Historical Perspective*, ed. Toyin Falola and Paul E. Lovejoy (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994); Paul E. Lovejoy and David Richardson, "Trust, Pawnship, and Atlantic History: The Institutional Foundations of the Old Calabar Slave Trade." *American Historical Review* 104, no. 2 (1999): 333–55; Paul E. Lovejoy and

his mother redeemed her sibling, she failed to reclaim her own son. Her creditors placed Nanga in the hands of Portuguese traders at Luanda who put him on a transatlantic slaver bound for Brazil.³

In the nineteenth century, the transatlantic slave trade was increasingly under attack. Despite the rising European demand for goods produced in the Americas with slave labor, such as cotton and sugar, slavery and the slave trade came to be seen as something that was morally wrong and should be suppressed.⁴ Great Britain was no doubt the most important power in this process. Not only did it abolish its own slave trade in 1807, it encouraged other nations to follow suit by signing a series of bilateral agreements for the gradual suppression of the traffic. Britain established courts, some of them international, to adjudicate ships accused of illegal slave trading and deployed an antislave trade squadron to patrol the coasts of Africa and the Americas.⁵ Nanga's story has a neat twist. A British man of war intercepted his vessel and took it for adjudication in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The court found the ship and its crew guilty of trading slaves and released all those enslaved.⁶ Nanga, a free man, adopted the name John Smart and remained in Sierra Leone with a woman from his own country. Seven years after Nanga's liberation, Sigismund Koelle, a German missionary, took down his story and made it available for posterity as part of his *Polyglotta Africana*, primarily a study in African languages.⁷

Nanga did not share the fate of the majority of Africans forced into the transatlantic slave trade. He never worked on a plantation, in a mine, or in

David Richardson, "The Business of Slaving: Pawnship in Western Africa, c.1600–1810." *Journal of African History* 42, no. 1 (2001): 67–89.

³ Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*, 15.

⁴ David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 234–38; Seymour Drescher, *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 208–09; David Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 23–26; James Walvin, *Crossings: Africa, the Americas, and the Atlantic Slave Trade* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 169–76.

⁵ Eltis, *Economic Growth*, 81–101; Walvin, *Crossings*, 176–92.

⁶ The "African Origins" portal, which provides users with access to all lists of Africans rescued from slave ships adjudicated at the courts of Freetown, has records of three individuals who fit Koelle's description of Nanga. Two sailed from Cabinda and one from Ambriz between 1843 and 1845. Although Nanga told Koelle that he had been handed to Portuguese slave traders at Luanda, he may have been transported from these other two ports because the Portuguese had prohibited the traffic from Luanda in 1836 and the British established a court at that port in 1845. David Eltis and Philip Misevich, "African Origins: Portal to Africans Liberated from Transatlantic Slave Vessels," Online database (2009), African ids 53559, 54216, and 175537, www.african-origins.org/.

⁷ Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*, 15.

the streets of a city in the Americas. He never felt the pain of having the family that he rebuilt at great cost torn apart as a result of a commercial transaction. He never spent the days wondering whether he or any of his descendants would ever regain freedom. Nonetheless, his journey from enslavement to shipment follows a trajectory similar to that by which millions of other Africans traveled to the Americas. This book focuses on that journey. From where did these Africans come? How were they transported? Who captured them? Why? What was the impact of the trade on their communities? More importantly, could anybody be enslaved or were there specific criteria determining who was eligible for enslavement? These questions lie at the heart of the whole enterprise and this book will explore them in light of the West Central African experience at the peak of its involvement in the traffic.

By focusing on the journey Africans took from the interior to the coast, this book contributes significantly to our understanding of the history of Africa and the African Diaspora. It traces for the first time the inland origins of the slaves carried off as the transatlantic slave trade reached its peak. Although most slaves transported to the Americas came from West Central Africa, historians have paid less attention to this region than to others involved in the trade. The book also sheds light on African motivation to participate in the traffic as well as on the ordeals that those caught up in this huge migration experienced. Finally, thanks to the sources examined and the maps they allowed us to create, historians of the African Diaspora will be better able to explore the African contribution to the making of the New World. In addition, descendants of Africans, at least those whose ancestors arrived in the last century of the trade, will be able to narrow their search for their ancestral homelands. The longevity of the transatlantic slave trade impacted the lives of millions of people. No single study will ever provide a full accounting of what happened, but an assessment of how the traffic unfolded in the African interior is fundamental to increasing our understanding of this tragic saga.

SLAVERY AND POLITICS

Scholars have often associated the huge number of slaves sold into the trade with major political developments in the interior of Africa, notably with processes of state formation and imperial expansion. They believe that the enslavement and subsequent sale of slaves required such great resources that only individuals who commanded significant numbers of

followers could undertake such activities. J. D. Fage, for example, suggests that the slave trade tended to integrate, strengthen, and develop political authority, but to weaken or destroy more segmentary societies in Africa.⁸ A. A. Boahen claims that the slave trade constituted the principal source of income for many rulers and military leaders, who had a monopoly over the sale and enslavement of individuals on the African coast.⁹ Similarly, Patrick Manning argues that rulers, who succeeded in profiting and expanding at the expense of their neighbors, captured most of the slaves sold into the trade.¹⁰ Finally, Martin Klein broadly endorses these positions by stressing that the trade required such large resources that rulers and raiding bands of professional warriors dominated the enslavement and sale of slaves across the Atlantic.¹¹

In West Central Africa, the origins of slaves sold into the trade are frequently associated with the expansion of the Lunda Empire and the formation of the Imbangala Kingdom of Kasanje. On the basis of oral traditions collected in the mid-nineteenth century, in addition to Portuguese documentary evidence, Jan Vansina, David Birmingham, and Joseph Miller argue that the Lunda expansion began long before the eighteenth century. In addition, they claim Lunda dissidents, led by a man named Kinguri acting in accordance with Imbangala traditions, left their country after Luba hunters assumed control over the government. En route to a new environment, they encountered Portuguese soldiers, who were themselves at war with their neighbors on the coast of present-day Angola. Since the Portuguese were short of manpower, they welcomed the arrival of and recruited the newcomers, who proved to be great warriors. Further, these newcomers offered to exchange their prisoners of war for rare commodities imported from Europe, Asia, and the Americas. The Lunda expatriates saw this exchange as an opportunity to amass wealth and power. As a consequence, they continued to provide military support for the Portuguese. Over time, these Lunda named themselves Imbangala and founded a new state, the Kingdom of Kasanje, at the confluence of the Lucala and Kwango rivers. The Portuguese regarded

⁸ J. D. Fage, "Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Context of West African History." *Journal of African History* 10, no. 3 (1969): 402.

⁹ A. A. Boahen, "New Trends and Processes in Africa in the Nineteenth Century." In *General History of Africa*, ed. J. F. A. Ajayi, vol. 6 (London: Heinemann, 1989), 61.

¹⁰ Patrick Manning, *Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental, and African Slave Trades* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 132.

¹¹ Martin A. Klein, "The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on the Societies of the Western Sudan." *Social Science History* 14, no. 2 (1990): 237.

this newly formed kingdom as the principal supplier of slaves shipped from West Central Africa.¹²

However, recent research suggests that the supply of slaves sold on the coast did not necessarily depend on processes of state formation and imperial expansion within Africa. David Northrup notes that the sale of slaves in the Bight of Biafra, a major source of slaves for the transatlantic trade, was conducted mostly without the participation of African rulers. He writes that decentralized societies such as the Efik, Igbo, and Ibibio dominated the slave trade in that region.¹³ These societies were generally organized in clans or lineages headed by one or more individuals who had a vote in decisions affecting the entire society. Ugo Nwokeji argues that the Aro in particular, a subgroup of the Igbo, organized themselves as a “trade diaspora,” which allowed them to maintain their own identity through festivals, homages, and patronage while at the same time facilitating their political and economic hegemony in the Bight of Biafra.¹⁴ Walter Hawthorne and Andrew Hubbell also question the emphasis scholars have traditionally placed on the role of state formation and imperial expansion in the slave trade. In their view, scholars have underestimated the ability of decentralized societies to organize and participate actively in the supply of slaves from Africa as well as defend themselves from enslavers.¹⁵ Hawthorne, whose work focuses specifically on the transatlantic trade, notes that, although decentralized, the rice-growing Balanta of present-day Guinea Bissau, supplied many slaves to the Americas, especially to northern Brazil. Similarly, David Eltis, observing

¹² This broadly summarizes a major debate Jan Vansina, David Birmingham, and Joseph Miller had in the pages of the *Journal of African History*. The principal references to this debate include Jan Vansina, “The Foundation of the Kingdom of Kasanje.” *Journal of African History* 4, no. 3 (1963): 355–74; David Birmingham, “The Date and Significance of the Imbangala Invasion of Angola.” *Journal of African History* 6, no. 2 (1965): 143–52; Jan Vansina, “More on the Invasions of Kongo and Angola by the Jaga and the Lunda.” *Journal of African History* 7, no. 3 (1966): 421–29; Joseph C. Miller, “The Imbangala and the Chronology of Early Central African History.” *Journal of African History* 13, no. 4 (1972): 549–74.

¹³ David Northrup, *Trade without Rulers: Pre-Colonial Economic Development in South-Eastern Nigeria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 89–100.

¹⁴ G. Ugo Nwokeji, *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra: An African Society in the Atlantic World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 17–21.

¹⁵ Walter Hawthorne, “The Production of Slaves Where There Was No State: The Guinea-Bissau Region, 1450–1815.” *Slavery and Abolition* 20, no. 2 (1999): 97–98; Andrew Hubbell, “A View of the Slave Trade from the Margin: Souroudougou in the Late Nineteenth-Century Slave Trade of the Niger Bend.” *Journal of African History* 42, no. 1 (2001): 28. See also Martin A. Klein, “The Slave Trade and Decentralized Societies.” *Journal of African History* 42, no. 1 (2001): 49.

a marked decline in the traffic from the Bight of Benin immediately after the Dahomean annexation of Allada and Ouidah in 1724 and 1727, suggests that processes of state formation and imperial expansion did not necessarily result in more slaves being sold into the trade.¹⁶ Finally, Rebecca Shumway and Randy Sparks have argued more recently that the tendency of historians to focus on centralized states to the neglect of other populations has been detrimental to our knowledge of the history of the traffic from the Gold Coast.¹⁷ As Shumway notes, “the coastal population was an essential component on how the Atlantic slave trade operated on the Gold Coast.”¹⁸

Studies focused on the Lunda expansion itself cast doubt on the role of the slave trade in processes of state formation and imperial expansion in West Central Africa. They show that the Lunda expansion began much later than previously thought and may not have been responsible for the large number of slaves sold into the Atlantic. Based on an extensive study of kings’ lists, Jean Luc Vellut claims that the Lunda expansion began in the late seventeenth century or at the beginning of the eighteenth century.¹⁹ John Thornton dates the Lunda expansion from the same period, but he believes that it reached its maximum size, both geographically and demographically, only in 1852 with the death of Mwant Yav Naweij II, the first event recorded in Lunda history in contemporary documents.²⁰ Jeffrey Hoover, using linguistic data, argues that Imbangala traders introduced the figure of Kinguri into Lunda traditions, probably in the nineteenth century, to elevate the status of their own founding ancestors, who were not originally Lunda.²¹ In other words, the frequently mentioned Lunda expansion, said to have begun long before the eighteenth century, may not have unfolded as previously believed. Jan Vansina, after revising his original position, went even further. Although he believes that the Lunda spread north of Angola,

¹⁶ David Eltis, “The Volume and Structure of the Transatlantic Slave Trade: A Reassessment.” *William and Mary Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2001): 34.

¹⁷ Rebecca Shumway, *The Fante and the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2011), 8; Randy J. Sparks, *Where the Negroes Are Masters: An African Port in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).

¹⁸ Shumway, *The Fante and the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, 8.

¹⁹ Jean-Luc Vellut, “Notes sur le Lunda et la Frontière Luso-Africaine (1700–1900).” *Études d’Histoire Africaine* 3 (1972): 68.

²⁰ John K. Thornton, “The Chronology and Causes of Lunda Expansion to the West, c.1700–1852.” *Zambia Journal of History* 1 (1981): 1.

²¹ Jeffrey J. Hoover, “The Seduction of Ruweej: Reconstructing Ruund History (The Nuclear Lunda: Zaire, Angola, Zambia)” (Ph.D., Yale University, 1978), vol. 1, 213–14.

he claims that until 1846 there are no records of Lunda conquest to the south in what is now eastern Angola.²² As a result, the slave trade would have offered little stimulus for Lunda expansion or the formation of other states in West Central Africa, including the Kingdom of Kasanje. As Vansina reflected upon the implications of this finding, “if the Kinguri story had only been subjected to critical appraisal from the outset, we historians would now be much more advanced than we are today.”²³

Recent studies on the history of slavery and the slave trade, however, are prompting some historians to reconsider the origins of the captives transported from West Central Africa. Instead of tracing these to places beyond the Kwango River, where the Lunda Empire was located, they are now increasingly indicating that these slaves came from regions much closer to the coast. José Curto, for instance, analyzing records of runaway slaves published in the *Boletim Oficial de Angola* between 1850 and 1876, shows that slaves living under Portuguese rule in Luanda and who were previously sold into the Atlantic hailed from a wide range of places, with the majority coming from the neighboring regions of Luanda and the Kwanza River.²⁴ Mariana Cândido, in an analysis of the slave trade from Benguela, in southern Angola, argues that the populations living near the coast were not immune to raids, kidnappings, and other forms of enslavement. “In contrast to a gradual movement inland,” she writes, “the process of enslavement did not move only to the east, but also to the south, to the north, and finally bounced back to the west, towards the populations on the coast who lacked protection.”²⁵ Similarly, Roquinaldo Ferreira, examining court records from eighteenth and nineteenth-century Luanda, observes that slaves who filed for freedom were generally individuals who had been captured in regions close to the coast, including areas under Portuguese influence. “African control over sources of slaves in the east,” he argues, “exposed freeborn Africans living in the Luanda hinterland to enslavement.”²⁶

²² Jan Vansina, “It Never Happened: Kinguri’s Exodus and Its Consequences.” *History in Africa* 25 (1998): 401.

²³ Ibid., 403. Vansina himself started this process. See Jan Vansina, *How Societies Are Born: Governance in West Central Africa before 1600* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004).

²⁴ José C. Curto, “The Origin of Slaves in Angola: The Case of Runaways, 1850–1876” (Seventh European Social Science and History Conference, Lisbon, 2008), 6–9.

²⁵ Mariana P. Cândido, *Fronteras de Esclavización: Esclavitud, Comercio e Identidad en Benguela, 1780–1850*, trans. María Capetillo Lozano (Mexico: El Colegio de México, 2011), 157–58.

²⁶ Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange*, 16.

Despite the work of these scholars, a detailed study of the origins of slaves leaving West Central Africa in the nineteenth century is still lacking, perpetuating the view that the Lunda were the region's main suppliers of slaves to the Americas. Joseph Miller, for instance, in his widely cited *Way of Death*, argues that in the nineteenth century the source of slaves shipped from Angola moved further east, as successive Lunda kings raided and plundered the populations living near the borders of their territories.²⁷ Achim von Oppen claims that the search for slaves to export was the principal motivation behind the eastward movement of the trading frontier.²⁸ Paul Lovejoy, in his well-known *Transformations of Slavery*, argues that the center of Lunda trade was the royal capital, “from where Lunda armies raided outwards, capturing slaves.”²⁹ Jan Vansina, in spite of his revision, believes that the Lunda expansion north and the spreading of the Lunda influence in eastern Angola were undoubtedly linked to the slave trade.³⁰ Finally, John Thornton in his more recent volume, *A Cultural History of the Atlantic World*, argues “it is possible to see the expansion of the Lunda Empire from its base deep in central Africa (Shaba Province in the Democratic Republic of Congo) nearly 1,000 kilometers from the coast as a response to the development of the slave trade farther east.”³¹

QUANTITATIVE VERSUS QUALITATIVE

This book uses new evidence and a fresh approach to revisit the debates over how people became enslaved and the location of their homelands. It examines a variety of sources, ranging from archival material, to published primary sources, and digital resources. Since the book focuses on a huge wave of migration, it draws significantly on quantitative methods to analyze the number of slaves transported, their demographic characteristics, and their geographic distribution. These methods were used less in the belief in their intrinsic superiority to qualitative methods of analysis,

²⁷ Miller, *Way of Death*, 146–47.

²⁸ Achim von Oppen, *Terms of Trade and Terms of Trust: The History and Contexts of Pre-Colonial Market Production around the Upper Zambezi and Kasai* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 1994), 59–61.

²⁹ Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*, 2nd edn. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 78 and 98.

³⁰ Vansina, “It Never Happened,” 403.

³¹ John K. Thornton, *A Cultural History of the Atlantic World, 1250–1820* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 85.

but rather because they were more adequate in view of the book's objectives, the types of sources examined, and the volume of information available. The latter, in fact, imposed a great barrier to earlier interpretations of the trade from West Central Africa. This approach, however, does not exclude qualitative methods. Indeed, in the following discussions of African motivation in participating in the trade, eligibility for enslavement, and especially the experiences of those captured and sold overseas, the qualitative approach takes precedence.

It is unfortunate that these two approaches have been set up in opposition to each other, as if they were somehow mutually exclusive. Cliometrics, or quantitative history, made a huge impact on the larger field following the publication of Philip Curtin's *The Atlantic Slave Trade* and Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman's *Time on the Cross*.³² Cliometricians contributed significantly to our knowledge of the history of slavery and the slave trade by providing us with an idea of how many people were transported from Africa, the ratio of slave to free in the Americas, and other details about the Middle Passage, family life, and labor routines in the New World. Such information is very helpful in contextualizing the experience of enslaved Africans and their descendants, but it does not reveal other aspects of their lives. Qualitative history has been around for a long time and often provides a rich account of the experiences of an individual, social group, or nation. Although it was partially eclipsed by the rise of cliometrics, qualitative history is now leading the field again thanks to the work of microhistorians such as Carlo Ginzburg and Natalie Zemon Davis. These authors have renewed academic interest in individual stories and how they can help us understand broader patterns of behavior and historical change.³³

Some recent contributions to the field have echoed a remark Joseph Miller made long ago that numbers "have no meaning either in human terms or in perceiving the operational complexity and diversity of the trade."³⁴ Toby Green argues that "a quantitative emphasis distracts

³² Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969); Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (Boston: Little Brown, 1974).

³³ Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. Anne Tedeschi and John Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980); Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).

³⁴ Joseph C. Miller, "The Slave Trade in Congo and Angola." In *The African Diaspora: Interpretative Essays*, ed. Martin L. Kilson and Robert I. Rotberg (London: Harvard University Press, 1976), 76.

attention from seeing how the advent of Atlantic slavery affected African societies, and from thinking through what the cultural, political and social consequences of this phenomenon were.”³⁵ Mariana Cândido believes that “quantitative studies that analyze population exports, natural reproduction, and food production tend to neglect social transformations, such as the dependence of societies on slave labor.”³⁶ Silke Strickrodt, while acknowledging that the quantitative approach “helps us to deal with broad trends and wide regions,” argues “it is less useful for detailed analysis of minor ports.”³⁷ Finally, Alice Bellagamba, Sandra Greene, and Martin Klein maintain that quantitative studies, whether they focus on Africa or the Americas, “are based on European and American shipping and customs records,” and that “we need to hear how Africans understood and now remember that part of their own past associated with slavery and the slave trade.” They claim “we need to listen to African voices.”³⁸

Although these are valid arguments, they often miss the point. Quantitative and qualitative methods are not mutually exclusive. In their attempts to reconstruct the past, historians must use both to develop their narratives. This book draws on quantitative sources such as shipping records, slave registers, and lists of liberated Africans to review broader patterns of the trade, while at the same time examining travel accounts, official correspondence, and testimonies of slave and freed individuals to shed light on the experiences of Africans pulled into the transatlantic traffic. A quarter century ago, Ginzburg argued for using both quantitative and qualitative tools with the latter “opening out into a series of case studies but never excluding, as we have said, serial [quantitative] research.”³⁹ This project constitutes an application of that advice to the history of the later slave trade from West Central Africa.

³⁵ Toby Green, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Western Africa, 1300–1589* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 4–5.

³⁶ Cândido, *An African Slaving Port*, 14.

³⁷ Silke Strickrodt, *Afro-European Trade in the Atlantic World: The Western Slave Coast, c.1550–c.1885* (James Currey, 2015), 5.

³⁸ Alice Bellagamba, Sandra E. Greene, and Martin A. Klein, “Finding the African Voice.” In *African Voices on Slavery and the Slave Trade*, ed. Alice Bellagamba, Sandra E. Greene, and Martin A. Klein (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 2.

³⁹ Carlo Ginzburg and Carlo Poni, “The Name and the Game: Unequal Exchange and the Historiographic Marketplace.” In *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe*, ed. Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero, trans. Eren Branch (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 7.

SOURCES AND ORGANIZATION

This book is organized into six chapters. Chapter 1 provides an assessment of the size and distribution of the flow of slaves leaving West Central Africa in the age of abolition, from the 1780s to the 1860s. The chapter draws on “Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database,” to which I have contributed from my own considerable archival research.⁴⁰ I was not only one of the original contributors and builders of the core voyages database, but in this study I present new projections of slave departures that improve on those that currently display on the “Voyages” estimates page. It shows that the number of slaves shipped from West Central Africa increased between the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century as a result of the demand for primary commodities, such as sugar and cotton, in Europe and the suppression of the slave trade in the North Atlantic. Although scholars usually argue that the Lunda expansion triggered the massive number of slaves shipped from Angola in this period, my own analysis shows that the number of slaves shipped varied mostly as a result of events taking place across the Atlantic. Demand, rather than supply, drove the trade and most of its fluctuations.

Chapter 2 provides an analysis of the organization of the transatlantic slave trade from West Central Africa. It shows that the transportation and sale of slaves depended essentially on three categories of commercial agents: merchants, brokers, and traders. All three worked independently of the military power of both the Lunda and the Imbangala. Merchants oversaw the transatlantic phase of the business from assembling trade goods in Brazil, to the shipment of slaves from Angola. The second category, that of brokers, was a disparate group, made up of Portuguese and Brazilian subjects living in Angola. They comprised a mixed group that included descendants of Portuguese and Africans, in addition to rulers and subjects of various African polities located on the African coast. They brokered slaves brought from the interior for the commodities imported from overseas. The third group were traders, and served as middlemen between the brokers and slave suppliers in the interior of West Central Africa. They were mostly Africans, including the offspring of unions between Africans and Portuguese expatriates. Although a few individuals had multiple roles, the trade depended largely on these three separate groups.

⁴⁰ David Eltis et al., “Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database,” Online database (2008), www.slavevoyages.org/.

Chapter 3 traces the inland origins of slaves leaving West Central Africa in the nineteenth century based on two sets of documents. The first consists of lists of liberated Africans compiled between 1832 and 1849 by the courts of mixed commission in Havana, Cuba, and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. These lists were created to prevent the re-enslavement of Africans rescued from slave vessels by antislave trade naval cruisers. They provide details on 4,601 individuals, including their name, age, sex, height, and place of origin. The second set of documents is the slave registers of Angola compiled by Portuguese colonial officials in Luanda, Benguela, and Novo Redondo between 1854 and 1856. These registers, also used to prevent freed Africans from being re-enslaved, contain identical information to the lists of liberated Africans in Havana and Rio de Janeiro. The registers record details for 11,264 individuals. In addition to the records available in the “Voyages” database and the “African Origins” portal, these documents allow us to identify the ethnolinguistic origins of captives leaving West Central Africa.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 seek to explain the transatlantic slave trade from an African perspective. Chapter 4 provides a demographic profile of the men, women, and children sold as slaves on the coast of Angola based on archival records in addition to data available in the “Voyages” database. It shows that the slave trade from Angola was largely shaped by African conceptions of gender and age. David Eltis and Stanley Engerman note that, in contrast to conventional wisdom, men were not the dominant demographic category in the transatlantic trade. Their work suggests that adult male slaves comprised much less than half of the total number of slaves carried across the Atlantic.⁴¹ Herbert Klein and Ugo Nwokeji, among others, also argue that African conceptions of gender and age played a critical role in the slave trade. They show that slaves sold into the transatlantic trade varied according to gender and age, suggesting that African enslavers and traders had specific criteria for determining who remained a captive on the continent and who was sold on the coast.⁴²

⁴¹ David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman, “Was the Slave Trade Dominated by Men?” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23, no. 2 (1992): 240–46.

⁴² Herbert S. Klein, “African Women in the Atlantic Slave Trade.” In *Women and Slavery in Africa*, ed. Claire C. Robertson and Martin A. Klein (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 35–37; G. Ugo Nwokeji, “African Conceptions of Gender and the Slave Traffic.” *William and Mary Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2001): 52; Claire C. Robertson and Martin A. Klein, “Women’s Importance in African Slave Systems.” In *Women and Slavery in Africa*, ed. Claire C. Robertson and Martin A. Klein (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 3–5; Joseph C. Miller, “Women as Slaves and Owners of Slaves: Experiences from Africa, the Indian Ocean World, and the Early Atlantic.” In *Women*

The slave trade from Angola was no exception; it followed similar patterns to those of other regions of slave embarkation.

Chapter 5 provides an analysis of African motives for enslaving other Africans and selling them into the trade, based on slave prices in Luanda, the principal port of embarkation in Angola. It shows that Africans who enslaved and sold other Africans into the trade were motivated primarily by economic factors. Philip Curtin suggested that Africans were politically motivated to sell other Africans into the slave trade. He argued that the number of slaves embarked from the coast between the Senegal and Gambia rivers did not correspond to the demand for slaves overseas, since an increase in price did not result in more slaves being shipped. He attributed the variation in the number of slaves carried from Senegambia to the political situation in the region's hinterland, which was often characterized by widespread violence and warfare.⁴³ Curtin's argument clearly favored the association of the slave trade with processes of state formation and imperial expansion, directly connecting the two. However, Philip Le Veen, David Richardson, and David Eltis, among others, challenged this position based on several price series of slaves shipped from different African regions. Their work clearly shows the supply of slaves on the coast responded to variations in demand as measured by price.⁴⁴ In West Central Africa, the available evidence indicates that the supply of slaves also responded to variations in price, suggesting that Africans were economically motivated to participate in the trade. This finding further indicates that state formation and imperial expansion were not the sole reasons Africans participated in the trade.

The commodities for which Africans traded slaves also shed light on their motives to participate in the traffic. David Richardson and George Metcalf argue that African patterns of consumption shed new light on

and Slavery: Africa, the Indian Ocean, and the Medieval North Atlantic, ed. Gwyn Campbell, Suzanne Miers, and Joseph C. Miller, vol. 1 (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007), 4–11; Paul E. Lovejoy, “Internal Markets or an Atlantic-Sahara Divide? How Women Fit into the Slave Trade of West Africa.” In *Women and Slavery: Africa, the Indian Ocean, and the Medieval North Atlantic*, ed. Gwyn Campbell, Suzanne Miers, and Joseph C. Miller, vol. 1 (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007), 259–61.

⁴³ Philip D. Curtin, *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa: Senegambia in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975), vol. 1, 156–68.

⁴⁴ E. Philip Le Veen, “The African Slave Supply Response.” *African Studies Review* 18, no. 1 (1975): 9; David Richardson, “Prices of Slaves in West and West Central Africa: Toward an Annual Series, 1698–1807.” *Bulletin of Economic Research* 43, no. 1 (1991): 43–48; Eltis, *Economic Growth*, 15 and 182–83.

what motivated Africans to enslave other Africans and sell them into the transatlantic slave trade.⁴⁵ Hence, in addition to price series, Chapter 5 analyzes lists of imports at Luanda for several years between 1785 and 1864. These lists show that Africans traded slaves for a wide variety of commodities imported from Europe, Asia, and the Americas. Although weapons formed a significant percentage of the commodities for which slaves were traded, textiles and alcoholic beverages were in fact of greater value. The fact that Africans imported more trade than war commodities indicates that economic gains were the primary motivation for their participation in the traffic. The slave trade was not dominated just by political or military developments in the interior of Africa.

Finally, Chapter 6 analyzes both primary and secondary sources dealing with specific cases of enslavement in the interior of Angola to examine further the question of who was eligible for enslavement and sale across the Atlantic. Because the slave trade has been commonly associated with processes of state formation and imperial expansion, scholars have tended to see slaves shipped from Africa merely as victims of war. Here, I explore other possibilities. Africans could also become slaves through trickery, judicial proceedings, or even voluntary enslavement. Causes of the last phenomenon included catastrophic events such as famine and drought. The chapter focuses primarily on African perceptions of who was eligible for enslavement, as defined by the victims' sex, age, identity, social status, and form of enslavement, among other categories.⁴⁶ It provides an analysis of different processes of enslavement to assess what induced Africans to enslave and sell other Africans into the transatlantic slave trade. David Eltis and Nathan Huggins, for example, argue that identity was a crucial element in determining who remained captive on the continent and who was sold into Atlantic markets.⁴⁷ Robin Law draws attention to the judicial nature of African slavery, stressing differences between legal and

⁴⁵ David Richardson, "West African Consumption Patterns and Their Influence on the Eighteenth Century English Slave Trade." In *The Uncommon Market: Essays in the Economic History of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, ed. Henry A. Gemery and Jan S. Hogendorn (New York: Academic Press, 1979), 304–05; George Metcalf, "A Microcosm of Why Africans Sold Slaves: Akan Consumption Patterns in the 1770s." *Journal of African History* 28, no. 3 (1987): 377–78.

⁴⁶ Sean Stilwell, *Slavery and Slaving in African History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 9.

⁴⁷ David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 57–61; Nathan Irvin Huggins, *Black Odyssey: The Afro-American Ordeal in Slavery* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 20.

illegal enslavement in the interior of the continent.⁴⁸ Others have argued that external pressures, such as the demand for slaves on the coast, transformed the way Africans viewed slavery, making what they previously considered illegal enslavement only too common.⁴⁹

The slave trade from West Central Africa was one of the largest and longest waves of coerced migration in history. Many scholars have long believed that the majority of slaves sold on the coast came from the continent's deep interior, as victims of wars waged by the Lunda Empire. However, this book throws doubt on this position and explores alternative interpretations for the peak years of the trade. Moreover, it will provide members of the African Diaspora with new information about their ancestors. As hard as it may seem for us to accept, Africans sold on the coast were enslaved by other Africans in various ways and shipped by traders linked to a complex commercial network created to carry millions of men, women, and children as slaves across the Atlantic. Clearly, economics motivated Africans to enslave and sell other Africans, but these individuals acted according to their own dictates and mores to determine who was and was not eligible for enslavement. Angola and other countries of present-day West Central Africa still bear the legacies of this past, which have offered an important obstacle in the formation of national identities in the region.⁵⁰ In the final analysis, these conventions fitted well with the overall operation of the transatlantic slave trade and made West Central Africa the principal source of slaves for the Americas well into the nineteenth century.

⁴⁸ Robin Law, "Legal and Illegal Enslavement in West Africa, in the Context of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade," in *Ghana in Africa and the World: Essays in Honor of Adu Boahen*, ed. Toyin Falola (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003), 513–14.

⁴⁹ Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 10–12; Linda Heywood, "Slavery and Its Transformation in the Kingdom of Kongo, 1491–1800." *Journal of African History* 50, no. 1 (2009): 1–22; Cândido, *An African Slaving Port*, 13–17; Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange*, 96–98.

⁵⁰ Marcia C. Schenck and Mariana P. Cândido, "Uncomfortable Pasts: Talking about Slavery in Angola." In *African Heritage and Memories of Slavery in Brazil and the South Atlantic World*, ed. Ana Lúcia Araújo (Amherst: Cambria Press, 2015), 213–52. Alternative views are available in Linda M. Heywood, *Contested Power in Angola, 1840s to the Present* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2000), xiii–xvi; Marissa Jean Moorman, *Intonations: A Social History of Music and Nation in Luanda, Angola, from 1945 to Recent Times* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008), 2–3; Justin Pearce, *Political Identity and Conflict in Central Angola, 1975–2002* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 5–17.

I

The Atlantic Slave Trade in the Century of Abolition

In the late eighteenth century, the slave trade from West Central Africa entered a new age of social, political, economic, and ultimately ideological change. Economic growth and industrialization in Europe, particularly in Britain, increased the demand for primary commodities imported from the Americas, such as sugar, cotton, rice, and tobacco. These were produced with slave labor brought from Africa and, as the demand for these items increased, so did the demand for slaves carried across the Atlantic. Ironically, although slavery was widespread in the Americas, some Europeans had begun to question the morality of an institution that deprived some individuals of their liberty for the benefit of others.¹ Moreover, they became increasingly persuaded that slave labor was inferior to free labor because slaves lacked the incentive to work.² The French Revolution and the 1791 slave rebellion in Saint Domingue, present-day Haiti, further questioned slavery, contributing to the spread of the abolitionist movement in the Atlantic world.³ As a consequence, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the slave trade declined as some nations began to retreat from the business. In 1807, both the US Congress and the British Parliament prohibited their citizens from participating in the trade and, soon after, the British initiated a campaign to suppress the entire

¹ Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, 231–49.

² Seymour Drescher, *The Mighty Experiment: Free Labor versus Slavery in British Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 9–23. The main source for this argument is Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1776), vol. 1, 471–72.

³ Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, 160–61.

trade from Africa, which continued throughout the balance of the nineteenth century.⁴

This new era of antislavery sentiment had a profound impact on the trade from West Central Africa. Despite British efforts to suppress it, the number of slaves embarked from the region remained high, as the center of gravity shifted from the North to the South Atlantic. During the eighteenth century, the slave trade expanded largely because of the demand for labor in the British and French Caribbean. British and French traders were the principal suppliers of slaves for the Caribbean. They purchased the majority of their slaves on the coast of West Africa, north of the Equator. However, as these nations withdrew from the business at the beginning of the nineteenth century, that traffic declined. Other nations sought to tap the sources of slaves previously dominated by British and French traders, notably Portugal, Spain, and Brazil. In order to prevent this from happening, Britain signed treaties with each of these countries that restricted or banned their involvement in the traffic. Thus, in 1810 Britain and Portugal signed a treaty for the gradual suppression of the trade, especially from ports outside Portuguese jurisdiction in Africa.⁵ In 1815, an Anglo-Portuguese treaty prohibited Portuguese traders carrying slaves north of the Equator.⁶ Independent from Portugal since 1822, Brazil tacitly agreed to the terms of this 1815 treaty, and Brazilian traders too were banned from purchasing slaves from African regions located north of the line.⁷ In 1817, Britain signed a similar treaty with Spain, except the prohibition was to apply to the whole of the Atlantic. In 1826, it signed a further treaty with Brazil, establishing outright abolition of the slave trade within three years following ratification in 1827.⁸ Moreover, Britain sent warships to patrol the coast of West Africa to intercept vessels violating these agreements. The antislavery conventions established

⁴ Roger Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition, 1760–1810* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1975), 396–98; Paul Finkelman, “Regulating the African Slave Trade,” *Civil War History* 54, no. 4 (2008): 379.

⁵ Leslie Bethell, *The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade: Britain, Brazil and the Slave Trade Question, 1807–1869* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 8–9; João Pedro Marques, *Os Sons do Silêncio: O Portugal de Oitocentos e a Abolição do Tráfico de Escravos* (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 1999), 93–94.

⁶ Bethell, *The Abolition*, 13–14; Marques, *Os Sons do Silêncio*, 103–04.

⁷ Bethell, *The Abolition*, 13–14.

⁸ David R. Murray, *Odious Commerce: Britain, Spain, and the Abolition of the Cuban Slave Trade* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 70–71; Bethell, *The Abolition*, 60–61; Marques, *Os Sons do Silêncio*, 153–54.

mixed commission courts around the Atlantic to adjudicate vessels accused of illegal trading.⁹ As the British increased their efforts to suppress the traffic in the North Atlantic, the number of captives in the South Atlantic continued to rise well into the nineteenth century, making West Central Africa the major source of slaves for the Americas.

Some major figures in the field believe that in the nineteenth century a rising demand for labor in the Americas pushed the sources of slaves shipped from West Central Africa deeper into the region's interior. Joseph Miller has argued that the shifting origins of slaves formed what he called "slaving frontiers." He claims that since the sixteenth century these frontiers moved gradually from the coast to the interior of West Central Africa. In the nineteenth century, Miller maintains, these frontiers had reached the populations living beyond the valley of the Kwango River, forcing thousands of Africans into slavery.¹⁰ Paul Lovejoy also believes the nineteenth century saw the trade drawing on slaves from the interior of West Central Africa. He posits that the new demand for slaves in the Americas required many Lunda and Luba warlords to search for slaves deep in the interior of West Central Africa.¹¹ Patrick Manning claims the journey of a slave coffle, a train of captives chained together, from the region's interior doubled in length as the trade expanded, resulting in a sharp decline in the inland populations.¹²

A close analysis, however, shows there is insufficient evidence to support the idea of a nineteenth-century expansion of such frontiers. Although the treaties signed with Portugal, Spain, and Brazil did initially cause an expansion of the Iberian slave trade from West Central Africa, the withdrawal of other nations from the business partly offset this expansion. Iberian traders spread their activities along the coast of West Central Africa because they tapped into the sources of slaves previously dominated by their competitors. Moreover, since Brazil and the Spanish colonies depended largely on slave labor, they simply had no other options but to spread their activities along the African coast, especially to regions where they had a long tradition of trading slaves, such as in West Africa. Despite the treaties, Iberian governments often turned a blind eye to the activities of their traders. Brazil, perhaps, is a notorious case. In 1831, the

⁹ Leslie Bethell, "The Mixed Commissions for the Suppression of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in the Nineteenth Century." *Journal of African History* 7, no. 1 (1966): 79–83; Eltis, *Economic Growth*, 85–103.

¹⁰ Miller, *Way of Death*, 140–46 and Map 5.1.

¹¹ Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 149. ¹² Manning, *Slavery and African Life*, 70.

government reassured Britain of its commitment to suppress the traffic by enacting its own law to abolish the trade, in spite of which Brazilian traders continued their activities.¹³ Since the law prohibited trafficking in both hemispheres, traders no longer felt restricted to West Central Africa and expanded their operations, albeit illegally, to other African regions, including areas as far as Southeast Africa. Therefore, the size of the Iberian trade was insufficient to move the slaving frontiers further into the interior of West Central Africa. At least in this respect, the trade between the late eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth century followed a pattern of continuity rather than expansion. This pattern can be better explained with the help of “Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database.”¹⁴

DEMAND

The most complete database of slaving voyages available, “Voyages” contains information on almost 2 million slaves shipped from West Central Africa between 1781 and 1867, the last year a transatlantic slave venture was reported to have left the region.¹⁵ “Voyages” provides not only a database of shipping records but also estimates of all slaves shipped that can be broken down by national carriers and regions of embarkation and disembarkation. These estimates were built using information from the database itself and secondary sources to supplement periods for which the database lacks hard voyage information. The “Voyages” estimates page shows that approximately 2.8 million Africans embarked as slaves from the coast of West Central Africa between 1781 and 1867, 29 percent more than the number of slaves according to shipping records alone. This estimate, however, can be further refined.

“Voyages” draws on records of maritime activity in the Americas. After the prohibition of the slave trade in the North Atlantic, many slave traders from Bahia, in Northeast Brazil, applied to the Portuguese and later Brazilian authorities for licenses to purchase slaves at Cabinda or Molembo, on the coast of West Central Africa, instead of their traditional ports of slave embarkation at the Bight of Benin, in West Africa.

¹³ Bethell, *The Abolition*, 62–72; Brazil, *Collecção das Leis do Império do Brasil de 1831: Actos do Poder Legislativo* (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia Nacional, 1875), 182.

¹⁴ Eltis et al., “Voyages.”

¹⁵ David Eltis, “The Nineteenth Century Transatlantic Slave Trade: An Annual Time Series of Imports into the Americas Broken Down by Region,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 67, no. 1 (1987): 128–29.

Nevertheless, most of them continued to trade in the Bight of Benin and used the licenses to deceive British naval officers should the latter intercept them while carrying a slave cargo loaded north of the Equator.¹⁶ As a result, from 1816 until 1830, when the complete ban came into force this bias in the sources was transferred to the shipping records available in “Voyages.” David Eltis was the only historian to address this problem by reallocating to the Bight of Benin all slaves originally recorded to have been shipped from the ports north of the Congo River to Bahia.¹⁷ It is now possible to address this issue with more precision.

The “Voyages” database allows users to fine tune their search for data. In order to improve the accuracy of the estimates, the share of slaves carried in Portuguese and Brazilian vessels from Cabinda and Molembo to Bahia between 1816 and 1830 can be discounted from the remaining ports and subtracted from the total number of slaves carried from West Central Africa. The database shows that in the 15 years before 1816 Bahia purchased only 2,237 slaves from Cabinda, while between 1816 and 1830, this number increased to 41,059. Further, it shows that Bahia did not purchase a single slave from Molembo in the 15 years before 1816, but between 1816 and 1830, there are records indicating some 46,333 slaves leaving Molembo for Bahia. As the 1815 treaty may have indeed forced some Bahian traders to purchase slaves in West Central Africa, it seems plausible that, between 1816 and 1830, only a fraction of the slaves recorded in the database actually embarked from Cabinda and Molembo to Bahia. Hence, the number of slaves leaving these ports for Bahia between 1816 and 1830 in the estimates was reduced to approximately 63 percent of the observable totals. This percentage represents the midpoint between the share of the number of slaves carried from West Central Africa to Bahia from 1801 to 1815 and those from 1816 to 1830. Similarly, the number of slaves shipped from Cabinda and Molembo in the database was reduced to 63 percent to correct for the overrepresentation of these ports in the total estimated number of slaves embarked from West Central Africa in these 15 years on the “Voyages” estimate page. Although this percentage may look high, the

¹⁶ Alexandre Vieira Ribeiro, “O Tráfico Atlântico de Escravos e a Praça Mercantil de Salvador, c.1680–1830” (M.A., Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 2005), 58, 61, and 137; Pierre Verger, *Fluxo e Refluxo: O Tráfico de Escravos entre o Golfo de Benin e a Bahia de Todos os Santos dos Séculos XVII a XIX* (São Paulo: Corrupio, 1987), 414–19.

¹⁷ David Eltis, “Slave Departures from Africa, 1811–1867: An Annual Time Series,” *African Economic History*, no. 15 (1986): 146.

TABLE 1.1 *Slaves leaving West Central Africa, 1781–1867*

Periods	Number of slaves embarked	Average of slaves embarked per year
1781–1807	974,190	36,081
1808–1830	913,884	39,734
1831–1850	730,474	36,524
1851–1867	156,779	9,222
All Years	2,775,327	31,900

Sources: David Eltis et al., “Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database,” Online database, 2008, www.slavevoyages.org/ and Daniel B. Domingues da Silva, “The Atlantic Slave Trade from Angola: A Port-by-Port Estimate of Slaves Embarked, 1701–1867,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 46, no. 1 (2013): 121–22.

overall impact on “Voyages” estimated number of slaves transported from the region between 1781 and 1867 is less than one percent. Table 1.1 summarizes the results of this procedure.¹⁸

Table 1.1 shows the number of slaves shipped from West Central Africa between the late eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth century using four key periods. The first begins in the 1780s, with the expansion of the demand for slaves in the Americas and ends in 1807, with the abolition of the British slave trade. The second period begins in 1808, with the transference of the Portuguese court to Rio de Janeiro, in Southeast Brazil, and the opening of Brazilian ports for direct trade with friendly nations, especially Britain. This period ends in 1830, with the suppression of the slave trade to Brazil following the 1826 Anglo-Brazilian treaty. This was a critical period in the trade, since the center of gravity shifted from the North to the South Atlantic, where West Central Africa is located. The third period begins in the following year, when the trade from the region became illegal, and ends in 1850, when Brazil did in fact close its ports to all vessels carrying slaves from Africa. Finally, the fourth period represents the period of decline of the trade, between 1851 and 1867, the last year in which there are records of slaves being shipped from the coast of West Central Africa.

Although the traffic varied widely within each of these periods, the outflow of slaves from West Central Africa remained relatively constant

¹⁸ Additional information on the adjustment of “Voyages” figures is available in Daniel B. Domingues da Silva, “The Atlantic Slave Trade from Angola: A Port-by-Port Estimate of Slaves Embarked, 1701–1867,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 46, no. 1 (2013): 107–22.

from the late eighteenth until the mid-nineteenth century. In the first period, ships belonging to various nationalities embarked an average of 36,080 slaves per year. This figure increased approximately 9 percent in the following period, to 39,735 per year, as a result of suppression of the trade in the North Atlantic. However, in the third period, the average number of slaves embarked declined to levels approximating those found prior to the abolition of the British trade. Between 1831 and 1850, the average number of slaves shipped from West Central Africa declined to 36,525 per year. The traffic in the region declined significantly only after the abolition of the Brazilian trade in 1850, when the average number shipped from West Central Africa fell a precipitous 75 percent to about 9,220 slaves per year. It is apparent that from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century West Central Africa served as a steady source of slaves for the Americas.

The trade from West Central Africa varied mostly as a result of the demand for labor in the Americas and British efforts to suppress the transatlantic trade. In the late eighteenth century, demand from the Americas had increased the competition for slaves along the coast of West Central Africa. The Portuguese, the principal traders in this region, had been there since the sixteenth century and controlled two outlets, Luanda and Benguela. British and French traders, by contrast, used to purchase most of their slaves in West Africa, but as the demand for slaves across the Atlantic increased after 1700, they had extended their activities to points north of the Congo River. Unlike the Portuguese, however, they obtained most of their captives at ports controlled by independent African polities trading out of Cabinda, Molembo, Loango, and other ports around the mouth of the Congo River. In the late eighteenth century, the presence of British and French slavers in the region increased so much that the Portuguese, located further south, began to fear for their own supplies. In 1782, for example, Manoel da Silva Ribeiro Fernandes, a trader in the service of the Portuguese colonial government, sailed for the ports north of Luanda and reported that the French conducted a lively trade at Cabinda and Loango.¹⁹ In 1793, the Portuguese governor of Angola, Manoel de Almeida e Vasconcelos, noted that the British trade at Ambriz had significantly reduced the supply of slaves at Luanda from the north of Angola.²⁰

¹⁹ “Relação de uma viagem à costa ao norte de Luanda por Manoel da Silva Ribeiro Fernandes ao Senhor Ajudante de Ordens Pedro José Corrêa Quevedo,” 15 August 1782, AHU, CU, Angola, box 65 doc. 64.

²⁰ Manoel de Almeida e Vasconcelos to Martinho de Melo e Castro, 25 April 1793, AHU, CU, Angola, box 78 doc. 57.

Nonetheless, from the last decade of the eighteenth to the first decade of the nineteenth century, the competition for slaves in West Central Africa tended to decline as a result of, first, the Haitian Revolution and, second, the abolition of the British slave trade. In 1791, the slaves of Saint Domingue, a French colony in the Caribbean, rebelled. The rebellion spread throughout the island, reaching an unprecedented scale, and culminated in rebel independence in 1804. Saint Domingue was renamed Haiti, the first modern state founded by people of African ancestry in the Americas and the second independent nation in the continent. Before the rebellion, Saint Domingue was the main producer of tropical produce in the Americas and served as the principal destination for slaves embarked in French vessels from the coast of West Central Africa.²¹ With the independence of Haiti, the French slave trade virtually collapsed, significantly reducing the number of slaves shipped in French vessels from West Central Africa. As the “Voyages” estimates indicate, in the ten years preceding the slave rebellion, French traders shipped about 128,840 from the coast of West Central Africa but, in the ten years following the rebellion, this figure declined to 32,615, almost all of whom arrived between 1791 and 1793. Particularly after 1793, the Haitian Revolution reduced the competition for slaves on the coast of West Central Africa.

The abolition of the British slave trade in 1807 further reduced the international competition for slaves on the region’s coast. After the Haitian Revolution, the British were the only real competition for the Portuguese. They expanded their slaving activities along the coast of West Central Africa by shipping many of the captives previously carried in French vessels. The estimates show that in the ten years preceding the slave rebellion in Saint Domingue, British traders shipped 16,710 slaves from the coast of West Central Africa, but in the following ten years this figure increased to 115,720. The British slave trade increased as a direct result of the Haitian Revolution and the subsequent collapse of its French counterpart. However, with the abolition of the trade in 1807, British

²¹ C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint Louverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, 2nd edn. (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), 224–35; Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 84–97; David Geggus, “The French and Haitian Revolutions, and Resistance to Slavery: An Overview,” *Revue Française d’Histoire d’Outre-Mer* 76, no. 282–83 (1989): 107–24; Carolyn Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint-Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 1–2; Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 1–2 and 95–97.

slaving activities along the coast of West Central Africa came to a complete halt. Overall, the international competition for slaves in the region declined significantly, resulting in a new phase in the exodus of captives from West Central Africa.

After the abolition of the British slave trade, Iberian carriers established a major presence in the region. Iberian carriers included vessels belonging to Portugal and Spain, as well as Iberian America – Cuba, Brazil, Puerto Rico, and Uruguay. However, between 1808 and 1830, Portuguese and Brazilian traders carried off the majority of slaves from West Central Africa. In 1808, the Prince Regent Dom João VI transferred the Portuguese court to Rio de Janeiro to escape the Napoleonic invasion of Lisbon led by General Jean Andoche Junot.²² After arriving in Brazil, Dom João opened Brazilian ports for the first time to international trade, particularly with the British, who had escorted the Portuguese royal family across the Atlantic.²³ The transfer of the Portuguese court and the opening of the Brazilian ports increased the population of Rio de Janeiro significantly. Census data for Rio de Janeiro shows that the city's population increased 14 percent in this period, from 46,944 in 1803 to 54,255 in 1808.²⁴ As the city's inhabitants depended largely on slave labor, this increase also stimulated the expansion of the slave trade from West Central Africa.

The major source of increased demand for the region's slaves was, however, the growth of Brazilian commercial agriculture. From the late eighteenth century, Brazilian agriculture benefited from the decline of gold production in Goiás, Minas Gerais, and Mato Grosso, three captaincies situated in the interior of Brazil. Gold had been the principal commodity exported from Brazil, but production in these captaincies gradually declined, from an average of 1,072 *arrobas* produced at its peak period

²² Alan K. Manchester, "The Transfer of the Portuguese Court to Rio de Janeiro." In *Conflict and Continuity in Brazilian Society*, ed. Henry H. Keith and S. F. Edwards (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1969), 148–63; Kirsten Schultz, "The Transfer of the Portuguese Court and Ideas of Empire," *Portuguese Studies Review* 15, no. 1–2 (2007): 367–91; Jerry Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 222–38; Gabriel Paquette, *Imperial Portugal in the Age of Atlantic Revolutions: The Luso-Brazilian World, c. 1770–1850* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 85–95.

²³ Paulo Bonavides and Roberto Amaral, *Textos Políticos da História do Brasil*, 3rd edn. (Brasília: Senado Federal, 2002), vol. 1, 410–11.

²⁴ Dauril Alden, "Late Colonial Brazil, 1750–1808." In *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, ed. Leslie Bethell, vol. 2 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 605, Table 3; Mary C. Karasch, *Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro, 1808–1850* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 61, Table 3.1.

between 1750 and 1754 to about 299 *arrobas* between 1795 and 1799.²⁵ Many individuals sought to invest in other activities such as the production of sugar, rice, and cotton. Sugar producers in Brazil, in particular, also benefited from the Haitian Revolution, which had ruined their competitors in Saint Domingue. Sugar exports from Bahia, for example, increased from about 480,000 *arrobas* in 1788 to 746,600 *arrobas* in 1798. Sugar exports from Pernambuco also increased, from about 275,000 *arrobas* in 1790 to 560,000 in 1807. Similarly, sugar exports from Rio de Janeiro expanded from 200,000 *arrobas* in 1790 to 487,200 in 1800.²⁶ As gold exports from the Brazilian interior declined, the traditional centers of sugar production in Brazil ensured that demand for West Central African captives remained high.

The expansion of Brazilian agricultural exports was not limited to sugar. Exports of rice and cotton, for example, also increased during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The majority of rice and cotton exported from Brazil was produced in the captaincies of Maranhão and Pará, located in the Amazon Basin, mainly with African slave labor imported from Upper Guinea. Rice was produced mostly for consumption in Portugal, while cotton was grown for export to the larger European market. By 1781, rice exports from Pará and Maranhão, as well as from Rio de Janeiro, were more than enough to allow Portugal to ban the entry of all foreign rice.²⁷ Cotton production in Pará and Maranhão also increased significantly, spreading quickly to other captaincies. In 1799, for example, the Bishop of Olinda, a meticulous observer of the Brazilian economy at that time, noted that in Pernambuco cotton exports "almost equaled the value of sugar and all other products combined."²⁸ As a result, between 1780 and 1800, Brazil emerged as a major cotton supplier for the Lancashire factories during the Industrial Revolution in England, ranking after the British West Indies and the Mediterranean, and before the United States.²⁹

²⁵ Virgílio Noya Pinto, *O Ouro Brasileiro e o Comércio Anglo-Português: Uma Contribuição aos Estudos da Economia Atlântica no Século XVIII*, 2nd edn. (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1979), 114. Pinto calculates the weight of one *arroba* of gold at approximately 14.7 kilograms.

²⁶ Alden, "Late Colonial Brazil," 627–31.

²⁷ Ibid., 641; Manuel Nunes Dias, *Fomento e Mercantilismo: A Companhia Geral do Grão Pará e Maranhão (1755–1778)* (Belém: Universidade Federal do Pará, 1970), vols. 1, 431–52.

²⁸ Cited in Alden, "Late Colonial Brazil," 637.

²⁹ Thomas Ellison, *The Cotton Trade of Great Britain* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1886), 86; William Henry Johnson, *Cotton and Its Production* (London: Macmillan, 1926), 190–91.

Table 1.2 confirms that Brazil was the principal market for slaves embarked from West Central Africa. Brazil alone served as the destination for about 74 percent of all slaves shipped between the late eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth century. The remaining slaves were carried to different areas of the Caribbean, mainland North America, and British enclaves in Africa, to which naval cruisers escorted the slave vessels they had detained. The Africans rescued by British naval forces were generally liberated at either a mixed commission or a Vice-Admiralty court established in Sierra Leone, West Africa, for the adjudication of cases involving vessels accused of illegal slave trading. These individuals were rarely repatriated. In most cases, they settled down in Sierra Leone, merged with the local population, or joined the British navy.³⁰ The majority of slaves shipped from West Central Africa disembarked in Rio de Janeiro, Southeast Brazil. Table 1.2 shows that over 1.4 million slaves were shipped to Southeast Brazil alone between 1781 and 1867. Pernambuco was the second principal market for slaves, the destination for about 312,200 slaves embarked from the region. Bahia, in third place, received approximately 243,100 slaves, and the captaincies of Pará and Maranhão, in Amazonia, took about 47,700 slaves shipped from West Central Africa to Brazil. In short, from the late eighteenth until the mid-nineteenth century, Brazil had a strong connection to West Central Africa, serving as the principal market not only for the region's slaves, but also for captives carried off from all African regions, including Southeast Africa.

Those slaves shipped from West Central Africa were employed in several regions in the interior of Brazil. Studies focusing on the Brazilian internal trade are in their infancy, but the first indications are that slaves disembarked in Brazil from Africa were distributed to several places. Between 1760 and 1779, about 30 percent of all slaves landed at Bahia were transported to regions far into the interior of Brazil.³¹ The majority of this group went, as before, to the former gold districts of Minas Gerais, which received 18 percent of all slaves shipped to the interior of Brazil.³² However, in the nineteenth century, Maranhão became the major destination for all slaves sold in Bahia. Between 1811 and 1820, for example, about 30 percent of all captives leaving Bahia, both Africans and Creoles, went to Maranhão.³³ Slaves arriving in Rio de Janeiro were also sold

³⁰ Daniel B. Domingues da Silva et al., "The Diaspora of Africans Liberated from Slave Ships in the Nineteenth Century." *Journal of African History* 55, no. 3 (2014): 349–64.

³¹ Ribeiro, "O Tráfico Atlântico," 101. ³² Ibid., 107. ³³ Ibid., 115.

TABLE 1.2 *Slaves leaving West Central Africa by region of disembarkation (in thousands), 1781–1867*

Regions	Sub-regions	1781–	1808–	1831–	1851–	Total
		1807	1830	1850	1867	
Brazil	Amazonia	25.0	21.4	1.3	-	47.7
	Bahia	94.1	127.0	20.9	1.1	243.1
	Pernambuco	103.6	144.8	63.8	0.0	312.2
	SE Brazil	336.6	514.8	565.6	3.1	1,420.1
Other		11.9	15.8	6.4	-	34.1
British Caribbean		142.8	4.6	2.5	-	149.9
French Caribbean		173.3	2.4	-	-	175.7
Spanish Caribbean		26.7	78.6	48.2	135.3	288.8
Other		60.2	4.5	21.7	17.2	103.6
All regions		974.2	913.9	730.5	156.8	2,775.4

Note: Other regions include mainland North America, the Dutch Caribbean, the Danish West Indies, and Africa.

Source: Same as Table 1.1.

to several regions in the interior of Brazil. Between 1819 and 1830, approximately 43 percent of Rio de Janeiro landings were redirected from the city to other Brazilian markets.³⁴ The majority of them were sent to Minas Gerais, which received 59 percent of the total shipped from Rio de Janeiro. By this time, Minas Gerais had become a major producer of food for the internal market.³⁵ A further 24 percent went mostly to São Paulo, in Southeast Brazil, where they were employed in sugar and coffee plantations.³⁶ The majority of the remainder, about 10 percent, went to Rio Grande do Sul, in southern Brazil, where they were used in various activities but particularly in jerked beef production.³⁷

The opening of the Brazilian ports to foreign shipping, especially British, resulted in lower transportation costs for Brazilian plantation produce. This, in turn, stimulated the Brazilian slave trade from West Central Africa. *Lloyd's Register of Shipping* shows that, after the British

³⁴ Roberto Guedes and João Luís Fragoso, “Alegrias e Artimanhas de uma Fonte Seriada: Os Códices 390, 421, 424 e 425: Despachos de Escravos e Passaportes da Intendência de Polícia da Corte, 1819 – 1833.” In *Tráfico Interno de Escravos e Relações Comerciais no Centro-Sul do Brasil, Séculos XVIII e XIX*, ed. IPEA (Brasília: Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada, 2000), calculated from table 3.

³⁵ Ibid., calculated from table 4; Amilcar Martins Filho and Roberto B. Martins, “Slavery in a Non-Export Economy: Nineteenth Century Minas Gerais Revisited,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 63, no. 3 (1983): 556–65.

³⁶ Guedes and Fragoso, “Alegrias e Artimanhas,” calculated from table 4. ³⁷ Ibid.

abolished their slave trade, they redeployed their slaving fleet to the commodity trade in the tropics. Since these vessels were originally designed to sail in the warm waters of Africa, their hulls were covered with copper sheets, which not only better protected them from sea worms, but also improved their speed and durability.³⁸ British ex-slavers sailed for several places in the Caribbean and South America, such as Antigua, Bahamas, Cuba, Dominica, Jamaica, and Peru. However, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Brazil served as the single major destination for all British ex-slavers. *Lloyd's Register of Shipping* indicates that 33 percent of all voyages undertaken by British ex-slavers between 1808 and 1811 went to Brazil.³⁹ Although West Central Africa represented just one, albeit the major, source of slaves for Brazil, slaves brought from this region probably produced a significant percentage of the commodities that these British ex-slavers carried to Europe. The opening of the Brazilian ports resulted in lower costs for Brazilian commerce and a higher demand for slaves.

The British connection to the slave trade from West Central Africa was not limited to the transportation of produce cultivated by the region's slaves in Brazil. The spread of British credit following the opening of the Brazilian ports to international trade also fueled the trade from West Central Africa. David Eltis examined the British consular and naval correspondence together with an analysis of the trade goods that Cuban and Brazilian slave traders used to purchase their slaves and shows that British subjects contributed significantly to the post-1807 traffic. Eltis states that they "owned, managed, and manned slaving adventures; purchased newly imported Africans in the Americas; supplied ships, equipment, insurance, and most important of all trade goods and credit to foreign slave traders."⁴⁰ British firms could wait up to two years to receive returns on their investments. This was particularly useful to Brazilian traders, given the scarcity of credit available in most financial centers in Brazil.⁴¹

³⁸ Peter M. Solar and Klas Rönnbäck, "Copper Sheathing and the British Slave Trade." *Economic History Review* Early view (2014): 1–3, doi:10.1111/ehr.12085.

³⁹ David M. Williams, "Abolition and the Re-Deployment of the Slave Fleet, 1807–11." *Journal of Transport History* 11, no. 2 (1973): 106–11.

⁴⁰ David Eltis, "The British Contribution to the Nineteenth Century Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade." *Economic History Review* 32, no. 2 (1979): 211.

⁴¹ Ibid., 220; David Eltis, "The British Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade after 1807." *Maritime History* 4, no. 1 (1974): 8–9; Eltis, *Economic Growth*, 58–59; Miller, *Way of Death*, 505–08.

SUPPLY

Iberian carriers dominated the trade from West Central Africa following the bilateral treaties Britain signed with Portugal in 1810 and 1815, and with Spain in 1817. Figure 1.1 shows that Iberian traders increased their activities along the coast of West Central Africa in the aftermath of the treaties' ratification. They sought to abolish the trade gradually, starting first, in the Portuguese case, with the prohibition of the traffic from ports outside Portuguese control in Africa and then with the suppression of the trade north of the Equator, although in the case of the 1817 Anglo-Spanish treaty this ban was to extend to the whole of the Atlantic (north and south) from May 1820. Many Iberian traders, who had been purchasing slaves on the coast north of the Equator, now began to search for alternative sources of slaves south of the Equator. This shift increased the Portuguese trade from West Central Africa significantly. The number of slaves transported in Iberian vessels from the region increased from an average of 26,090 per year between 1806 and 1815 to an average of 43,340 per year between 1816 and 1825.

A large number of these slaves were embarked from ports controlled by several independent African polities situated north of Luanda. These ports had been selling most of their slaves to the British and the French. However, with the abolition of the British trade and the Haitian Revolution, Iberian carriers extended their slaving activities to these ports, especially after 1810, when many traders who did not have commercial connections at the Portuguese outlets, such as Luanda and Benguela, began to purchase slaves from ports mainly north of the Congo River, now vacated by British and French carriers. Additionally, Portuguese slave traders based in Brazil found it more economical to purchase slaves at African-controlled ports rather than Luanda and Benguela, because Africans collected lower taxes on slaves embarked than their Portuguese competitors further south.⁴² "Voyages" indicates that after 1810 Iberian carriers shipped almost all their Angolan slaves from ports north of Luanda, even after adjusting for the bias available in the sources documenting the slave trade from Cabinda and Molembo to Bahia.

After the prohibition of the Portuguese trade north of the Equator and the total ban of Spanish slaving activities, the supply of captives from

⁴² Roquinaldo Amaral Ferreira, *Dos Sertões ao Atlântico: Tráfico Ilegal de Escravos e Comércio Lícito em Angola, 1830–1860* (M.A., Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 1996), 86–89.

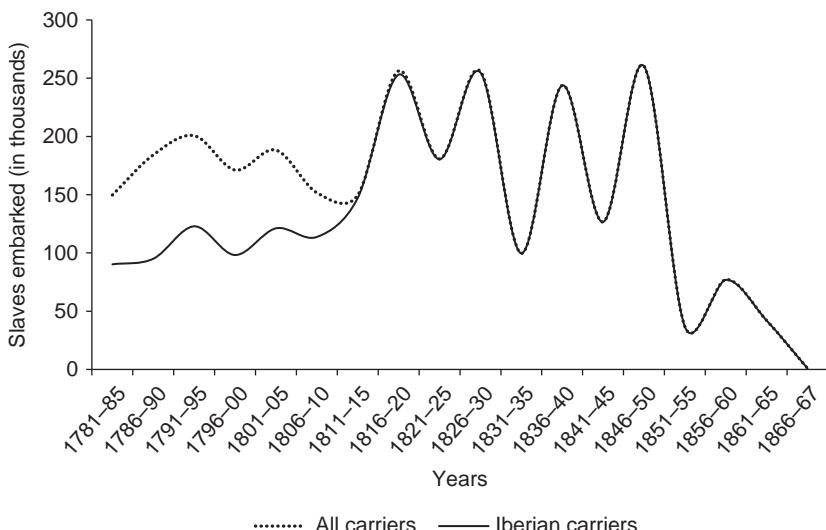


FIGURE 1.1 Slaves leaving West Central Africa by national carriers, 1781–1867
Source: Same as Table 1.1.

Angola fluctuated in response to British efforts to suppress the trade. Figure 1.1 shows that the trade from West Central Africa peaked three times after 1815. Each of these peaks was related to the British attempts to suppress the traffic. The first was between 1826 and 1830. In 1826, an Anglo-Brazilian treaty determined that Brazil would abolish the transatlantic slave trade three years after the 1827 ratification, making the Brazilian slave trade illegal after 1830.⁴³ Although Brazil agreed to the terms of the treaty, it effectively never closed its ports to the slave trade until the mid-nineteenth century. In anticipation of the 1830 ban, however, traders increased their activities in West Central Africa. Many of them invested heavily in the traffic. The number of slaves shipped from West Central Africa increased from about 180,380 embarked between 1821 and 1825 to 254,860 between 1826 and 1830.

Between 1836 and 1840, trade from the region peaked for a second time as a result of two important events in Europe. The first was the formal abolition of the Portuguese slave trade. In 1836, the Portuguese government enacted a law prohibiting the trade from all Portuguese

⁴³ Bethell, *The Abolition*, 60–61; Bonavides and Amaral, *Textos Políticos*, vol. 1, 833–35.

possessions in Africa, including Luanda and Benguela.⁴⁴ However, at that time the government lacked the means to enforce the law, and once again many traders increased their activities before its expected implementation in Luanda and Benguela. The second event was a British measure: the passage of Lord Palmerston's bill in 1839. When this bill became law it allowed the British navy to capture any vessel flying Portuguese colors suspected of trading slaves on the African coast and take it before a British domestic court.⁴⁵ The act was a clear violation of international law, but it signaled to traders that their active days were coming to an end. Many traders again rushed to West Central Africa, increasing the number of slaves shipped from the region from approximately 99,660 between 1830 and 1835 to 243,800 slaves between 1836 and 1840.

None of these measures was entirely effective, as there is a yet a third peak in the West Central African traffic, this time between 1846 and 1850, when the British changed their focus from the Portuguese to the Brazilian slave trade. In 1844, the British and Portuguese established a mixed commission court as well as a naval station at Luanda, from where they could better patrol the coast of West Central Africa.⁴⁶ In the following year, the British Parliament approved Lord Aberdeen's act, a measure similar to the 1839 legislation but applicable to Brazilian vessels as well as those carrying no registration papers and without any apparent national affiliation.⁴⁷ Once more, the British navy could seize such vessels and have them condemned in British courts. Additionally, in 1850 British naval interventions at two Brazilian ports had a huge impact throughout the country.⁴⁸ These actions were a major violation of Brazilian sovereignty, and they served as a final call for Brazilian authorities to pass and enforce new legislation against the slave trade. These measures prevented Iberian traders from using traditional ports of embarkation and led them to expand their activities north and south of Luanda. As a result, the number of slaves shipped from West Central Africa increased from about 126,600 between 1841 and 1845 to 260,400 between 1846 and 1850.

⁴⁴ Marques, *Os Sons do Silêncio*, 203–14; Roquinaldo Ferreira, “The Suppression of the Slave Trade and Slave Departures from Angola, 1830s–1860s.” *História Unisinos* 15, no. 1 (2011): 4.

⁴⁵ Bethell, *The Abolition*, 156–64.

⁴⁶ Bethell, “The Mixed Commissions,” 79; Samuël Coghe, “The Problem of Freedom in a Mid-Nineteenth Century Atlantic Slave Society: The Liberated Africans of the Anglo-Portuguese Mixed Commission in Luanda (1844–1870).” *Slavery and Abolition* 33, no. 3 (2012): 481–83; Ferreira, “The Suppression,” 10–11.

⁴⁷ Bethell, *The Abolition*, 259–66. ⁴⁸ Eltis, *Economic Growth*, 215–16.

The supply of slaves from the region also varied in response to important events in the Atlantic. Figure 1.2 shows the estimated numbers shipped from West Central Africa by place of embarkation. In the late eighteenth century, places north of Luanda shipped the majority of the slaves carried from West Central Africa. These ports included Ambriz, Cabinda, Loango, Molembo, and the mouth of the Congo River, in addition to smaller places like Kilongo and Mayumba. Independent African polities such as the kingdoms of Kongo, Kakongo, Loango, and Ngoyo controlled these ports and had sold most of their slaves to non-Iberian slave traders. British and French slavers in particular conducted such a lively trade in these ports that the Portuguese tried to halt this commerce by taking possession of them. In 1783, for example, the Portuguese occupied Cabinda and built a small fort on the coast to prevent the sale of slaves to foreign traders. However, in the following year, a French squadron arrived at Cabinda and formed an alliance with the local rulers that forced the Portuguese to destroy their fort and leave the area.⁴⁹ In 1788, the Portuguese in Luanda made another attempt to reduce the competition for slaves by waging a war against the Marquis of Musulu, a dissident of the Kingdom of Kongo. The Marquis controlled Ambriz, an important outlet for British slave traders. In an attempt to intercept this commerce from the interior, the Portuguese built a fort at the mouth of the Loge River. In view of what had happened in Cabinda, however, the colonial office in Lisbon ordered the governor of Angola to recall his forces and destroy the fort two years after the war.⁵⁰ The ports

⁴⁹ Governmental Board of Angola to Martinho de Melo e Castro, 11 July 1783, AHU, CU, Angola, box 66 doc. 68, 69, 70 and 74; Pedro Álvares de Andrade to Martinho de Melo e Castro, 12 February 1784, AHU, CU, Angola, box 68 doc. 29; Pedro Álvares de Andrade to Martinho de Melo e Castro, 24 March 1784, AHU, CU, Angola, box 68 doc. 54; António Máximo de Sousa Magalhães to Martinho de Melo e Castro, 8 October 1784, AHU, CU, Angola, box 69 doc. 34.

⁵⁰ Manoel de Almeida e Vasconcelos to Martinho de Melo e Castro, 23 April 1791, AHU, CU, Angola, box 76 doc. 18; Manoel de Almeida e Vasconcelos to Martinho de Melo e Castro, 31 December 1791, AHU, CU, Angola, box 76 doc. 102; Manoel de Almeida e Vasconcelos to Martinho de Melo e Castro, 17 March 1792, AHU, CU, Angola, box 77 doc. 31. See also David Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict in Angola: The Mbundu and Their Neighbours under the Influence of the Portuguese, 1483–1790* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 157–58; Jan Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna: A History of Central African States until European Occupation* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), 182 and 191; Phyllis M. Martin, *The External Trade of the Loango Coast, 1576–1870: The Effects of Changing Commercial Relations on the Vili Kingdom of Loango* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 137–38; Anne Hilton, *The Kingdom of Kongo* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1985), 211.

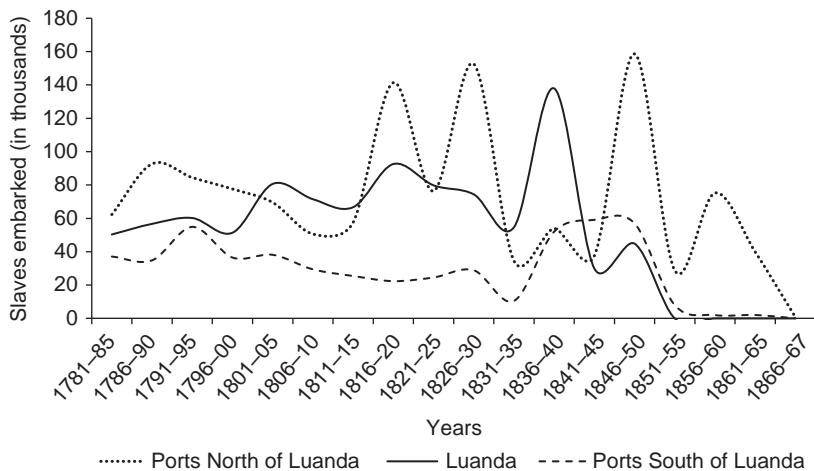


FIGURE 1.2 Slaves leaving West Central Africa by port of embarkation, 1781-1867

Source: Daniel B. Domingues da Silva, "The Atlantic Slave Trade from Angola: A Port-by-Port Estimate of Slaves Embarked, 1701-1867." *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 46, no. 1 (2013): 121-22.

north of Luanda thus remained open for international commerce throughout the late eighteenth century.

Although African-controlled ports were open to all comers, the number of slaves shipped from ports north of Luanda declined in the late eighteenth century in the face of the transatlantic developments described above. The British expansion was not sufficient to offset the decline, and when they pulled out of the business, further decline occurred north of Luanda. The estimates show that the number of slaves shipped from these ports by all carriers fell in the five years immediately after the slave rebellion in Saint Domingue from 92,650 to 84,500. Between 1801 and 1805, with the independence of Haiti, this number fell further to approximately 69,500, and then to 50,590 after abolition of the British slave trade, a figure barely half the number shipped before the 1791 rebellion.

In contrast, traffic from Luanda increased during the late eighteenth century. Luanda was the single largest port of slave embarkation on the African coast. It shipped about 34 percent of West Central Africa's slaves between 1781 and 1867. The Portuguese had dominated this port since the sixteenth century, except for a brief interlude of Dutch occupation from 1641 to 1648. In the late eighteenth century, the number of slaves

shipped from Luanda increased as Brazilian plantations, supplied by Portuguese traders, took advantage of events in the wider Atlantic. Luanda and the northern ports shared some internal supply routes. As the activities of the British and French declined, many of the slaves that were previously sold through these ports were diverted for sale at Luanda. The estimates show that, compared to the late eighteenth century, the trade from Luanda increased significantly at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Between 1801 and 1810, the number of slaves shipped from Luanda increased approximately 27 percent from the previous decade.

South of Luanda, on the other hand, slave departures declined steadily from the late eighteenth century until the mid-1830s. Benguela and Novo Redondo were the departure points in this region. Benguela alone shipped the majority of slaves from these ports. Lesser ports to the south of Luanda included Benguela Velha, Quicombo, Salinas, and the mouth of the Kwanza River, which traders used occasionally as clandestine embarkation sites during the era of suppression. Unlike departures from Luanda and points north, the majority of captives leaving from such ports came from the central plateau of present-day Angola, an area dominated by several African polities, sometimes in conflict with one another. These included the kingdoms of Kakonda, Mbailundu, Viye, and Wambu. Although wars between African powers generally produced large numbers of slaves, the conflicts in the Angolan highlands did not have the same effect, as the trend line for the southern ports in Figure 1.2 clearly shows.

In any event, in the nineteenth century the supply of slaves on the coast of West Central Africa varied greatly with efforts to suppress the transatlantic trade. Figure 1.2 shows that soon after the tightening of restrictions on the trade north of the Equator, the number of slaves leaving from both Luanda and the northern ports increased. Portuguese traders carried off the majority of these. Many of these traders may never have previously purchased slaves in this part of the continent. They had probably traded slaves in regions north of the Equator, such as the Bights of Benin and Biafra. However, as the pressure on the trade in those areas increased, they had to purchase slaves in other regions, such as West Central Africa or Southeast Africa. For many, the African-controlled ports north of Luanda emerged as an ideal alternative as British and French competitors left this part of the coast. In addition, Luanda and Benguela merchants had few connections in the northern ports and, as already noted, taxes were lower there. As late as 1847, the British commissioner at Luanda noted “the abandonment of the port of Luanda for that of Ambriz, the resort now of

almost all the foreign vessels, is partly accounted for . . . by their having no duties to pay at the latter.”⁵¹ It is not surprising that the numbers carried off from the long coast north of Luanda swelled after 1816.

Brazilian independence and the already mentioned Anglo-Brazilian treaty of 1826 added impetus to the increased flows of captives in the north. Following independence in 1822, many Brazilian traders sought to avoid Portuguese ports. Revenues generated at Luanda and the southern ports, still part of the Portuguese Empire, declined.⁵² Rumors that a fleet commanded by Lord Cochrane, in the service of the Brazilian government, was departing from Pernambuco to capture Luanda led Portuguese authorities there to strengthen their defenses.⁵³ Given the political conflict between Portugal and Brazil, many traders turned to African-controlled outlets north of Luanda. As the Anglo-Brazilian treaty of 1826 took effect, traders rushed to the northern ports in order to purchase slaves before Brazil closed its ports to those arriving from Africa.

After 1830, the distribution of departures across West Central Africa shifted once again. Numbers leaving north of Luanda declined, while exports from Luanda and the ports south of Luanda increased. In 1825, Portugal recognized Brazilian independence in return for Brazilian compensation for Portuguese financial losses and undertakings not to support the independence of any other Portuguese colony.⁵⁴ This agreement favored traders, because it allowed them to resume their activities at Portuguese ports on the African coast. Many dealers based in Brazil, notably in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro, developed commercial relations with their counterparts based in Luanda and Benguela, further increasing the number of slaves shipped from these ports at the beginning of the 1830s.⁵⁵ However, the expansion of the trade from Luanda and the ports south of it was short-lived. In 1836, the Portuguese government banned

⁵¹ H.M.’s Commissioners to Viscount Palmerston, 14 February 1848, in Great Britain, *Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers: Slave Trade* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1968), vol. 36, 105.

⁵² José Joaquim Lopes de Lima, *Ensaios sobre a Statistica das Possessões Portuguezas* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1844), vol. 3, 165–68.

⁵³ Nicolau de Abreu Castelo Branco to Count of Sub-Serra, 23 February 1825, AHU, CU, Angola, box 147 doc. 34. See also Boris Fausto, *História do Brasil*, 8th edn. (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 2000), 144.

⁵⁴ Bonavides and Amaral, *Textos Políticos*, vol. 1, 812–15.

⁵⁵ Ferreira, “Dos Sertões ao Atlântico,” 82–85; Mariana P. Cândido, “Merchants and the Business of the Slave Trade in Benguela C. 1750–1850,” *African Economic History* 35 (2007): 4–11; Mariana P. Cândido, “Trans-Atlantic Links: The Benguela-Bahia Connections, 1700–1850.” In *Paths of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Interactions, Identities, and Images*, ed. Ana Lúcia Araújo (Amherst: Cambria Press, 2011), 239–72;

trading from its possessions in Africa.⁵⁶ Additionally, British policymakers began to pursue the suppression of the transatlantic trade more aggressively, following the passage of the previously mentioned Palmerston and Aberdeen acts of 1839 and 1845, respectively, as well as the establishment of a mixed commission court at Luanda.⁵⁷ Furthermore, Britain, in addition to France, Portugal, and the United States, increased naval patrols off the African coast.⁵⁸ As a result, the number of slaves shipped from Luanda and the ports south of Luanda declined in the 1840s.

Even so, as long as Brazil remained open for the trade and Africans continued to supply slaves, captive departures from West Central Africa remained high. Between 1846 and 1850, the region's trade reached its highest level in the nineteenth century. Approximately 260,000 enslaved Africans were sold into the transatlantic trade from West Central Africa in that period alone. The majority of them embarked at the African-controlled ports north of Luanda. Despite aggressive legislation and naval reinforcements, the trade declined significantly only after 1850, when Brazil finally closed its ports to all vessels carrying slaves from Africa.⁵⁹ Following the abolition of the Brazilian trade, some traders continued to sail to West Central Africa to purchase slaves, but most of these captives were now destined for Cuba, the principal market for the last victims of the transatlantic trade. The numbers shipped after 1850 never came close to matching those taken to Brazil prior to that year.

CONCLUSION

From the late eighteenth until the mid-nineteenth century, West Central Africa was a major source of slaves for the Americas. The slave rebellion in Saint Domingue and the abolition of the British trade decreased the number of slaves shipped from the region. However, with the growing restrictions on the trade north of the Equator, average numbers shipped from West Central Africa recovered to levels matching those of the years

Mariana P. Cândido, "South Atlantic Exchanges: The Role of Brazilian-Born Agents in Benguela, 1650–1850," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 50, no. 1 (2013): 66–71.

⁵⁶ Marques, *Os Sons do Silêncio*, 203–14; Ferreira, "The Suppression," 4.

⁵⁷ Bethell, *The Abolition*, 156–64; Bethell, "The Mixed Commissions," 79; Coghe, "The Problem of Freedom in a Mid-Nineteenth Century Atlantic Slave Society: The Liberated Africans of the Anglo-Portuguese Mixed Commission in Luanda (1844–1870)."

⁵⁸ Eltis, *Economic Growth*, 94–95.

⁵⁹ Bonavides and Amaral, *Textos Políticos*, vol. 2, 212–14.

when British and French traders were still engaged in the traffic. In this period, Iberian carriers expanded their activities on the West Central African coast by tapping sources north of Luanda. The expansion of Brazilian commercial agriculture, the transference of the Portuguese court to Rio de Janeiro, the opening of the Brazilian ports to international trade, and the spread of British capital in Brazilian markets all contributed to the expansion of the Iberian trade along the coast of West Central Africa. As a consequence, the numbers shipped remained high well into the nineteenth century.

Changing opinion about the morality and viability of slavery in Europe and the Americas had a profound impact on the slave trade from West Central Africa. At first glance, it appears that this shift was particularly and paradoxically negative for the region, given that when suppression of the trade focused initially on West Africa regions further south emerged as the principal source of captives for the Americas. That said, the slave rebellion in Saint Domingue and the abolition of the British trade spared the region's population from the effects of an even more rapidly expanding trade. Had the French regained Saint Domingue from the insurgents and the British remained active in the trade, the numbers shipped would probably have been higher than they actually were. In that case, the demand for slaves might indeed have expanded the slaving frontiers deep into the interior of West Central Africa, as many scholars have argued. However, these events remained in the realm of a counterfactual world. The slave rebellion of Saint Domingue, the abolition of the British trade, and the campaign for the suppression of the transatlantic trade in large measure checked the expansion of the Iberian trade. The impact of the traffic on the interior of West Central Africa was less extensive than scholars have generally believed, as will be seen in the following chapters.

The Commercial Organization of the Slave Trade

In the nineteenth century, a complex network of merchants, brokers, and traders governed the trade from West Central Africa. While they controlled much of the human input into the traffic, they did so within a framework that was shaped by environmental factors in the Atlantic. Merchants based in Portugal and Brazil organized most of the shipments to the Americas. They bankrolled these voyages individually or in partnership with others, including ship captains. Merchants purchased their captives from brokers located along the coast of West Central Africa. These brokers controlled the supply of human cargo on the coast but depended in turn on traders who transported captives from the interior to the ports. Although these categories are analyzed individually, they frequently overlapped. Brokers, for example, often tried to break into the shipping business and finance transatlantic voyages themselves. Traders, on the other hand, had to work hard to acquire enough contacts and resources to operate as brokers on the coast of West Central Africa. Nevertheless, these categories will be examined independently of each other to provide a better understanding of how slaves left the region in the final decades of the traffic.

OCEANIC PATTERNS

Let us first consider patterns of wind and sea currents that shaped the direction of the slave trade. Both wind and sea currents flow in the same direction throughout the year, changing little from one season to the next.¹

¹ Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, *O Trato dos Viventes: Formação do Brasil no Atlântico Sul* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2000), 57–63; Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism:*

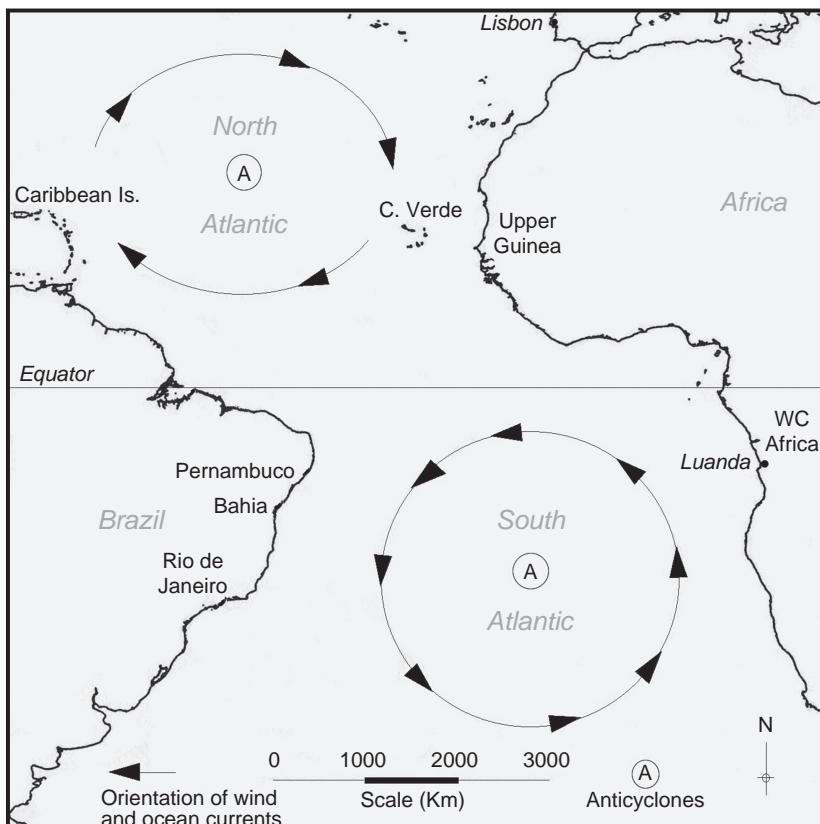


FIGURE 2.1 Wind and sea currents of the North and South Atlantic
 Source: Adapted with permission from Daniel B. Domingues da Silva, "The Atlantic Slave Trade to Maranhão, 1680–1846: Volume, Routes and Organisation." *Slavery and Abolition* 29, no. 4 (2008): 486.

However, the Atlantic gyres, to use the correct term, differ north and south of the Equator. Figure 2.1 shows these movements in schematic perspective. In the North Atlantic, the wind and sea currents move clockwise like a giant wheel, while in the South Atlantic they move counterclockwise. The gyres on either side of the Atlantic are separated by the doldrums, which are calm

The Biological Expansion of Europe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 104–32; Daniel B. Domingues da Silva, "The Atlantic Slave Trade to Maranhão, 1680–1846: Volume, Routes and Organisation." *Slavery and Abolition* 29, no. 4 (2008): 485–87; Miller, *Way of Death*, 318–24.

waters flowing around the Equator. Captains, navigating from one hemisphere to another, had no alternative but to cross the doldrums, which certainly increased voyage times.

Gyres determined the trade routes, and those in the North Atlantic differed significantly from those in the South Atlantic. In the former, the wind and sea patterns saw the shipment of slaves via the classic triangular trade in which vessels sailed from Europe to Africa and then to the Americas, from where they returned to their homeports in Europe. South of the Equator, the wind and sea currents facilitated a bilateral trading system, in which vessels departed from the Americas to Africa, and returned directly to their homeports in the Americas. The trade between West Central Africa and Brazil provides a clear example of how the Atlantic gyres shaped the routes of the trade. Portuguese and Brazilian vessels loading slaves in West Central Africa sailed both north and south of the Equator. However, as Table 2.1 shows, the majority of the slaves shipped to regions north of the Equator, in this case Amazonia, were carried in vessels that had departed from Portugal. This was the more challenging venture, as it meant crossing the doldrums. The overwhelming majority of the slaves shipped from West Central Africa to regions south of the Equator, such as Bahia, Pernambuco, and Southeast Brazil, were carried in vessels that had departed from Brazilian ports.

Compared to other regions in the Americas, South Atlantic patterns of wind and sea currents allowed merchants based in Brazil to supply their own regions with slaves. Table 2.1 shows that approximately 89 percent of the captives shipped from West Central Africa to Bahia were carried in vessels that had departed from Bahia. This pattern is also evident in other Brazilian regions situated south of the Equator. In Pernambuco, the ratio was 82 percent and Southeast Brazil 95 percent. Vessels leaving from any of these regions sailed southward propelled by the Brazilian current running along the coast of Brazil until they were able to catch the West Wind Drift that would take them across the Atlantic. When they sighted the African coast, they sailed northward along the coast of West Central Africa propelled by the Benguela current until they reached their destination in Africa. To return, vessels re-entered the Benguela current sailing northward until they were able to access the South Equatorial current that would carry them to Brazil. When they reached the Brazilian coast, they sailed southward propelled by the Brazilian current until arriving at their final destination.

The voyage between West Central Africa and Brazil was one of the shortest in the transatlantic trade. Vessels leaving that region for Pernambuco between the late eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth century

TABLE 2.1 *Percentage of slaves leaving West Central Africa distributed by region of departure and home port of the vessels that carried them, 1781–1867*

Regions where slaving venture organized	Regions of disembarkation			
	Amazonia	Bahia	Pernambuco	SE Brazil
Portugal	54.6	1.7	6.8	2.6
Amazonia	8.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bahia	10.1	88.8	2.2	1.5
Pernambuco	12.2	1.8	81.7	1.0
SE Brazil	15.0	7.5	8.6	94.6
Others	0.0	0.2	0.7	0.3
Totals	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Others in regions of departure include Cuba, Rio de la Plata, India, Southeast Africa, and unspecified regions in Brazil.

Sources: David Eltis et al., “Voyages,” and Domingues da Silva, “The Atlantic Slave Trade from Angola,” 121–22.

crossed the Atlantic on average in 33 days. A crossing to Bahia took a little over a month, 34 days on average, and to Southeast Brazil it took about 40 days.² These ships were among the largest carriers in the trade. The number of slaves carried per vessel from West Central Africa to Pernambuco averaged 376; to Bahia, 349; and to Southeast Brazil, 435.³ In comparison, British ships loading slaves in the same region between 1781 and 1808 took about 55 days to cross the Atlantic and carried only 289 Africans on average.⁴ French ships sailing in the same period as the British took somewhat longer, 60 days, to cross the ocean, but carried almost as many slaves, 361, as Brazilian-bound vessels.⁵ Although Portuguese and Brazilian ships carried such large numbers of slaves, the

² Calculated based on a sample of 255 records of voyages of ships leaving West Central Africa to Bahia, 62 to Pernambuco and 1,117 to Southeast Brazil between 1781 and 1867 available in the “Voyages” database.

³ Calculated based on a sample of 364 records of voyages of ships leaving West Central Africa to Bahia, 543 to Pernambuco and 2,226 to Southeast Brazil between 1781 and 1867 available in the “Voyages” database.

⁴ The length of voyage for British vessels was calculated based on a sample of 163 records of voyages, while the average number of slaves transported was based on a sample of 579 records available in the “Voyages” database.

⁵ The length of voyage for French vessels was calculated based on a sample of 219 records of voyages, while the average number of slaves transported was based on a sample of 367 records available in the “Voyages” database.

mortality rate during the voyage was surprisingly low. From the late eighteenth century until the end of the trade, deaths at sea averaged about 6 percent of the total number of slaves shipped to Bahia and about 7 percent to Pernambuco and Southeast Brazil.⁶ In the British trade between 1781 and 1808, the equivalent figure was lower, 3 percent, but from 1788 the British trade was subject to Parliamentary legislation. The French, in the same period, experienced much higher rates, 11 percent.⁷ The fact that French ships often carried a large number of captives and had to cross the doldrums to reach their destination might account for the time difference as well as the higher mortality rate. Clearly, then, the patterns of wind and sea currents in the South Atlantic provided Brazilian merchants with an advantage over their European counterparts.

The connections between Brazil and West Central Africa were not governed purely by environmental factors. Cultural and economic ties developed between the regions. In 1630, when the Dutch invaded Pernambuco, they discovered that the majority of slaves used in the Portuguese sugar plantations came from Angola, in West Central Africa. Johannes de Laet, drawing on Portuguese records collected after the occupation, noted that “from Angola alone in the years 1620, 21, 22, 23, being four years, to the Captaincy of Pernambuco have been disembarked 15,430 Blacks.”⁸ The Dutch, like most Europeans at that time, regarded the sugar industry of Pernambuco as highly profitable, and they attempted to maintain slave trading routes that the Portuguese had established. In 1641, the Dutch captured Luanda, which then, as later, served as the major port of embarkation and the capital of the Portuguese government in Angola.⁹

⁶ Calculated based on a sample of 222 records of voyages of ships leaving West Central Africa to Bahia, 39 to Pernambuco and 1,177 to Southeast Brazil between 1781 and 1867 available in the “Voyages” database.

⁷ The mortality rate for slaves transported from West Central Africa in British vessels was calculated based on a sample of 113 records of voyages, while that for slaves transported in French vessels was calculated based on a sample of 76 records.

⁸ Joannes de Laet, *Iaerlijck Verhael van de Verrichtingen der Geocroyerde West-Indische Compagnie in dertien Boecken. Tweede Deel: Boek IV-VII (1627–1630)*, ed. S. P. L’Honoré Naber (’s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1932), 139. I would like to thank Rik van Welie for this reference.

⁹ Alencastro, *O Trato dos Viventes*, 210–15; C. R. Boxer, “Salvador Correia de Sá E Benevides and the Reconquest of Angola in 1648.” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 28, no. 4 (1948): 489–92; C. R. Boxer, *Salvador de Sá and the Struggle for Brazil and Angola, 1602–1686* (London: University of London Press, 1952), 240–42; Ralph Delgado, *História de Angola* (Lisbon: Banco de Angola, 1970), vol. 2, 215–24.

However, the Dutch occupation of Luanda was short-lived. In 1648, Salvador Corrêa de Sá e Benevides recaptured Luanda with a fleet assembled in Rio de Janeiro. Corrêa de Sá was governor of Rio de Janeiro, where he owned land and slaves. After retaking Luanda, he reorganized the Portuguese colony in Angola, appointing members of his expedition to key offices in the government.¹⁰ This process created bonds between Brazil and West Central Africa. Appointing Brazilian officers, such as João Fernandes Vieira and André de Vidal Negreiros, to positions in the government of Angola further strengthened the transatlantic ties. Both men had distinguished themselves in the 1650s during the reconquest of Pernambuco.¹¹ They were among the longest serving governors in Angola. Governors of Angola were generally appointed for three-year terms, but João Fernandes Vieira served for about four years, between 1658 and 1661, and Negreiros served for almost six years immediately after him.¹²

The discovery of gold in the interior of Brazil in the 1690s had a similar impact on the ties between Brazil and West Central Africa. Rising gold production attracted large numbers of Portuguese immigrants to Brazil.¹³ They settled not only in the mining centers but also on the coast, especially in Bahia, Pernambuco, and Rio de Janeiro, which served as the main ports of entry to the gold producing areas. Moreover, they expected to tap some of the wealth coming in and out of the interior by engaging in trading activities in these regions. In Pernambuco, the arrival of these immigrants resulted in serious conflicts with the local community because gold exports had increased the price of commodities imported from abroad, including slaves.¹⁴ Sugar planters, for example, became increasingly indebted to traders who had migrated from Portugal. However, in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro the local community was able to accommodate the

¹⁰ Carlos Dias Coimbra, ed., *Livro de Patentes do Tempo do Sr. Salvador Correia de Sá e Benevides* (Luanda: Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola, 1958), passim.

¹¹ Alencastro, *O Trato dos Viventes*, 221–38; Boxer, “Salvador Correia de Sá,” 1948, 504–11; Boxer, *Salvador Correia de Sá*, 1952, 261–69; Delgado, *História de Angola*, vol. 2, 376–93; Evaldo Cabral de Mello, *Olinda Restaurada: Guerra e Açúcar no Nordeste, 1630–1654* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Forense-Universitária, 1975), 171–208.

¹² “Catálogo dos Governadores do Reino de Angola,” *Arquivos de Angola*, 1, 3, no. 34–36 (1937): 275–84; Elias Alexandre da Silva Corrêa, *História de Angola*, ed. Manuel Múrias (Lisbon: Editorial Ática, 1937), vol. 1, 275–84.

¹³ C. R. Boxer, *The Golden Age of Brazil, 1695–1750: Growing Pains of a Colonial Society* (Berkeley: University of California, 1962), 35–36; Pinto, *O Ouro Brasileiro*, 51–53.

¹⁴ Evaldo Cabral de Mello, *A Fronda dos Mazombos: Nobres Contra Mascates, Pernambuco, 1666–1715* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1995), 177–80.

newcomers with less friction. Planters in Bahia and Rio regarded the arrival of Portuguese immigrants as an opportunity to build commercial alliances and raise the status of their families by creating direct links with the metropolis. The immigrants saw the planters as an important means of getting access to local power and prestige, and they began to marry daughters of planter families.¹⁵ A strong community of local merchants emerged in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro, which increasingly dominated the West Central African trade.

In the mid-eighteenth century, the Portuguese government tried to limit the power that Brazilian merchants exercised over the trade from West Central Africa. In 1755 and 1759, the Portuguese Prime Minister, Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, created two trading companies based in Lisbon; the Companhia Geral de Comércio do Grão Pará e Maranhão and the Companhia Geral de Comércio de Pernambuco e Paraíba. The minister granted the two companies a monopoly over all maritime trade, including the slave trade, to the northern captaincies of Brazil as well as to Pernambuco and its neighboring captaincies, Alagoas, Paraíba, Rio Grande do Norte, and Ceará.¹⁶ In Bahia, the government also tried to curtail the control of local merchants over the trade by abolishing the *Mesa do Bem Comum*, the trading board of the Bahian merchants.¹⁷

¹⁵ Rae Jean Flory, “Bahian Society in the Mid-Colonial Period: The Sugar Planters, Tobacco Growers, Merchants and Artisans of Salvador and the Recôncavo, 1680–1725” (Ph.D., University of Texas, 1978), 98–109; João Luís Ribeiro Fragoso, “A Nobreza da República: Notas sobre a Formação da Primeira Elite Senhorial do Rio de Janeiro (Séculos XVI e XVII).” *Topoi*, no. 1 (2000): 58–60; John Norman Kennedy, “Bahian Elites, 1750–1822.” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 53, no. 3 (1973): 423–24; Antônio Carlos Jucá Sampaio, “Famílias e Negócios: A Formação da Comunidade Mercantil Carioca na Primeira Metade do Setecentos.” In *Conquistadores e Negociantes: Histórias de Elites no Antigo Regime nos Trópicos. América Lusa, Séculos XVI a XVIII*, ed. João Luís Ribeiro Fragoso, Antônio Carlos Jucá de Sampaio, and Carla Maria de Carvalho de Almeida (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2007), 234–60; David Grant Smith, “The Mercantile Class of Portugal and Brazil in the Seventeenth Century: A Socioeconomic Study of the Merchants of Lisbon and Bahia, 1620–1690” (Ph.D., University of Texas, 1975), 288–90 and 400–02.

¹⁶ António Carreira, *As Companhias Pombalinas de Navegação, Comércio e Tráfico de Escravos entre a Costa Africana e o Nordeste Brasileiro* (Bissau: Centro de Estudos da Guiné Portuguesa, 1969), 31–33 and 249–52; Dias, *Fomento e Mercantilismo*, vol. 1, 207–25; José Ribeiro Júnior, *Colonização e Monopólio no Nordeste Brasileiro: A Companhia Geral de Pernambuco e Paraíba (1759–1780)* (São Paulo: HUCITEC, 1976), 82–83.

¹⁷ Alexandre Vieira Ribeiro, “A Cidade de Salvador: Estrutura Econômica, Comércio de Escravos e Grupo Mercantil (c.1750–c.1800)” (Doctorate, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 2009), 375–77; Verger, *Fluxo e Refluxo*, 105–08.

A further government initiative reformed the taxes on slaves shipped from its Angolan colony in 1758. Although this revision was couched in the language of free trade, it in fact provided the state with more control over the commerce. Before 1758, slaves shipped from Angola were taxed on the basis of a *peça da Índia*, a unit equivalent to a prime adult slave of a certain height. Children, disabled individuals, and adults shorter than the designated height had been considered as a fraction of a *peça da Índia* for purposes of tax collection.¹⁸ However, following the 1758 reform, officials began to collect taxes on each individual embarked, rather than on the basis of *peça da Índia*, effectively an increase in taxes. The reform also integrated taxes previously levied separately, with the *peças de Índia* combined with the *preferências*, a 2,000 réis fee collected for each slave embarked on ships carrying *efeitos próprios*, merchandize belonging to the ship owners, whose captains wished to go to the front of the departure queue.¹⁹ The *preferências* was first established in 1684, but not every merchant was required to pay it.²⁰ The 1758 tax reform abolished this practice, but it obliged every captain clearing from Luanda to pay an additional fee with no discernable benefit.

The Portuguese government also tried to erode Brazilian control over the trade by promoting individuals loyal to Lisbon to major offices in the government of Angola. In 1764, Francisco Inocêncio de Sousa Coutinho became governor in Angola and introduced a series of initiatives, including the development of the wax and ivory trade, aimed at reducing the colony's dependence on human trafficking. Additionally, he was responsible for the first attempt to build a European iron factory in the interior of Angola in a place called Nova Oeiras, between the Lucala and Luina rivers, another attempt at diversifying the colony's economy. Sousa Coutinho governed Angola for almost eight years, between 1764 and 1772.²¹ His successors were also loyal to the central administration in

¹⁸ Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, 22–23; Enriqueta Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica y el Comercio de Esclavos* (Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1977), 189–90. Curtin implied that only male slaves could be considered *peças da Índia*, but the documents cited by Vila Vilar clearly state that female slaves could also be considered *peças da Índia*.

¹⁹ Dom José I, "Ley para Ser Livre, e Franco o Commercio de Angola, e dos Portos, e Sertões Adjacentes," *Arquivos de Angola*, 1, 2, no. 13–15 (1936): 532–33; Dom José I, "Ley sobre a Arecadação dos Direitos dos Escravos, e Marfim, que Sahirem do Reino de Angola, e Pórtos da sua Dependencia," *Arquivos de Angola*, 1, 2, no. 13–15 (1936): 538–39.

²⁰ Dom Pedro II, "Ley sobre as Arqueações dos Navios que Carregarem Escravos, 28 de Março de 1684," *Arquivos de Angola*, 1, 2, no. 11–12 (1936): 315.

²¹ da Silva Corrêa, *História de Angola*, vol. 2, 29–44; "Catálogo dos Governadores do Reino de Angola," 526–31; Ana Madalena Trigo de Sousa, "Uma Tentativa de Fomento

Lisbon, and were relatively successful in maintaining Sousa Coutinho's initiatives. Miguel António de Melo, for example, governor between 1797 and 1802, founded another iron factory at Trombeta in the present-day province of Cuanza Norte.²² Despite these efforts, merchants based in Bahia, Pernambuco, and Rio de Janeiro still exercised major control over the trade from West Central Africa, as the demand for labor in those regions increased over time.

MERCHANTS

Brazilian merchants organized shipments from West Central Africa through individual enterprises or in partnership with others. The "Voyages" database provides an indication of the frequency with which they engaged in the trade by listing the names of individuals and partnerships that sponsored slaving voyages across the Atlantic. The data are particularly rich for the period from the late eighteenth century until 1830, when the trade to Brazil became illegal. The database names those who financed slaving ventures for 43 percent of all voyages to Bahia between 1781 and 1830; 64 percent of those to Pernambuco; and 52 percent to Southeast Brazil. In the Bahia sample, there are 130 individuals who sponsored slaving voyages in this period, 21 of whom were ship captains. In addition to these individuals, the Bahia sample contains references to 24 partnerships listed under the names of individual dealers.²³ The Pernambuco sample identifies 23 partnerships plus 105 merchants, 20 of these were also captains. Finally, the sample for Southeast Brazil includes 196 merchants, 35 of whom were captains, in addition to 18 partnerships, as well as identifying individual entrepreneurs.

The trade between West Central Africa and Brazil generated some degree of concentration of ownership but probably not enough to suggest significant restrictions on competition. Table 2.2 shows that the traffic was largely centered in the hands of a few individuals and partnerships. In Bahia, three merchants financed ten or more voyages to West Central

Industrial na Angola Setecentista: A 'Fábrica do Ferro' de Nova Oeiras (1766–1772)." *Africana Studia* 10 (2007): 293–305.

²² Miguel António de Melo to Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho, 18 March 1800, in *Arquivos de Angola* ser. 1, vol. 4, nos. 52–54 (1939): 295–300; Miguel António de Melo to Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho, 5 April 1800, in *Arquivos de Angola* ser. 1, vol. 4, nos. 52–54 (1939): 307–08.

²³ These records appear in the database with a star (*) next to the name of the partnership representative.

TABLE 2.2 *Concentration of ownership of vessels embarking slaves at West Central Africa, 1781–1867*

Regions	Range of voyages	Number of merchants	Percentage of merchants	Number of voyages	Percentage of voyages
Bahia	1 to 3	138	89.6	187	60.9
	4 to 6	8	5.2	41	13.4
	7 to 9	5	3.2	35	11.4
	10 +	3	1.9	44	14.3
	Total	154	100	307	100
Pernambuco	1 to 3	109	85.2	146	42.2
	4 to 6	6	4.7	30	8.7
	7 to 9	7	5.5	58	16.8
	10 +	6	4.7	112	32.4
	Total	128	100	346	100
SE Brazil	1 to 3	161	75.2	218	24.1
	4 to 6	21	9.8	101	11.2
	7 to 9	9	4.2	65	7.2
	10 +	23	10.7	520	57.5
	Total	214	100	904	100

Source: Same as Table 2.1.

Africa. They comprised about 2 percent of all traders, but their names appear associated with 44 voyages, or about 14 percent of all voyages leaving West Central Africa. In Pernambuco, 6 merchants, representing about 5 percent of all dealers, appear associated with 112 voyages, or approximately 32 percent of all voyages. Finally, in Southeast Brazil the slave trade from West Central Africa was also considerably concentrated, with 23 merchants and companies financing 10 or more voyages. They constituted about 11 percent of all traders, and their names were associated with 520 voyages, or about 57 percent of all those involved in the West Central Africa-Southeast Brazil branch of the traffic.

Small investors, defined here as financing on average one to three voyages, formed the majority of such individuals and played an important role in the South Atlantic slave trade. Although we view it as immoral today, public acceptance of slavery and the slave trade at that time was such that anyone who had some capital available could invest in the business without any loss of moral standing. In Bahia, small investors numbered 138 individuals, or about 89 percent of all merchants, and their names appear associated with 187 voyages, or approximately 61 percent

of all voyages. In Pernambuco, 109 individuals invested in one to three voyages, close to 85 percent of all merchants, but they financed 146 voyages, or about 42 percent of the total. In Southeast Brazil, the participation of small investors was less important than in Bahia and Pernambuco, but here there were nevertheless 161 of them, approximately 75 percent of all dealers, associated with a mere 218 or 24 percent of all voyages.

In the period of the legal trade, before 1831, the activities of the larger merchants are easier to trace than those of small investors. Slave traders who participated frequently in the traffic were usually members of the social, political, and economic elite of Brazil. Detailed records of their lives survive in the archives, which historians have used to reconstruct some individual careers. These big traders generally had prestigious titles granted by institutions like the *Ordem de Cristo* or Order of Christ.²⁴ They also had a seat at the administration of related institutions like the *Santa Casa da Misericórdia*, an important source of credit in many cities in Portugal and Brazil.²⁵ These individuals included men such as Elias Coelho Sintra in Pernambuco, Pedro Rodrigues Bandeira in Bahia, and the well-known Elias Antônio Lopes in Rio de Janeiro, who donated the palace at the Quinta da Boa Vista, where the Portuguese royal family resided between 1808 and 1821.²⁶ The activities of the many small investors are more difficult to unearth, because they left few records of their lives. Although the names of hundreds of them survive, historians have not been able to collect sufficient information to establish profiles of these individuals. Nevertheless, their numbers clearly show that they viewed the activity as an opportunity to increase their wealth.

After 1830, the activities of traders in general are more difficult to trace because the traffic to Brazil was illegal. Individuals continued to finance slaving voyages by forming partnerships for specific voyages. However, the

²⁴ Manolo Florentino, *Em Costas Negras: Uma História do Tráfico Atlântico de Escravos entre a África e o Rio de Janeiro, Séculos XVIII e XIX* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997), 204–08; Alexandre Vieira Ribeiro, “O Comércio de Escravos e a Elite Baiana no Período Colonial.” In *Conquistadores e Negociantes: Histórias de Elites no Antigo Regime nos Trópicos. América Lusa, Séculos XVI a XVIII*, ed. João Luís Ribeiro Fragoso, Carla Maria de Carvalho de Almeida, and Antônio Carlos Jucá de Sampaio (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2007), 332–34.

²⁵ Flory, “Bahian Society in the Mid-Colonial Period,” 262; Ribeiro, “O Comércio de Escravos,” 333–34.

²⁶ Marcus J. M. de Carvalho, *Liberdade: Rotinas e Rupturas do Escravismo no Recife, 1822–1850* (Recife: Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, 2002), 118; Florentino, *Em Costas Negras*, 207; Ribeiro, “O Comércio de Escravos,” 330–31.

prominence achieved by some merchants suggests that during these years the trade was becoming increasingly concentrated in the hands of those who had developed the necessary contacts required to bypass the authorities and introduce slaves to Brazil. Such merchants included Joaquim Pereira Marinho in Bahia, Gabriel José Antônio in Pernambuco, and Manoel Pinto da Fonseca in Rio de Janeiro, who promoted their major trading status in order to remind the Brazilian slave-owning class of their services.²⁷ Public acceptance of slavery and the associated trade was such that traders had no need to conceal their activities. Dependency on the trade gave merchants access to important centers of decision-making in national politics.²⁸ Additionally, it allowed them to mix with the Brazilian aristocracy, largely consisting of planters and slave owners.²⁹ Major traders had considerable standing in Brazilian society.

Although these merchants organized the logistics of the trade and took much of the credit for the successful disembarkation of slaves, they were not acting alone. They relied on an extensive commercial network that linked not only Brazil, Portugal, and West Central Africa, but also involved the United States and Great Britain. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, much of the merchandise used to purchase slaves was produced in Portugal and Brazil. Some of it included textiles imported from the Portuguese colonies in Asia. Merchants in Brazilian ports then assembled these commodities into appropriately mixed cargoes and exchanged them for slaves in West Central Africa. After the opening of the Brazilian ports to international trade in 1808, Brazilian traders increasingly used British goods, particularly textiles, to buy slaves because African consumers considered British textiles superior to those of the Portuguese.³⁰ Additionally, the Industrial Revolution in Britain reduced the production costs of manufactured goods, which was reflected in their price in the international market.³¹ In 1810, reduced customs duties levied on British commodities imported into Brazil further increased their attractiveness in relation to locally produced goods and other imports.³² Slave merchants based in Brazil began to rely on British traders for trade goods intended for Africa.

²⁷ Carvalho, *Liberdade*, 118; Mary C. Karasch, “The Brazilian Slavers and the Illegal Slave Trade, 1836–1851” (M.A., University of Wisconsin, 1967), 12–15; Cristina Ferreira Lyrio Ximenes, “Joaquim Pereira Marinho: Perfil de um Contrabandista de Escravos na Bahia, 1828–1887” (M.A., Universidade Federal da Bahia, 1999), 1–21.

²⁸ Karasch, “The Brazilian Slavers,” 14–15. ²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Miller, *Way of Death*, 349; Karasch, “The Brazilian Slavers,” 27–35.

³¹ Eltis, *Economic Growth*, 47. ³² Fausto, *História do Brasil*, 122–24.

After 1830, the organization of the trade from West Central Africa became increasingly internationalized. Roquinaldo Ferreira notes that as the British increased their efforts to abolish the slave trade, merchants expanded their trading networks to places outside Brazil, especially to Cuba and the United States.³³ From there, they organized slaving expeditions free from interference by the Brazilian authorities as well as the British navy. These merchants contracted with Portuguese and Spanish traders located in these countries to obtain vessels, goods, false documents, as well as the American flag to use on at least the outbound portion of their slaving expeditions.³⁴ American registration papers, in particular, served as an important factor in the illegal trade because, in contrast to the Brazilian government, the United States did not grant the British the right to search their vessels until 1862.³⁵

Merchants based in Brazil were not the only businessmen using international networks to organize slaving expeditions. Planters in the southern United States willing to re-open the transatlantic trade also tapped these networks to organize clandestine voyages. Charles Lamar from Georgia provides perhaps the most striking example. In 1858, Lamar made a deal with Captain William Corrie. They purchased a racing yacht built in Long Island, fitted it with the help of Portuguese traffickers based in New York, and sent it to West Central Africa.³⁶ The *Wanderer* embarked 350 slaves at Ambriz and 47 days later it arrived at Jekyll Island, Georgia.³⁷ The slaves brought in the yacht were quickly sold to planters in Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida.³⁸ Eventually, the American authorities discovered Lamar's intrigue and arrested him and his associates in Georgia. They were charged with piracy and slave trading, but were not convicted. Lamar's slaving expedition was one of the last successful disembarkations of slaves from Africa in the United States, but it illustrates that after 1830 the organization of the West Central African trade extended far beyond Brazil.

³³ Ferreira, "Dos Sertões ao Atlântico," 100–03.

³⁴ Eltis, "The British Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade after 1807," 9; Eltis, *Economic Growth*, 134 and 157; Karasch, "The Brazilian Slavers," 27–35; Miller, *Way of Death*, 505–09.

³⁵ Ferreira, "Dos Sertões ao Atlântico," 176.

³⁶ Erik Calonius, *The Wanderer: The Last American Slave Ship and the Conspiracy That Set Its Sails* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006), 45–52 and 66–82.

³⁷ Eltis et al., "Voyages," voyage id 4974. See also Emory University, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Book Library, MSS 172, *Wanderer* (Ship) Records, Logbook of the yacht "Wanderer."

³⁸ Calonius, *The Wanderer*, 125–33; Tom Henderson Wells, *The Slave Ship Wanderer* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1967), 24–29.

The Portuguese connection to the trade between Cuba and West Central Africa was more important than that to the United States. William Gervase Clarence-Smith has long called attention to the participation of Portuguese merchants in this business. He shows Cuban slave traders often relied on the commercial expertise of Portuguese merchants in order to obtain false documents, colors, and provisions to carry slaves from West Central Africa as well as other regions controlled by the Portuguese. He further notes that Cuban dependence on Portuguese trading networks stemmed not only from a need for commercial expertise but also from a “lack of internationally recognized and occupied colonial possessions in Sub-Saharan Africa.”³⁹ More recently, Roquinaldo Ferreira has pointed out that Portuguese merchants based in Angola played a key role in the supply of slaves to Cuba during the illegal period of the traffic. Merchants such as António Severino de Avellar and Guilherme José da Silva Correia, also known as Guilherme do Zaire, lived in Luanda but usually assisted Cuban vessels to load slaves at ports located north of Luanda, especially at Ambriz and at the mouth of the Congo River.⁴⁰ The Cuban trade from West Central Africa increased significantly in this period, from an annual average of 1,400 captives embarked in the 1840s to 10,200 in the 1850s.⁴¹ The demand for labor on the Cuban sugar plantations was the principal factor behind this increase, but the Portuguese commercial networks facilitated the process.

BROKERS

The trade from West Central Africa depended on merchants established on the region’s coast. Some of them were Africans who acted as brokers or middlemen responsible for purchasing slaves in the interior and selling them to transatlantic traders. At embarkation ports such as Cabinda, Molembo, and Loango, rulers regulated the supply of slaves by nominating a representative to collect taxes before granting traders the right to trade. These individuals could not enforce a monopoly, and they seldom left their capitals unattended to interfere in commercial affairs on the coast. In return for captives, rulers wanted a mix of foreign commodities, such as firearms, gunpowder, textiles, and alcohol. They distributed these

³⁹ William Gervase Clarence-Smith, “The Portuguese Contribution to the Cuban Slave and Coolie Trades in the Nineteenth Century.” *Slavery and Abolition* 5, no. 1 (1984): 26–27.

⁴⁰ Ferreira, “Dos Sertões ao Atlântico,” 100–06.

⁴¹ Calculated from Domingues da Silva, “The Atlantic Slave Trade from Angola,” 121–22.

goods to loyal followers to consolidate their own power, but also advanced them on credit to traders supplying slaves from the interior to the coast.⁴² In this way, they maintained a nexus of commercial power on the coast, as a counter to the interior, where the centers of political life were generally located.

The agents of African rulers on the coast held titles directly connected to their functions. In Loango, they were known as *mafuko* or *mafouk* and in Cabinda and Molembo as *mambuco* or *mambouk*, meaning customs officer responsible specifically for Atlantic commerce. These agents were usually the first people traders met when they arrived at these northern ports. They collected taxes from traders either at their vessels or in tents on the shore. The negotiations were usually lengthy, and involved displays of power, with no little amount of rum consumed on both sides, generally underwritten by traders from Europe and the Americas. Once an agreement was reached with the tax collectors, however, the former set up shop on the shore and began to negotiate with anyone interested in selling slaves.⁴³ Such negotiations could take a long time, but they usually involved lower transaction costs for traders than their initial encounters with royal officials. The price paid for slaves was negotiated with each seller separately.⁴⁴

The trade at ports dominated by decentralized states was similar to that at ports controlled by centralized states, except in two respects. At the former, rituals and processions commonly preceded commercial exchanges. Additionally, the transatlantic merchants usually bartered one-on-one with the community leaders, rather than their representatives. In 1782, for example, Manoel da Silva Ribeiro Fernandes sailed to the ports north of Luanda and described his encounter with a prince of Nsoyo, a former province of the old Kingdom of Kongo, which by that time was no longer the imperial structure of previous centuries. His description provides a vivid account of how decentralized societies conducted the slave trade.

The prince came with about three hundred men carrying drums, flutes, and lugubrious instruments as well as firearms; most of them were no longer working and neither had gunpowder of quality. Others were carrying wooden clubs, knives, cassava roots, and corn stalks. They were all wearing dresses made of straws. The prince looked like a woman, wearing the same dress as the princess

⁴² Miller, *Way of Death*, 40–70 and 94–103.

⁴³ Martin, *The External Trade*, 97–99; Miller, *Way of Death*, 184–85.

⁴⁴ Martin, *The External Trade*, 100–03; Miller, *Way of Death*, 175–80.

when I met her, and the headdress of a grenadier, in addition to a large sword on his side, and a Crucifix of the Lord in his hands. He then entered the Church between six blacks holding knives, marched through the sacristy, passed around a gate in front of the altar, knelt before the principal chapel [...] shouted and all the people in front of the Church's door entered, knelt, and began to sing a song. After they finished, the prince left the sacristy, marched around the Church, re-entered the sacristy, and then left the building through its main door towards a square, where he ordered two chairs to be placed, distant a fathom from each other, one for him and another for me. He then sat and summoned me. I sat and dealt directly with him.⁴⁵

From the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, a number of families with historic connections to the trade dominated the supply of slaves at the principal embarkation points north of Luanda. Phyllis Martin notes that this was the case at Cabinda, in the Kingdom of Ngoyo. Some of these families had famous ancestors or connections to the royal court at Mbanza Ngoyo. Others, such as the Franque family at Cabinda, gained prominence because of wealth garnered during the trade.⁴⁶ The family's founder, Kokelo, was a servant of a French trader who had died at Cabinda and left his possessions to his African employee. Kokelo continued to participate in the trade, rising from a minor figure in the community to a successful broker and merchant.⁴⁷ His descendants followed him into the business and expanded the family's influence. Perhaps, the most important example was Francisco Franque, who at the age of eight was sent to be educated in Brazil. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, he returned to Cabinda and assumed the family's business just as Dutch, French, and British traders withdrew from the port. Francisco Franque, of course, remained in business on the basis of his connection with Bahia and Rio de Janeiro, and the Franque family became one of the principal slave suppliers on the whole West Central African coast.⁴⁸

The supply of captives at the Portuguese ports of embarkation was different. At Luanda, Benguela, and Novo Redondo, individuals from many different backgrounds predominated. Some of them were Portuguese expatriates while others were Luso-African Creoles, that is, descendants of unions of Portuguese expatriates and Africans. Traders originally from Brazil also operated at these ports, working as

⁴⁵ "Relação de uma viagem à costa ao norte de Luanda por Manoel da Silva Ribeiro Fernandes ao Senhor Ajudante de Ordens Pedro José Corrêa Quevedo," 15 August 1782, AHU, CU, Angola, cx. 65 doc. 64.

⁴⁶ Phyllis M. Martin, "Family Strategies in Nineteenth Century Cabinda." *Journal of African History* 28, no. 1 (1987): 71.

⁴⁷ Ibid. ⁴⁸ Ibid., 73.

representatives of trading houses at Bahia, Pernambuco, and Rio de Janeiro. Finally, some were Africans who spoke Portuguese and adopted European fashion and customs. Perhaps the most notable example was Dona Ana Joaquina dos Santos e Silva, a woman who emerged in the nineteenth century as one of the wealthiest merchants in Luanda.⁴⁹ Some sources claim her father was a Portuguese trader and her mother a mixed race woman from Luanda, but others suggest that she was born an African slave.⁵⁰ Either way, these individuals collectively made up a tiny percentage of the resident population in the Portuguese ports. Census records from Benguela, for example, show that merchants comprised less than 2 percent of the total population living in the port between 1796 and 1815.⁵¹ However, since the trade was the principal economic activity in Benguela, they were also the wealthiest residents.

The central administration in Lisbon regulated the trade from Portuguese Angola. It established customs houses at the principal ports called *feitorias* or *alfândegas*, where colonial officials supervised both the disembarkation of merchandise brought from abroad and the embarkation of slaves to the Americas. These bureaucrats were also responsible for collecting taxes levied on slave departures.⁵² The 1758 tax law, as we have seen, allowed vessels carrying *efeitos próprios* to load slaves and depart as soon as they were ready, instead of leaving according to the order of arrival. The new regulation also specified age-specific taxes. Adult slaves, males or females, were taxed 8,700 réis, small children 4,350 réis, and

⁴⁹ Carlos Alberto Lopes Cardoso, “Dona Ana Joaquina dos Santos Silva: Industrial Angolana da Segunda Metade do Século XIX.” *Boletim Cultural da Câmara Municipal de Luanda* 37 (1972): 5; Júlio de Castro Lopo, “Uma Rica Dona de Luanda.” *Portucalé*, 2, 3, no. 16–17 (1948): 126–27.

⁵⁰ Douglas L. Wheeler, “Angolan Woman of Means: D. Ana Joaquina Dos Santos E Silva, Mid-Nineteenth Century Luso-African Merchant-Capitalist of Luanda.” *Santa Barbara Portuguese Studies Review* 3 (1996): 284–85.

⁵¹ “Mapa das Pessoas Livres e Escravos . . .” 15 June 1796, AHU, CU, Angola, box 83 doc. 66; “Mapa das Pessoas Livres e Escravos . . .” 1797, AHU, CU, Angola, box 85 doc. 28; “Ocupação dos Habitantes da Paróquia de São Felipe de Benguela,” 1809, AHU, CU, Angola, box 121 doc. 32; “Ocupação dos Habitantes da Paróquia de São Felipe de Benguela,” 1810, AHU, CU, Angola box 121A doc. 36; “Ocupação dos Habitantes da Paróquia de São Felipe de Benguela,” 1815, AHU, CU, Angola, box 131 doc. 45. Mariana Cândido believes that the merchant community of Benguela comprised between 3 and 17 percent of the total population of this port, but her calculations clearly included traders operating between Benguela and the interior. See Cândido, “Merchants,” 9.

⁵² António Miguel de Mello, “Regimento da Alfandega da Cidade de São Paulo d’Assumpçāo Capital do Reino de Angola, 21 de Outubro de 1799.” *Arquivos de Angola*, 1, 2, no. 11–12 (1936): 410–14.

nursing infants were tax free, if embarked with their mothers.⁵³ This system of tax collection remained in effect until 1836, when the Portuguese prohibited all transatlantic trading from their African possessions. With the traffic banned, traders increasingly moved their activities to African-controlled or clandestine ports north and south of Luanda.

Portuguese export duties were collected from merchants rather than captains of slave vessels. The trade from West Central Africa was an expensive and risky business, with profits ranging from as little as 3 to 90 percent of the original investment.⁵⁴ Capital always seems to have been scarce, and the purchase of slaves in the interior was made possible only via merchandise advanced on credit, ultimately extended from overseas. The factor driving this arrangement was the fact that African traders in the interior demanded payment at the moment of the exchange. As a consequence, merchants in Portuguese Angola became indebted to their counterparts in Portugal and Brazil.⁵⁵ Yet they bore most of the risks until slaves were sold in the Americas. Above all, these merchants had more to lose from deaths of captives in transit than their counterparts in Portugal or Brazil, on whose ships they dispatched their captives.

High risks meant only a few individuals would become major slave merchants. A successful career in Portuguese Angola required several years of experience in trading slaves. The service records of Anselmo da Fonseca Coutinho provide insight into just how much experience a slave merchant had to have before he or she became a major supplier. In 1806, the Governor and Captain General of Angola, Fernando António de Noronha, submitted these records to the Portuguese Regent Prince, showing Coutinho's contribution to the colony's royal revenue. They included two lists of his trading activities spanning a period of almost 40 years, from 1768 until 1806, and comprise the most extensive record available of slaves shipped by a single merchant based in Luanda.⁵⁶ More important,

⁵³ Dom José I, "Ley sobre a Arecadação," 537–38.

⁵⁴ Eltis, *Economic Growth*, 152–62; Florentino, *Em Costas Negras*, 154–70.

⁵⁵ Miller, *Way of Death*, 298–300; José Carlos Venâncio, *A Economia de Luanda e Hinterland no Século XVIII: Um Estudo de Sociologia Histórica* (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1996), 175–78.

⁵⁶ "Certidão de António José Manzoni de Castro," 31 May 1796, enclosed in the "Petição de Anselmo da Fonseca Coutinho," s.d., AHU, CU, Angola, box 115 doc. 45 and "Certidão de António Martiniano José da Silva e Sousa," 10 March 1806, enclosed in the "Petição de Anselmo da Fonseca Coutinho," s.d., AHU, CU, Angola, box 115 doc. 45. A detailed analysis of these records is available in Daniel B. Domingues da Silva, "The Supply of Slaves from Luanda, 1768–1806: Records of Anselmo Da Fonseca Coutinho." *African Economic History* 38 (2010): 53–76.

they provide a rare opportunity to trace the career of a successful merchant.

Anselmo da Fonseca Coutinho, son of António da Fonseca Coutinho, Knight of the Order of Christ, was born in Luanda.⁵⁷ Little is known about Coutinho's early years at this point, but as an adult he was clearly ambitious and climbed to the top of Luanda's social ladder by accumulating titles and high military rank. In 1784, the Portuguese Queen Dona Maria confirmed Coutinho as Colonel of the Auxiliary Troops of Massangano, in the interior of Angola.⁵⁸ Two years later, the queen made him knight of her own house and granted him a symbolic stipend of 600 *réis* per month.⁵⁹ Coutinho was then promoted to Colonel of the Militia of Luanda. In 1799, he followed in his father's footsteps and became Knight of the Order of Christ, the most distinguished title in the Portuguese Empire.⁶⁰ He was able to apply for this title thanks to his older sister, Dona Ana Maria, heiress to her father's estate. She had transferred the remuneration and recognition of all services performed by their father for the Crown to her brother, who had supported her throughout her life.⁶¹ Finally, sometime between 1807 and 1810, Governor and Captain General of Angola António Saldanha da Gama promoted Coutinho to commander of the Militia of Luanda.⁶²

Clearly the governors of Angola had a favorable opinion of him. The Baron of Moçâmedes (1784–1790), for instance, referred to him as “the most trustworthy merchant in Luanda.”⁶³ Manoel de Almeida e Vasconcelos (1790–1797) called Coutinho “one of the most condign vassals of His Majesty,” and Fernando António de Noronha (1802–1806) said that Coutinho was a “credit worthy and useful inhabitant of Angola.”⁶⁴ All these comments resulted from Coutinho’s commercial power and political influence. In fact, between 1768 and 1806 Coutinho

⁵⁷ “Atestação de Manoel de Almeida e Vasconcelos,” 7 February 1793, AHU, CU, Angola, box 115 doc. 45. “Instrumento em Pública Forma Sobrescrito por Felipe Benício e Rosa Mascarenhas,” 8 June 1795, AHU, CU, Angola, box 115 doc. 45.

⁵⁸ ANTT, Registo Geral de Mercês, Dona Maria I, Book 16, f. 126. ⁵⁹ Idem.

⁶⁰ ANTT, Registo Geral de Mercês, Dona Maria I, Book 29, ff. 224v and 243.

⁶¹ “Instrumento em Pública Forma Sobrescrito por Felipe Benício e Rosa Mascarenhas,” 8 June 1795, AHU, CU, Angola, box 115 doc. 45.

⁶² João de Oliveira Barbosa to Conde das Galvãas, 2 December 1810, AHU, CU, Angola, box 121A doc. 31.

⁶³ “Atestação do Barão de Moçâmedes,” 6 October 1790, AHU, CU, Angola, box 115 doc. 45.

⁶⁴ “Atestação de Manuel de Almeida Vasconcelos,” 2 January 1796, AHU, CU, Angola, box 115 doc. 45. “Atestação de Fernando António de Noronha,” 27 February 1806, AHU, CU, Angola, box 115 doc. 45.

alone embarked about 5 percent of all slaves shipped from Luanda. As the slave trade was the principal economic activity of this port, this ratio impressed the highest authorities in Angola.⁶⁵

Coutinho's records suggest that the career of a successful merchant took many years to build capital and access internal sources of slaves. Table 2.3 shows the number of slaves shipped by him over a period of approximately 40 years, drawn from the two previously cited lists copied from the customs books of Luanda. It indicates that he took almost half of this 40-year period to become a major merchant, shipping slaves only occasionally during the first 12 years of activity. He became a first class merchant only after 1785, when he was able to load a couple of vessels per year with captives, assuming 350 as the average carrying capacity of each vessel. The first list of shipments has no dates of embarkation, but both followed the books' chronological order, allowing distribution of Coutinho's shipments according to the opening and closing dates of each. Although the first book is dated 9 May 1767, the first list begins in the following year, presumably when he shipped his first slaves, and ends 31 May 1796. The second list continues from this date until 10 March 1806.

Coutinho's records also shed light on the commercial strategies that Luandan merchants employed. As with all slave traders, their profits were vulnerable to shipboard mortality, so they devised ways to reduce this risk. One means was to assign their slaves to several vessels. Luanda was a busy slaving port with a large number of vessels arriving and leaving annually. The frequency of vessels calling at the port allowed merchants to allocate small shipments of slaves in several different vessels. Stanley Engerman and others have noted that mortality at sea was unevenly distributed. Most vessels had very low mortality, but a few had high numbers of deaths.⁶⁶ Coutinho's strategy reduced the risk of losing an entire cargo at sea in the event a venture was captured, destroyed, sunk, or subject to an epidemic. It also allowed Luandan merchants to dispose quickly of a highly vulnerable commodity. Slaves often arrived from the journey to the coast exhausted, undernourished, and, as a consequence, susceptible to disease. Their condition tended to deteriorate further while on the coast, as merchants often had too many slaves on their properties. Crowded barracoons increased the risks of malnourishment and

⁶⁵ Domingues da Silva, "The Supply of Slaves from Luanda," 55.

⁶⁶ Stanley L. Engerman et al., "Transoceanic Mortality: The Slave Trade in Comparative Perspective." *William and Mary Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2001): 100–02.

TABLE 2.3 *Number of slaves shipped by Anselmo da Fonseca Coutinho, 1768–1806*

Lists	Periods	Number of years	Number of slaves	Number of slaves per year
1	1 January 1768 to 11 January 1780	12.0	478	40
	12 January 1780 to 4 February 1785	5.1	733	145
	5 February 1785 to 31 May 1796	11.3	7,933	701
2	31 May 1796 to 16 October 1798	2.4	1,865	787
	17 October 1798 to 10 March 1806	7.4	5,833	789
Total		38.2	16,842	441

Source: Reproduced with permission from Daniel B. Domingues da Silva, “The Supply of Slaves from Luanda, 1768–1806: Records of Anselmo da Fonseca Coutinho.” *African Economic History* 38 (2010): 60.

contagious diseases. This reality put a premium on selling slaves as soon as possible. Table 2.4 shows the size of Coutinho’s shipments between 1768 and 1806. It indicates that this major merchant typically shipped his slaves in small numbers per vessel. In fact, he rarely shipped a full cargo of slaves at any one time. The majority of his shipments consisted of no more than 50 slaves per vessel, but in fact almost half of all his shipments, 48 percent, ranged between one and ten slaves only. No doubt other merchants followed a similar strategy.

Partnering with other merchants, not only in Europe and the Americas but also in Africa, also reduced risk. Such business arrangements meant that individuals invested less capital in a voyage than they would if they undertook the entire enterprise alone. Table 2.5 shows the structure of ownership of the slaves Coutinho dispatched between 1768 and 1806. It indicates that almost 60 percent of his shipments were made in partnership with others. He sent approximately 30 percent of the slaves on his own account in addition to 10 percent on behalf of others. However, the table also indicates that partnerships became possible only after a merchant had gained experience and developed a sound reputation. At the beginning of his career, from 1768 through 1785, Coutinho owned outright the majority of the slaves he embarked. This long period

TABLE 2.4 *Size of Coutinho's slave shipments, 1768–1806*

Size of shipments	Number of vessels
1–50	207
51–100	10
101–150	2
151–200	7
201–250	5
251–300	4
301–350	3
351 over	17
Total	255

Source: Reproduced with permission from Domingues da Silva, "The Supply of Slaves from Luanda," 63.

TABLE 2.5 *Structure of ownership in Coutinho's shipment of slaves (in row percentages), 1768–1806*

List	Approximate years of shipment	On Coutinho's account	In partnership	On behalf of others
1	1768–1780	90.4	9.6	-
	1780–1785	78.2	21.8	-
	1785–1796	33.8	66.2	-
2	1796–1798	16.5	43.1	40.4
	1798–1806	24.0	61.3	14.8
Total		32.2	58.4	9.4

Source: Reproduced with permission from Domingues da Silva, "The Supply of Slaves from Luanda," 64.

of apprenticeship eventually provided him with sufficient experience and resources to attract other merchants as partners. As his career evolved successfully, his joint ventures widened to include shipments made on behalf of others. Since slaves were at risk of dying before they reached markets in the Americas, well-established merchants in Luanda were willing at times to offer their services as agents for others in the business.

Luandan and Benguelan merchants understood that owning the vessels that shipped their goods reduced their exposure to risk. To increase their control over the itineraries of voyages and the conditions under which slaves were carried, they often tried to break into the shipping business after accumulating sufficient resources. Coutinho's records show that he

owned three vessels, which he used both to ship slaves and to rent out to the government: the corvette *Rainha dos Anjos*, the brigantine *Flor do Mar*, and the smack *Santo António e Almas*.⁶⁷ Coutinho used the first two in the slave trade, although in 1799 he loaned the second for a military expedition to Benguela organized by Governor and Captain General of Angola Miguel António de Melo. Coutinho frequently reserved the smack *Santo António e Almas* for state activities, but at some point in the government of Miguel António de Melo (1797–1802) French privateers captured the corvette *Rainha dos Anjos* while it was delivering slaves to Rio de Janeiro. Coutinho responded by asking the governor to release his smack from the royal service so he could use it in the trade.

Luandan merchants like Coutinho were, of course, responsible for the well-being of their slaves until the moment of embarkation. During the period of the legal trade, they kept them in *quintais*, that is, in enclosures on their properties at the major ports, where the supply of water and food was frequently a major concern.⁶⁸ Luanda had only one well, in addition to the city cisterns at the fort of São Miguel and the Public Granary of Luanda. It was located at some distance from the coast, in the neighborhood of Maianga. Moreover, it was not very reliable because of brackish water and the pressure of high demand.⁶⁹ During periods of water shortage, colonial officials entertained the idea of building a canal that would connect Luanda to the Kwanza River, but this never materialized.⁷⁰ As a consequence, merchants had to import potable water from the Bengo River, about 20 kilometers north of Luanda. African traders dominated this thriving trade in water from the Bengo. They loaded barrels with the precious liquid, transported them along the coast in canoes, and distributed them to Luandan residents. Unfortunately, slave merchants sometimes stored these barrels in poor conditions, so the water became contaminated.⁷¹ Slaves contracted diarrhea and dysentery, two of the principal causes of death in the trade. Eltis, Lewis, and McIntyre

⁶⁷ “Carta de Ofício de Miguel António de Melo,” 9 May 1799, AHU, CU, Angola, box 115 doc. 45. “Petição de Anselmo da Fonseca Coutinho a Miguel António de Melo,” s.d., AHU, CU, Angola, box 115 doc. 45. The Voyages Database provides information on only two records of slaving voyages with Coutinho’s name as owner; one for an unnamed ship, which set sail in 1799, and the other for the *Bergantim Flor do Mar*, which sailed between 1810 and 1811. Eltis et al., “Voyages,” voyage id 46,313 and 49,898.

⁶⁸ Ferreira, “Dos Sertões ao Atlântico,” 66–70; Miller, *Way of Death*, 390.

⁶⁹ Miller, *Way of Death*, 395–96; Venâncio, *A Economia de Luanda*, 60–61.

⁷⁰ See, for example, José de Oliveira Barbosa to Conde das Galvães, 31 July 1813, AHU, CU, Angola, box 125 doc. 46.

⁷¹ Miller, *Way of Death*, 396–97; Venâncio, *A Economia de Luanda*, 61.

calculated trader losses from mortality and morbidity in the British commerce and discovered that they “contributed to more than 40 percent of the price difference between slaves in Africa and healthy slaves in the Caribbean.”⁷²

Food was another major concern. Until the mid-eighteenth century, most slave provisions were produced on Jesuit farms near Luanda or brought from Brazil.⁷³ However, with the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Portuguese Empire in 1759, Africans and Luso-Africans became increasingly responsible for food supplies.⁷⁴ In Luanda, for example, African and Luso-African food producers sold their grains at the Public Granary of Luanda, founded in 1764 by Governor Sousa Coutinho.⁷⁵ The term “grains” is used loosely here, given that they included cassava, maize, and beans, but they were produced mostly in *arimos* or farms near Luanda, located along the Bengo, Icolo, Zenza, and Dande rivers.⁷⁶ In 1844, Commander Lopes de Lima noted that this region “could well be called the granary of Luanda.”⁷⁷ Although Luanda was situated near rich sources of grains, that did not save the city from periodic shortages. As Jill Dias and Joseph Miller have observed, Angola suffered prolonged periods of drought and famine.⁷⁸ In 1792, one of these famines was so severe that the governor was compelled to allow food producers in Luanda to sell cassava flour at the Public Granary according to the market price as opposed to the price established by the government.⁷⁹ In 1841, another period of severe drought struck the city, followed by an invasion of locusts originating north of Luanda. George Tams, a German physician who had

⁷² David Eltis, Frank D. Lewis, and Kimberly McIntyre, “Accounting for the Traffic in Africans: Transport Costs on Slaving Voyages.” *Journal of Economic History* 70, no. 4 (2010): 950.

⁷³ Arlindo Manuel Caldeira, “Angola and the Seventeenth-Century South Atlantic Slave Trade.” In *Networks and Trans-Cultural Exchange: Slave Trading in the South Atlantic, 1590–1867*, ed. David Richardson and Filipa Ribeiro da Silva (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 136–37; Venâncio, *A Economia de Luanda*, 83–88.

⁷⁴ Miller, *Way of Death*, 270–71, 297–98, and 351–55.

⁷⁵ “Catálogo dos Governadores do Reino de Angola,” 527; Miller, *Way of Death*, 352; da Silva Corrêa, *História de Angola*, vol. 2, 31; Venâncio, *A Economia de Luanda*, 65.

⁷⁶ Aida Freudenthal, *Arimos e Fazendas: A Transição Agrária em Angola, 1850–1880* (Luanda: Chá de Caxinde, 2005), 149–65.

⁷⁷ Lopes de Lima, *Ensaios*, vol. 3, 194.

⁷⁸ Jill R. Dias, “Famine and Disease in the History of Angola, c.1830–1930.” *Journal of African History* 22, no. 3 (1981): 350–59; Joseph C. Miller, “The Significance of Drought, Disease and Famine in the Agriculturally Marginal Zones of West-Central Africa.” *Journal of African History* 23, no. 1 (1982): 20–22.

⁷⁹ Manoel de Almeida e Vasconcelos, 5 October 1792, AHU, CU, Angola, cod. 1634, 11.

traveled to Portuguese Angola in that year, witnessed this event and noted that it “was the second swarm that had threatened Luanda within six years; the preceding one took the same direction, and evidently sought the more luxuriant regions to the south.”⁸⁰ Severe periods of famine usually followed such invasions, exacting a huge toll on slaves awaiting passage to the Americas.

Problems with supplies could trigger contagious diseases, especially smallpox, often associated with the large number of men, women, and children held in the slave yards. In 1782, the Portuguese government addressed this issue by creating quarantine stations at the principal ports of disembarkation in the Americas.⁸¹ At the point of boarding, however, this problem remained largely unaddressed. In 1804, Governor Noronha considered inoculating slaves to prevent the spread of smallpox in Luanda and reduce slave mortality at sea. Inoculation had been introduced in the West in 1721, but Governor Noronha’s idea came from a recommendation made by the Secretary of the Overseas Council in Lisbon as well as the Portuguese Regent Prince based on an experiment conducted on a French vessel, which reputedly lost only one captive at sea after transporting 250 inoculated slaves. The governor ordered the city physician to replicate the experiment in Luanda, but there is no evidence that he did so.⁸² In 1814, the Governor of Benguela, João de Alvelos Leiria, faced with a city overcrowded with slaves, informed his superior at Luanda that he allowed vessels to embark more slaves than their legal capacity. “There are 1,400 slaves in this situation,” he wrote, “with many more arriving from the interior, but we can already feel the consequences with the spread of smallpox and hunger.”⁸³ The threat of epidemics was constant.

⁸⁰ Georg Tams, *Visit to the Portuguese Possessions in South-Western Africa* (London: T. C. Newby, 1845), vol. 2, 39.

⁸¹ Jaime Rodrigues, *De Costa a Costa: Escravos, Marinheiros e Intermediários do Tráfico Negreiro de Angola ao Rio de Janeiro, 1780–1860* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2005), 284.

⁸² Fernando António de Noronha to Visconde de Anadia, 2 August 1804, AHU, CU, Angola, box 110 doc. 33. See also Cary P. Gross and Kent A. Sepkowitz, “The Myth of the Medical Breakthrough: Smallpox, Vaccination, and Jenner Reconsidered.” *International Journal of Infectious Diseases* 3, no. 1 (1 July 1998): 55–56; Eugenia W. Herbert, “Smallpox Inoculation in Africa.” *Journal of African History* 16, no. 4 (1975): 552–53; Dauril Alden and Joseph C. Miller, “Out of Africa: The Slave Trade and the Transmission of Smallpox to Brazil, 1560–1831.” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 2 (1987): 195–200.

⁸³ João de Alvelos Leiria to José de Oliveira Barbosa, 19 October 1814, AHU, CU, Angola, box 129 doc. 63. See also João de Alvelos Leiria to José de Oliveira Barbosa,

During the period of the illegal trade, traffickers in Portuguese Angola faced an additional challenge. As noted in the previous chapter, in 1836 Portugal prohibited the embarkation of slaves from all of its African possessions. A few years later, in 1844, the British increased their antislave trade patrols off West Central Africa, and the Portuguese allowed them to establish a naval station as well as a mixed commission court at Luanda. Slave merchants responded by moving their operations to clandestine areas away from the traditional ports of embarkation, such as Kilongo, Mayumba, and Penedo, situated north of Luanda, and Quicombo, Salinas, Benguela Velha, and the mouth of the Kwanza River, to the south of the city. The exact location of some of these places, for example, Alecuba, Ambona, Bomara, Cape Mole, and Grenada Point, remains unclear.

After 1836, slave merchants could no longer rely on their *quintais*, official sources of provisions, and other infrastructure that had previously formed the basis of their operations. They now had to transport slaves rapidly to more remote locations prearranged with captains of slave vessels, where slaves were held in barracoons, a word meaning shelter or warehouse derived from the Portuguese *barracão* or the Spanish *barracón*.⁸⁴ These barracoons were built at some distance from the shore in order to conceal their presence from antislave trade cruisers patrolling the coast.⁸⁵ Some of the merchants engaged in the illegal slave trade went to great lengths to secure a successful dispatch, even shipping slaves at night. George Tams met Arsênio Pompeu Pompílio de Carpo, one of the most renowned Luandan slave merchants active during the period of the illegal trade, and described his strategy to bypass the authorities.

A rapid mode of traveling was indispensable to Mr. Arsênio, for he was often obliged to take very long journeys on horseback during the night, when his personal presence was suddenly required at the place where his slaves were embarked. Considerable and repeated losses had induced him to adopt the plan of embarking the slaves during the night at a distance from Luanda. One morning,

²⁶ October 1814, AHU, CU, Angola, box 129 doc. 63; João de Alvelos Leiria to António de Araújo de Azevedo, 18 November 1814, AHU, CU, Angola, box 129 doc. 63; and “Abaixo Assinado dos Negociantes de Benguela,” s.d., AHU, CU, Angola, box 129 doc. 63.

⁸⁴ “Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online,” 2011, barracoon, www.merriam-webster.com/.

⁸⁵ Ferreira, “Dos Sertões ao Atlântico,” 38–42. Joseph Miller equates the barracoons of the illegal period of the slave trade from Angola to the *quintais* of the legal period. See Miller, *Way of Death*, 387–401.

when I paid him a professional visit on account of a chronic disorder of the liver, to which he had become subject by his long residence in different parts of Brazil, he told me that; although he was so ill, he had ridden sixteen leagues during the preceding night, in order to be present at the embarkation of his slaves to the south of the Dande River.⁸⁶

TRADERS

Traders from the interior who supplied Arsênio and his fellow merchants were mostly Africans or Luso-Africans. Merchants and colonial officials on the coast called them by different terms that changed over time but usually derived from the regions where they purchased slaves or the community from which the traders themselves originated. One of the earliest terms used to designate these traders was *pombeiros*, from the Kikongo *pumbu*. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, many slaves came from regions near Malebo Pool, which Kikongo speakers called *Pumbu*. The coastal merchants incorporated the word *Pumbu* into their vocabulary as *pombo*, and began calling all traders travelling between the interior and the coast *pombeiros*.⁸⁷ This term was still widely used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, even though Malebo Pool was no longer an important source of slaves.

Another term commonly applied to traders was *ambaquista*, which emerged in the eighteenth century and was widely used in the nineteenth, when traders operating from Ambaca began to dominate the supply chain. Ambaca was a major slave trading post located about 220 kilometers southeast of Luanda. Traders operating at this post usually obtained slaves in the immediate hinterland of Luanda, between the rivers Dande and Kwanza. However, in the nineteenth century, there are references to *ambaquistas* trading in regions as far south as the central plateau of Angola.⁸⁸ Eventually, *aviados*, *volantes*, *ambulantes*, *sertanejos*, *feirantes*, *quimbares*, or *kimbares* also became synonyms for *pombeiros*.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Tams, *Visit to the Portuguese Possessions*, vol. 1, 251–52.

⁸⁷ Willy Bal, “Portugais Pombeiro, Commerçant Ambulant du ‘Sertão.’” *Annali dell’Istituto Universitario Orientalis*, Naples 7 (1965): 148–51; Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict*, 17, note 1; Cândido, *Fronteras de Esclavización*, 66–72; Miller, *Way of Death*, 189–90.

⁸⁸ Ferreira, “Dos Sertões ao Atlântico,” 215–16; Beatrix Heintze, *Pioneiros Africanos: Caravanas de Carregadores na África Centro-Ocidental entre 1850 e 1890*, trans. Marina Santos (Lisbon: Caminho, 2002), 229–59; Miller, *Way of Death*, 644.

⁸⁹ Bal, “Portugais Pombeiro,” 152–61; Manolo Florentino, “The Slave Trade, Colonial Markets, and Slave Families in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, ca.1790–ca.1830.” In *Extending*

Initially, each term referred to a specific aspect of the trade, but by the nineteenth century they were all used to designate traders operating in the interior.

Traders operating between the interior and the coast numbered in the hundreds, if not the thousands. In 1809, the census returns of Benguela show that there were about 412 “traders who traveled to the interior with commodities of merchants from this port.”⁹⁰ This number would have been much larger if the caravan porters, who normally lived outside the city limits, had been included in the count. The average size of the caravans is unclear, but it must have varied significantly. Joseph Miller says that *pombeiros* usually organized small-scale caravans with five or eight porters at most, but “twenty to one hundred slaves would not have been an uncommon range of sizes for commercial expeditions in the eighteenth century.”⁹¹ In the nineteenth century, the size of caravans increased to accommodate the overseas demand for products in addition to slaves. Miller believes that in this period the largest caravans included about 1,000 porters.⁹² Isabel Castro Henriques argues that such caravans averaged about 1,500 people.⁹³ Maria Emilia Madeira Santos claims that they “always had over a thousand people but many included three thousand or more.”⁹⁴ This last view seems implausible, at least for the slave trade era, as the comment primarily reflects produce trade in the late nineteenth century.

The recruitment of porters also varied significantly. Traders from Kasanje and Lunda typically recruited them from within their own families, viewing the caravan trade as a family enterprise.⁹⁵ Africans and Luso-Africans from Portuguese Angola typically used porters from the various chiefdoms under Portuguese suzerainty. These chiefdoms were obliged as vassals to provide the Portuguese ports of slave embarkation with a certain

the Frontiers: Essays on the New Transatlantic Slave Trade Database, ed. David Eltis and David Richardson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 283–84; Jan Vansina, “Ambaca Society and the Slave Trade c.1760–1845.” *Journal of African History* 46, no. 1 (2005): 8–9.

⁹⁰ “Ocupações dos Habitantes da Paróquia de São Felipe de Benguela,” 1809, AHU, CU, Angola, box 121 doc. 32. A copy of this document is also available in AHU, CU, Angola, box 121A doc. 32.

⁹¹ Miller, *Way of Death*, 191. ⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Isabel Castro Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade em Angola: Dinâmicas Comerciais e Transformações Sociais no Século XIX*, trans. Alfredo Margarido (Lisbon: Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical, 1997), 408.

⁹⁴ Maria Emilia Madeira Santos, *Nos Caminhos de África: Serventia e Posse (Angola, Século XIX)* (Lisbon: Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical, 1998), 18.

⁹⁵ Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade*, 405–06.

number of porters to carry commodities in caravans between the coast and the interior.⁹⁶ These porters received little or no payment, and were often abused by caravan leaders. In 1839, the Portuguese government in Lisbon attempted to prohibit the use of involuntary porters, but traders continued to use coercion to recruit from chiefdoms under Portuguese nominal rule. Many chiefs barred recruitment in their own territories because they viewed the work as humiliating or wanted to exploit such labor for their own benefit. Roquinaldo Ferreira notes that some chiefs used porters in their own caravans, while others took bribes from their subjects in exchange for exemption from this service.⁹⁷ It is unclear whether these porters also worked as slave drivers on the march to the coast but, since some chiefs also engaged in the trade and many of them view the activity as a family enterprise, this is not implausible.

Merchandise from the coast was exchanged for slaves at different places in the interior, according to where the best prices or trading terms could be found. Traders usually purchased slaves directly from African suppliers, but in the eighteenth century the Portuguese colonial government designated a number of *feiras*, or fairs, where traders were supposed to exchange wares for slaves. Most of these fairs were located in the Kingdom of Kasanje, with which the Portuguese entertained regular diplomatic relations.⁹⁸ The Portuguese government created these fairs to undermine the effects of the *reviro*, a commercial strategy that traders in the interior used to maximize their purchasing power. It comprised the *Pombeiros* using Portuguese commodities they had obtained in Luanda to purchase captives that they then sold to British and French traders operating north of Luanda. They subsequently returned to the interior taking with them the British and French goods that Africans apparently preferred. Once in the interior, they were able to obtain more slaves than the first transaction had yielded. The *reviro* thus allowed *pombeiros* to accumulate significant resources, which may have rivaled those of the coastal merchants based in Luanda.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Carlos Couto, *Os Capitães-Mores em Angola no Século XVIII: Subsídios para o Estudo da sua Actuação* (Luanda: Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola, 1972), 245–56; Ferreira, “Dos Sertões ao Atlântico,” 195–97 and 213–20; Beatrix Heintze, “Luso-African Feudalism in Angola? The Vassal Treaties of the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century.” *Revista Portuguesa de História* 18 (1980): 123–24.

⁹⁷ Ferreira, “Dos Sertões ao Atlântico,” 214–20.

⁹⁸ Cândido, *An African Slaving Port*, 185 and 189; Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange*, 47–53; Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade*, 109–15; Miller, *Way of Death*, 582–89; Venâncio, *A Economia de Luanda*, 156–62.

⁹⁹ Ferreira, “Dos Sertões ao Atlântico,” 198; Miller, *Way of Death*, 276–79.

A trading board based at Luanda, called *Junta de Comércio*, was responsible for organizing slave fairs in the interior of Angola, which were intended to prevent practices such as the *reviro*. The board appointed both directors and clerks to check the items exchanged for slaves and it had the effect of limiting the activities of *pombeiros*. Furthermore, it provided merchants on the coast with a clearer idea of the destination of their commodities and the number of slaves for which they were exchanged.¹⁰⁰ The slave fairs remained important supply centers until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Moreover, when the British and French withdrew, traders in the interior could no longer use the *reviro* to maximize their purchasing power. The *pombeiros* then gradually abandoned the fairs and resorted to trading directly with African suppliers in the interior.

SEASONAL VARIATIONS

Assessments of the supply of slaves from the interior to the coast must take into account the seasons and the agricultural calendar of the populations living inland from the coast. Generally, historians have argued that seasonal variations in the slave trade occurred as a function of the demand for labor in the Americas. They have viewed the crop cycle of the slave plantations in the Americas as shaping the seasonal variations in the trade to the Americas.¹⁰¹ However, records of vessels arriving at Luanda compiled by Portuguese customs officials between 1736 and 1808 suggest a different interpretation.¹⁰² They show that the slave trade varied

¹⁰⁰ Ferreira, “Dos Sertões ao Atlântico,” 199; Miller, *Way of Death*, 586–89; Venâncio, *A Economia de Luanda*, 156–57.

¹⁰¹ Stephen D. Behrendt, “Ecology, Seasonality, and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.” In *Soundings in Atlantic History: Latent Structures and Intellectual Currents, 1500–1830*, ed. Bernard Bailyn and Patricia L. Denault (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 45–47; Florentino, *Em Costas Negras*, 60–63; Herbert S. Klein, “The Portuguese Slave Trade From Angola in the Eighteenth Century.” *Journal of Economic History* 32, no. 4 (1972): 900. In another version of Klein’s article, he acknowledges that the number of slaves shipped from Angola varied significantly throughout the year, but dismissed the climatic evidence as having any influence on this variation. “While the rainy season can be said to have been of some influence, it does not appear to be the predominant factor.” He then attributes the seasonal variation of the Portuguese slave trade from Angola to American demands. One should note, however, that gold was the principal commodity exported from Portuguese America during the mid-eighteenth century, and output did not vary by season. See Herbert S. Klein, *The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 33–34.

¹⁰² These records are described in detail in Klein, “The Portuguese Slave Trade from Angola,” 894–905; Klein, *The Middle Passage*, 23–37; Corcino Medeiro dos Santos,

according to the climate, as well as the agricultural calendar of the populations living in the interior. These records include the name of the vessels and date of their arrival at Luanda. The creators of the “Voyages” database integrated similar data from the Americas. Combined, these data allow us to calculate the number of slaves leaving Luanda monthly between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

West Central Africans categorized seasons according to variations in rainfall, which served as an important indication of the optimal time to plant, harvest, and process food. In addition, rainfall determined the most suitable periods to wage wars and organize long-distance trade expeditions. However, given the variations in topography and latitude from one region to another, climate figures covering large areas are meaningless for a calculation of shipment variations in the slave trade. Figure 2.2 shows that the patterns of rainfall in Angola vary significantly between the coast and the interior. As Jill Dias noted, precipitation levels increase in a southwesterly direction, from the central plateau toward the coast, reaching an extreme near Moçâmedes.¹⁰³ Given the irregular distribution of rainfall throughout the territory, the number of slaves shipped from Luanda has to be measured against the levels of rainfall in their regions of provenance.

As will be seen in the following chapter, most slaves leaving Luanda came from regions within 400 kilometers of the coast. The majority were Kimbundu and Kikongo farmers, who planted many of their crops along the main rivers of the region, such as the Kwanza to the south and the Bengo and Dande to the north. However, because they did not use irrigation, they depended heavily on the rain. Fortunately, patterns of rainfall in this region are dependable compared to other places, monthly change over the year being within 15 and 25 percent of the country’s annual average. Malanje is located within the region of provenance of the majority of the slaves shipped from Luanda. Unfortunately, precipitation data for the interior of Angola in the nineteenth century is unavailable, but meteorologists have recorded levels of precipitation there for 396 months between 1951 and 1984.¹⁰⁴ These data can be compared to the number of slaves shipped to derive an idea of the seasonal variations in the trade from

¹⁰³ “Relações de Angola com o Rio de Janeiro (1736–1808).” *Estudos Históricos*, no. 12 (1973): 5–66.

¹⁰⁴ Dias, “Famine and Disease,” 350.

¹⁰⁴ Robert Hoare, “WorldClimate: Weather and Climate Data Worldwide,” Online database, (1996), www.worldclimate.com/.

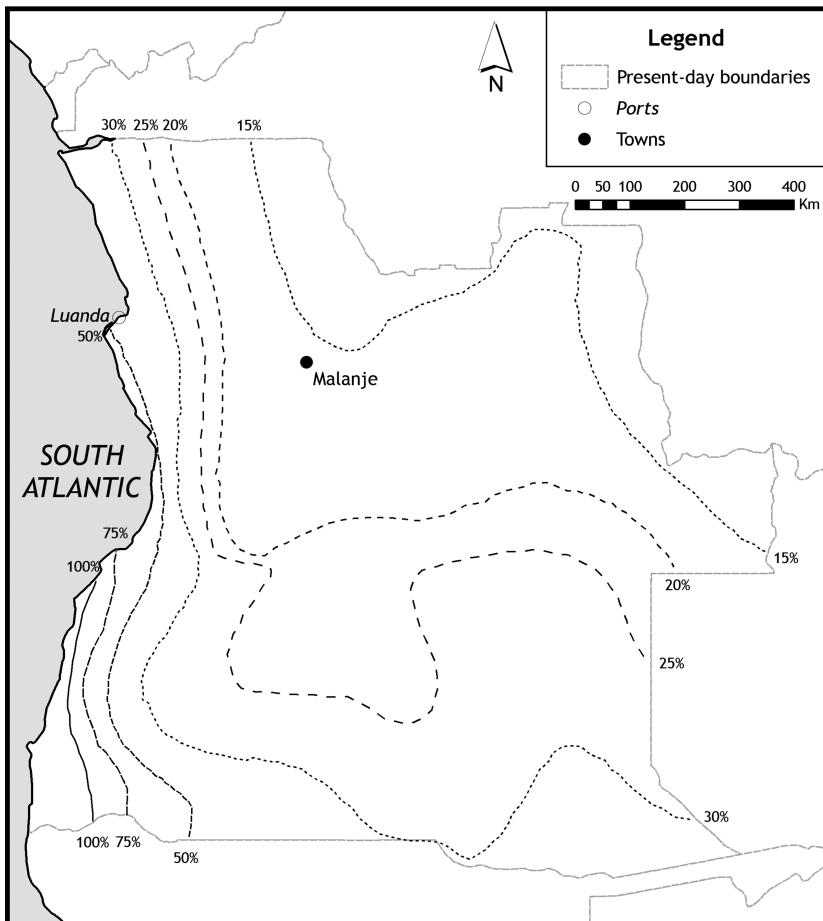


FIGURE 2.2 Lines of equal coefficient of variability of rainfall in Angola
 Source: Dario X. de Queirós, *Variabilidade das Chuvas em Angola* (Luanda: Serviço Meteorológico de Angola, 1955). Based on Jill Dias, "Famine and Disease in the History of Angola, c.1830–1930." *Journal of African History* 22, no. 3 (1981): 351.

Luanda under the reasonable assumption that climatic patterns in the region did not change massively over the previous century.

Figure 2.3 shows that the number of captives leaving Luanda peaked during the middle of the year, between May and August. This corresponds with the region's driest season of the year, known as *cacimbo*, when a total of 47,200 slaves on average were dispatched between 1736 and 1808.

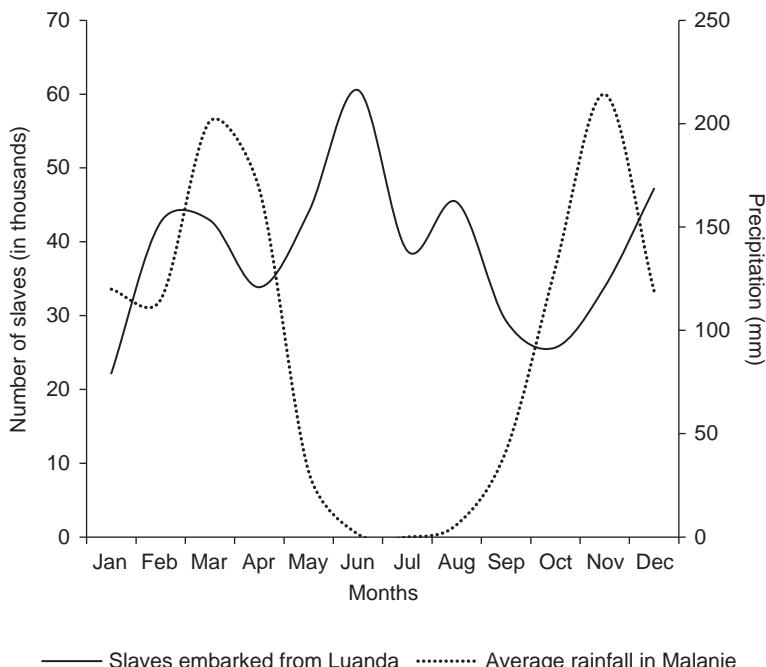


FIGURE 2.3 Seasonal variations in the slave trade from Luanda, 1736–1808
Sources: Eltis et al., “Voyages” and Robert Hoare, “WorldClimate.”

In the other seasons, the average number of slaves embarked was considerably lower; 35,400 between January and April, and 34,000 between September and December. The seasonality of the slave trade from Luanda also aligns with the agricultural calendar of the populations living in the hinterland. Italian Capuchins, who traveled widely throughout Kimbundu and Kikongo territories during the seventeenth century, noted that Africans in this region experienced two agricultural cycles. The first began at the end of January, with the cultivation of the land, and ended with the harvest in late April. The second cycle started in September, after the long, dry season, and ended in December. The Capuchins further noted that between May and August Africans neither sowed nor harvested.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Mário José Maestri Filho, *A Agricultura Africana nos Séculos XVI e XVII no Litoral Angolano* (Porto Alegre: Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, 1978), 52–56; Adriano Parreira, *Economia e Sociedade em Angola na Época da Rainha Jinga, Século XVII* (Lisbon: Estampa, 1990), 29–31.

As we might expect, traders in Portugal and Brazil increased the number of vessels available for the trade during May to August, keeping the number of slaves transported per vessel steady throughout the year. The records available in the “Voyages” database show that between 1736 and 1808 371 vessels embarked slaves at Luanda between January and April, 499 between May and August, and 348 between September and December. In other words, the number of vessels loading slaves between May and August was at least 26 percent higher than in the other months. Mean numbers of slaves held steady with 382 per ship between January and April, 378 between May and August, and 391 between September and December.

The constant flow of slaves leaving Luanda provided the Brazilian plantations and mines with a regular supply of coerced labor throughout the year. The sugar plantations greatly benefited from this steady supply of slaves because of the lengthy agricultural cycle. As Stuart Schwartz observed, the pace of labor on Brazilian sugar plantations continued incessantly for about eight to nine months, beginning in late July or August and ending in May of the following year.¹⁰⁶ Since the trade from Luanda peaked just before the beginning of the harvesting season, it would appear that it was oriented to provide these plantations with a fresh contingent of labor from Africa. However, given the diversification of Brazilian exports at this time, sugar was clearly not the only force driving the demand for slaves. Rice, cotton, and tobacco were also produced with slave labor but were not necessarily grown and processed at the same time as sugar cane.¹⁰⁷ Rice production, for example, started in September or October with the fields’ clearing. Planting and weeding continued in the following months until the harvest season started from the end of May through July.¹⁰⁸ Cotton production followed more or less the same cycle as that of rice. The production of tobacco, however, lasted about a year: four months for cultivation, starting in March, April, or May, and from six to eight months for harvesting and processing, commencing in July, August, or September.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, during the eighteenth century, gold

¹⁰⁶ Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society, Bahia, 1550–1835* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 100–01.

¹⁰⁷ Alden, “Late Colonial Brazil,” 627–53; José Jobson de A. Arruda, *O Brasil no Comércio Colonial* (São Paulo: Editora Ática, 1980), 604–30.

¹⁰⁸ Walter Hawthorne, *From Africa to Brazil: Culture, Identity, and an Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600–1830* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 155–63.

¹⁰⁹ Jean Baptiste Nardi, *O Fumo Brasileiro no Período Colonial: Lavoura, Comércio e Administração* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1996), 52–53.

rather than sugar was the principal commodity exported from Brazil, and gold was not produced in cycles.¹¹⁰ The service industry, another important sector of the Brazilian economy, also employed large numbers of slaves, especially in the cities, and it operated independently of the calendar on the sugar plantations.¹¹¹ Finally, Portuguese policies aimed at controlling inflation and protecting monopolistic rights also shaped the traffic.¹¹² Overall, these factors combined indicate that the seasonal fluctuations were more important on the Angolan than on the Brazilian side of the transatlantic slave market.

CONCLUSION

Merchants, brokers, and traders played a central role in the transatlantic trade from West Central Africa. They bought ships, imported commodities, and mobilized many other resources to secure transportation of slaves from the interior of West Central Africa to the Americas, especially Brazil. They came from different backgrounds but had shared interests: the accumulation of wealth, power, and prestige. To achieve their goals, they employed several commercial strategies aimed at reducing risks and maximizing profits. Some of these strategies included partnerships and the transportation of small numbers of slaves in different vessels. Traders had to factor in environmental issues that determined certain aspects of the trade. The most relevant were no doubt the gyres of the South Atlantic and patterns of rainfall in the African interior. Additionally, as the trade became increasingly illegal, they had to devise ways to avoid antislave trade cruisers patrolling the coasts of Africa and the Americas. Despite these limitations, merchants, brokers, and traders successfully carried out their activities well into the nineteenth century.

¹¹⁰ Pinto, *O Ouro Brasileiro*, 112–17; A. J. R. Russell-Wood, “Colonial Brazil: The Gold Cycle, c.1690–1750.” In *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, ed. Leslie Bethell, vol. 2 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 593–600.

¹¹¹ Alden, “Late Colonial Brazil,” 606–07.

¹¹² In this sense, the law of 1684 and the tax reform of 1758 are particularly important. One should also note the period of activity of the trading companies of Grão Pará and Maranhão, and Pernambuco and Paraíba, which had the monopoly of the slave trade to these areas between the 1750s and 1770s. See the discussion above.

The Origins of Slaves Leaving West Central Africa

Although West Central Africa was the principal source of slaves to the Americas during the nineteenth century, the inland origins of these Africans have not been clear. Scholars such as Joseph Miller, Jan Vansina, and John Thornton, among others, have in general suggested that these slaves came from deep in the interior of West Central Africa. These historians argue that the demand for slaves in the Americas stimulated the expansion of the slaving frontier to the border of present-day Angola with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Further, they maintain that the majority of slaves shipped were prisoners of wars waged by the Lunda Empire. Lunda kings viewed the trade as an opportunity to expand their power by exchanging captives for foreign commodities, which they used to cement alliances, raise armies, and annex neighboring territories.

However, lists of liberated Africans from Cuba and Brazil, in addition to slave registers made by Portuguese colonial officials in Angola, reveal a different pattern. Analysis of these new sources indicates that in the nineteenth century slaves came from several places, with the majority coming from regions much closer to the coast than previously thought. Moreover, these records suggest that slaves and enslavers were not unknown to one another. They came from different ethnic groups but often spoke the same language and shared similar values. Additionally, these records show that the impact of the trade on the African populations was more localized than commonly assumed, with the majority of those shipped originating from a few specific areas near the ports of embarkation. These findings challenge the view of West Central Africa as a region ravaged by wars and crossed by caravans transporting huge numbers of

people from distant lands. They also indicate that slaves sold into the Atlantic not only comprised outsiders, but also people who were born and raised as members of the same communities that enslaved them.

Scholarly knowledge of the origins of the slaves shipped from West Central Africa derives largely from oral traditions collected in the second half of the nineteenth century. These traditions suggest a group of Lunda dissidents left their country at the beginning of the sixteenth century after Luba hunters took control of their territory, located at the Upper Kasai River. These Lunda dissidents moved west, joining forces with people they met en route and with whom they founded new polities such as the Imbangala Kingdom of Kasanje, located at the confluence of the rivers Kwango and Lui. Inevitably, some of these encounters were violent, and the thousands who became prisoners of war were made available for sale to transatlantic slave traders. African rulers soon realized the gains to be made from the sale of slaves on the coast of West Central Africa. The trade provided them with rare commodities such as guns, textiles, and alcohol that they used to expand their power throughout the region's interior.¹

According to current thinking, in the nineteenth century this practice of exchanging foreign merchandise for prisoners of war continued with disastrous consequences for the populations of West Central Africa. Africans searched for slaves in regions further and further away from the coast. Joseph Miller has stated:

Because the richest returns from converting goods into people came from spreading textiles and imports widely into areas where they remained rare, or from employing guns to capture slaves in the regions farthest from home, the transformation of the African political economies acquired an expansive geographical momentum that drove its violence off toward the east. From the earliest period of slave exporting in western central Africa, the political revolutions thus moved toward the interior, leaving behind them a growing commercialized area under new regimes oriented toward the Atlantic trade.²

Miller concludes that in the nineteenth century the slave trade had spread to the deep interior of West Central Africa, bringing dramatically disruptive changes to those living in this region.

¹ This paragraph summarizes a long debate about the foundation of the kingdoms of West Central Africa. Important references to this debate include Vansina, “The Foundation of the Kingdom of Kasanje,” 355–74; Birmingham, “The Date and Significance of the Imbangala Invasion of Angola,” 143–52; Vansina, “More on the Invasions of Kongo and Angola,” 421–29; Miller, “The Imbangala and the Chronology of Early Central African History,” 549–74.

² Miller, *Way of Death*, 140.

ORIGINS

The lists of liberated Africans from Cuba and Brazil and the slave registers of Angola provide evidence that calls for a revision of this view. These two sources were created to protect freed Africans from re-enslavement. In 1819, the British, in association with other powers, established mixed commission courts in Havana, Cuba, and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to adjudicate cases involving vessels suspected of violating international treaties restricting the sale of slaves across the Atlantic.³ The courts confiscated the slave traders' property and freed all Africans found on board. Clerks of the courts then recorded information about all surviving captives in bound registers, including names, age, sex, and height, as well as country or nation of origin. The lists of liberated Africans from Cuba and Brazil contain information on approximately 454 Africans shipped from the Congo River, 922 from Loango, 94 from Mayumba, 1,235 from Ambriz, 1,059 from Luanda, and 837 from Benguela. In total, the lists provide information on 4,601 Africans shipped from West Central Africa between 1832 and 1840.⁴ Nothing similar to the size, aims, and extent of these lists exists for previous years.

Portuguese colonial officials created the second source, the slave registers of Angola, between 1855 and 1856. These records were part of a process undertaken by the Portuguese colonial administration in Lisbon for the gradual emancipation of slaves and continued freedom of other Africans living under Portuguese rule in Africa.⁵ They provide the same kind of information as the lists of liberated Africans from Cuba and Brazil, and indeed they may have been modeled on their Mixed Commission counterparts. Colonial officials registered slaves living under Portuguese rule on the coast as well as in the interior of their territories in Angola. However, since the registers listed the slave

³ Bethell, "The Mixed Commissions," 79–81; Domingues da Silva et al., "The Diaspora," 349–50.

⁴ The lists of liberated Africans from Cuba are available on line at Eltis et al., "Voyages"; Eltis and Misevich, "African Origins." The originals are kept in the BNA, FO 313, vols. 58 (*Aguila*), 60 (*Joven Reyna and Marte*), and 61 (*Marte, Amália, Diligencia, Empresa, and Matilde*). The lists of liberated Africans from Brazil are available in the ANRJ, cod. 184, vol. 4 (*Especulador, Leal, and Paquete de Benguela*), cod. 471 (*Duque de Bragança, Rio da Prata, Orion, Brilhante, Feliz, and Carolina*), and in the AHI, lata 4, maço 3 (*Brilhante* and a vessel without name).

⁵ Visconde d'Athoguia, "Decreto de 14 de Dezembro de 1854." *Diário Do Governo*, 28 December 1854, 305 edition, sec. Ministério dos Negócios da Marinha e Ultramar, Seção do Ultramar.

population that remained in Angola, as opposed to those sold across the Atlantic, not all of them provide information adequate for tracing the origins of slaves shipped to the Americas. Moreover, the continued presence of the Portuguese in the interior of Angola during the mid-nineteenth century further contaminated this source because it incorporated into the registers vast numbers of people previously outside Portuguese influence, such as the Kasanje, whose kingdom the Portuguese invaded in 1850. At a later date, this invasion resulted in the construction of the Portuguese forts of Duque de Bragança and Tala Mungongo, where many Kasanje were listed in the slave registers of Angola.⁶ Therefore, only the registers compiled at the coastal settlements are reliable for tracing the origins of slaves sold overseas.

The Angolan registers do, however, include a large number of slaves who were originally intended for sale into the transatlantic trade. The rapid growth of the slave populations of the coastal settlements before and after the abolition of the Brazilian trade confirms this hypothesis. In Luanda, for example, the slave population increased from 2,749 in 1844 to 6,020 in 1850 and to 14,294 in 1856, when Governor José Rodrigues Coelho do Amaral reported the total numbers registered in Angola to the colonial office in Lisbon.⁷ In Benguela, the slave population increased from 2,438 in 1844 to 2,634 in 1850 and to 5,566 in 1856.⁸ Figures on the earlier slave population of Novo Redondo are not

⁶ António Rodrigues Neves, *Memoria da Expedição à Cassange Commandada pelo Major Graduado Francisco Salles Ferreira em 1850, Escripta pelo Capitão Móvel d'Ambriz António Rodrigues Neves* (Lisbon: Imprensa Silvana, 1854), passim; Douglas L. Wheeler, "The Portuguese in Angola, 1836–1891: A Study in Expansion and Administration" (Ph.D., Boston University, 1963), 126–80; René Pélissier, *História das Campanhas de Angola: Resistência e Revoltas, 1845–1941* (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1997), vol. 1, 107–44; Jill R. Dias, "Angola." In *Nova História da Expansão Portuguesa: O Império Africano, 1825–1890*, ed. Valentim Alexandre and Jill R. Dias, vol. 10 (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1986), 408–12.

⁷ Angola, *Almanak Estatístico da Província d'Angola e suas Dependências para o Anno de 1851* (Luanda: Imprensa do Governo, 1852), 8; Lopes de Lima, *Ensaios*, vol. 3, mapa no. 1; José C. Curto, "The Anatomy of a Demographic Explosion: Luanda, 1844–1850." *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 32, no. 2/3 (1999): 402–03; José C. Curto and Raymond R. Gervais, "The Population History of Luanda during the Late Atlantic Slave Trade, 1781–1844." *African Economic History* 29 (2001): 58–59. See also José Rodrigues Coelho do Amaral to the State Secretary of the Navy and Overseas Affairs, 11 February 1856, AHU, Angola, Papéis de Sá da Bandeira, sala 12, maço 822.

⁸ Angola, *Almanak Estatístico*, 9; Lopes de Lima, *Ensaios*, vol. 3, mapa no. 1; Cândido, *Fronteras de Esclavización*, 76. See also José Rodrigues Coelho do Amaral to the State Secretary of the Navy and Overseas Affairs, 11 February 1856, AHU, Angola, Papéis de Sá da Bandeira, sala 12, mç. 822.

available, but they must have followed a similar upward trend, culminating with a population of 1,154 in 1856.⁹ Slave registers for Luanda survive for 7,522 Africans, about 53 percent of the total registered at that port.¹⁰ Records of captives registered at Benguela are available for 2,588 Africans, or 46 percent of captives originally registered.¹¹ Only the slave registers of Novo Redondo appear to be complete.¹² In summary, the slave registers of Luanda, Benguela, and Novo Redondo provide information on 11,264 enslaved Africans, most of whom were originally intended for sale into the transatlantic trade.

When combined, the lists of liberated Africans from Cuba and Brazil and the Angolan records provide information about 15,864 Africans who were enslaved in the interior of West Central Africa during the nineteenth century. However, only about half of these provide information for tracing slave origins. In the nineteenth century, Africans had conflicting concepts of origins and identity. They responded to questions such as "where did you come from?" or "what is your nationality?" in different ways. Hence, most of the 15,864 individuals gave replies that are not useful for the purposes of this study. For example, 814 did not specify a place of origin; 120 referred to places outside West Central Africa, such as Mozambique, São Tomé, and Zanzibar; and 223 individuals mentioned names of places no longer identifiable. Additionally, 456 individuals referred to rivers such as Kwanza or Kwango as their country of origin but, since these rivers crossed the territories of several peoples and the individuals did not provide any additional clues about where they had come from, it is impossible to specify their origins. A further 2,432 Africans did provide a known place of origin, but mostly referred to major slave trading posts situated on the coast or in the interior of Angola, such as Ambaca, Benguela, Boma, Cabinda, or Encoje. Finally, 4,207 individuals indicated a generalized country of origin such as "Angola" or "Congo."

Despite the number of records with no geographic information, 7,612 Africans, close to half of all individuals listed, gave an ethnonym as an answer. Scholars have normally hesitated to use these to trace the origins of slaves carried across the Atlantic. They suspected that these ethnonyms

⁹ José Rodrigues Coelho do Amaral to the State Secretary of the Navy and Overseas Affairs, 11 February 1856, AHU, Angola, Papéis de Sá da Bandeira, sala 12, m^c 822.

¹⁰ AHNA, cod. 2467, 2482, 2524, 2784, 2846, 2862, 3186, 3254, 3260 (Luanda), and box 135 (Luanda).

¹¹ AHNA, cod. 3160 (Benguela). ¹² AHNA, cod. 2830 (Novo Redondo).

had a European origin. Traders may have imposed ethnonyms on slaves carried across the Atlantic, or slaves themselves may have adopted new ethnonyms as they left Africa and sought to blend into the new milieu in the Americas.¹³ Also, enslaved Africans could have been captured and owned by different masters in Africa before they were sold into the Atlantic markets. They may have assimilated the identity or ethnicity of their previous owners before they arrived in the Americas.¹⁴ All these concerns have made historians very cautious about using ethnonyms to trace the origins of captives leaving Africa.

Although these are serious issues, we can have some confidence in the use of ethnonyms in these records. Both sources were created soon after

¹³ Robert W. Slenes, “‘Malungu, Ngoma Vem!:’ África Coberta e Descoberta no Brasil.” *Revista USP* 12 (92, 1991): 51–54; Robin Law, “Ethnicity and the Slave Trade: ‘Lucumi’ and ‘Nago’ as Ethnonyms in West Africa.” *History in Africa* 24 (1997): 205–09; Michael Angelo Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Ties in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 2–4 and 144; Mariza de Carvalho Soares, *Devotos da Cor: Identidade Étnica, Religirosidade e Escravidão no Rio de Janeiro, Século XVIII* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2000), 224–30; D. B. Chambers, “Ethnicity in the Diaspora: The Slave Trade and the Creation of African ‘Nations’ in the Americas.” *Slavery and Abolition* 22, no. 3 (2001): 26–27; Beatriz Gallotti Mamigonian, “To Be a Liberated African in Brazil: Labour and Citizenship in the Nineteenth Century” (Ph.D., University of Waterloo, 2002), 46–47; Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, “African Ethnicities and the Meanings of ‘Mina.’” In *Trans-Atlantic Dimensions of Ethnicity in the African Diaspora*, ed. Paul E. Lovejoy and David V. Trotman (New York: Continuum, 2003), 64–66; Edward A. Alpers, “‘Mozambique’ in Brazil: Another Dimension of the African Diaspora in the Atlantic World.” In *Africa and the Americas: Interconnections during the Slave Trade*, ed. José C. Curto and Renée Soulodre-La France (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2005), 43–68; Robin Law, “Ethnicities of Enslaved Africans in the Diaspora: On the Meanings of ‘Mina’ (Again).” *History in Africa* 32 (2005): 248.

¹⁴ Curtin, *Economic Change*, vol. 1, 34–35; Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, “African ‘Slavery’ as an Institution of Marginality.” In *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 10–24; Miller, *Way of Death*, 255; Slenes, “Malungu, Ngoma Vem!,” 54–55; Joseph C. Miller, “Central Africa during the Era of the Slave Trade, c.1490s–1850s.” In *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora*, ed. Linda M. Heywood (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 42–43; Paul E. Lovejoy, “Ethnic Designations of the Slave Trade and the Reconstruction of the History of Trans-Atlantic Slavery.” In *Trans-Atlantic Dimensions of Ethnicity in the African Diaspora*, ed. Paul E. Lovejoy and David V. Trotman (New York: Continuum, 2003), 15; Linda M. Heywood and John K. Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundation of the Americas, 1585–1660* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 169–70; Paul E. Lovejoy, “Transatlantic Transformations: The Origins and Identities of Africans in the Americas.” In *Africa, Brazil, and the Construction of Trans-Atlantic Black Identities*, ed. Boubacar Barry, Elisée Soumonni, and Livio Sansone (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2008), 97–98.

Africans landed in the Americas or, in the case of the Angolan registers, while they were still in Africa. Additionally, both sets of documents were created with the assistance of people familiar with the languages and cultures of the individuals recorded. The lists of liberated Africans from Cuba, for instance, include the names of the translators who assisted the court commissioners in registering the recaptives. They were often slaves or freed Africans who had previously come from West Central Africa and become fluent in Spanish and Portuguese. The Brazilian lists are less clear, but they must also have been created with the help of African translators, since the courts there followed the same guidelines as in Cuba. Furthermore, Rio de Janeiro had such a large slave population that many of the languages spoken in West Central Africa were also spoken in the city. As Mary Karasch notes, travelers visiting Rio often remarked on the babble of tongues spoken in the streets.¹⁵

In Angola, Portuguese colonial officials registered slaves with similar procedures. Given the lengthy presence of the Portuguese on the coast of West Central Africa, they were well acquainted with neighboring populations. Also, they had been compiling censuses of the populations living under Portuguese rule in Angola since the late eighteenth century, and colonial officials had considerable experience with the bureaucratic requirements of such activities.¹⁶ Furthermore, the guidelines for slave registration encouraged slave owners to present all their slaves to colonial officials, since in theory unregistered slaves were automatically freed.¹⁷ They also specified that an inspector should be present at the moment of the registration.¹⁸ There are few reasons to doubt the capacity of local officials and inspectors to engage with Africans. Although Portuguese was the dominant language of the administration, the everyday speech among the local population comprised a range of local African dialects. In fact,

¹⁵ Karasch, *Slave Life*, 214–15.

¹⁶ Curto and Gervais, “The Population History of Luanda,” 4–26; José C. Curto and Raymond R. Gervais, “A Dinâmica Demográfica de Luanda no Contexto do Tráfico de Escravos do Atlântico Sul, 1781–1844.” *Topoi*, no. 4 (2002): 86–97.

¹⁷ Visconde d’Athoguia, “Decreto de 14 de Dezembro de 1854.” *Diário do Governo*, 28 December 1854, 305 edition, sec. Ministério dos Negócios da Marinha e Ultramar, Seção do Ultramar, Title 1, Article 2, 1574.

¹⁸ The guidelines specify that the inspection of the slaves should follow the “Regulamento de 25 de Outubro de 1853.” See *Ibid.*, Title 1, Article 1, 1574; Visconde d’Athoguia, “Regulamento que Faz Parte do Decreto de 25 de Outubro de 1853, Publicado no Diário do Governo no. 268, de 14 de Novembro de 1853.” *Diário do Governo*, 29 November 1853, 281 edition, sec. Ministério dos Negócios da Marinha e Ultramar, Seção do Ultramar, Article 7, 1601.

Kimbundu was the dominant language spoken in Luanda well into the nineteenth century.¹⁹ This fact is all the more important given that at that time Luanda was the largest European community in Africa south of the Sahara, with the possible exception of Cape Town.

Africans had no reason to conceal their ethnicity when questioned by court or Portuguese officials. The lists of liberated Africans from Cuba and Brazil were created to protect Africans from re-enslavement. The slave registers of Angola served a similar purpose. They were created to inhibit the enslavement of free Africans, as well as the re-enslavement of Africans who had gained their freedom after registration. Furthermore, as will be seen below, the ethnonyms available in the lists of liberated Africans and the slave registers align with data from the analysis of other documents used to measure the impact of the slave trade on Africa. The number and proportion of Nsundi or Ndongo slaves leaving West Central Africa in the nineteenth century from the registers, for example, match reports about warfare, predatory trade, and depopulation in the areas where these ethnic groups lived. The form in which some of these ethnonyms appear in the documents also attests to their authenticity. Designations such as “Muxicongo” and “Camundongo” literally mean “I am Kongo” and “I am an inhabitant of Ndongo,” in Kikongo and Kimbundu, respectively. Therefore, they are not inventions of slave traders or colonial officials, but authentic expressions of African identity. Finally, although slaves may have been traded several times before they entered the transatlantic traffic, it is doubtful whether the majority of them spent sufficient time enslaved in Africa to adopt the ethnicity of their owners. As will be seen in the next chapter, slaves leaving Angola in the nineteenth century were relatively young, suggesting that they were first generation slaves sold across the ocean soon after their enslavement. All in all, the ethnonyms available in the lists of liberated Africans as well as the slave registers provide reliable information about the origins of slaves leaving West Central Africa in this period.

While ethnonyms often appear with different spellings, they can be organized into modern ethnic and linguistic groups and located on a map of West Central Africa. Research suggests that the ethnolinguistic map of West Africa, another region that served as a major source of slaves for the transatlantic slave trade, shows remarkable continuity throughout the

¹⁹ Jan Vansina, “Portuguese vs Kimbundu: Language Use in the Colony of Angola (1575–c.1845).” *Bulletin Des Séances de l’Academie Royale Des Sciences d’Outre Mer* 47 (March 2001): 276–78.

years from the beginning of the slave trade to the present, although political stability is quite another issue.²⁰ Preliminary analyses of the Bantu languages of Southeast Africa, also a region deeply affected by the slave trade, yield similar results.²¹ Furthermore, Portuguese colonial records, in addition to field studies and historical research, provide scholars with a number of maps, lists, and other resources that have enabled them to reconstruct the ethnolinguistic map of West Central Africa for the nineteenth century.²² The ethnonyms available in the lists of liberated Africans and the slave registers of Angola have been compared with these sources and organized into modern ethnic and linguistic groups. Africans who claimed they came from or were affiliated with the Lunda, Muatianvo, and Muatianbo, for example, were considered as belonging to the Lunda ethnic group – part of the Ruund linguistic group, located east of the Upper Kasai River. After adjusting for the variations in spelling, the records show that slaves shipped from West Central Africa in these years came from 21 linguistic groups, comprising 116 ethnicities spread throughout the region's interior.

²⁰ P. E. H. Hair, "Ethnolinguistic Continuity on the Guinea Coast." *Journal of African History* 8, no. 2 (1967): 247–49.

²¹ P. E. H. Hair, "From Language to Culture: Some Problems in the Systemic Analysis of the Ethnohistorical Records of the Sierra Leone Region." In *The Population Factor in African Studies*, ed. R. P. Moss and R. J. A. R. Rathbone (London: University of London Press, 1975), 74.

²² These resources include but are not limited to João Carlos Feo Cardoso de Castello Branco e Torres, *Memórias Contendo a Biographia do Vice Almirante Luis da Motta Feo e Torres, a História dos Governadores e Capitãens Generaes de Angola desde 1575 até 1825, e a Descrição Geographica e Politica dos Reinos de Angola e Benguela* (Paris: Fantin, 1825), Map; Lopes de Lima, *Ensaios*, Maps; José de Oliveira Ferreira Diniz, *Populações Indígenas de Angola* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1918), Maps; Mário Milheiros, *Índice Histórico-Corográfico de Angola* (Luanda: Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola, 1972), Lists; José Redinha, *Distribuição Étnica de Angola* (Luanda: Centro de Informação e Turismo de Angola, 1962), Lists and Map; Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, Maps and Index; Martin, *The External Trade*, Maps and Index; Hilton, *The Kingdom of Kongo*, Maps and Index; Robert W. Harms, *River of Wealth, River of Sorrow: The Central Zaire Basin in the Era of the Slave and Ivory Trade, 1500–1891* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), Maps and Index; Karasch, *Slave Life*, Appendix A; Gladwyn Murray Childs, *Kinship and Character of the Ovimbundu: Being a Description of the Social Structure and Individual Development of the Ovimbundu of Angola, with Observations Concerning the Bearing on the Enterprise of Christian Missions of Certain Phases of the Life and Culture Described* (London: Reprinted for the International African Institute & for the Witwatersrand U.P. by Dawson, 1969), Maps and Index; John K. Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1800*, 2nd edn. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Maps and Index; "Ethnologue: Languages of the World," 2009, www.ethnologue.com/.

The records also provide the means to estimate the number of slaves shipped by linguistic and ethnic groups. In 1969, Philip Curtin observed that the number of captives leaving from West Central Africa varied according to ports of embarkation, suggesting that different regions in the interior supplied these ports with slaves. Curtin argued captives embarking at ports north of Luanda usually came from the basin of the Congo River; slaves leaving from ports south of Luanda originated from the central plateau of Angola; and slaves shipped from Luanda itself came not only from its immediate interior but also from the central plateau and the basin of the Congo River.²³ Indeed, Luanda was a case apart, because it was by far the largest single departure point in the history of the transatlantic trade.²⁴ It is now possible to use estimates of the number of slaves shipped from Luanda and the ports north and south of it to arrive at an approximate distribution of the Africans transported by ethnic and linguistic origins.²⁵

Recent studies show that between 1831 and 1855, the period covered by the lists of liberated Africans and the slave registers of Angola, the ports north of Luanda shipped 313,375 slaves. The ports south of it shipped approximately 186,510, while Luanda alone shipped about 267,330.²⁶

²³ Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, 260–62. See also Domingues da Silva, “The Atlantic Slave Trade from Angola,” 112–13; Ferreira, “The Suppression,” 5.

²⁴ An up-to-date ranking of the largest ports of slave embarkation is available in David Eltis and David Richardson, eds., *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), Table 5, 90.

²⁵ Domingues da Silva, “The Atlantic Slave Trade from Angola,” 122; Eltis and Richardson, *Atlas*, 137–53.

²⁶ Domingues da Silva, “The Atlantic Slave Trade from Angola,” 122. Other similar estimates are available in José C. Curto, “The Legal Portuguese Slave Trade from Benguela, Angola, 1730–1828: A Quantitative Re-Appraisal.” *Africa: Revista Do Centro de Estudos Africanos Da Universidade de São Paulo* 16–17, no. 1 (April 1993): 110–15; José C. Curto, “A Quantitative Reassessment of the Legal Portuguese Slave Trade from Luanda, Angola, 1710–1830.” *African Economic History*, no. 20 (1992): 15–24; Eltis and Richardson, *Atlas*, 137–53; Eltis, “The Volume and Structure of the Transatlantic Slave Trade,” 23–28 and 31–35; Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 46–55 and 145–51; Joseph C. Miller, “Legal Portuguese Slaving from Angola: Some Preliminary Indications of Volume and Direction, 1760–1830.” *Revue Française d’Histoire d’Outre-Mer* 62, no. 226–27 (1975): 138–56; Miller, “The Slave Trade,” 101–02; Joseph C. Miller, “The Numbers, Origins, and Destinations of Slaves in the Eighteenth-Century Angolan Slave Trade,” *Social Science History* 13, no. 4 (1989): 393–412; Joseph C. Miller, “The Numbers, Origins, and Destinations of Slaves in the Eighteenth-Century Angolan Slave Trade.” In *The Atlantic Slave Trade: Effects on Economics, Societies, and Peoples in Africa, the Americas and Europe*, ed. Joseph E. Inikori and Stanley L. Engerman, 2nd edn. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 89–108.

Since the lists of liberated Africans and the slave registers provide information on the port of departure or, in the case of the slave registers, the places of registration in Angola, the ratio of linguistic and ethnic groups for each of these three regions can be computed and then applied to the estimated numbers shipped from the three port groupings. This operation is important because, without it, the different nature of the sources and the fluctuations in the slave trade can render a distorted picture of the past. As we have seen, most of the records from the lists of liberated Africans from Brazil and Cuba refer to Africans who had embarked from ports north of Luanda, while most of the individuals recorded in the slave registers of Angola were registered in Luanda and ports south of Luanda. Moreover, the number of slaves leaving from each port fluctuated significantly between the 1830s and the 1850s. From the 1830s to the first half of the 1840s, the majority of the slaves departed from Luanda and the ports south of Luanda. From the mid-1840s, however, that picture changed, with the majority leaving from the northern ports. Finally, some ports were simply more involved in the traffic than others and estimates of the proportion of each linguistic and ethnic group forced into the trade must take such differences into consideration. For example, 5 percent of slaves shipped from Luanda who were Kongo is considerably more than 5 percent transported from any of the ports north of Luanda who were Kongo. The sources alone, therefore, cannot account for the size and relative distribution of that migration. They must be adjusted to provide a more accurate picture of the traffic. After completing this operation, the resulting ethnolinguistic subtotals for the three regions can be aggregated and projected on a map of West Central Africa.

Figure 3.1 shows the result of this procedure. It displays the estimated number of slaves leaving West Central Africa between 1831 and 1855 by linguistic groups and the relative position of those groups in the region's interior. The map makes immediately apparent that slaves came from a wide variety of places across West Central Africa. As scholars have already stressed, in the nineteenth century slaves were drawn into the trade from regions situated increasingly farther from the coast.²⁷ Certainly, Figure 3.1 shows that the enslavement zone at that time covered a vast area of approximately 2.5 million square kilometers; a region larger than the territory of the United States east of the

²⁷ See, for example, Miller, *Way of Death*, 146–47; Oppen, *Terms of Trade and Terms of Trust*, 59–61; Vansina, “It Never Happened,” 403; Thornton, “The Chronology and Causes,” 7.

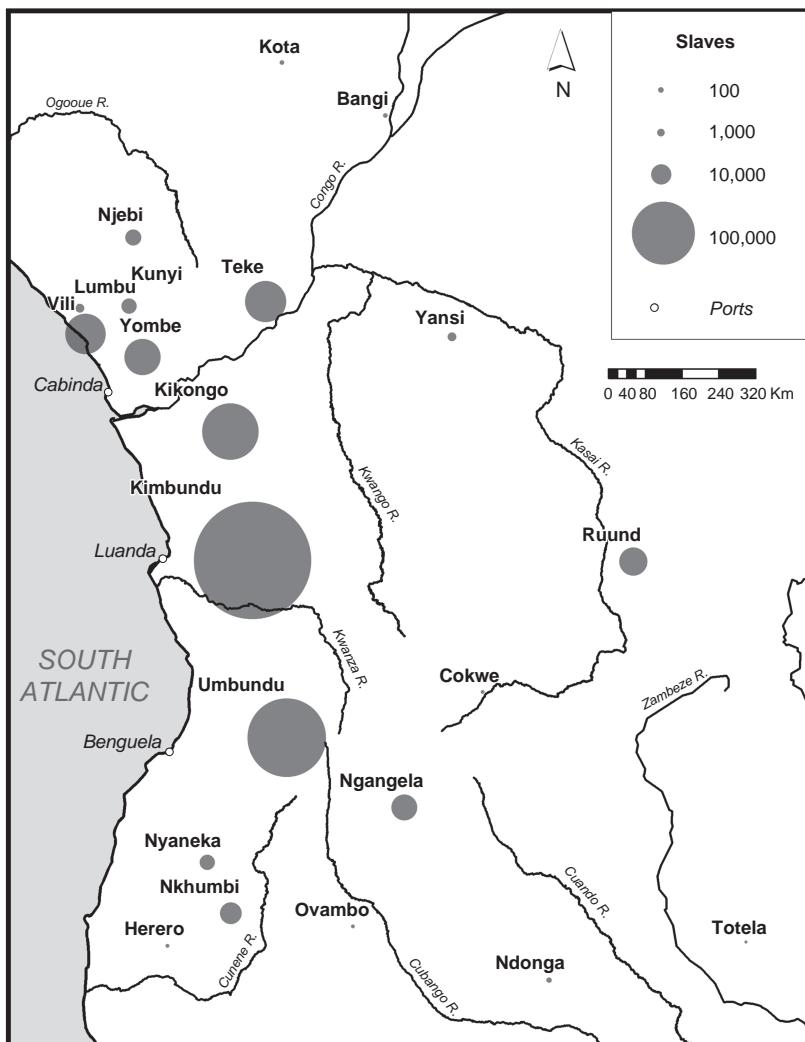


FIGURE 3.1 Estimated number of slaves leaving West Central Africa by linguistic groups, 1831–1855

Source: Appendix B, Table B.24.

Mississippi River. Moreover, captives came from different ecological environments ranging from the Equatorial forest in the north to the arid lands around the Cunene River in the south. In the east, they came from places as distant as the Kasai or Zambeze rivers. Scholars have rightly stressed the extent to which the transatlantic trade expanded

throughout the interior of West Central Africa during the nineteenth century.

However, the most important pattern that Figure 3.1 illustrates is that the vast majority of the slaves carried off in this period did not come from these remote regions. It clearly indicates that they belonged to the Kikongo, Kimbundu, and Umbundu linguistic groups, all of whom lived west of the Kwango River. By the nineteenth century, slave traders had long drawn on these groups as sources of captives for the transatlantic trade. Kikongo slaves first appeared in the historical record in the early sixteenth century, when Portuguese traders sailed to Angola to purchase slaves for their sugar plantations at São Tomé, in the Bight of Biafra.²⁸ Kimbundu slaves are first mentioned shortly thereafter, as Portuguese traders expanded their activities to Luanda, where they founded a colony in 1576.²⁹ Umbundu slaves began to appear in the records somewhat later, around the late seventeenth century, shortly before the Portuguese built the first military garrisons in the Angolan highlands.³⁰ By the nineteenth century Kikongo, Kimbundu, and Umbundu speakers were already well-established and historic targets of the transatlantic trade.

Slaves leaving West Central African ports certainly traveled greater distances prior to embarkation than captives leaving from any other broad region of sub-Saharan Africa. However, these distances were shorter than most scholars claim. Patrick Manning, for instance, contends that in the nineteenth century slaves shipped from West Central Africa came from places situated between 600 and 700 kilometers from the coast.³¹ Joseph Miller argues that at this time they traveled in caravans departing from Lunda, 500 kilometers distant from Kasanje, which in turn is located about 300 kilometers from the coast.³² However, Table 3.1 suggests that in the nineteenth century slaves traveled much shorter distances than this. It provides a breakdown of Africans with known ethnonyms by ports of

²⁸ Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict*, 24–25; Hilton, *The Kingdom of Kongo*, 55–59; Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, 52–54; Miller, *Way of Death*, 140–46.

²⁹ Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict*, 32–33 and 46–51; Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, 125–30; Miller, *Way of Death*, 140–46.

³⁰ Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict*, 140–41; Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, 197–200; Miller, *Way of Death*, 140–46; Roquinaldo Amaral Ferreira, “Transforming Atlantic Slaving: Trade, Warfare and Territorial Control in Angola, 1650–1800” (Ph.D., University of California, 2003), 71–80; Cândido, *Fronteras de Esclavización*, 28–37.

³¹ Manning, *Slavery and African Life*, 70. ³² Miller, *Way of Death*, 195.

TABLE 3.1 *Percentage of slaves leaving West Central Africa by distance traveled between their origins in the interior and their ports of embarkation (in kilometers), 1831–1855*

Distances (km)	Ports north of Luanda	Luanda	Ports south of Luanda	Total
0–100	10.4	0.2	21.2	11.0
101–200	5.4	15.7	10.5	11.8
201–300	7.8	33.5	21.3	24.1
301–400	20.3	15.1	17.9	17.1
401–500	6.9	2.0	11.8	7.1
501–600	12.8	24.5	13.2	17.8
601–700	34.9	0.6	0.7	6.0
701–800	0.9	1.1	0.3	0.7
801 over	0.7	7.2	3.0	4.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Appendix B, Tables B.21, B.22, and B.23.

embarkation and the distances they traveled to reach those ports (or their place of registration). It demonstrates that two out of every three captives traveled distances no greater than 400 kilometers, with the average distance traveled ranging between 200 and 300 kilometers.

But the average is probably subject to some upward bias. The distances that form the basis of Table 3.1 are measured from the heartland of the specified linguistic group, which is often located in places more distant from the coast than the actual population centers. Many Lunda slaves probably originated from areas close to the Kwango River, whereas they were counted in this study as coming from beyond the Kasai River, the traditional heartland of the Ruund-speaking people to which the Lunda belong. This attribution explains the high percentages of Africans coming from regions situated between 500 and 700 kilometers from the coast. Additionally, many Africans who embarked at Luanda but claimed to have come originally from the basin of the Congo River or the Angolan highlands probably did not travel overland from these regions directly to Luanda. They must have traveled first to one of the ports north or south of Luanda and then completed their journey by sea, a much quicker and safer route than crossing dense forests, mountainous regions, and toll roads controlled by local rulers. Actual distances travelled were probably shorter than Table 3.1 suggests.

SLAVERY AND SOCIETY

One of the major implications of the above argument is that Africans transported from West Central Africa became slaves as a result of internecine strife rather than as victims of large-scale wars waged throughout the interior. As previously mentioned, scholars claim that in the nineteenth century the majority of slaves sold into the Atlantic were prisoners of wars waged by Ruund speakers from the Lunda Empire. They argue that Lunda rulers were responding to the demand for slaves on the coast of West Central Africa by extending their military activities throughout the interior. This aggression gave them control over the flow of foreign commodities introduced inland via trade with the Americas. Rulers could use these commodities as an important source of revenue and a way of building dependency and loyalty among their subjects.³³

The supposition that the trade in slaves leaving West Central Africa is connected to the expansion of the Lunda Empire has received further support from research focusing on slavery in Africa. Scholars have long stressed that outsiders were usually the principal targets of enslavement and sale into the trade. Orlando Patterson claims, for example, that natal alienation of slaves was a key component of slave status in any given society.³⁴ Claude Meillassoux argues that Africans regarded outsiders as the primary candidates eligible for enslavement. He maintains that the slave was above all “the alien *par excellence*, if not the alien in an absolute sense.”³⁵ More recently, Sean Stilwell went even further, arguing that “slaves in Africa were not just outsiders; they were also understood as kinless.”³⁶ In short, the idea that outsiders were perfect candidates for enslavement has shaped much of the current scholarship focusing on the question of who was eligible for enslavement and sale across the Atlantic. These views fit well with the idea that the majority of the slaves leaving West Central Africa in the nineteenth century were prisoners of war.

However, the data presented in this chapter suggest that the majority of the captives in this region had more in common with their captors than

³³ Ibid., 78–94 and 146–47; Oppen, *Terms of Trade and Terms of Trust*, 59–61; Vansina, “It Never Happened,” 403; Thornton, “The Chronology and Causes,” 6–8.

³⁴ Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 44. For a recent criticism of this view of slavery, see Vincent Brown, “Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery.” *American Historical Review* 114, no. 5 (2009).

³⁵ Claude Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold*, trans. Alide Dasnois (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 28.

³⁶ Stilwell, *Slavery and Slaving*, 9.

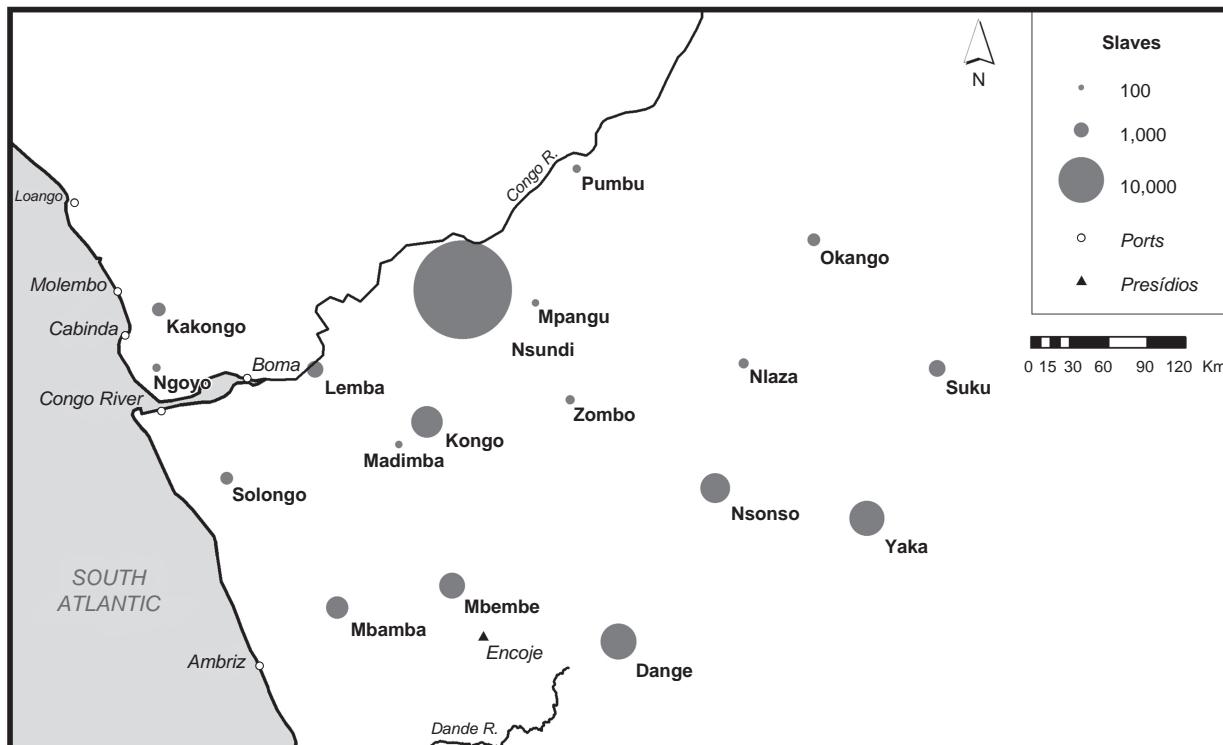
historians have commonly assumed. A more refined analysis is possible for each of the three principal language groups identified in Figure 3.1. Together the Kikongo, Kimbundu, and Umbundu-speaking peoples accounted for 72 percent of the men, women, and children in our sample. The Lunda Empire subjugated none of these groups. They were more likely to have been enslaved as a result of internal conflicts within their own language communities, perhaps through judicial proceedings, debts, and kidnapping. Figures 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 take each of these groups in turn and provide a further breakdown of slaves transported by ethnicity.

Figure 3.2 shows that the majority of the Kikongo slaves came from the former Kingdom of Kongo, which in the nineteenth century was largely fragmented as a result of years of civil wars. However, smaller numbers also came from neighboring polities, such as the kingdoms of Ngoyo, Kakongo, and Yaka. All these societies recognized the nominal power and authority of a king, even though this position was sometimes vacant. Kongo had ceased to exist as a centralized kingdom in the seventeenth century, but the king's position still existed and candidates from different royal lineages disputed the throne among themselves.³⁷ As in other kingdoms, Kikongo society was hierarchical; nobility at the apex, commoners in the middle, and slaves in the lowest tier. Slavery, in fact, predated the transatlantic trade in Kikongo territory, but the incidence of slaves in Kikongo society and the extent to which the trade influenced who, by, and how one could be enslaved likely changed over time. Linda Heywood, among others, argues that the transatlantic trade contributed significantly to changing Kikongo values, laws, and ideas of who could be enslaved.³⁸ Reflecting on the case of the Kongo in particular, she writes:

In the early seventeenth century, when Kongo stopped expanding and waging wars against its neighbors, elites had the opportunity to manipulate the laws concerning the kinds of crimes for which freeborn Kongos could be enslaved. Civil wars which began in the last quarter of the seventeenth century and which continued into the eighteenth further encouraged this process, and contenders for power enslaved the populations of their rivals. Thus, condemning rebels to slavery

³⁷ Susan Broadhead, "Beyond Decline: The Kingdom of Kongo in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries." *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 12, no. 4 (1979): 619–20; Jelmer Vos, "The Kingdom of Kongo and Its Borderlands, 1880–1915" (Ph.D., School of Oriental and African Studies, 2005), 33–42; Hilton, *The Kingdom of Kongo, 218–19*; John K. Thornton, *The Kingdom of Kongo: Civil War and Transition, 1641–1718* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 53.

³⁸ Heywood, "Slavery," 2–3. See also Vos, "The Kingdom of Kongo," 32–33; Hilton, *The Kingdom of Kongo, 121–22*; Thornton, *The Kingdom of Kongo*, 19–20.



FIGURES 3.2 Estimated number of Kikongo slaves leaving West Central Africa by ethnic groups, 1831–1855
Source: Same as Figure 3.1.

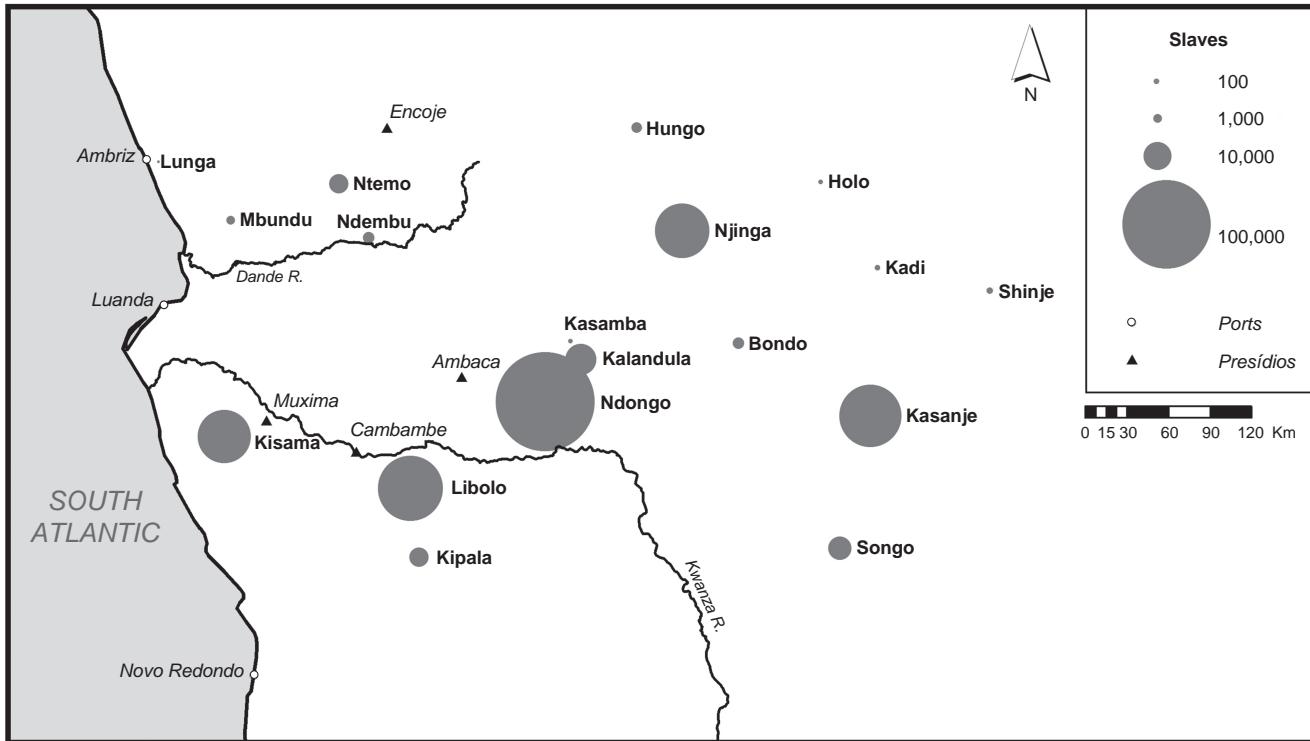


FIGURE 3.3 Estimated number of Kimbundu slaves leaving West Central Africa by ethnic groups, 1831–1855
Source: Same as Figure 3.1.

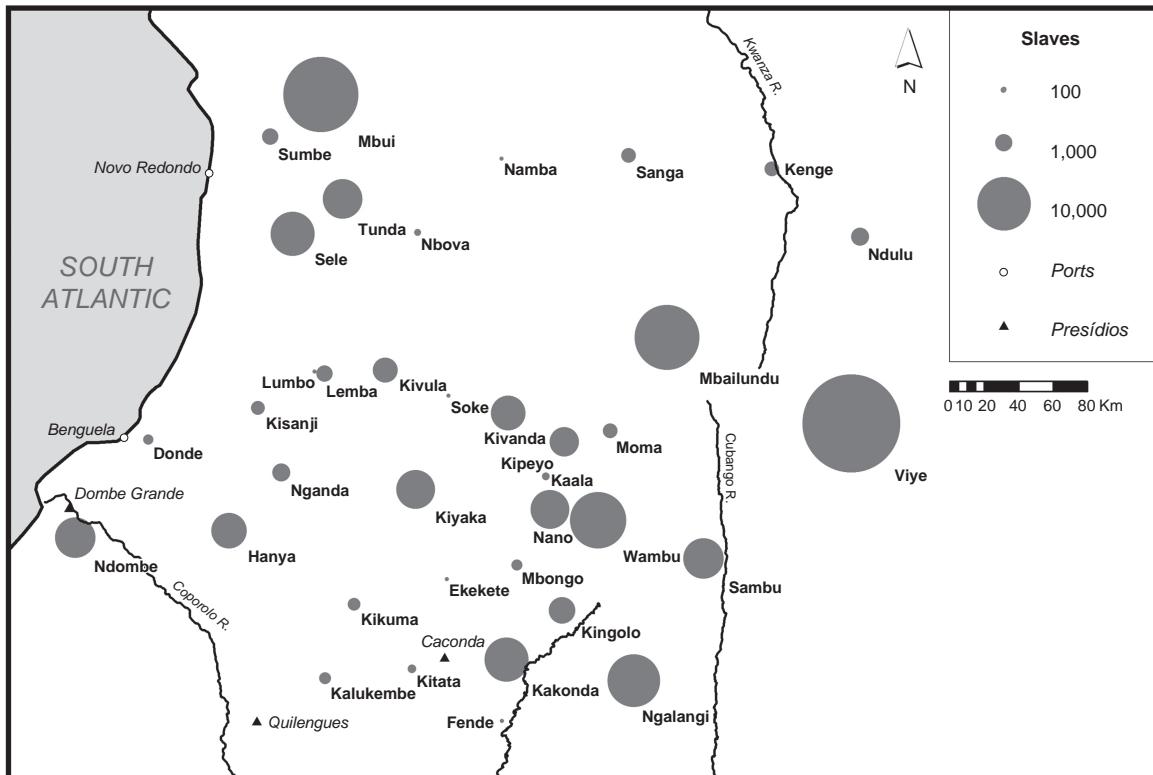


FIGURE 3.4 Estimated number of Umbundu slaves leaving West Central Africa by ethnic groups, 1831–1855
Source: Same as Figure 3.1.

increasingly became the way for freeborn Kongos to lose their freedom. In time, kings and their political rivals openly enslaved free Kongos, selling some to Portuguese and other foreign merchants, sending others as gifts to missionaries and political allies, and keeping the remainder to serve as soldiers, producers or status symbol.³⁹

The majority of the Kikongo-speaking captives shipped from West Central Africa in the nineteenth century belonged to the Nsundi ethnic group. The Nsundi inhabited a province of the old Kingdom of Kongo that went by the same name. In the nineteenth century, the Nsundi became victims of a sophisticated trading network dominated by Kikongo speakers at Boma, at the mouth of the Congo River. Norm Schrag points out that Boma elders believed that the Nsundi, as well as the Yombe, another language group situated north of the Congo River, were “enemies against whom they should not make war but [rather] kidnap through deception.”⁴⁰ These “enemies” were then sold into the Atlantic commerce through the *dingizi* trading system, a commercial network that allowed certain individuals to travel safely through the interior using special insignias belonging to healing cults called *lemba*.⁴¹ Most of these individuals were graduates of the *khimba* schools for youth initiation, organized by chiefs who introduced young free men to knowledge of their spirit world. The graduates used a secret language unknown to other Kikongo speakers and promoted special bonds among the initiates that transcended lineage, territorial domain, and ethnicity.⁴² As a result, Boma traders were able to enslave and sell members of the Nsundi ethnic group even though both spoke the same language and shared similar cultural values.

The impact of the slave trade on the Kikongo speakers in the nineteenth century is difficult to determine, but it must have been distributed unevenly across different regions. John Thornton measured the demographic impact of the slave trade on the Kikongo population living within the boundaries of the old Kingdom of Kongo between 1780 and 1789. He argued that in this period about 600,000 people lived in the kingdom from where an average of 6,180 slaves, or approximately 1 percent of the

³⁹ Heywood, “Slavery,” 12.

⁴⁰ Norm Schrag, “Mboma and the Lower Zaire: A Socioeconomic Study of a Kongo Trading Community, c.1785–1885” (Ph.D., Indiana University, 1985), 62–63.

⁴¹ John Janzen, *Lemba, 1650–1930: A Drum of Affliction in Africa and the New World* (New York: Garland, 1982), 3–6.

⁴² Schrag, “Mboma and the Lower Zaire,” 64–65.

total population, were carried annually.⁴³ This estimate does not include Africans who died during the process of enslavement, transport, and sale on the coast, and is thus a lower bound assessment of the demographic impact of the traffic.

The majority of the slaves shipped came from the kingdom's capital, Mbanza Kongo, which at that time served as the principal stage for the kingdom's civil wars. These slaves were supplemented with other Kikongo speakers captured in different parts of the kingdom, especially Mbrize, Kibangu, and Mbamba Lubota, all three south of Mbanza Kongo.⁴⁴ Not all of these slaves were prisoners of war. According to Thornton's estimates, at least 27 percent of all captives shipped from the Kingdom of Kongo were enslaved through raids or judicial proceedings.⁴⁵ The impact of the slave trade was particularly destructive in the capital, however. In 1780, the population of Mbanza Kongo numbered about 27,600, but by 1789 it had fallen to 18,950; a decline of 31 percent in just ten years.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the overall impact on the kingdom's population was reduced by the importation of slaves from neighboring regions.⁴⁷ In the nineteenth century, the impact of the slave trade on the Kikongo-speaking population likely followed a similar pattern of geographic concentration, but with the majority of the slaves coming from Nsundi rather than Mbanza Kongo.

Similarly, Kimbundu speakers leaving West Central Africa in the nineteenth century were also enslaved as a result of internal conflicts, judicial proceedings, debts, and kidnapping. In fact, their presence in the trade can be established as early as the sixteenth century, when the Portuguese established a colony at Luanda.⁴⁸ Figure 3.3 shows the estimated number of Kimbundu slaves entering the traffic between 1831 and 1855 broken down by ethnic group. The majority of them came from decentralized societies organized around clans or lineages headed by one or more powerful individuals who had a voice in decisions affecting the entire society. These societies included the Kisama, Libolo, Ndembu, and Ndongo. However, captives also came from some centralized states such as Holo, Hungu, Kasanje, Njinga, Shinje, and Songo, generally ruled by a chief or king.

⁴³ John K. Thornton, "As Guerras Civis no Congo e o Tráfico de Escravos: A História e a Demografia de 1718 a 1844 Revisitadas." *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos* 32 (1997): 67 and table 1.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 67. ⁴⁵ Ibid., calculated from table 1. ⁴⁶ Ibid., calculated from table 2.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 68.

⁴⁸ Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict*, 32–33 and 46–51; Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, 125–30; Miller, *Way of Death*, 140–46.

The political impact of the trade on the Kimbundu was particularly destructive. In the sixteenth century, the Ndongo appeared to be on the verge of becoming a centralized society ruled by a king, holder of the title of *ngola*. However, with the increasing demand for slaves on the coast, the Ndongo fell prey to the Portuguese and other Kimbundu societies, notably Kasanje, who raided them for slaves.⁴⁹ As a result, the Ndongo fragmented into a number of chiefdoms called *sobados* by the Portuguese. The latter established suzerainty over local peoples by forcing them to sign vassal treaties reducing them to vassal status, and building a number of forts along the Kwanza River, such as Muxima, Cambambe, and Ambaca. These forts, called *presídios*, are identified on Figure 3.3 by dark triangles. The Portuguese then collected tributes from the *sobados* in slaves and other commodities.⁵⁰

In theory, vassals were not allowed to enslave other vassals, but the demand for slaves on the coast was so high that it stimulated rivalry among different *sobas* or chiefs. As a consequence, instead of capturing non-vassals living near their territories, these *sobas* frequently turned against each other to supply the tributes that their suzerains demanded. Vassals enslaved other vassals through raids, kidnappings, and pawning, to an extent that, ironically, alarmed the Portuguese authorities in Luanda. As Roquinaldo Ferreira notes, “by the end of the eighteenth century, enslavement had become so pervasive in regions under nominal Portuguese control that the Luanda administration was forced to intervene on behalf of African vassals.”⁵¹ The Portuguese worried about the enslavement of vassals less from humanitarian reasons, but rather because the practice had the potential to undermine their authority in the region. It threatened their ability to recruit laborers to carry out services in the colony and encouraged out migration from regions under Portuguese control.⁵² The Portuguese tried to address the problem by creating tribunals and other judicial mechanisms that would ensure all individuals captured were non-vassals, but their efforts produced little results.

⁴⁹ Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict*, 17–20 and 91–96; David Birmingham, *Central Africa to 1870: Zambesia, Zaire and the South Atlantic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 75–83.

⁵⁰ Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict*, 32–33, 50, and 78–79; Heintze, “Luso-African Feudalism in Angola? The Vassal Treaties of the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century,” 123; Beatrix Heintze, “Angola nas Garras do Tráfico de Escravos: As Guerras do Ndongo (1611–1630).” *Revista Internacional de Estudos Africanos* 1 (1984): 11–15. Carlos Couto, however, asserts that tributes were paid mostly in goods. See Couto, *Os Capitães-Mores*, 124–33 and 252–56.

⁵¹ Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange*, 77. ⁵² Ibid., 85–86.

The practice of pawning was deeply rooted. The colonial administration simply had neither the resources nor manpower to police the *sobas* and enforce the laws. Ndongo *sobas* also had few options. If they did not enslave vassals, they would have to wage wars against the more powerful kingdoms of eastern Kimbundu land or against the Kisama and Libolo, in the forest south of the Kwanza River, who the Portuguese were unable to subdue. As Ferreira further observes, “the enslavement of African vassals remained central to production of slaves in Angola well into the nineteenth century.”⁵³

The slave trade had a significant demographic impact on the Ndongo. In 1844, Commander Lopes de Lima traveled to Luanda and consulted the censuses of Portuguese Angola then available in the colonial archives. These censuses began in the late eighteenth century and, because the Ndongo were the largest ethnic group living under Portuguese rule in Angola, they provide valuable evidence about the size of the Ndongo population. According to Lopes de Lima, the censuses indicated that the black population of Portuguese Angola “had grown so little, that it had increased no more than one percent in an interval of twenty years.”⁵⁴ Modern research supports this assessment, at least for an earlier period. John Thornton has established that the slave trade not only reduced the rate of growth among the black population of Portuguese Angola, but also caused a dramatic imbalance between the number of males and females. He concludes that late eighteenth-century Angola was very much a female world, since females outnumbered males in different age and social categories by as much as 60 percent.⁵⁵

Umbundu speakers, the third major linguistic group represented in the registries, exhibited patterns similar to the Kikongo and Kimbundu populations. The Umbundu lived on the central plateau of Angola intermingled among several different societies. The largest of them, Mbailundu and Viye, were located in the east, at the head of the Kwanza and Cubango rivers. They practiced agriculture but their main economic activity comprised long distance trade. Initially, most of the trade was in salt, copper, iron, wax, ivory, and foodstuffs transported between the coast and the populations living east of the Angolan highlands. However, after the arrival of the Portuguese on the coast of southern Angola in the 1610s,

⁵³ Ibid., 87. ⁵⁴ Lopes de Lima, *Ensaios*, vol. 3, 6–7.

⁵⁵ John K. Thornton, “The Slave Trade in Eighteenth Century Angola: Effects on Demographic Structures.” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 14, no. 3 (1980): 421–23.

the Umbundu began to exchange a whole new range of goods, including textiles, spirits, and firearms. It is not clear when these societies adopted a centralized form of government, but linguistic evidence and oral traditions show that they were familiar with concepts of kingship as early as the fourteenth century and that many were living under the authority of rulers before the Portuguese reached the highlands in the mid-seventeenth century.⁵⁶

Slavery in Umbundu land also predated the arrival of the Portuguese, and slaves were used in a variety of ways, from concubines, to laborers, and military officers. However, the transatlantic trade from their region began after Portuguese attempts to find copper mines in the interior of Benguela had failed.⁵⁷ In the eighteenth century, the trade from the central plateau increased with the opening of Benguela in 1716 to direct trade with Brazil and the establishment of Portuguese forts in the Angolan highlands, especially in Caconda.⁵⁸ In the nineteenth century, the trade further expanded, spreading throughout the central plateau. Figure 3.4 presents an estimated ethnic breakdown of the Umbundu-speaking slaves leaving West Central Africa similar to the Kimbundu and Kikongo breakdowns. It shows that the majority of Umbundu captives came from centralized states such as Mbailundu, Viye, Wambu, Kiyaka, Ngalangi, Kivula, Ndulu, Kingolo, Kalukembe, Sambu, Ekekete, Kakonda, and Kitata. These kingdoms collected tribute from other Umbundu kingdoms, such as Kasongi, Ngalangi, Kivanda, Namba, Sanga, Kenge, Kipeyo, Mbongo, and Elende.⁵⁹ However, many of the slaves also came from decentralized societies, such as the Mbui, Hanya, and Ndombe.

The Portuguese channeled these slaves through a series of forts that they had constructed along the Coporolo River and on the slopes of the Angolan highland, such as Quilengues, Dombe Grande, and Caconda. To protect their interests in the region, the Portuguese forced the local populations to sign vassal treaties with them, similar to those they signed with the Kimbundu. As Mariana Cândido notes, these treaties offered

⁵⁶ Vansina, *How Societies Are Born*, 170–82.

⁵⁷ Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict*, 140–41; Maria Emilia Madeira Santos, *Viagens de Exploração Terrestre dos Portugueses em África* (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos de Cartografia Antiga, 1978), 138–41; Ferreira, “Transforming Atlantic Slaving,” 71–80; Cândido, *Fronteras de Esclavización*, 28–29; Cândido, *An African Slaving Port*, 44–50. Add note on slavery.

⁵⁸ Ferreira, “Transforming Atlantic Slaving,” 112–21; Cândido, *Fronteras de Esclavización*, 30–32; Cândido, *An African Slaving Port*, 160–64.

⁵⁹ Childs, *Kinship and Character*, 168; Merran McCulloch, *The Ovimbundu of Angola* (London: International African Institute, 1952), 2.

Portuguese protection to vassals in exchange for tributes. Some of these tributes could be paid in slaves, but vassals were not allowed to enslave other vassals because “they were considered to have embraced the Christian faith.”⁶⁰ The Portuguese thus expected their Umbundu vassals to pay tributes by enslaving non-vassals or delivering people who had at least been born into slavery. As with their Kimbundu counterparts, this system did not work. Most of the Umbundu vassals were unable to resist their more powerful, independent neighbors to the east. Some attacked their fellow vassals, fearing they themselves would be enslaved should they fail to pay tributes. Others claimed that they had been attacked by other vassals and maneuvered the Portuguese to launch a punitive expedition against their neighbors. This situation contributed to an atmosphere of violence and insecurity in the plateau. As Cândido writes, “*sobas* who were raided eventually raided others as a way to generate captives who could be exchanged for weapons, alcohol, and other imported goods, indicating the pervasive effects of the transatlantic slave trade.”⁶¹

Although such raids were important, they were not the exclusive source of Umbundu slaves. Debts and judicial proceedings, especially in cases involving accusations of witchcraft, often resulted in significant numbers of slaves. In the mid-nineteenth century, László Magyar, a refugee of the Hungarian revolutions of 1848, moved to the Angolan highlands. He married the daughter of an Umbundu aristocrat and lived in the Kingdom of Viye for almost ten years, from 1849 to 1858, leaving detailed records of his interactions with the several Umbundu kingdoms on the central plateau. He noticed, for example, that among the Umbundu there were two types of slaves: the *fuka* or *hafuka*, in other words, pawns, and the *dongo*, “slaves captured in war or purchased, whose owners had unlimited power over them.” “The number of the *dongo*,” he continues, “is enormous.” He further noticed that “many of them were imported, but there are also many who were enslaved in the land.” According to Magyar, the Umbundu had vast numbers of slaves because “among these greedy, jealous, and perpetually in conflict people the least offense . . . is considered a *kesila*, a crime, and, since there are no written laws and the customary laws are interpreted and applied in most cases arbitrarily by the powerful in detriment of the vulnerable, we cannot be surprised to find half of the nation enslaved to the other half.” Of all crimes, however, witchcraft produced the most slaves. “The dangerous consequences of crimes based on superstitious beliefs,” Magyar concludes, “contribute

⁶⁰ Cândido, *An African Slaving Port*, 205–06. ⁶¹ Ibid., 208.

significantly for the disgrace of the peoples of southern Africa, because at least half of the several millions of slaves exported over the centuries to the Americas, as well as those who stay in Africa, can attribute their sad fate to these imaginary crimes.”⁶²

Despite the importance of the Umbundu as a source of slaves, Atlantic commerce probably had little impact on the total number of Umbundu speakers living in the central plateau of Angola. Linda Heywood and John Thornton accessed Magyar’s accounts and estimated the size of the Umbundu population on the basis of his knowledge of African systems of tax collection. They argue that the total Umbundu population in this period numbered approximately 1,680,150 individuals, living in Kakonda, Kenge, Kisanji, Kiyaka, Mbailundu, Mbui, Ndulu, Ngalangi, Nganda, Sambu, Sele, Sumbe, Viye, and Wambu.⁶³ The estimates of slaves shipped from the same ethnic groups over the quarter century from 1831 to 1855 is 116,324 individuals, or an average of 4,652 per year. This figure suggests that the proportion of Umbundu slaves sold into the trade each year during the nineteenth century was approximately 0.3 percent of the entire Umbundu population, not a significant proportion. Heywood and Thornton also compared Magyar’s figures with other data available for a selected number of Umbundu societies in the late eighteenth century and noted that the Umbundu had grown in the nineteenth century, thanks to the incorporation of slaves from other linguistic groups. The Umbundu kingdoms of the central plateau shared borders with a number of peoples from whom they drew slaves, especially females in the fertile age range. Newcomers included the Nyaneka, Nkhumbi, Ovambo, and notably the Ngangela, a group whose name was originally derived from a derogatory term that Umbundu speakers gave to the people living east of the central plateau.⁶⁴ The Umbundu sold some of these slaves to the coast, but they also kept some of them within their

⁶² László Magyar, *Reisen in Süd-Afrika in den Jahren 1849 bis 1857* (Pest and Leipzig: Lauffer & Stolp, 1859), chap. 7 and 8. I would like to thank Conceição Neto for allowing me to use the forthcoming Portuguese translation by Chá de Caxinde of the German edition of Magyar’s work.

⁶³ These do not include the Massongo, Kubala, Libolo, and Haku, listed in Thornton and Heywood’s chart 1, since they were actually Kimbundu speakers. See Linda Heywood and John Thornton, “African Fiscal Systems as Sources for Demographic History: The Case of Central Angola, 1799–1920.” *Journal of African History* 29, no. 2 (1988): 213–19.

⁶⁴ According to Gladwin Childs, the Ngangela included the Luimbi, Cimbandi, Lucazi, Cyemba, Ngonzelo, Chokwe, and other peoples who lived east of the central plateau. See Childs, *Kinship and Character*, 173, footnote 1.

kingdoms. Consequently, despite the continuation of the slave trade from their area, the Umbundu population actually increased in size between the late eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth centuries.⁶⁵

CONCLUSION

Analysis of the lists of liberated Africans from Cuba and Brazil in addition to the slave registers of Angola challenges current interpretations of the origins of slaves and the ways they entered the transatlantic traffic. Regions adjacent to the coast were the source of most captives, rather than Lunda prisoners from the deep interior. It also draws attention to an important aspect of the history of the transatlantic trade. Africans enslaved and sold one another into the trade for nearly four hundred years, albeit under pressures that emanated from the Atlantic world. However, it should be noted that these individuals did not regard themselves as Africans. In fact, the documentary evidence suggests that they defined themselves on the basis of ties to localized polities, lineages, or ethnic groups. They might speak the same language as their captors, live next to one another, worship the same deities, but they could still be considered “outsiders.” This restricted sense of localized identity had disastrous consequences for some communities, such as the Nsundi and the Ndongo. Others were able to minimize the demographic impact of the trade by incorporating slaves from other linguistic groups into their own societies, as did the Umbundu of the central plateau of Angola. It is clear that these localized forms of identity were an essential prerequisite for the continuation of the transatlantic trade in the nineteenth century and probably in earlier centuries too.

⁶⁵ Heywood and Thornton, “African Fiscal Systems,” 223–25; Heywood, *Contested Power in Angola*, 2–3, 10–11, and 17.

The Demographic Profile of the Enslaved Population

Any new insights into how captives entered the traffic must take into account their age and sex. The demographic profile of the population forced into the trade provides important clues about master preference for slaves in the Americas. Did they prefer male or female slaves? Adult or children? Did this preference change over time? Why? The sex and age of captives also provide insights into who Africans regarded as eligible for enslavement and sale overseas. Was African preference for slaves any different from that of masters in the Americas? Which was dominant? Could they have been complementary? Only an analysis of African and European conceptions of gender and age, coupled with a careful assessment of the demographic data of slaves forced into the Atlantic, will help clarify these questions.

In the nineteenth century, British efforts to suppress the transatlantic trade increased the demand for slave women in Brazil and Spanish America. Planters in these regions feared that, if Britain succeeded in abolishing the trade, the captive population on their plantations would decline rapidly. They looked to increase the ratio of women to men on their properties in the expectation that the slave population would soon increase by natural means, so negating the need to rely on arrivals from Africa. Indeed, until the abolition of the trade, the growth of the captive population in Brazil and the Caribbean had depended largely on the transatlantic trade. The working conditions on the Brazilian and Cuban plantations were so demanding that planters often preferred to buy able-bodied slaves from Africa rather than raising slave children to adulthood.¹

¹ Carlos Augusto Taunay, *Manual do Agricultor Brasileiro*, ed. Rafael de Bivar Marquese (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2001), 76–80; Maria Graham, *Journal of a Voyage to*

Furthermore, mortality rates among slaves working on plantations, especially sugar plantations, but also rice, coffee, and cotton, were particularly high, restricting the natural growth of slave populations in many parts of the Americas.² At the same time, the Industrial Revolution in Europe reduced the cost of merchandise used to obtain slaves, making it possible for planters to buy more able-bodied individuals.³

However, planter preferences had little impact on the demographic profile of the slave population leaving West Central Africa after 1800. Although planters tried to increase the number of females on their plantations, males continued to outnumber women in West Central African departures. Moreover, captives sold into the trade during the nineteenth century were on average younger than those sold in previous centuries. All this suggests that planter preferences were but one factor shaping the demographic profile of the traffic from West Central Africa. African enslavers, traders, and owners were also primary agents determining the sex and age patterns of the export trade. This finding has profound implications for the history of the transatlantic trade, because it fundamentally challenges accepted wisdom about who shaped the trade and decided which individuals were eligible for enslavement and sale across the Atlantic.

Scholars in the past have generally claimed that planter preferences were the principal factor shaping the demographic profile of captives embarked from Africa. They have argued that the majority of slaves embarked were men because planters believed that males were more able than females to endure the harsh work conditions on cash crop plantations in the Americas.⁴ Additionally, in most European societies, men usually performed most of the heavy labor in agriculture, such as clearing, plowing, and harvesting, while women generally attended to

Brazil and Residence There during Part of the Years 1821, 1822, 1823 (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1824), 289; Alexander Humboldt, *The Island of Cuba*, trans. J. S. Thrasher (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1856), 213–16 and 227–29.

² B. W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807–1834* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 314–17 and 374–78; Herbert S. Klein and Francisco Vidal Luna, *Slavery in Brazil* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 167–68; Manuel Moreno Fraguinals, *The Sugarmill: The Socioeconomic Complex of Sugar in Cuba, 1760–1860* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), 55, 142–43, and 148.

³ Eltis, *Economic Growth*, 47–48; Miller, *Way of Death*, 496–502 and 635–36.

⁴ Jacob Gorender, *O Escravismo Colonial* (São Paulo: Ática, 1978), 321–24; Fernando Ortiz, *Los Negros Esclavos* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1975), 196–99; Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 38.

household chores, such as making preserves, clothing, and selling home-grown produce in neighboring markets.⁵ When Europeans migrated, they took with them their gender perceptions of the division of labor, which they sought to replicate on the cash crop plantations of the Americas. Scholars long accepted that the proportion of approximately two males for every female exported in the overall history of the traffic was the result of planters demanding more slave men than women.

However, in recent decades a number of studies have challenged this interpretation. According to this new view, the majority of slaves sold into the transatlantic trade were men not because planters believed that males could support the labor regime of plantation agriculture better than females but because Africans valued female labor more highly than male labor. Ester Boserup, for example, drew attention to women's participation in African economic development. She observed that women played a central role in both agriculture and trade in Africa.⁶ Claire Robertson and Martin Klein then noted the importance of female labor in Africa, stressing that most slaves as well as their owners on the continent were women rather than men.⁷ Finally, in a recent publication with Gwyn Campbell and Suzanne Miers, Joseph Miller has also emphasized the importance of women in African economies by showing not only that they outnumbered men in earlier times but also "that they played crucial roles in the politics of the men who brought them into their households, and sometimes also the economies of the women in them."⁸

Such findings have prompted new research into the gender component of the slave trade. For example, after examining the sexual distribution of slaves shipped from Africa by different European carriers, Herbert Klein argued that Africans exercised a direct control over this movement by keeping what for them were more highly valued women off the market. Klein held that the preferences of planters in the Americas and Africans were complementary.⁹ David Eltis and Stanley Engerman analyzed sex and age data of slaves sold into the trade between the seventeenth and

⁵ Carlo M. Cipolla, *Before the Industrial Revolution: European Society and Economy, 1000–1700* (New York: Norton, 1976), 59–60; Louise Tilly and Joan W. Scott, *Women, Work, and Family* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978), 32–37 and 44–47; Merry E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd edn. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 108–11.

⁶ Ester Boserup, *Woman's Role in Economic Development* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1970), 16–24.

⁷ Robertson and Klein, "Women's Importance in African Slave Systems," 3–5.

⁸ Miller, "Women as Slaves and Owners of Slaves," 1.

⁹ Klein, "African Women," 34–37.

nineteenth centuries and discovered that men made up less than half of all slaves embarked from Africa. They noted the proportion of women dropped markedly from a relatively high level in the seventeenth century, while the number of boys and girls rose strongly into the nineteenth century, with the increase in the ratio of girls being the most dramatic of any of the four categories. They concluded that men were not the dominant sex and age category in the trade and that their relative importance probably declined over time.¹⁰ Finally, Ugo Nwokeji analyzed the trade from the Bight of Biafra and noted that the sex distribution of slaves embarked from this region differed significantly from that of other regions of embarkation in Africa. He observed economic factors alone cannot account for this difference either in Africa or the Americas. Rather, he argues that in this particular region “African conceptions of gender shaped the sex and age structure of the overseas slave trade.”¹¹ All in all, recent studies of the trade have suggested that Africans may have been major, if not the primary, agents shaping the demographic profile of slaves carried across the Atlantic.

MALES AND FEMALES

What was the situation in nineteenth-century West Central Africa? Data on the sex and age of slaves embarked from the region in this period is fragmentary at best. However, they indicate that Africans had a major influence on determining the demography of slave departures. Table 4.1 shows the percentage of males leaving the region between 1781 and 1867 by destination based on 316 voyages available in the “Voyages” database. It confirms the traditional opinion about the sexual distribution of individuals sold into the trade, with males accounting for 68 percent of all captives embarked. The last row of the table shows little variation across regions of disembarkation. The majority of the captives leaving West Central Africa were males regardless of their final destination in the Americas.

However, the proportion of males embarked did increase significantly during the period of the illegal trade. Table 4.1 shows that between 1781 and 1805 about 66 percent of those shipped were males. This proportion decreased to 64 percent between 1806 and 1830, probably the response of Cuban and Brazilian planters to British efforts to abolish the trade. They

¹⁰ Eltis and Engerman, “Was the Slave Trade Dominated by Men?” 241.

¹¹ Nwokeji, “African Conceptions of Gender,” 66.

TABLE 4.1 *Percentage of male slaves leaving West Central Africa by region of disembarkation, 1781–1867*

Years	British and French Caribbean	Cuba	Brazil	Other	Total
1781–1805	65.0 (45.8)	70.4 (7.3)	69.7 (0.8)	64.3 (3.7)	65.7 (57.6)
1806–1830	71.4 (1.5)	61.2 (5.9)	50.0 (0.2)	70.0 (1.2)	64.0 (8.8)
1831–1855	81.5 (1.7)	79.0 (2.8)	67.1 (3.8)	74.3 (16.5)	74.2 (24.8)
1856–1867	91.1 (0.5)	42.6 (0.6)	—	74.1 (8.6)	73.3 (9.7)
Total	66.1 (49.5)	67.3 (16.6)	66.5 (4.8)	72.3 (30.0)	67.9 (100.9)

Note: Numbers in brackets represent thousands of slaves for whom data are available.

Source: David Eltis et al., “Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database,” Online database, 2008, www.slavevoyages.org.

expected to use the females they had brought to expand the slave population on their plantations in case the British succeeded in their endeavors to cut the traffic completely, but the ratio of males embarked increased sharply to 74 percent between 1831 and 1855 and remained high between 1856 and 1867 despite planter demands for more females.

Planters in general valued males more highly than females but, as we have seen, in the first decades of the nineteenth century there was an increased demand for females. This demand narrowed the price differential between males and females at the main slave markets of the Americas. Manolo Florentino has accessed probate records of slave owners who had lived in rural areas of Rio de Janeiro between 1790 and 1830, then the principal destination for slaves leaving West Central Africa.¹² These records list the value of each individual by age, sex, and origin, that is, whether the slaves were Africans or Creoles. They indicate that planter attitudes toward females were shifting as the British pressed to end the traffic. Among African slaves aged 12 to 55 years old, the price differential between males and females decreased from 25 percent between 1810 and 1812 to 14 percent between 1815 and 1817. In the following years, this figure continued to decline, from 11 percent between 1820 and 1822 to 9 percent between 1825 and 1827. In 1830, the last year of the legal trade to Brazil, and also the final year for which price data are available, the price difference for captives brought from Africa was slightly under 9 percent.¹³ Among Creoles in the same age group there was a similar

¹² Florentino, *Em Costas Negras*, 59–60.

¹³ Ibid., 220.

price pattern between males and females, though less pronounced. The price differential between male and female Creoles decreased sharply from 22 percent between 1815 and 1817 to 11 percent between 1820 and 1822 and then increased again to 14 percent in 1825 to 1827 and to 17 percent in 1830.¹⁴ All in all, the higher relative price for females suggests that planters had changed their attitudes toward the acquisition of females, especially those from Africa.

Pictorial representations of plantation labor in the Americas indicate that planters had no reservations about putting female slaves alongside males in the most demanding tasks. Jerome Handler and Michael Tuite have grouped into a single website images of plantations scenes and agriculture labor published in periodicals, as well as travelers' accounts from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. These images are a rich source for our understanding of the sexual division of labor in the plantations and cities of the Americas.¹⁵ One of the most revealing sets of images, published in 1823, is William Clark's *Ten Views in the Island of Antigua*. It clearly shows women working in every stage of sugar production, including digging, cutting, fetching, and carrying sugar cane.¹⁶ Planters in nineteenth-century Brazil were no different. Henry Koster, who lived in Pernambuco between 1809 and 1815, reported that it was common for slave women to work alongside men in the Brazilian sugar mills. Figure 4.1 is a copy of an image published in Koster's account showing two women working in a sugar mill; one is carrying cane while the other is feeding it to the sugar mill. His interpretation is that "two men and two women are employed in feeding the mill with cane."¹⁷ Maria Graham also noted the use of women in sugar production in Brazil. She travelled throughout the interior of Rio de Janeiro between 1821 and 1823 and saw slave women working in one of the first steam-powered mills then existing in Brazil.¹⁸ Steam-powered milling of sugar cane was a key technological innovation on nineteenth-century plantations.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Jerome S. Handler and Michael L. Tuite Jr., "The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Americas: A Visual Record," Online database, (2008), <http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/>.

¹⁶ William Clark, *Ten Views in the Island of Antigua* (London: T. Clay, 1823). Reproduced in Handler and Tuite Jr., "The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Americas," image reference NWoo51, NWoo52, NWoo54, and NWoo65.

¹⁷ Henry Koster, *Travels in Brazil* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1816), 348.

¹⁸ Maria Graham, *Journal of a Voyage to Brazil and Residence There during Part of the Years 1821, 1822, 1823* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1824), 282–83.



FIGURE 4.1 A sugar mill, Brazil, 1816

Source: Henry Koster, *Travels in Brazil* (London: Longman, Hurst Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1816), 336. Reproduced from “Internet Archive,” 1996–
<https://archive.org/details/travelsinbraziookost>.

In 1854, the *Illustrated London News* published an article about the application of this new technology in Brazil, and the image illustrating the article showed three slave women milling sugar cane in one of De Mornay's steam-powered mills on the Caraúna plantation, Pernambuco.¹⁹

Milling sugar cane may not seem as exacting as toiling in the fields, but it was in fact hard work. Since the sixteenth century, travelers often described the labor routine in Brazilian sugar mills as a hell for blacks.²⁰ Because the juice had to be extracted from the cane as soon as it was cut, the sugar mill had to operate almost continually from August to the beginning of May of the following year.²¹ Moreover, in Brazil the boiling

¹⁹ “Sugar Manufacture in Brazil.” *The Illustrated London News* 25 (9 September 1854): 232. A copy of this article’s image is available in Handler and Tuite Jr., “The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Americas,” image reference pg232.

²⁰ André João Antonil, *Cultura e Opulência do Brasil* (Belo Horizonte: Itatiaia, 1982), 92–93.

²¹ Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations*, 99–106. In Cuba, sugar mills could operate up to 16 hours per day during the peak of the harvest seasons. See Ortiz, *Los Negros Esclavos*, 189.

house was commonly located next to the mill. As a consequence, in addition to the stress of milling cane, workers also had to endure the heat coming from the caldrons of the boiling house.²²

Work at the sugar mills was particularly dangerous because of the risk of slaves losing a limb while feeding cane between the sugar mill rollers. Henry Koster witnessed such accidents and reported planters' precautions to avoid them. He also noted that some planters began using oxen instead of horses to run their mills, because the screams of the blacks caught in the rollers sometimes caused horses to draw the mill with increased velocity. Oxen, by contrast, moved more slowly and tended to stop rather than speed up when such accidents occurred. Koster describes:

Negros who thrust the cane in between the rollers have sometimes allowed their hands to go too far, and one or both of them having been caught, in some instances, before assistance could be given, the whole limb and even the body has been crushed to pieces. In the mills belonging to owners who pay attention to the safety of their negroes, and whose wish it is to have every thing in proper order, a bar of iron and a hammer are placed close to the rollers upon the table which supports the cane. The bar is intended to be violently inserted between the rollers in case of an accident, so as to open them, and this set at liberty the unfortunate negro. In some instances I have seen lying by the side of the bar and hammer, a well tempered hatchet, for the purpose of severing the limb from the body if judged necessary.²³

The flames heating the caldrons, intense work routine, and horrendous accidents were enough to evoke the image of hell in the minds of European travelers. Slave women's work, however, was not restricted to planting and milling sugar. Historians have noted that women were employed in a wide variety of activities located in the countryside as well as urban centers. They typically worked as servants, maids, cooks, porters, weavers, sewers, hucksters, washers, midwives, and in many other capacities. Some activities were well-known domains of female slaves, such as wet nursing and prostitution.²⁴ All the evidence from nineteenth-century Brazil points to female slaves being just as useful to planters as male slaves. Forces shaping the demographic profile of slaves leaving West Central Africa were more likely to have originated in Africa than in the Americas.

Breaking out the regional data into groupings of port of departure provides further evidence of African influence. Table 4.2 shows that over the whole period 69 percent of the slaves embarked were males. However, the proportion of males shipped varied significantly from port to port.

²² Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations*, 115–18. ²³ Koster, *Travels in Brazil*, 348–49.

²⁴ Karasch, *Slave Life*, 203–10 and 230–31.

TABLE 4.2 *Percentage of male slaves leaving West Central Africa by port of embarkation, 1781–1867*

Years	Ports north of Luanda	Luanda	Ports south of Luanda	Total
1781–1805	65.7 (26.7)	68.2 (0.6)	74.7 (0.2)	65.9 (27.5)
1806–1830	68.9 (4.4)	53.8 (3.1)	—	62.8 (7.5)
1831–1855	81.0 (13.3)	75.6 (2.9)	62.2 (7.2)	74.5 (23.4)
1856–1867	73.3 (9.8)	—	—	73.3 (9.8)
Total	70.5 (54.2)	63.2 (6.6)	63.3 (7.4)	68.9 (68.2)

Note: Numbers in brackets represent thousands of slaves for whom data are available.

Source: Same as Table 4.1.

In the African-controlled ports located north of Luanda, about 70 percent were males. As we have seen, most came from the Kimbundu, Kikongo, and Vili-speaking peoples, who lived in matrilineal societies where women had a prominent role in decisions about production and reproduction. In contrast, the ratio of males embarked from the Portuguese ports was considerably lower; only 63 percent of those leaving Luanda and the ports south of Luanda were males. The populations inhabiting the hinterlands of these ports were also matrilineal societies; the Kimbundu again, as well as the Umbundu. Since planters in the nineteenth century purchased slaves of both sexes, the variation in the ratio of males shipped from these ports is likely a result of African conceptions of who could be enslaved and who could not. Some societies were simply more open to selling females into the trade than others.

The sexual distribution of slaves embarked from each of these ports also varied considerably over time. In the ports north of Luanda, the proportion of males embarked increased continuously between 1781 and 1855, from 66 to 81 percent, declining thereafter to 73 percent between 1856 and 1867. In contrast, the ratio of males shipped from Luanda declined initially from 68 percent between 1781 and 1805 to 54 percent between 1806 and 1830. However, it increased again to 76 percent between 1831 and 1855. Data for the ports south of Luanda are incomplete, but the evidence available suggests that the proportion of males shipped declined between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from 75 percent between 1781 and 1805 to 62 percent between 1831 and 1855. These data indicate that the populations living in the central plateau were inclined to sell more females into the trade than other populations living in the region's interior.

West Central Africans in general had several reasons for selling more males than females into the trade. Many males were trained soldiers who had been captured in wars waged by different polities within the region. As prisoners of war, they were expensive to maintain and at the same time potentially rebellious. Some of these prisoners came from the central plateau of Angola. They were soldiers of the Nano Wars waged by several Umbundu polities during the first half of the nineteenth century, especially Viye, Mbailundu, and Wambu.²⁵ African masters, enslavers, and traders in general usually looked to sell these slaves on the coast as soon as they could. This outlet gave them a convenient way of reducing maintenance costs, avoiding potential rebellions, and making a profit from an undesirable “commodity.”

A second reason for retaining females was that women were an integral part of the work force throughout the larger region, especially in food production. Europeans frequently commented on women digging, planting, harvesting, and processing food with children strapped on their backs. Father Giovanni Antonio Cavazzi de Montecuccolo travelled throughout the kingdoms of Ndongo, Kongo, and Matamba between 1654 and 1667 and noted that “women performed almost all agricultural work.”²⁶ One of his illustrations depicts a woman with a child strapped on her back preparing the soil for cultivation with a hoe. Over two hundred years later, the Portuguese explorers Hermenegildo Capello and Roberto Ivens, travelling overland from Benguela to Yaka, recorded the same scene near the Kwango River, reproduced here in Figure 4.2.²⁷ Women’s work was essential to the economies of West Central African societies, so much so that African masters, enslavers, and slave traders often considered it more important to hold rather than sell female slaves into the transatlantic trade.

A further reason Africans preferred to retain females lies in the importance of their role in the distribution of wealth and power within West

²⁵ Bernardino Freire de Figueiredo Abreu e Castro, “Colonia de Mossamedes,” *Annaes do Conselho Ultramarino (Parte Não Oficial)* ser. 1 (1855): 152; Joachim John Monteiro, *Angola and the River Congo* (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1876), 289; Péliśnier, *História das Campanhas de Angola*, vol. 1, 173–75 and 187–92; Redinha, *Distribuição Étnica de Angola*, 16–17; Catarina Madeira Santos, “Um Governo ‘Polido’ para Angola: Reconfigurar Dispositivos de Domínio (1750-c.1800)” (Doctorate, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2005), 299–308.

²⁶ João António Cavazzi de Montecuccolo, *Descrição Histórica dos Três Reinos de Congo, Matamba e Angola*, trans. Graciano Maria Leguzzano (Lisbon: Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, 1965), vol. 1, 38–39.

²⁷ Hermenegildo Capello and Roberto Ivens, *De Benguella às Terras de Iácca: Descrição de uma Viagem na África Central e Ocidental* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1881), vol. 1, 53–54 and 177.



FIGURE 4.2 African Women working the fields near the Kwango River, 1881.
Source: Hermenegildo Capello and Roberto Ivens, *De Benguela às Terras de Iácca: Descrição de uma Viagem na África Central e Ocidental* (Lisbona: Imprensa Nacional, 1881), vol. 1, 177. Reproduced from “Internet Archive,” 1996-, <https://archive.org/details/debenguellasterro1cape>.

Central African societies. Although power was usually in the hands of men, most of these societies were matrilineal, which meant that wealth and power were passed on through maternal lines of succession. This practice often led men who wanted to protect inherited wealth and power to marry kinless women so that their inheritance would not be disbursed among their brothers-in-law or their own children, who were the legal heirs of their mothers and maternal uncles. Thus, many African men sought to marry slave women to avoid the dispersal of their wealth and power to the families of their spouses.²⁸ Moreover, in most African societies, the

²⁸ Hilton, *The Kingdom of Kongo*, 85–90; Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 12–15; Kristin Mann, *Slavery and the Birth of an African City: Lagos, 1760–1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 76–79; Manning, *Slavery and African Life*, 118–22;

number of dependents a man had commonly served as an important indicator of a man's status.²⁹ Marrying slave women ensured that any offspring legally belonged to their fathers instead of their mothers and uncles. The African preference for female over male slaves is easy to understand.

YOUNG AND OLD

Culturally specific norms also influenced the age profile of individuals sold into the trade from West Central Africa. Traditionally, planters and slave owners in the Americas purchased more adults than children from Africa because they could put them to work as soon as they arrived. However, in the nineteenth century, slaves leaving the region were younger than in previous centuries, suggesting that, despite the planter preference for adults, the number of children shipped tended to increase over time. Explanations for such a trend are more likely to be found either in Africa or in attempts to suppress the slave trade on the African coast than in Europe.

Comparing age categories of persons sold into the trade is considerably harder than comparing sexual categories. The age an individual enters adulthood differs from culture to culture and is subject to many interpretations. Europeans often recorded the age of slaves purchased in Africa according to their own perceptions of age. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Europeans believed that individuals entered adulthood when they became eligible for marriage. In southern Europe, females were generally eligible for marriage when they reached puberty at about 12 years old. Males were commonly eligible for marriage about the time they could bear arms and serve in the army. As a result, European females usually reached adulthood before males. The Constitutions of the Archbishopric of Bahia, which guided moral conduct in the Portuguese empire, ruled that females were eligible for marriage when they reached

Joseph C. Miller, "Imbangala Lineage Slavery." In *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 211–15; Miller, *Way of Death*, 94–103; Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, 219.

²⁹ Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 12–15; Mann, *Slavery and the Birth of an African City*, 79–81; Manning, *Slavery and African Life*, 122–25; Miller, *Way of Death*, 42–53; Alberto da Costa e Silva, *A Manilha e o Libambo: A África e a Escravidão de 1500–1700* (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 2002), 370; Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, 91; Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, 194–96.

12 years of age, while males were eligible for marriage only after they turned 14 years old.³⁰ Thus, by our standards many of the individuals that Europeans recorded as adult slaves were probably teenagers.

Perception of adulthood among West Central Africans during the period of the trade was not very different from that of Europeans previously described. However, in Africa both sexes generally had to undergo rituals of initiation before being considered adults. Because physical signs of adulthood are less clear in males than in females, males had to undergo extensive rituals of initiation that culminated with circumcision. These rituals were frequently carried out in camps outside the home villages, towns, and cities from which the initiates came. Additionally, these rituals introduced young males to techniques of hunting, warfare, and other responsibilities associated with manhood in their societies. In some societies, these rituals could be exceedingly cruel. Galdwyn Childs noted that among the twentieth-century Umbundu speakers of the central plateau of Angola the “hardship and the cruelty of the initiation camps have their parallel in the trading and slave trading expeditions of the past.”³¹ In any event, Portuguese and West Central Africans probably had similar notions of when individuals reached adulthood.

However, the specifics of carrying slaves across the Atlantic sometimes influenced the way Europeans distinguished children from adults. From the sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth century, for example, Portuguese and Spanish traders identified slave children not by their approximate age but by their height. They counted slaves in terms of *peças da Índia*, or in *piezas de Índia* in Spanish. This term, literally a piece of Asian cloth, referred to one of the most popular commodities used to purchase slaves on the African coast. In the seventeenth century, a *peça* in Spanish contracts for the slave trade equaled the value of a healthy adult, male or female, measuring seven or more quarters of a *vara*.³² The *vara* was a medieval form of measurement of length that varied over time from region to region. The Seville *vara* was the standard used in the Angolan-Brazilian maritime trade. In the nineteenth century, the length of a Seville *vara* was approximately 83.59 centimeters or 32.9 inches, so the height of a *peça da Índia* in the nineteenth century was about 146 centimeters or 57 inches.³³

³⁰ Sebastião Monteiro da Vide, *Constituições Primeiras do Arcebispado da Bahia* (São Paulo: Typographia de António Louzada Antunes, 1853), 109–10, Title 64.

³¹ Childs, *Kinship and Character*, 116–17. ³² Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamerica*, 189–90.

³³ Converted according to the “Real Orden del 9 de Diciembre de 1852.” In Carlos Sanguineti, *Diccionario Jurídico-Administrativo* (Madrid: Imprenta de la Revista de Legislacion y Jurisprudencia, 1858), 643–55.

This was rather short for a healthy adult, male or female. David Eltis showed that in the nineteenth century adult males shipped from any part of the African coast south of the Sahara measured on average between 157 and 166 centimeters, while females measured between 151 and 157 centimeters.³⁴ In any event, Portuguese slave traders between the sixteenth and the mid-eighteenth century calculated the carrying capacity of their vessels by adding the heights of their slaves in *peças da Índia* and dividing it by a *vara craveira*, which measured about 525 centimeters.³⁵ In general, three *peças* were allowed for each ton, so that Portuguese and Spanish traders could in fact write contracts for the trade specifying the volume of the cargo to be shipped across the Atlantic.³⁶ Additionally, this practice allowed customs officials to collect taxes on the basis of able-bodied equivalencies rather than on the actual number of captives. The contract of the Companhia da Guiné, for example, specified that it had to deliver “ten thousand tons of slaves” from Africa to the Spanish Americas between 1699 and 1705.³⁷ As a consequence, until the eighteenth century, references to children in documents related to the Portuguese and Spanish trades are rare.

In the eighteenth century, the term *peça da Índia* was increasingly replaced by a new term, *cabeça*, indicating a single adult. Because a *cabeça* did not necessarily imply the same labor power as a healthy adult, the Portuguese government began to tax slaves according to different age categories. These categories, however, were also based on the height of the slaves rather than their actual age. The trade contract that the Portuguese government awarded to Manoel Barbosa Torres in 1753 to carry slaves from Angola stated that “the duties for *cabeças* and children who do not fit the established requirements of *peças da Índia* will be paid relative to the *peças da Índia* with the proviso that the children must not be more than four *palmos* tall.”³⁸ *Palmos* was a measurement of length equivalent approximately to 22 centimeters in the nineteenth century.

³⁴ David Eltis, “Nutritional Trends in Africa and the Americas: Heights of Africans, 1819–1839.” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 12, no. 3 (1982): 459, Table 1.

³⁵ J. Lúcio de Azevedo, *Épocas de Portugal Económico*, 4th edn. (Lisbon: Livraria Clássica, 1988), 75–76.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ “Assento para a Introdução dos Negros das Índias Espanholas, Feito entre o Conselho Real das Índias e um Sócio da Companhia Real da Guiné, em Madrid a 12 de Julho de 1699.” In Carreira, *As Companhias Pombalinas*, 309.

³⁸ Dom José I, “Carta de Sua Mag. sobre a Remataçam do Contrato dos Direitos Novos que a Rematou Manoel Barbosa Torres dos Direitos dos Escravos q’ se Embarcam desta Cid. de Loanda p. os Portos do Brazil.” *Arquivos de Angola*, 1, 2, no. 13–15 (1936): 521.

Therefore, slaves considered children could not be taller than 88 centimeters, a very short stature compared to 146 centimeters of a *peça da Índia*.³⁹

In the eighteenth century, the Portuguese began to separate children embarked from West Central Africa into two different categories. The first category they called *crias de pé* or children able to stand. The second category they called *crias de peito* or nursing infants. The distinction between *crias de pé* and *crias de peito* resulted from a conflict over how to tax children put on board Portuguese ships on the coast of West Central Africa. Until the eighteenth century, the heights of children were added to those of adults and taxes were then collected in *peças da Índia*. However, as traders and customs officials began to count slaves in *cabeças*, they had to create a new way of taxing children. In 1758 the Portuguese government settled the conflict with a tax reform that levied different taxes on children and adults embarked. *Crias de pé* measuring four *palmos* or less were charged half the taxes paid on adults, while *crias de peito* were tax free and, when shipped together with their mothers, the two counted as only one *cabeça*.⁴⁰

After the Portuguese began to count slaves in *cabeças*, children appeared in the documentation more frequently. Most of them were probably nursing infants and toddlers. Since tax procedures at the Portuguese ports of slave embarkation in West Central Africa stipulated such a short height for children embarked, there were many individuals classified as adults who would be considered children by our own standards and, indeed, may have been by the standards of Europeans and Africans of that time. Nevertheless, tax records of slaves embarked from Luanda provide us with some idea of their age distribution.

In the eighteenth century, children were a significant percentage of the total number of slaves shipped from Luanda. Horácio Gutiérrez analyzed records of taxes collected from vessels carrying slaves from Luanda and estimated the proportion of children shipped for 17 years between 1734 and 1769. These records provide the total number of slaves as well as the number of *crias de pé* and *crias de peito* embarked for the years 1740–1742, 1744, 1747–1749, 1762–1767, and 1769. Gutiérrez also found records showing only totals embarked for the years 1734, 1738, and 1754, but he estimated the proportion of *crias de pé* and *crias de peito*

³⁹ Fortunato José Barreiros, *Memória sobre os Pesos e Medidas de Portugal, Espanha, Inglaterra e França* (Lisbon: Typographia da Academia Real das Ciencias, 1838), 20.

⁴⁰ Dom José I, "Ley sobre a Arecadação," 538.

embarked in these years using the average percentage rate of children shipped according to each category in the following four years for which he had data. In total, he calculated that 143,848 slaves were embarked from Luanda in these 17 years. Approximately 9,220 of the total were children; 7,003 *crias de pé* and 2,217 *crias de peito*. According to his estimates, about 6 percent of the slaves embarked from Luanda in those years were children.⁴¹

Although Gutiérrez recognized the different categories of children embarked, he did not realize that these categories included only individuals measuring up to four *palmos* tall. In fact, the proportion of children shipped could have been much higher according to both European and African perceptions of age during the period of the trade. A more realistic proportion is probably double the percentage Gutiérrez estimated. This is important to emphasize because shipping records with age data available for slaves embarked in West Central Africa during the nineteenth century were not based on Portuguese tax records. Rather, they were created by other institutions in different countries that recorded the age of enslaved individuals according to European and African perceptions of age during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One example of these institutions is the mixed commission courts for the adjudication of vessels accused of illegal trading, which form the basis for much of the age data available in the “Voyages” database.

The database contains 365 records of voyages with age data for slaves shipped from West Central Africa by region of disembarkation between the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Table 4.3 shows that about 17 percent of all individuals carried were children. Further, the ratio of children embarked varied widely across time. Between 1781 and 1805, about 11 percent of those shipped were children. This percentage increased to 16 between 1806 and 1830. However, during the period of the illegal trade, the percentage of children sold increased sharply to 53 between 1831 and 1855 and to 36 between 1856 and 1867. Traders had never shipped such a large percentage of children before, and the reasons for this increase are difficult to determine. On the one hand, planters in the Americas were not interested in receiving so many children. On the other, Africans were often reluctant to sell children across the Atlantic. Given these positions, it appears that the British efforts to abolish the slave trade created a situation to which both sides had to adjust.

⁴¹ Horácio Gutiérrez, “O Tráfico de Crianças Escravas para o Brasil durante o Século XVIII.” *Revista de História, São Paulo* 120 (1989): 60–63.

TABLE 4.3 *Percentage of slave children leaving West Central Africa by region of disembarkation, 1781–1867*

Years	British and French Caribbean	Cuba	Brazil	Other	Total
1781–1805	15.2 (38.8)	21.4 (3.1)	3.2 (58.6)	27.8 (2.4)	10.6 (102.9)
1806–1830	33.4 (1.2)	19.2 (5.2)	4.0 (9.9)	39.7 (1.2)	16.5 (17.5)
1831–1855	55.4 (1.7)	53.1 (2.2)	56.8 (3.8)	49.6 (6.7)	52.9 (14.4)
1856–1867	—	—	—	42.9 (2.3)	42.9 (2.3)
Total	17.5 (41.7)	25.9 (10.5)	8.1 (72.3)	43.2 (12.6)	17.4 (137.1)

Note: Numbers in brackets represent thousands of slaves for whom data are available.

Source: Same as Table 4.1.

Table 4.3 confirms that the percentage of children embarked increased, especially during the period of the illegal trade. In the British and French Caribbean, it increased from 15 percent between 1781 and 1805, to 33 percent between 1806 and 1830, and 55 percent between 1831 and 1855. The percentage of children shipped to Cuba initially decreased from 21 between 1781 and 1805 to 19 between 1806 and 1830. However, from 1831 to 1855 it increased sharply to 53 percent. The percentage of children embarked to Brazil also increased significantly during the nineteenth century, from a range of 3 to 4 between 1781 and 1830 to an impressive 57 between 1831 and 1855. The share of children embarked to other destinations, though always relatively high, also increased during the nineteenth century, from 28 percent between 1781 and 1805 to 40 percent between 1806 and 1830, reaching 50 percent between 1831 and 1855. After this period, the percentage of children shipped to other destinations declined to 43 percent.

The ratio of children shipped varied significantly by port of embarkation. Table 4.4 shows that the ports north and south of Luanda shipped relatively more children than Luanda. In total, children made up about 26 percent of the slaves leaving the northern ports, 47 percent from the southern ports, and only 6 percent from Luanda itself. However, these numbers may be misleading. The “Voyages” database contains too few records of voyages with age data for slaves leaving Luanda between 1831 and 1855, when the proportion of children sold into the slave trade is likely to have increased.

Despite the lack of data, the records available do indicate important variations in the percentage of children exported across time from the various ports of embarkation. Between 1781 and 1805, for example, the

TABLE 4.4 *Percentage of slave children leaving West Central Africa by port of embarkation, 1781–1867*

Years	Ports north of Luanda	Luanda	Ports south of Luanda	Total
1781–1805	16.0 (20.8)	3.2 (57.8)	3.4 (1.5)	8.0 (80.1)
1806–1830	28.3 (3.7)	8.1 (12.9)	—	14.8 (16.6)
1831–1855	50.5 (7.8)	53.4 (2.1)	55.4 (4.1)	52.5 (14.0)
1856–1867	35.7 (2.9)	—	—	35.7 (2.9)
Total	26.4 (35.2)	6.3 (72.8)	46.8 (5.6)	17.1 (113.6)

Note: Numbers in brackets represent thousands of slaves for whom data are available.

Source: Same as Table 4.1.

percentage of children leaving the ports north of Luanda, at 16 percent, was considerably higher than the 3 percent recorded for departure from Luanda and the southern ports together. The societies in the hinterland of these more southerly ports were apparently less open to selling children into the trade than those to the north. However, during the period of the illegal trade, the percentage of children embarked from all ports increased significantly. Between 1831 and 1855, just over half those shipped from all ports in the region were children.

The increase in the proportion of children embarked from West Central Africa is surprising in view of the current understanding of who was eligible for enslavement and sale into the transatlantic trade. Scholars generally stress that African enslavers and traders commonly preferred to sell adults into the external trade and keep children for sale into the domestic market. This interpretation implies that the demand for slave children in Africa was higher than the demand for adult slaves because African slave owners believed that purchasing and owning slave children involved fewer risks and that children adapted more readily to the dominant culture. Adults, on the other hand, were potential escapees, capable of inciting rebellion or murdering their masters, sometimes employing poison and even witchcraft.⁴² Scholars of African slavery need to take into account the increasing proportion of children sold from West Central Africa between the late eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth century. Perhaps our current understanding of African slavery in this period

⁴² Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 16–17; Miers and Kopytoff, “African ‘Slavery,’” 53.

needs reassessing, particularly ideas about who was eligible for sale across the Atlantic.

Kikongo speakers living in the interior of the ports north of Luanda were probably more open to selling children into the trade than Kimbundu or Umbundu speakers who lived in the interior of Luanda and the ports south of Luanda. Table 4.4 shows that during the first half-century of our period the proportion of children leaving the northern ports was four to five times higher than at Luanda and possibly at locations to the south, although we have data for only three vessels there. This trend may be related to the methods of enslavement among the Kikongo. As previously noted, kidnapping was one of the primary forms of enslavement among Kikongo speakers, especially at Boma, and children could easily fall victim to such abductions.⁴³ Kimbundu speakers living in the interior of Luanda were more conservative in determining who could be sold into the trade. Many of them had long suffered the demographic impact of the trade, especially the Ndongo who lived under direct influence of the Portuguese. Perhaps, some Kimbundu societies could not afford to sell women and children into the trade, since the latter were crucial to the very survival of their societies.⁴⁴ In the mid-nineteenth century, the ratio of children to adults shipped from Luanda increased, but it should be noted that by then the overall numbers embarked from this port had declined significantly.⁴⁵ Finally, the Umbundu also seemed very conservative in their sale of slaves, as the percentage of captives leaving the southern ports was similar to that leaving Luanda. However, the Umbundu populations of the central plateau of Angola were expanding between the late eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth centuries.⁴⁶ It may be that they shipped more adults during the legal period of the trade not because they were coping with the demographic impact of the trade, but rather because they could best supply the demand for adult slaves overseas. The proportion of children shipped from the southern ports also increased in the mid-century, but this was more an adjustment to the period of the illegal trade than a shift in Umbundu conceptions of who could be sold across the Atlantic.

Two important factors contributed to the increase in the percentage of children embarked from West Central Africa during the nineteenth

⁴³ Schrag, “Mboma and the Lower Zaire,” 62–63.

⁴⁴ Thornton, “The Slave Trade in Eighteenth Century Angola,” 421–23.

⁴⁵ See Chapter 1, Figure 1.2.

⁴⁶ Heywood and Thornton, “African Fiscal Systems,” 223–25; Heywood, *Contested Power in Angola*, 2–3, 10–11, and 17.

century. Neither had much to do directly with developments on either side of the South Atlantic; rather they were a function of efforts to suppress the trade. First, as British antislave trade activity increased, traders had to find new outlets through which to sell captives across the Atlantic. These outlets assumed the form of clandestine ports of slave embarkation spread along the coast of West Central Africa. British naval cruisers often guarded traditional ports of embarkation, so traders had to move their operations to different places agreed upon in advance with captains of slave vessels. In most of them, captives were maintained not on the coast, but in barracoons located at some distance from the shoreline, in order to disguise their presence from antislave trade cruisers patrolling the coast. These barracoons were built for the sole purpose of housing slaves until the moment of embarkation.⁴⁷ Since traders had to constantly change location and run their activities as clandestinely as possible, they could not afford to face resistance from their slaves. In 1847, Portuguese naval officers captured a boat carrying 20 slaves belonging to Manoel José Constantino, who owned a barracoon in Benguela Velha, southern Angola. All of them were male, being eleven under 14 years old, three over 17, and six over 20.⁴⁸ In 1851, Captain João Máximo da Silva Rodovalho, commander of the Portuguese naval station in Luanda, reported the destruction of another barracoon, located in Equimina, near Benguela. This barracoon had 354 slaves, of whom 194 were destined for sale into the trade: 50 men, 33 women, 69 boys, 37 girls, and 5 infants.⁴⁹ Finally, in 1857, Portuguese naval officers destroyed another barracoon in Porto da Lenha, northern Angola, containing 25 men, 11 boys, and 9 women.⁵⁰

Second, as the demand for slaves in the Americas declined, the number of slaves available for sale in the African domestic market increased. Examining the censuses of Portuguese Angola in the mid-1840s, Lopes de Lima observed that the population had been increasing at the rate of 1 percent in the previous 20 years. “I do not doubt that the causes for such a small increase,” he wrote, “lie above all in the slave trade, which forced more than 20,000 souls to leave the ports of Angola and Benguela annually.”⁵¹ When discussing the state of slavery in the region, he further noticed that “it is presently in the proportion of *twelve to forty* in relation to the free population; but the number of slaves should increase as the

⁴⁷ Ferreira, “*Dos Sertões ao Atlântico*,” 38–42; Miller, *Way of Death*, 299–308.

⁴⁸ Ferreira, “*Dos Sertões ao Atlântico*,” 38. ⁴⁹ Ibid., 147–48. ⁵⁰ Ibid., 149–50.

⁵¹ Lopes de Lima, *Ensaios*, vol. 3, 6.

inhabitants of our cities and districts decide to establish plantations rivaling those of Brazil . . . and when the allied sobas in the interior, persuaded that they cannot sell their vassals and prisoners to foreign lands, understand how convenient will be to employ them to grow in their own lands and conduct to the markets these colonial goods that their soil offer and such demand are enjoying in the ports.”⁵²

Although large numbers of slaves continued to be shipped from West Central Africa until 1850, their real price on the coast began to decline from the beginning of the nineteenth century. Real prices of slaves sold at Luanda, for example, remained constant from the 1800s to the 1810s, varying between 110,395 réis to 110,008 réis. They declined significantly in the 1820s to approximately 66,901 réis, increasing again only on the eve of the abolition of the Brazilian slave trade in the 1830s to 149,123 réis.⁵³ These data indicate that, although large numbers continued to be shipped from West Central Africa until the mid-nineteenth century, the demand for slaves on the coast was losing momentum. Africans who were previously enslaved and sold into the external trade were now being sold into the domestic market. Enslavement in the interior must have declined with time, and the temporary effect of more slaves on the domestic market probably increased the slave population in many societies of West Central Africa, perhaps resulting in many African owners holding a surplus of young captives that they could not afford to raise to adulthood. In no other place that would have been truer than in the central plateau of Angola, where, as László Magyar observed, “the number of *dongo* slaves is very large,” with “half of the nation enslaved to the other half,” although “slave prices are presently very low, declining to a third since suppression has started.”⁵⁴

CONCLUSION

All in all, slaves shipped from West Central Africa included individuals from every sex and age category, but in the nineteenth century they tended to be mostly boys. The demographic profile of slaves transported shows that African conceptions of gender and age helped shape the trade by determining who should be enslaved and sold across the Atlantic. In the nineteenth century, planters in the Americas became more interested in purchasing slave women in response to the British efforts to abolish the

⁵² Ibid., vol. 3, 7. ⁵³ See Appendix C, Table C.2.

⁵⁴ Magyar, *Reisen in Süd-Afrika*, chap. 7.

trade. Africans, on the other hand, were often reluctant to sell women into the traffic. They also preferred to keep children within the continent rather than selling them overseas. However, given the pressures to suppress the trade, Africans adjusted to the new circumstances and began selling more children into the trade than in previous years. Children were easier to transport and keep at barracoons situated at remote places along the coast of West Central Africa. As the slave trade declined, it is also possible that African traders found themselves with a surplus of captives, including children, that they were disposed to sell across the Atlantic. African conceptions of gender and age combined with the impact of attempts to suppress the trade were important factors determining who could be enslaved and sold into the transatlantic slave trade from West Central Africa.

African Patterns of Consumption

Africans exchanged slaves on the coast of West Central Africa for a variety of goods imported from several regions around the world. The majority of slaves were purchased for Asian and European textiles, rum produced in the Americas, and weapons brought largely from Europe. Historians believe that Africans distributed these goods among their loyal followers in order to accumulate power, increase their number of dependents, raise armies to capture more slaves, and expand their influence throughout the region's interior. This interpretation implies that the supply of captives on the coast was in the hands of just a few rulers, who competed for power and access to foreign imports. This process generated a vicious cycle of violence and warfare, which led to the destruction of some societies and the imperial expansion of others, such as the Lunda Empire. Some scholars have seen Africans as politically motivated to participate in the trade, with the economic gains resulting from sales being secondary.¹

However, prices of slaves leaving Luanda between the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries suggest that Africans did respond to economic incentives. Philip Curtin devised a model to examine the participation of Africans in the trade from Senegambia, which measured their political and economic motivations to sell slaves based on variations in the value and number of captives sold across the Atlantic. If the number of individuals shipped varied according to the price for which they were sold,

¹ The main supporter of this view is, of course, Miller, *Way of Death*, 51–61. But see also Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict*, 148–49; Dias, “Angola,” 335–39; Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 149–50; Thornton, “The Chronology and Causes,” 6–7; Oppen, *Terms of Trade and Terms of Trust*, 59–61.

it signified that Africans were economically motivated to participate in the trade. In contrast, if the number of individuals shipped did not respond to variations in price, it meant that Africans engaged in the trade for political reasons, such as wars waged in the interest of establishing a state and imperial expansion. These are extreme examples, of course. The actual motivations must have been diverse, but they probably varied within these parameters, making the analysis of the price and number of slaves embarked a useful indicator of the primary reason Africans participated in the trade.²

MOTIVATIONS

Because the number of slaves shipped from the Senegambia did not vary according to price, Curtin concluded that in this particular region Africans were more politically than economically motivated to participate in the trade.³ Since the publication of his study, many historians have begun collecting data on the price and number of captives sold from other African regions and subjecting them to similar analyses but sometimes reaching different conclusions. Philip Le Veen surveyed price data from all regions and argued that Africans were motivated more by economic than political gain. As he explained, the price of captives sold on the coast varied according to the number of slaves shipped. When prices increased, the number of slaves transported increased, and when prices declined, the number of captives shipped also declined. Le Veen claimed that, in general, Africans sold other Africans on the coast not because of their desire to accumulate power, but on account of economic rewards.⁴

The paucity of the price data for slaves embarked from West Central Africa makes similar analyses difficult. However, the custom records of Luanda provide price information about captives shipped from there between 1780 and 1830, which serves as an indicator of the fluctuations in the prices of slaves leaving the larger region. Customs officials reported the prices of slaves embarked from Luanda annually, but they did not record the value for which each captive was sold. Rather, they listed the annual average price of adult slaves embarked. Although the custom records are incomplete, the data available do allow us to calculate the average price by decade and compare it with the number of slaves leaving

² Curtin, *Economic Change*, vol. 1, 156–57. ³ Ibid., vol. 1, 166–68.

⁴ Le Veen, “The African Slave Supply Response,” 18–21.

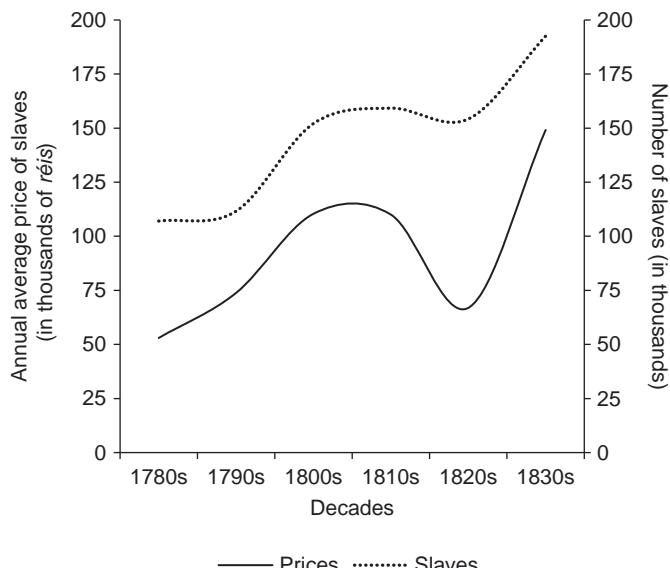


FIGURE 5.1 Comparison between price and number of slaves leaving Luanda by decades, 1780s–1830s

Sources: Prices – Appendix B, Table B.2; Slaves – Daniel B. Domingues da Silva, “The Atlantic Slave Trade from Angola: A Port-by-Port Estimate of Slaves Embarked, 1701–1867.” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 46, no. 1 (2013): 121–22.

Luanda. The prices listed in the records were deflated to reflect real prices and to allow comparison over time. The original data are reproduced together with the deflated prices in Appendix B, Tables B.1 and B.2. The comparison between the price and the number of slaves shipped from Luanda between the 1780s and 1830s is indicated in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 shows that the number of captives embarked varied directly with the prices for which they were sold in Luanda. The trend lines in the number of slaves and the annual average price almost coincide. The only exception is in the 1820s, when the average price of slaves sold declined significantly compared to the number of captives embarked. Otherwise, the lines representing the value and number of slaves transported fluctuated together. When prices increased, the number of captives shipped also increased, when prices declined, the number of slaves embarked declined. This variation shows that traders in the interior were sensitive to changes in demand on the coast. Since Africans dominated the supply of slaves, the variation in the price and number of captives embarked indicates that

economic motivations predominated. It also suggests that more than a handful of despotic rulers were willing to participate in this activity.

Slavery had, of course, existed in West Central Africa long before the nineteenth century. Historians still debate whether or not Africans regarded slavery as a system of exchange and economic exploitation before the rise of the transatlantic slave trade. John Thornton argues that Africans viewed slaves as the only form of private, revenue-producing property recognized by law. As such, they were subject to exchange for other slaves as well as for commodities.⁵ "When Europeans came to Africa and offered to buy slaves," Thornton notes, "it is hardly surprising that they were almost immediately accepted."⁶ Joseph Miller, on the other hand, believes that Africans began to sell slaves as commodities gradually because of the transatlantic trade. According to him, although Africans had long exchanged material goods, such as copper, iron, wax, and salt, among themselves, they regarded the exchange of slaves for goods as something qualitatively different, as gifts among people who had personal obligations to one another. Miller argues that the transatlantic trade changed this form of exchange by adding a new variable, people without previous personal obligations meeting at trading centers with goods to be exchanged exclusively for slaves.⁷

In the nineteenth century, West Central Africans were very familiar with the concept of slavery as a system of exchange and economic exploitation and their desire to obtain consumer goods was the primary reason they enslaved and sold other Africans. The goods they obtained circulated widely throughout the region, and they served as an important medium of exchange, especially for high-value transactions. Historians of Africa often claim that rulers somehow monopolized these goods and used them to raise armies and finance wars.⁸ Some of them also argue that

⁵ Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, 74. ⁶ Ibid., 94. ⁷ Miller, *Way of Death*, 47–58.

⁸ Joseph E. Inikori, "Introduction." In *Forced Migration: The Impact of the Export Slave Trade on African Societies*, ed. Joseph E. Inikori (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1982), 41–54; Martin A. Klein and Paul E. Lovejoy, "Slavery in West Africa." In *The Uncommon Market: Essays in the Economic History of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, ed. Henry A. Gemery and Jan S. Hogendorn (New York: Academic Press, 1979), 201; Klein, "The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade," 235–41; Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, 110; Claude Meillassoux, "The Role of Slavery in the Economic and Social History of Sahelo-Sudanic Africa." In *Forced Migration: The Impact of the Export Slave Trade on African Societies*, ed. Joseph E. Inikori, trans. R. J. Gavín (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1982), 80–81; Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery*, 44–54; Richard L. Roberts, *Warriors, Merchants, and Slaves: The State and the Economy in the Niger Valley, 1700–1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 18–19; Stilwell, *Slavery and Slaving*, 50–55.

the importation of these goods discouraged African industry and economic development.⁹ However, most of the goods imported were destined for personal use, including adornment. Furthermore, they were not substitutes for locally produced items. In fact, they were introduced in such large quantities that the net effect was to reduce their value as luxury items. As a result, the goods brought to West Central Africa generated large numbers of slaves and were dispersed among the wider public, anxious to obtain foreign imports.

African economic interest in the trade is not difficult to explain. Historians of the slave trade have long challenged the assumption that Europeans purchased slaves with gewgaw or trinkets. Scholars have collected lists of trade goods from several regions. They noted that, like peoples in other parts of the Atlantic world, Africans had a sophisticated taste for goods imported from places far away.¹⁰ As previously mentioned, the majority of the slaves shipped were exchanged for textiles, alcohol, and weapons, but these were not the only trade goods used to purchase captives. Since a successful deal depended largely on being able to present the “right” assortment of goods, traders combined them with a wide variety of other items, such as tobacco, beads, and clothing. Commodities used to purchase slaves can therefore provide us with important clues to further understanding why Africans participated in the trade.

CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

As with data on slave prices, lists of imported goods for the period are rare. Only a few records of the merchandise imported at Benguela, for

⁹ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington D.C.: Howard University Press, 1982), 95–103; Inikori, “Introduction,” 51–58; Nathan Nunn, “Historical Legacies: A Model Linking Africa’s Past to Its Current Underdevelopment.” *Journal of Development Economics* 83 (2007): 157–75; Warren Whatley and Rob Gillezeau, “The Fundamental Impact of the Slave Trade on African Economies.” In *Economic Evolution and Revolution in Historical Time*, ed. Paul Rhode, Joshua Rosenbloom, and David Weiman (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 111–34.

¹⁰ See, for example, Richard Bean, “A Note on the Relative Importance of Slaves and Gold in West African Exports.” *Journal of African History* 15, no. 3 (1974): 351–56; Metcalf, “A Microcosm of Why Africans Sold Slaves: Akan Consumption Patterns in the 1770s,” 377–94; Joseph C. Miller, “Imports at Luanda, Angola: 1785–1823.” In *Figuring African Trade: Proceedings of the Symposium on the Quantification and Structure of the Import and Export and Long-Distance Trade of Africa in the Nineteenth Century, c.1800–1913* (St. Augustin, 3–6 January 1983), ed. Gerhard Liesegang, Helma Pasch, and Adam Jones (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1986), 162–244; Richardson, “West African Consumption Patterns,” 303–30.

example, have survived. Moreover, Africans who controlled the trade in the ports north of Luanda did not keep written records of the goods imported there, or at least none has ever been located. For this reason, historians have generally used lists of articles at source as they left Europe or the Americas in order to trace African patterns of consumption.¹¹ After 1807, with the increasing illegality of the slave trade, these lists gradually became scarce. Brazil and Cuba remained the principal markets, with their traders purchasing slaves at the ports north of Luanda, but records of the commodities exported from these countries to those ports are missing.

Customs records from Luanda, by contrast, are more complete and indeed are the best available for sub-Saharan Africa. They allow us to trace the consumption patterns of the populations living in the Luanda hinterland. In the late eighteenth century, customs officials began to report the amount, value, and price of all merchandise legally imported per year, but this information did not reflect the current value of the goods exchanged for slaves. Rather, the figures were estimates that members of the trading board at Luanda calculated by multiplying the amount of goods imported by the annual average price of these goods. By 1823, the records became more accurate, reflecting the value of the merchandise as it entered the port. Joseph Miller has published summaries of these records for the years 1785–1799, 1803–1805, 1809–1810, 1812, 1815–1819, and 1823, but this coverage can now be extended.¹²

New lists of imports at Luanda are now available for the years 1802, 1811, 1813, 1820, 1823–25, 1830–32, 1837, 1857–59, and 1861–1864, and they allow us to extend our analysis to the period of the suppression of the trade. Although the Portuguese prohibited the sale of slaves from their African possessions in 1836, many vessels continued to visit Luanda after that year. As Roquinaldo Ferreira noted, these vessels arrived with goods commonly used to purchase slaves, unloaded them at Luanda, and then departed in ballast to neighboring ports, where they loaded captives clandestinely.¹³ This strategy enabled captains to continue using Luanda as a major slaving port, despite the prohibition on selling captives overseas. The customs house at Luanda thus continued to record the bulk of commodities used to purchase slaves through the end of the trade.

¹¹ See, for instance, Richardson, "West African Consumption Patterns," 305–11.

¹² Miller, "Imports at Luanda," 211–41.

¹³ Ferreira, "Dos Sertões ao Atlântico," 221–22.

Table 5.1 shows the total value of the merchandise imported at Luanda for the years available between the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries in thousands of *réis* distributed across eight different categories. These categories are the same ones that Miller used in his study, and they were adopted here to facilitate a comparison of the eighteenth-century data with those of the legal and illegal period of the slave trade in the nineteenth century. The first category includes alcohol, followed by apparel and notions, Asian textiles, European textiles, foodstuffs, metals and metalware, weapons, and miscellaneous items, such as beads, shells, raw cotton, and tobacco.

The most striking feature about the commodities used by Africans for trading slaves is that the majority of them consisted of articles that did not address the primary needs of the populations living in the interior of West Central Africa. John Thornton noted that Africans had a strong textile manufacturing industry during the period of the slave trade. Although their technology was not comparable to that in Europe, Africans wove excellent cloth from raffia fibers as well as bark and palm trees. Some of these textiles were so fine and delicate that only nobles could afford to wear them. In fact, European visitors frequently compared the cloth produced by Kikongo and Vili weavers to the best produced in Europe.¹⁴ Nevertheless, Asian and European textiles together accounted for approximately 54 percent of Luanda imports by value between the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries.

Asian textiles accounted for about 24 percent of all goods brought to Luanda. These fabrics were the most important items used to purchase slaves in the interior. Materials most in demand were *cadeás*, *chitas*, *coromandéis*, *lenços*, and *zuartes*. Other textiles imported included *carlangânis*, *casimiras*, *cassas*, *cassadizes*, *damascos*, *dotins*, *dórias*, *elefantes*, *gangas*, *garrazes*, *gingões*, *lapins*, *longuins*, *madapolões*, *mamodins*, *metins*, *musselinas*, *patavares*, and *sanás*. They were dyed white, red, yellow, and blue and came in different patterns such as stripes or checks.¹⁵

¹⁴ John K. Thornton, “Precolonial African Industry and the Atlantic Trade, 1500–1800.” *African Economic History*, no. 19 (1990): 10–12.

¹⁵ Luís Frederico Dias Antunes, “Têxteis e Metais Preciosos: Novos Vínculos do Comércio Indo-Brasileiro (1808–1820).” In *O Antigo Regime nos Trópicos: a Dinâmica Imperial Portuguesa (Séculos XVI–XVIII)*, ed. João Fragoso, Maria Fernanda Baptista Bicalho, and Maria de Fátima Silva Gouvêa (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2001), 410; Pedro Machado, “Cloths of a New Fashion: Indian Ocean Networks of Exchange and Cloth Zones of Contact in Africa and India in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.” In *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500–1850*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Tirthankar Roy (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 68.

TABLE 5.1 *Commodities imported at Luanda (in thousands of réis), selected years, 1785–1864*

Years	Alcohol	Apparel and notions	Asian textiles	European textiles	Foodstuff	Metals and metalware	Miscellany	Weapons	Total
1785–99	1,782,529.8 (23.4)	255,710.2 (3.4)	1,998,810.9 (26.2)	2,089,779.9 (27.4)	487,758.9 (6.4)	77,720.5 (1.0)	647,902.6 (8.5)	287,537.3 (3.8)	7,627,750.1 (100.0)
1802–30	4,184,321.0 (20.7)	622,943.3 (3.1)	5,291,277.7 (26.2)	6,382,707.5 (31.6)	1,025,270.1 (5.1)	522,689.5 (2.6)	800,969.0 (4.0)	1,346,392.4 (6.7)	20,176,570.5 (100.0)
1831–64	2,105,316.1 (18.3)	305,045.9 (2.7)	2,081,601.6 (18.1)	3,318,110.4 (28.9)	1,223,406.3 (10.6)	203,291.8 (1.8)	1,709,171.1 (14.9)	550,247.8 (4.8)	11,496,191.0 (100.0)
Total	8,072,166.9 (20.5)	1,183,699.4 (3.0)	9,371,690.2 (23.8)	11,790,597.8 (30.0)	2,736,435.3 (7.0)	803,701.8 (2.0)	3,158,042.7 (8.0)	2,184,177.4 (5.6)	39,300,511.6 (100.0)

Note: Numbers in brackets represent row percentages.

Sources: Appendix C, Tables C.1 and C.2.

The names associated with some of them give us a hint about their place of origin. Names such as *cambaia*, *jambuseiro*, and *surrate* can be clearly identified with the ports of Cambay, Jambusar, and Surat, on the northwestern coast of India. Others, such as *bengala* and *paliacate*, were clearly Bengal and Pulicat, located on the northeastern coast. Many of the textiles imported through Luanda were simply called *panos da costa*, that is, “fabrics of the coast,” which should not be confused with the *panos da costa* from West Africa, which were brought from the Bights of Benin and Biafra for sale in Brazil.¹⁶

These ports were located near the principal centers of textile production in India, such as Gujarat, Punjab, and Sindh. Some of the fabrics, termed *coromandéis*, came from the Coromandel Coast, on the eastern Indian seaboard, which was also a major production center, along with Bengal, further north in the same region. Local Hindi traders known as *baneanes* transported these cloths overland from the production centers to the coast, where they put them on small vessels to be taken for sale at the principal Portuguese ports in Asia, such as Damão, Diu, and Goa in India, and Macau in China.¹⁷ From there, the textiles were shipped overseas in larger vessels to Portugal and Brazil.

Traditionally, the Portuguese crown held the monopoly over the transportation of goods from its Asian possessions. Since the sixteenth century, all commodities carried from Portuguese Asia had been shipped in a fleet system made up of royal vessels that sailed once or twice per year. These vessels were supposed to deliver the merchandise to Portugal, but they often stopped at Bahia to sell part of their cargo there illegally before crossing the North Atlantic. As a consequence, Bahia became a major center of distribution of Asian textiles in Brazil.¹⁸ The crown tried to suppress this contraband but the practice became so common that in 1672 it made Bahia an official stop in the famous *Carreira da Índia*, or the India Route.¹⁹ From there, Asian textiles were taken to other Brazilian

¹⁶ Antunes, “Têxteis e Metais Peciosos,” 410; Machado, “Cloths of a New Fashion,” 58–59.

¹⁷ Antunes, “Têxteis e Metais Peciosos,” 390–91; Machado, “Cloths of a New Fashion,” 58–59. See also Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 41–52.

¹⁸ José Roberto do Amaral Lapa, *A Bahia e a Carreira da Índia*, Estudos Históricos, 42 (São Paulo: Hucitec, Unicamp, 2000), 1–4.

¹⁹ Roquinaldo Amaral Ferreira, “Dinâmica do Comércio Intracolonial: Geribitas, Panos Asiáticos e Guerra no Tráfico Angolano de Escravos (Século XVIII).” In *O Antigo Regime nos Trópicos: A Dinâmica Imperial Portuguesa (Séculos XVI–XVIII)*, ed. João Fragoso, Maria Fernanda Baptista Bicalho, and Maria de Fátima Silva Gouvêa (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2001), 352.

ports, such as Recife and Rio de Janeiro, and traded for slaves in Luanda and Benguela among other places.

In 1765, the crown abolished the fleet system, allowing private traders to purchase textiles in Asia. It tried to restrict the agency of these entrepreneurs by limiting the sale of cloth in certain ports, including Luanda, before it reached Portugal.²⁰ However, Asian textiles were so crucial for the slave traffic in West Central Africa that Brazilians dominated this branch of the trade even in Portugal. According to Ernestina Carreira, in the final years of the fleet system, about 90 percent of all cloth shipped from Portugal to Brazil was Asian, which traders used to purchase slaves.²¹ In the late eighteenth century, Asian textiles accounted for approximately 26 percent of the commodities imported at Luanda by value, and in the nineteenth century, while the trade was still legal, this figure did not change. The huge amount of Asian textiles imported into Luanda no doubt widened consumer choice.

After 1830, during the period of the illegal slave trade, the proportion of Asian textiles brought to Luanda declined significantly to about 18 percent of the total value, as European textiles replaced them as the major import. Europeans always brought cloth produced in their own countries to purchase slaves in the region, but Africans found this cloth inferior to the Asian variety. The principal European fabrics introduced in Luanda included *baés*, *baetás*, *bretanhas*, *brins*, *calamanhas*, *chilas*, *crês*, *lenços*, *panos*, and *riscadinhos*. Despite the European technological advancements in textile production at the turn of the nineteenth century, these fabrics were still very rough and had less color variety than the Asian. European textiles were mostly dark and too thick to be worn in the tropics. Since this cloth was more appropriate for temperate climates, the principal consumers of European textiles in West Central Africa were probably the Umbundu, who lived in the central highlands, where the temperature was cooler than any other place in the region.

Most of the European cloth imported through Luanda came originally from England, but the names associated with some fabrics also indicate other regions of provenance. Names like *irlanda*, *holanda*, *alemanha*, and *ruão* for example, suggest that Luanda imported cloth from Ireland, the

²⁰ Ibid., 354.

²¹ Ernestina Carreira, “Os Últimos Anos da Carreira da Índia.” In *A Carreira da Índia e as Rotas dos Estreitos: Actas do VIII Seminário Internacional de História Indo-Portuguesa*, ed. Artur Teodoro de Matos and Luís Filipe F. Reis Thomaz (Angra do Heroísmo: Barbosa e Xavier, 1998), 826.

Netherlands, Germany, especially Hamburg, and Rouen, in France. These names also imply that such cloths had different styles. Europeans sold their textiles in Lisbon or Porto, from where Portuguese traders loaded them onto transatlantic vessels and resold them to merchants in Brazil. Merchants then exchanged them in Luanda for slaves.

In 1808, with the transfer of the Portuguese court to Rio de Janeiro, European traders were allowed to sell their textiles directly to Brazil. This reduced the costs of using European textiles in the slave trade, as well as shipping and freight costs for the merchandise carried from Portugal to Brazil. British textiles, in particular, benefitted significantly from the opening of the Brazilian ports. Since the British navy had escorted the Portuguese royal family to Brazil, the king granted tax privileges to all British imports.²² This made British textiles used in the slave trade far cheaper than most other cloth imported from Europe.

Although these incentives helped increase the imports of European goods, during the period of the legal trade in the nineteenth century Africans still preferred Asian materials. Between 1802 and 1830, the percentage of European textiles imported increased to about 32, while the share of Asian textiles remained the same as in the late eighteenth century. However, during the illegal period, this picture changed dramatically. While the value of European fabrics declined to approximately 29 percent, that of Asian fell to 18 percent of the total value of the commodities imported. In the nineteenth century, European technology finally caught up with Asian production techniques.²³ Europeans also had copied the patterns of Asian textiles and were now producing similar fabrics at much lower cost.²⁴ Textile designs that had typically been produced in India, such as *cadeás*, *chitas*, and *zuartes*, now began to arrive in Luanda from Europe, especially England.

Brazilian independence in 1822 was another important factor leading to the expansion of European textiles imported through Luanda. Before independence, textiles brought to Brazil from Portuguese possessions in Asia were taxed at the usual domestic import and export rates. However, after independence, trade between Brazil and Portugal was subject to tariffs. This charge inevitably increased costs for Brazilian traders, thus making European textiles the principal cloth brought to Luanda.

Alcohol was the third most imported commodity, constituting about 20 percent of the value of all goods brought to Luanda between 1785 and

²² Fausto, *História do Brasil*, 122–24. ²³ Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 138–46.

²⁴ Miller, *Way of Death*, 74.

1864. The customs records show that Africans were particularly interested in *aguardente*, *jeribita*, and wine. *Aguardente*, a distilled by-product of sugar or wine production in Portugal and Brazil, comprised 34 percent of all alcoholic beverages imported at Luanda during that period.²⁵ *Jeribita* was a sugar-based rum produced in Brazil, which accounted for 22 percent, while wine, which came mostly from the banks of the Douro and Tagus rivers in Portugal, contributed 21 percent.²⁶ The remaining imported beverages included beer, brandy, cognac, liquor, and a highly aromatic bitter gin called *genebra* or geneva, originally produced in the Netherlands.

African interest in *arguadente* and *jeribita* derived in large part from their high alcoholic content. According to Roquinaldo Ferreira, the alcohol content of the sugar rum that traders used to purchase slaves in the interior could be as high as 60 percent.²⁷ Joseph Miller believes that it could reach up to 90 percent, though it may have been mixed with water before consumption.²⁸ The alcoholic content of the wine must have been much lower, between 10 and 13 percent. Although traders also purchased slaves with wine, most of the wine imported at Luanda was probably sold at the numerous taverns that flourished throughout the city as well as at the churches, which used it in the Eucharistic rite. The 1850 census return for Luanda, for example, reported that the port had about 90 taverns, which addressed the needs of both the local population and the community of sailors, soldiers, and visitors from abroad.²⁹

The influx of rum and wine through Luanda offered consumers greater variety when compared to the locally produced alcoholic beverages. José Curto claims that Africans living in the hinterland of Luanda produced two types of fermented beverages: *malafu* or *malavu*, a sort of wine made primarily from raphia or extractions from the palm tree, and another, known as *ovallo* or *walo*, a type of beer made of grains such as millet or sorghum.³⁰ Neither one had a high alcoholic content so, after they were produced, both had to be drunk within a short time period. In contrast, the imported beverages, especially *arguadente* and *jeribita*, could be

²⁵ Calculated from Appendix C, Table C.3. ²⁶ Calculated from Appendix C, Table C.3.

²⁷ Ferreira, "Dinâmica do Comércio Intracolonial," 348. ²⁸ Miller, *Way of Death*, 465.

²⁹ "Estatísticas dos Edifícios, Estabelecimentos e Oficinas da Cidade de Luanda Relativa ao Ano de 1850" reproduced in José de Almeida Santos, *Vinte Anos Decisivos de uma Cidade* (Luanda: Câmara Municipal de Luanda, 1970), 167–68.

³⁰ José C. Curto, *Enslaving Spirits: The Portuguese-Brazilian Alcohol Trade at Luanda and Its Hinterland, c.1550–1830* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 21–22.

stored for much longer periods, making them more suitable for sale in the long-distance trade than the local variety.³¹

Despite this advantage, Africans continued consuming and producing both *walo* and *malafu*. As late as the 1880s, European travelers commented on the local production and consumption of liquor in the hinterland of Luanda. Hermenegildo Capello and Roberto Ivens, who traveled extensively throughout Angola between 1877 and 1886, observed the production of palm wine. Near the Kwango River, in the Kimbundu-speaking region, they estimated that the production reached “thousands of liters per habitation, judging from the quantity that we have seen consumed in the places we visited.”³² In fact, while the value of imported alcoholic beverages increased during the legal period of the trade, from an annual average of 118 million *réis* to 220 million between 1785–99 and 1802–30, it declined in the illegal period to an average of 210 million *réis*, suggesting that Africans continued to produce and consume large amounts of local alcoholic beverages.

Let us consider the remaining imports by category and their relative importance to the trade. Despite all of the debate about the introduction of firearms to the continent, the customs records of Luanda show that weapons made up less than 6 percent of the value of goods imported. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Portuguese tried to avoid exchanging arms for slaves because they feared Africans might use them to attack Portuguese posts in Angola. However, in the face of foreign competition at the ports north of Luanda and pressure from Lisbon’s arms dealers, the government relaxed this prohibition.³³ The customs records do not specify the origins of the firearms introduced in West Central Africa. Most of them were probably inexpensive flintlock guns known as “Angola muskets,” produced notably in Birmingham, England. Joseph Inikori argues that firearms were a key component in the British slave trade, and the majority of the guns used to purchase slaves were sold in West Central Africa.³⁴ Until 1807, when the British retreated from the slave trade business, these guns were distributed through the ports north of Luanda but, after that year, they were shipped to Luanda from Brazilian ports opened up to international commerce.

³¹ Ferreira, “Dinâmica do Comércio Intracolonial,” 346.

³² Capello and Ivens, *De Benguela às Terras de Iácca*, vol. 2, 143–44.

³³ Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict*, 146–47; Miller, *Way of Death*, 607–08.

³⁴ Joseph E. Inikori, “The Import of Firearms into West Africa, 1750–1807: A Quantitative Analysis.” *Journal of African History* 18, no. 3 (1977): 352.

Portuguese guns were also used to purchase slaves, and they circulated widely in the region's interior. In 1852, David Livingston traveled across the region, from Cape Town to Luanda, and noted that Africans living near the Upper Zambeze River traded Portuguese guns for slave children. He examined one of these guns and saw the inscription *Legítimo de Braga*, meaning "Made in Braga," Portugal. Livingston observed that Makololo chiefs bought these guns from the Mambári, traders of Portuguese and African ancestry who lived near the Kingdom of Viye, in the central plateau of Angola. In exchange for their guns, the Mambári accepted only boys about 14 years old, a pattern discussed in the previous chapter. Livingstone further noted that the children who the Makololo sold to the Mambári were not their own, but "captives of the black races they had conquered."³⁵

Africans no doubt used guns in wars and raids, but firearms never replaced traditional weapons in military conflicts in the area. In fact, John Thornton argues that during the period of the slave trade, weapons such as swords, knives, spears, clubs, axes, and shields, as well as bows and arrows figured prominently in most armies across the region. Firearms served only as an additional military resource that Africans used in conjunction with more traditional weapons.³⁶ Joseph Miller claims that only a small percentage of the guns survived the first few attempts to fire them, and many were unusable from the start.³⁷ Nevertheless, the potential of these guns to cause death and destruction was intimidating, and African generals could easily harness that potential in raids and military conflicts.

Most of the guns imported through Luanda were probably used for hunting. Guns had a revolutionary impact on Cokwe speakers, for example, who lived near the Upper Kasai River. In the nineteenth century, they broke into the ivory trade from Luanda and Benguela. Historians believe that this activity caused a significant decline in the number of elephants in the region, but it also inaugurated an age of prosperity for the Cokwe, who spread throughout the interior.³⁸ In the mid-nineteenth century, Cokwe influence in the region became so strong that it rivaled that of their more powerful neighbor, the Lunda Empire.

³⁵ David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa: Including a Sketch of Sixteen Years' Residence in the Interior of Africa* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1858), 105–06.

³⁶ John K. Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa, 1500–1800* (New York: University College London Press, 1999), 107–10.

³⁷ Miller, *Way of Death*, 88. ³⁸ Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade*, 448.

Cokwe art reflects the central importance of firearms in their culture, as is shown by guns decorated with hunter charms, which can be seen in many museums. Further, sculptures of their famous hunter hero, Chibinda Ilunga, depict him holding a gun instead of a bow and arrow.³⁹

Although Europeans considered the “Angolan muskets” cheap, Africans had good reason for preferring them to the more sophisticated firearms. The construction of these muskets involved less complicated technology, so blacksmiths could easily repair them using their own tools and knowledge. Isabel Castro Henriques stresses that European travelers in the region often remarked on the ability of local blacksmiths to repair firearms.⁴⁰ Similarly, historians have noted that Europeans considered British and French gunpowder superior to Portuguese, because of its higher saltpeter content, which made it more powerful. Africans, on the other hand, favored Portuguese gunpowder because it caused less damage to their weapons, which in turn resulted in fewer deaths to users.⁴¹

The customs records of Luanda reflected these preferences. While Africans could repair their muskets, they had to be more selective about the gunpowder they used, so the value of gunpowder imported at Luanda was far greater than that of firearms. Gunpowder represented about 70 percent of the value of all of the weaponry imported at Luanda, while firearms made up only 21 percent.⁴² The remaining weapons imported included shot lead and blade weapons, such as spears, swords, and knives, especially *facas flamengas* or Flemish knives.

Africans also traded slaves for a number of miscellaneous items, which accounted for approximately 8 percent of the value of all imports. Some of these goods were important for the slave trade, such as tobacco, which accounted for about 11 percent of the miscellaneous items.⁴³ Most of the tobacco brought to Luanda came from Bahia, Sergipe, Pernambuco, and

³⁹ See the images available in Marie Louise Bastin, *Statuettes Tshokwe du Héros Civilisateur “Tshibinda Ilunga”* (Arnouville-les-Gonesse: Arts d’Afrique Noire, 1978), 63–97; Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade*, 322.

⁴⁰ Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade*, 320–23.

⁴¹ Martin, *The External Trade*, 111; Miller, *Way of Death*, 91–92. For a similar observation for other African regions see Raymond A. Kea, “Firearms and Warfare on the Gold and Slave Coasts from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries.” *Journal of African History* 12, no. 2 (1971): 204–05.

⁴² Calculated from Appendix C, Table C.10.

⁴³ Calculated from Appendix C, Table C.9.

Alagoas, in Brazil, which were also major suppliers of tobacco to Europe and West Africa, especially the Bight of Benin, where tobacco was used to purchase slaves. Brazilian tobacco differed from its main competitors because it was covered with molasses, which rendered a sweet and intense flavor well-suited to African taste.⁴⁴

Although Angolans appreciated Brazilian tobacco, it encountered strong competition from local production. Capello and Ivens have observed that tobacco cultivation abounded in the lands of the Bondo, Kikongo speakers who lived near the Kwango River. They once stopped there on the way to Yaka and noted that the Bondo smoked their own tobacco in pipes that passed from hand to hand among a group of smokers. After a short period, this pipe was replaced by another type of pipe made of horn called *mutopa*, with which they smoked *liamba*, a herb Capello and Ivens identified with hemp of the species *Cannabis sativa*. They observed that, though the Bondo appreciated their own tobacco, they viewed the *liamba* as one of their “greatest delights.”⁴⁵

Beads, which accounted for about 9 percent of the miscellaneous items imported through Luanda, were also used to buy slaves.⁴⁶ It is difficult to tell the exact provenance of these beads. Most of them appear to have originated in Portugal. They were made of glass or porcelain and came in different shapes, sizes, and colors. They appear listed in the records as *missangas*, *avelórios*, *contas*, *contarias*, *granadas*, and *roncalhas*. Africans used these beads to make necklaces, bracelets, and earrings. They also used them to decorate their hair, clothes, and various utensils, including works of art and religious artifacts.⁴⁷

The customs records include two additional items worth mentioning under the miscellaneous category. The first is shells, listed in the records as *conchas*, *búzios*, and *zimbo*. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, shells were valued as medium of exchange at Luanda as well as in other African ports, particularly Ouidah, Cape Coast, and Lagos.⁴⁸ In Luanda, shells served as currency for small exchanges but with the expansion of the slave trade the value of the shells declined sharply, leading traders

⁴⁴ Alden, “Late Colonial Brazil,” 631–35; Verger, *Fluxo e Refluxo*, 20–26.

⁴⁵ Capello and Ivens, *De Benguela às Terras de Iácca*, vol. 2, 26–27.

⁴⁶ Calculated from Appendix C, Table C.9. ⁴⁷ Miller, *Way of Death*, 86.

⁴⁸ Klein and Lovejoy, “Slavery in West Africa,” 109–13; Marion Johnson, “The Cowrie Currencies of West Africa. Part II.” *Journal of African History* 11, no. 3 (1970): 17–27; Robin Law, *The Slave Coast of West Africa, 1550–1750: The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on an African Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 48–50, 57–58, and 176–81.

to barter rather than relying on commodity currencies.⁴⁹ The customs records show that this trend continued from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, when the value of shells declined to insignificance.

The second item worth mentioning is raw cotton, which accounted for approximately 24 percent of all miscellaneous items brought to Luanda, or less than 2 percent of total imports.⁵⁰ The reason for such imports is not clear. Perhaps, the cotton was destined for sale to the population living in the Portuguese colonies, but it may have been used to purchase slaves in the interior of West Central Africa. If so, this suggests that Africans were modifying their textile industry to spin and weave cotton cloth for local consumption and trade, a move that could have had important consequences for the relationship between Africans and Europeans. The development of a local cotton cloth industry might have reduced textile importation from Asia and Europe and, as a result, the export of slaves from West Central Africa.

In 1780, Elias Alexandre da Silva Corrêa noted that a species of wild cotton grew widely in Portuguese Angola, especially in Ambaca, Kimbundu land. Africans spun this cotton into yarn, which they used as currency. They also wove it on double-stick looms placed next to the walls of their habitations and made cloth and mats on which many people in Angola, including Portuguese colonizers, slept. According to Corrêa, the fabrics made with this cotton, especially in Kikongo country, “exceeded in perfection and beauty those produced in India.”⁵¹ Nevertheless, the use of imported cotton appears to have spread during the nineteenth century. European travelers believed that the region’s climate favored the cultivation of imported cotton varieties. David Livingston, travelling across Kimbundu country, saw “cotton growing luxuriantly all around the market places from seeds dropped accidentally. It is seen also about the native huts, and, so far as I could learn, it was the American cotton, so influenced by climate as to be perennial.”⁵²

The remaining commodities imported were not used exclusively in the slave trade. Foodstuffs, for example, were imported mostly for consumption in the Portuguese colonies. The principal articles were wheat flour, sugar, rice, olive oil, butter, and salt. None of these items, with the

⁴⁹ Carlos Couto, *O Zimbo na Historiografia Angolana* (Luanda: Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola, 1973), 37–42; Miller, *Way of Death*, 86.

⁵⁰ Calculated from Appendix C, Table C.9.

⁵¹ da Silva Corrêa, *História de Angola*, vol. 1, 155–58.

⁵² Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, 433.

exception of salt, was part of the African diet. Wheat flour and sugar alone made up 42 percent of the value of all food imports, and both were essential to the Portuguese diet.⁵³ Wheat flour was used in bread, cakes, and other food items, but also in the Eucharistic bread for Catholic mass. Sugar was another central ingredient in the various sweets, desserts, and pastry for which the Portuguese were and remain famous throughout the world. The diet of the African population was based essentially on maize, cassava, and beans, which was an insignificant percentage of the value of food imports.⁵⁴ They were probably brought to help traders supplement local food supplies for their slaves, because most of the food consumed in the colonies and exported in slave vessels was produced locally and stored at the public granary.⁵⁵ Although food was not used to purchase slaves, it accounted for about 7 percent of all goods imported at Luanda.

Apparel and notions also served a dual purpose: to purchase slaves and for use by Portuguese residents. As clothing denoted social hierarchy among Africans, traders often included it in their bundles of European and Brazilian goods destined for sale in the interior. Traders usually gave these clothes to Africans as gifts to begin negotiations or seal a deal rather than to purchase captives. Africans were particularly interested in caps, hats, and jackets, which they combined with their own outfits, creating a unique sense of fashion and style.⁵⁶ Early photographs from the mid-nineteenth century have an abundance of images showing West Central Africans wearing European clothing.⁵⁷

The apparel and notions, however, were not only employed in the slave trade. A large part of them was destined for sale at the Portuguese colonies, especially Luanda and Benguela. These colonies had a significant population of Europeans or people of European ancestry, who wished to maintain contact with their culture and traditions. One way of doing so was to wear clothes from their country of origin and follow the latest trends in European fashion. Apparel and notions for both uses made up only 3 percent of the total value of the commodities imported.

Metals and metalware could also be used to buy slaves, as well as to sell to Portuguese colonists. Iron, in particular, was an important commodity

⁵³ Calculated from Appendix C, Table C.7.

⁵⁴ Calculated from Appendix C, Table C.7. See also Venâncio, *A Economia de Luanda*, 57–59.

⁵⁵ Miller, *Way of Death*, 86; Venâncio, *A Economia de Luanda*, 63–67.

⁵⁶ Miller, *Way of Death*, 79–83.

⁵⁷ See, for example, the images available in Heintze, *Pioneiros Africanos*, between pages 96–97, 128–29, 160–61, 192–93, 225–26, and 288–89; Santos, *Nos Caminhos de África*, 272.

used to purchase slaves in other African regions. Indeed, in places like the Upper Guinea coast and the Bight of Benin, the value of a slave was measured in terms of iron bars.⁵⁸ However, in West Central Africa, iron as well as other metals played a relatively minor role in the trade. Although Africans had a thriving iron industry, the domestic supply of iron in West Central Africa was sufficient to satisfy the local demand.⁵⁹ In fact, the region had such rich deposits of iron ore that the Portuguese tried to build two foundries there during the period of the slave trade; one in Nova Oeiras and another in Trombeta. The ruins of the former remain, but neither one operated for long, because the working conditions the Portuguese imposed were not compatible with those to which African blacksmiths were accustomed.⁶⁰

Portuguese colonists in Luanda and Benguela, by contrast, depended heavily on the imported ironware. Metals like iron, copper, and zinc were crucial for the construction of houses, maintenance of public buildings and, of course, the operation of ports and military facilities. They also needed metals to make tools and a number of other articles essential for everyday life, such as cups, plates, knives, forks, spoons, and hooks. Thus, most of the metals imported at Luanda, no more than 2 percent of the value of all imported goods, were for European use.

CONCLUSION

The customs records of Luanda show that Africans sold other Africans into the trade for consumer goods, especially textiles, alcohol, and weapons imported from Asia, the Americas, and Europe. These goods were not the prime necessities of African life but could and did add to the variety of similar items produced locally. Although Africans had clear preferences for some imported commodities, such as Asian and European textiles, they continued to produce their own goods, like cloths made of raffia and palm trees. Even though they used the opportunity to experiment with new materials, as indicated by the use of imported cotton for textile production, the local industry remained largely independent of foreign

⁵⁸ See, for example, Walter Hawthorne, *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves: Transformations along the Guinea-Bissau Coast, 1400–1900* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003), 96–98; Law, *The Slave Coast*, 50–51.

⁵⁹ Miller, *Way of Death*, 85–86.

⁶⁰ Sousa, “Uma Tentativa de Fomento Industrial na Angola Setecentista: A ‘Fábrica do Ferro’ de Nova Oeiras (1766–1772),” 295–305; Venâncio, *A Economia de Luanda*, 113–23.

imports during the period of the slave trade, raising doubts about the latter's potential to undermine the local economy.

Additionally, the customs records show that most of the goods imported were destined for personal use and adornment. They were not primarily intended to fund raids and wars. Asian and European textiles could indeed have been employed to raise armies. However, they accounted for such a large percentage of the imported goods that their very abundance in the interior casts doubt on their exclusive status, which indicates they would not have power to finance raids and wars. Within Africa, the act of enslavement stemmed from the drive for material gain rather than political power. Foreign goods would only generate large numbers of slaves as long as they were spread among the African population and not concentrated in the hands of rulers. Warfare was far from being the single method of enslavement. The experiences of individual captives, the subject of the following chapter, will point to a wide variety of ways, violent and non-violent, in which Africans found themselves in the hold of a slave ship.

Experiences and Methods of Enslavement

Although outsiders were the main target group for capture and sale into the slave trade, insiders were also inadvertently or purposefully taken for the same end. This chapter will examine records and stories of both groups enslaved in the interior of West Central Africa. By the nineteenth century, many societies of the region had long been familiar with the institution of slavery, defined as a system of social, political, and economic exploitation in which people were regarded as valuable properties that could be exchanged for cash or merchandise. Not all captives were sold into the trade; some remained in bondage on the continent. As previously noted, those were mostly women and children, who could be easily integrated in the families of their masters as spouses or dependents. Africans sold into the trade had little to offer in this respect, but they had an exchange value. They were enslaved under specific circumstances, ranging from violent conflicts to judicial proceedings. The experiences of these individuals provide important insights into the question of eligibility for sale in the overseas market.

Contemporaries learned about the experiences of captives by interviewing them. In 1847, Sigismund Wilhelm Koelle disembarked at Freetown, Sierra Leone, as an agent of the Church Missionary Society. He became a linguist at the Fourah Bay Institute, where research into African languages was conducted. In 1854, he published his findings in *Polyglotta Africana*, a well-known book, which is essentially a collection of sample vocabularies of languages spoken by Africans rescued from ships condemned for illegal trading by the Freetown courts.¹ These

¹ Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*; P. E. H. Hair, "Koelle at Freetown: An Historical Introduction." In *Polyglotta Africana*, by Sigismund Wilhelm Koelle, ed. P. E. H. Hair and David Dalby (Graz: Akademische Druck, U. Verlagsanstalt, 1965), 7.

vocabularies cover almost all African regions involved in the trade. The book also provides information about the people Koelle interviewed, such as their names, ages, countries of origin, and the number of their fellow countrymen living in Sierra Leone as well as how they were taken from their original homelands.²

Koelle's work is especially valuable for our understanding of the experiences of West Central African captives. In contrast to those from other regions of slave embarkation, captives from this region left little information about their lives and experiences. There are no autobiographies of Africans enslaved in the region's interior.³ Reconstructed stories about these people in the Americas likewise contain little information on how they were captured and sold in Africa.⁴ Apart from Koelle's book, all we have are some fragments reporting the experiences of a few individuals. These fragments, which are available in print as well as in archival documents, together with Koelle's research, provide a valuable record of the experiences of people deprived of their freedom in Africa.⁵

Koelle interviewed 18 liberated Africans from what he termed Congo Angola to build his inventory of words for this region. Although this is a very small number compared to the thousands of individuals dispatched, it includes representatives from almost every major linguistic group forced into the trade. The demographics of Koelle's informants further support

² Philip D. Curtin and Jan Vansina, "Sources of the Nineteenth Century Atlantic Slave Trade." *Journal of African History* 5, no. 2 (1964): 186; P. E. H. Hair, "The Enslavement of Koelle's Informants." *Journal of African History* 6, no. 2 (1965): 193.

³ José C. Curto, "Experiences of Enslavement in West Central Africa." *Social History* 41, no. 82 (2009): 383–88.

⁴ Edward Ball, *Slaves in the Family* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1999), 134–37, 147, 174–76, 184, 228, 250–51; Cheryll Ann Cody, "There Was No 'Absalom' on the Ball Plantations: Slave-Naming Practices in the South Carolina Low Country, 1720–1865." *American Historical Review* 92, no. 3 (1987): 563–96; Melinde Lutz Sanborn, "Angola and Elizabeth: An African Family in the Massachusetts Bay Colony." *New England Quarterly* 72, no. 1 (1999): 119–29. Two notable exceptions are John K. Thornton, "The African Experience of the '20. and Odd Negroes' Arriving in Virginia in 1619." *William and Mary Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (1998): 421–34; Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundation of the Americas*, 1–9.

⁵ Louis Jadin, "Rapport sur les Recherches aux Archives d'Angola du 4 Juillet au 7 Septembre 1952." *Bulletin des Séances de l'Institut Royal Colonial Belge*, no. 24 (1953): 167; Luiz António de Oliveira Mendes, *Memória a Respeito dos Escravos e Tráfico da Escravatura entre a Costa da África e o Brasil*, ed. José Capela (Porto: Escorpião, 1977), 61–62; Felisberto Caldeira Brant Pontes, "Memória de Brant Pontes sobre a Comunicação das Duas Costas 9/9/1800." In *Apontamentos sobre a Colonização dos Planaltos e Litoral do Sul de Angola*, ed. Alfredo de Albuquerque Felner, vol. 1 (Lisbon: Agência Geral das Colónias, 1940), 248–51.

the use of his data for an assessment of how Africans were enslaved in the region. All interviewees were male, with ages ranging from 14 to 28. Except for three men who remained in Africa for several years, those captured had been immediately sold overseas. Not all of them specified how they were captured. When Koelle interviewed his sample, they were well-established in Sierra Leone, having been there for at least seven years. In fact, one of them, a Kongo man named Mugádu, also known as Thomas Tob, had been living in Freetown for about 40 years when Koelle contacted him. Koelle noted that by the time he interviewed Mugádu, given the man's age, he had held the "office of Kongo headman," a position found around the Atlantic wherever there was a substantial Kongo population.⁶ Koelle's informants provide us with reliable information about the experiences of West Central Africans sent to the Americas after 1807 (see Table 6.1).

The liberated Africans reported two broad methods of enslavement; kidnapping and judicial proceedings. One of the informants said that he was sold by his relatives, but did not give reasons for the transaction.⁷ Kidnapping included not only victims of abduction and trickery but also prisoners of wars or raids. Sometimes victims of warfare claimed that they were kidnapped as opposed to being captured, but their background as well as the context in which they were enslaved suggest otherwise. Depending on the circumstance, such as living among former enemies, not everyone felt comfortable enough in admitting to being a prisoner of war. Given the emphasis historians have placed on the role of wars in the slave trade, this method of capture deserves considerable discussion. Scholars generally agree that the majority of slaves sold into the slave trade were prisoners of wars. The question is what kind of wars generated these slaves? Were they large-scale wars that required the mobilization of significant resources and manpower? Or were they local conflicts more accurately described as raids and skirmishes?

WARFARE

The Angolan Wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have led many historians to believe that large-scale conflicts were the primary

⁶ Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*, 13. On the office of Kongo headman, see Marina de Mello e Souza, *Reis Negros no Brasil Escravista: História da Festa de Coroação de Rei Congo* (Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2002), 159–208.

⁷ Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*, 13–14.

TABLE 6.1 Koelle's interviewees, c.1847

Name	Date captured	Ethnolinguistic origin	Age at enslavement	Method of enslavement
Bémbi or William Davis	1832	Umbundu	28	Judicial proceeding/ Witchcraft
Bunsála or Thomas Pratt	1835	Obamba	Unknown	Judicial proceeding/ Adultery
Dsíku or Isaac Manners	1840	Nsundi	23	Kidnapped/ Warfare
Dsingó or James Job	1829	Teke	Unknown	Judicial proceeding/ Debt
Kadióngo or John Morrison	1837	Kisama	16	Kidnapped/ Abducted
Kindsímbu, Dsindsímbi, or John Baptist	1819	Vili	14	Unspecified
Kúmbu or Thomas Parker	1831	Yombe	Unknown	Judicial proceeding/ Witchcraft
Mugádu or Thomas Tob	1809	Kongo	22	Unspecified
Muséwo or Toki Petro	1794	Songo	15	Kidnapped/ Abducted
Mútomp or William Francis	1835	Kanyok	Unknown	Judicial proceeding/ Misconduct
Nanga or John Smart	1841	Libolo	24	Judicial proceeding/ Debt
Ndsúmu or William Fergusson	1832	Teke	17	Unspecified
Ngónга or John Wilhelm	1834	Kasanje	28	Kidnapped/ Unclear
Nkóngal or James Mafoi	1840	Lunda	23	Kidnapped/ Warfare
Nzinga or Andrew Hobb	1836	Kongo	23	Sold by relatives/ Unspecified
Okiri or Andrew Park	1822	Mbeti	16	Judicial proceeding/ Unspecified

(continued)

TABLE 6.1 (*continued*)

Name	Date captured	Ethnolinguistic origin	Age at enslavement	Method of enslavement
Tut or Charles Wilhelm	1832	Teke	20	Kidnapped/ Unspecified
Unknown	1839	Ngola	22	Unspecified

Source: Sigismund Wilhelm Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*, ed. P. E. H. Hair and David Dalby (Graz: Akademisch Druck, U. Verlagsanstalt, 1965), 13–15.

method of enslavement in the interior. After the Portuguese founded Luanda in 1575, they formed an alliance with bands of itinerant warriors known as the Jaga. This alliance destabilized a region that was already very politically fragile because of the independence of Ndongo from Kongo. When the Ndongo ruler proved unwilling to accept their trading terms, the Portuguese invaded his realm with the help of the Jaga, replacing him with a ruler more amenable to their interests. This move unleashed a series of military confrontations between claimants to the throne of Ndongo. The faction supported by the Portuguese and the Jaga founded a new polity in the region known as the Imbangala Kingdom of Kasanje.⁸ These confrontations resulted in a vast number of prisoners being sent to the Americas during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Portuguese governors often provoked these conflicts because their income depended largely on the traffic from Luanda.⁹ The traffic and political instability contributed to an atmosphere of destruction, violence, and insecurity in the hinterland of Luanda. As a local observer noted, the Angolan Wars led to “carnage on such a large-scale that rivers became polluted with numerous corpses and multitudes of innocent people were captured without cause.”¹⁰ Among these multitudes were soldiers and civilians.

In the eighteenth century, Portuguese participation in large-scale African wars began to decline. In 1720, administrative reforms established a salary for high-ranking administrators and prohibited them

⁸ The traditional account about the Angolan Wars is António de Oliveira de Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas*, 1680, ed. José Matias Delgado (Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1972).

⁹ Miller, *Way of Death*, 541–42.

¹⁰ Bishop of Angola to the King, 7 September 1619 in Alfredo de Albuquerque Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a Ocupação e Início do Estabelecimento dos Portugueses no Congo, Angola e Benguela Extraídos de Documentos Históricos* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1933), 452–56. As quoted and translated by Curto, “Experiences,” 390.

from engaging in private commercial activities in the colonies.¹¹ As a consequence, Portuguese governors based on the coast of Angola were, in theory, no longer able to participate in the trade. Nevertheless, historians continued to view large-scale wars as the primary method of enslavement, but for the eighteenth century they locate these conflicts in the deep interior of West Central Africa at the frontiers of the Lunda Empire. There is some documentary support for this position. During this period, the Portuguese governors in Luanda informed the Colonial Office in Lisbon that the Lunda were conducting military activities deep in the region's interior.¹² Additionally, slave traders operating inland reported on the Lunda campaigns. Manoel Correia Leitão traveled to the valley of the Kwango River between 1755 and 1756 and noted that the Lunda king "is very powerful, and from his realms and domains captains come forth who are sent forth by him to the West, the North, and the South, and other parts with troops of very many people to capture slaves which they sell, according to the place closest to where they take them . . . And it is certain that were it not for them, we would not have so many slaves, because, through their ambition and their reputation as conquerors, having become terrestrial Eagles, they raid countries so remote from their Fatherland only to lord it over other peoples."¹³

Lunda military activities along the Kwango River may have been highly destructive, but they did not result in the sale of large numbers on the coast as Leitão argued. Moreover, customs records of slaves shipped from Luanda suggest that large-scale wars inhibited the slave trade rather than stimulated it. David Birmingham, a major proponent of the Lunda origins of slaves embarked from the region, accessed records of slaves shipped from Luanda during the mid-eighteenth century. He noted that, despite the ongoing conflicts along the Kwango River, the number of slaves shipped from Luanda declined in comparison to previous years.¹⁴ As previously mentioned, large-scale wars were not the primary method of enslavement in the interior. This conclusion is not without parallel in other African regions. David Eltis has noted that the number of slaves shipped from the Bight of Benin actually declined in the first half of the eighteenth century as a result of the Dahomean wars, which culminated in

¹¹ Miller, *Way of Death*, 543. ¹² Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict*, 152–54.

¹³ Manoel Correia Leitão, "Angola's Eastern Hinterland in the 1750s: A Text Edition and Translation of Manoel Correia Leitão's 'Voyage' (1755–1756)," ed. Eva Sebestyen and Jan Vansina, *History in Africa* 26 (1999): 341–42.

¹⁴ Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict*, 154.

the annexation of Allada and Ouidah, the two principal ports of slave embarkation on the Bight of Benin.¹⁵

Other military conflict in the interior included frequent and widespread minor wars. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there were essentially two kinds of military initiatives, one waged by Portuguese colonial officials, the other conducted by different African groups and polities. Although Portuguese governors were no longer allowed to trade slaves, it was part of their mandate to launch punitive expeditions against Africans they considered disruptive or insufficiently loyal to the Crown. Such undertakings included fiscal incentives for slave traders to supply horses for the Luanda Calvary.¹⁶ Portuguese governors could also wage “just wars” against Africans who attacked, or threatened to attack, the Portuguese settlements in Angola.¹⁷ José Curto considers these expeditions large-scale wars, but the number of captives usually reported clearly indicates that they were minor conflicts. There are many examples of these military operations and some of them show the size of these conflicts.

In 1736, the Portuguese launched a military expedition from Benguela against Kakonda in the central plateau of Angola. The records list 77 captives for the royal fifth, a tax equivalent to a fifth part of all goods produced in the Portuguese colonies, paid to the government’s treasury. These records show that some 385 individuals were captured overall. In 1744, the Portuguese mounted another expedition against the Ndembu in the interior of Luanda, enslaving 62 females for the royal fifth. The total number of individuals captured must have numbered five times that or approximately 310 captives. In 1761, the Portuguese governor dispatched a small army from Luanda to fight the Hungu who, presumably, invaded Portuguese territory while escaping from a Lunda attack. António de Vasconcelos, Governor of Angola, estimated 15,000 dead or captured among the Hungu. The official figures, however, show that only 803 were allocated to the royal fifth, from a total of 4,015 individuals seized during this campaign. These examples were among the largest expeditions launched by the Portuguese during the eighteenth century but they include only the successful campaigns. Portuguese military expeditions were undermanned, lacked sufficient weapons, and were somewhat sporadic. Clearly, they were not the principal source of the 20,000 or so slaves shipped annually from Luanda and Benguela.

¹⁵ Eltis, “The Volume and Structure of the Transatlantic Slave Trade,” 34.

¹⁶ Ferreira, “Transforming Atlantic Slaving,” 189–206.

¹⁷ Cândido, *Fronteras de Esclavización*, 162–63.

Nevertheless, based on these examples José Curto concludes, “warfare remained far from a trivial mechanism for the production of slaves.”¹⁸

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, prisoners taken in small-scale conflicts between the different African polities frequently became slaves. Because these conflicts took place in regions outside European influence, we have little information about their causes, how they unfolded, much less the number of prisoners. However, our current knowledge of military logistics in the area suggests these conflicts were seasonal, marked by intense fighting, rapid retreat, and typically involved only a few thousand combatants. John Thornton notes that the savannah was the land of infantry. He argues that horses were unable to survive the climate and, although its main rivers supported considerable boat traffic, the local population never developed a marine culture similar to other African regions, such as the West African coast or along the Niger River.¹⁹ As a consequence, in West Central Africa, military leaders typically employed fleet-footed soldiers to resolve disputes.

Armies usually comprised a combination of conscript and professional warriors. The chain of command varied according to the level of centralization within each society, but a soldier’s loyalty to his commander was generally beyond question.²⁰ Battles occurred mainly during the dry seasons, when men and women were free from farming and armies could move more easily in the interior. The savannah was sparsely populated, making the distribution of food supplies problematic. Mobilized armies had to report with rations. They often took food with them in large baggage trains packed by their wives, who were the principal agricultural workers in most societies of the savannah. These baggage trains were positioned in the middle of marching formations, when armies were on the move, and carefully stationed at a secure place during battles.²¹ Given the limited food supplies, and the mobilization of significant productive sectors of the population, these small-scale campaigns usually involved fierce battles in wars that could last up to three years.²² As previously mentioned, the variations in the climate and agricultural calendar of the region resulted in a seasonal variation in the number of slaves embarked.²³

¹⁸ Curto, “Experiences,” 391–92.

¹⁹ John K. Thornton, “The Art of War in Angola, 1575–1680.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30, no. 2 (1988): 367–68; Thornton, *Warfare*, 99.

²⁰ Thornton, “The Art of War,” 362–63; Thornton, *Warfare*, 113.

²¹ Thornton, “The Art of War,” 369–71; Thornton, *Warfare*, 119–20.

²² Thornton, “The Art of War,” 368–69; Thornton, *Warfare*, 120–24.

²³ See Chapter 2.

The number of people captured in individual conflicts was probably small. However, given the frequency of such conflicts and their dispersal in the interior, they generated large numbers of captives for the trade. Prisoners of war were taken to the nearest markets in the interior, where traders from the coast came to purchase them. Sometimes these small-scale conflicts produced so many captives that they flooded inland markets, and African traders needed to take them directly to the ports of embarkation for sale. In 1791, Manoel de Almeida e Vasconcelos, Governor of Angola, noted that Kongo slave traders brought 120 slaves from the interior in one shipment for sale at Ambriz.²⁴ These unfortunates were probably prisoners of the civil wars at the old Kingdom of Kongo. They were sufficient to fill about half the average carrying capacity of a vessel loading slaves at Ambriz.

Although wars were a common method of enslavement, records of specific individuals enslaved through wars or raids are surprisingly rare. There are in fact only three such records. The earliest refers to the involuntary servitude of Angela who, according to John Thornton and Linda Heywood, was captured during the wars Portugal waged against the Kingdom of Ndongo or in a civil war in the old Kingdom of Kongo. They found that she sailed in the same vessel as the “20 and odd Negroes” who disembarked in Virginia in 1619, from the *São João Batista*. This vessel had left Luanda with some 350 slaves on board. A Dutch privateer, operating in conjunction with an English vessel, intercepted the *São João* off the coast of present-day Venezuela. The Dutch privateer seized slaves from the *São João* and transferred some of them, including Angela, to the English vessel, the *Treasurer*. The Dutch privateer then sailed ahead and delivered the “20 and odd Negroes” to Virginia, while Angela arrived at the same destination four days later in the *Treasurer*. Interestingly, Angela made two more trips in this ship. She went to Bermuda, finally returning to Virginia where she spent the rest of her life working as a servant on the estate of Captain William Pierce at Jamestown.²⁵

²⁴ Manoel de Almeida e Vasconcelos to Paulo Martins Pinheiro de Lacerda, 29 January 1791, AHU, CU, Angola, cod. 1627, 79–81.

²⁵ Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundation of the Americas*, 1–9. See also Engel Sluiter, “New Light on the ‘20. and Odd Negroes’ Arriving in Virginia, August 1619.” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3, 54, no. 2 (1997): 397; Thornton, “The African Experience of the ‘20. and Odd Negroes’ Arriving in Virginia in 1619,” 421–34.

The second record of particular prisoners of war is in the list of 77 captives representing the royal fifth of the military expedition that the Portuguese launched from Benguela against the Kingdom of Kakonda in 1736. This list includes the names of the individuals allocated to the royal fifth and the estimated value of each person in *réis*.²⁶ This information was organized into three categories by age and sex; “Negroes,” “girls,” and “women and children.” Of the 77 individuals, 14 were males, including two boys, one of whom was listed separately from his mother; 18 were girls; and 32 were women, including nine with one child each. Finally, a further small group was made up of one young child, two girls, and a male captive of unspecified age. The total value of these slaves at Benguela amounted to 901,000 *réis*.²⁷ As José Curto noted, excluding the nine children listed with their mothers and the last group, who were dying and consequently deemed worthless, the average value of the remaining 64 was only 14,708 *réis*, less than half the average price of a prime slave sold at Luanda or Benguela.²⁸ These individuals arrived in Benguela two years after being captured, but their subsequent fate remains unknown.

Koelle’s *Polyglotta Africana* provides the third record of individual Africans who forfeited their freedom through wars or raids in West Central Africa. Two of his informants said that neighboring populations kidnapped them in their hometowns. Further, at the time of their enslavement, both were old enough to bear arms and serve in the armies of their countries. Dsíku, for example, also known as Isaac Manners, was a Kikongo speaker from Nsundi, a former province of the Kingdom of Kongo located on the lower Congo River. He said he was born in the town of Kaimatúba, where the Yombe, who lived across the river, kidnapped

²⁶ Isabel Castro Henriques believes that the names available in this document do not belong to the individuals listed but to their African rulers. She claims that the abbreviations “Mle. pelo da terr” and “Ma. pelo da terra” means *moleque* or *moleca proveniente da terra*, that is, boy or girl from the land. However, the preposition “pelo” used in both terms implies that the names belonged to the individuals listed, as in the expression *moleque* or *moleca pelo nome da terra*, that is, how they were called in their lands, because the Portuguese commonly changed the African names of the individuals that they captured for Christian names in Portuguese form. See Isabel Castro Henriques, “A Organização Afro-Portuguesa do Tráfico de Escravos (Séculos XVII-XIX).” In *A Rota dos Escravos: Angola e a Rede do Comércio Negreiro*, ed. João Medina and Isabel Castro Henriques (Lisbon: Cegia, 1996), 164, note 1.

²⁷ *Avaliação das Cabeças que Chegaram de Benguela em . . . Abril de 1738*, enclosed in João Jacques de Magalhães, 29 April 1738, AHU, CU, Angola, box 30 doc. 90. This document is reproduced in Miller, *Way of Death*, xii–xiii; Henriques, “A Organização,” 162–64.

²⁸ Curto, “Experiences,” 392–93.

him when he was 23.²⁹ Dsíku was probably captured in a raid that the Yombe launched from across the Congo River. Nkóngal, or James Mafoi, was a Ruund speaker from the Lunda Empire. According to Koelle, the “Kásas” kidnapped him at his hometown when he was the same age as Dsíku. These “Kásas” were most likely the Kasanje, who lived across the Kwango River and often engaged in military conflicts with the Lunda.³⁰ Nkóngal may also have been captured in a raid or war, rather than being simply abducted from his hometown by an alien people.

ABDUCTION AND TRICKERY

Although most kidnappings occurred during raids and wars, many Africans were enslaved through abductions, trickery, or simply because of greed. Two of Koelle’s informants seem to have been taken from their hometowns. Kadiónço, or John Morrison, a Kimbundu speaker from Kisama, said he had been kidnapped in his hometown when he was 16. He was sold at Luanda and remained there for about five years before being sold into the Atlantic market.³¹ Muséwo, or Toki Petro, a Kimbundu speaker from Songo, related that he had been kidnapped when he was 15 and sold in Luanda, where he lived for approximately 21 years working for a Portuguese trader named Henrique Consale or Gonçalves. This slave trader sometimes purchased slaves at Songo. Muséwo was able to maintain contact with his former home by working as a translator. He assimilated much of the Portuguese culture, for his alternate name was a corruption of the Portuguese António Pedro. Although Muséwo claimed he was kidnapped, there is probably more to his story. He may have upset his people in some way, because at his master’s death he was freed, yet he did not return home, as one might have expected. Rather, he moved to Brazil, where another Portuguese trader employed him in the trade. Muséwo crossed the Atlantic seven times in six years as a free crewmember on a slaving vessel. On the eighth voyage, an antislave trade cruiser captured his ship and took him to Sierra Leone, where he lived for the next 28 years. Muséwo was about 70 when Koelle interviewed him.³²

Young men were routinely abducted for sale into the trade. Commander Felisberto Caldeira Brant Pontes, on his voyage from Angola to Bahia on 17 April 1800, met an African sailor who told him a story similar to those of Koelle’s informants. According to Brant Pontes, the sailor Domingos was born in a village called Quissuca Quialaceta near the source

²⁹ Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*, 15. ³⁰ Ibid. ³¹ Ibid. ³² Ibid.

of the Zambeze River. Local countrymen kidnapped him when he was about 15. They took him to Massango Nangumbe, from where he traveled to the lands of Quirimbo Quiandua, near the port of Novo Redondo. He was then shipped to Benguela. Domingos reported that his journey in the interior lasted three lunar months and that he was sold to a brother of the captain who commanded the ship in which Brant Pontes was traveling to Bahia. Although the evidence is not clear, Domingos seems to have been working as a sailor on a vessel belonging to this captain's family. On one of his trips to Brazil, he met his former kidnapper working in the port of Rio de Janeiro. This individual claimed that Domingos' father had captured him along with five of his companions after discovering that he was to blame for his son's plight. Domingos' response was that his father's actions were legal, because he had acted with the chief's permission. Two of the five captives remained enslaved in the interior, while Domingos' abductor and three others were taken to Mbailundu, in the central plateau of Angola, where a trafficker from Benguela purchased them and shipped them to Rio de Janeiro.³³ Domingos was about 39 when he told his story to Brant Pontes, and still working as a sailor.

Trickery was often used to enslave the unsuspecting. Nbena, an Umbundu speaker from Ndombe, enjoyed high status in her community as a freeborn owner of both goods and slaves. She was related, moreover, to male leaders within her community and connected through them to males of other Ndombe communities around Benguela.³⁴ Early one morning in May or June 1817, Nbena and her daughter set out on a journey to Benguela. On the way, they met an old slave woman who worked on the nearby estate of her owner, Lieutenant Colonel António Leal do Sacramento, a black man of means in Benguela. This woman convinced Nbena to interrupt her trip and follow her to Sacramento's house. Once there, she introduced Nbena to Sacramento's wife saying that, as she was too old and tired to work, she had found her master a much younger replacement.³⁵ Nbena and her daughter were coerced into working without compensation on the estate.

³³ Brant Pontes, "Memória." A copy of this document is also available in Felisberto Caldeira Brant Pontes, "Memoria de Brant Pontes sobre a Comunicação da Costa Oriental com a Ocidental de Africa." *Arquivos de Angola* 1, 1, no. 1 (1933): doc. 18. See also Curto, "Experiences," 402; Miller, *Way of Death*, 1–7.

³⁴ José C. Curto, "The Story of Nbena, 1817–20: Unlawful Enslavement and the Concept of 'Original Freedom' in Angola." In *Trans-Atlantic Dimensions of Ethnicity in the African Diaspora*, ed. Paul E. Lovejoy and David V. Trotman (New York: Continuum, 2003), 44.

³⁵ Ibid., 49; Curto, "Experiences," 409–10.

However, the two women escaped before their service began, returning to their village where they remained for the next five or six months. In November or December, they again traveled from their village to Benguela. The journey went smoothly but, when they reached their destination, Sacramento's men recognized the “runaways” and promptly recaptured them and took them to him. He branded Nbena and sold her, along with her daughter, for 70,000 réis to João de Oliveira Dias, captain of the *Astréa*, a vessel about to depart for Luanda. News of this sale quickly reached Nbena's village, where her relatives mobilized and headed for Benguela. A large crowd surrounded the port's military headquarters, among them five or six Ndombe *sobas*, one of them an uncle of Nbena. These men claimed that Nbena had been illegally enslaved and demanded her back, but she had already left for Luanda.³⁶

The situation of Nbena and her daughter raised serious concerns because it overstepped established boundaries as to who could be forced to forfeit their free status and who could not. In a place like Benguela, where the economy depended largely on the slave trade, this apparent disregard for the rights of free individuals caused great unrest. Such cases shook the foundations of many societies in West Central Africa, including the Portuguese colonies, which had a class system based on status – a lower class of slaves, a serving class of commoners, and, at the apex of the social pyramid, the nobility. Alarmed by the crowd, the Governor of Benguela, Manoel de Abreu de Melo e Alvim, decided to try the case in court. He summoned the plaintiffs, including Nbena's family, the Ndombe *sobas*, and a number of other witnesses, who were unanimous in their opinion. Nbena was born free and lived as a free woman until she was enslaved at Sacramento's estate. Sacramento, on the other hand, claimed that Nbena was a slave who had escaped from his estate after being brought there by an old slave woman as her replacement. In response to such a delicate situation, the governor decided in favor of Nbena and ordered Sacramento to return her to Benguela.³⁷

Fortunately, Nbena and her daughter were still in Luanda when the governor decided the issue. They were returned to Benguela but not to their village because Sacramento had petitioned for the case to be reopened. The two women were then placed in the custody of a local merchant, Manuel Pereira Gonçalves. Sacramento requested the help of the Governor of Angola at Luanda, Luiz da Mota Feo e Torres, and initiated

³⁶ Curto, “The Story of Nbena,” 49–50; Curto, “Experiences,” 410–11.

³⁷ Curto, “The Story of Nbena,” 50; Curto, “Experiences,” 411–12.

a judicial challenge against Melo e Alvim that lasted for three years, during which time Nbena and her daughter remained in Benguela. As the authorities could not reach an agreement, Melo e Alvim decided unilaterally to free Nbena and her daughter. Sacramento again pressed the authorities to have the two women returned to him, on the grounds that their successful flight from slavery would set a bad example for the slaves living on his estate. The term of service for both governors then ended and their successors showed little interest in supporting Sacramento, who unwillingly dropped the case.³⁸ Nbena and her daughter returned home to enjoy freedom surrounded by their family, friends and, ironically, their own slaves.

These two women remained free thanks to their political connections, and local authorities learned a valuable lesson from the incident. Those who lacked insider status or were subject to a quick sale were not so fortunate, such as the case of Catherine Mulgrave Zimmermann. As an eight-year-old, she was captured and put on board the *Heroína*, a slave ship that left for Cuba in 1833 with 303 slaves but was shipwrecked off the Jamaican coast.³⁹ Catherine survived and grew up as a free woman in Jamaica, and married twice. Johannes Zimmermann, her second husband, says in his letters that Catherine's African name was Gewe and that she was descended from a family of chiefs on her father's side. He claimed that she belonged to a prominent family of mulattos on her mother's side. However, the location of Catherine's hometown remains unclear. Zimmermann mentions that she remembered it as a major seaport where several Europeans lived. Luanda fits this description but since she also referred to snow-covered mountaintops, Cape Town is another possible location. Catherine recalled being on the way to school with her friends when a group of sailors offered them candies, and enticed them onto the *Heroína*, which subsequently set sail across the Atlantic. No political connections were able to intervene but, with the shipwreck of the *Heroína*, Catherine escaped what would otherwise have been a life of harsh work on one of the many sugar plantations of Cuba. She never returned to her hometown, but traveled to Africa with her second husband to work as a teacher and missionary in Ghana.⁴⁰

³⁸ Curto, "The Story of Nbena," 51–59; Curto, "Experiences," 412–13.

³⁹ Eltis et al., "Voyages," voyage id 41890.

⁴⁰ Daniel B. Domingues da Silva, "Catherine Zimmermann-Mulgrave: A Slave Odyssey." In *Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database*, ed. David Eltis et al. (Atlanta: Emory University, 2008), www.slavevoyages.org.

Walter Hawthorne, in his recent study on the trade between Brazil and Upper Guinea, argues that Africans enslaved other Africans from necessity. The Balanta, he argues, participated in the trade from Upper Guinea because they needed iron to make tools for use in rice production and weapons. Rice was an important component of the Balanta diet, and Upper Guinea was a region with just as many conflicts as West Central Africa. The Balanta could obtain iron only by participating in the trade. They imported iron bars from Europeans who, until the mid-nineteenth century, were interested in only one commodity from Upper Guinea. These factors clearly support Hawthorne's thesis, which is further bolstered by the social structures of the Balanta.⁴¹

Hawthorne argues that the Balanta were a decentralized society that valued ideologies of egalitarianism.⁴² However, in West Central Africa, as in Upper Guinea, decentralized societies were not the only suppliers of slaves. Moreover, decentralized societies were not immune to greed, which no doubt tempted many Africans. The King of Kongo, Dom Afonso I, was only too aware of the problem as can be seen from his letters. In the sixteenth century, the Kingdom of Kongo was a centralized society but, in spite of his powers, the king was unable to curtail the avarice of some of his subjects, who continued their illegal activities. In 1526, Dom Afonso I wrote to the Portuguese king saying that “every day the [Portuguese] merchants carry away our people, sons of our soil and sons of our nobles and vassals, and our relatives, whom thieves and people of bad conscience kidnap and sell to obtain the coveted things and trade goods of the [Portuguese] Kingdom.”⁴³ A few months later, he wrote again about “thieves and people of bad conscience.” The king claimed that they were “*nossos naturaes*,” that is, “our people who kidnapped and secreted them [e.g. slaves] away at night for sale to white men.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ Hawthorne, *From Africa to Brazil*, 64–80.

⁴² Walter Hawthorne, “Nourishing a Stateless Society during the Slave Trade: The Rise of Balanta Paddy-Rice Production in Guinea-Bissau.” *Journal of African History* 42, no. 1 (2001): 1–3; Hawthorne, *From Africa to Brazil*, 64 and 77–79.

⁴³ Dom Afonso I to Dom João III, 6 July 1526, in António Brásio, ed., *Monumenta Missionária Africana*, 1 (Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1952), 470–71. As quoted in and translated by Curto, “Experiences,” 389.

⁴⁴ Dom Afonso I to Dom João III, 18 October 1526, in Brásio, *Monumenta*, 489–90. As quoted in and translated by Curto, “Experiences,” 389. See also John K. Thornton, “African Political Ethics and the Slave Trade.” In *Abolitionism and Imperialism in Britain, Africa, and the Atlantic*, ed. Derek R. Peterson (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), 39–47.

The sixteenth-century Kingdom of Kongo, a centralized society, had laws prohibiting the enslavement and sale of free subjects and vassals. However, by the nineteenth century the kingdom was no longer the same. The new kings had little power over their subjects.⁴⁵ In this environment, it was easier to capture and sell fellow Africans. The King of Kongo, Dom Garcia V, annually dispatched an ambassador with three slaves for sale at Luanda to cover the expenses of the education of his son and nephew. They were studying Latin at Luanda's seminary in order to become priests. The sum available to Prince Pedro and his cousin seems to have been sufficient, but in 1812 the prince decided to supplement it by selling his father's ambassador into the slave trade, along with the usual three slaves.⁴⁶ Alarmed by this transaction, the Governor of Angola, João de Oliveira Barbosa, sent Prince Pedro and his cousin back to Kongo. Then he set out to search for the ambassador in Brazil. This was a difficult task, since official figures show that, in 1812, 10,704 slaves were shipped from Luanda to five different regions in Brazil; Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, Pernambuco, Maranhão, and Pará.⁴⁷ This search was extremely important because the ambassador's sale challenged the accepted norms of eligibility for enslavement. After all, as an envoy from Dom Garcia V, the ambassador was a nobleman who belonged to the Kongo diplomatic corps. Portuguese authorities eventually succeeded in locating the ambassador in Brazil. They made amends by returning him to Luanda from where he travelled back to Kongo. There he could enjoy life again as a free man, ironically in the company of his kidnappers.⁴⁸ As in societies throughout the world, greed does not recognize ideology or political organization. It thrived in centralized as well as decentralized societies.

The motives for kidnapping someone and selling him or her into the infamous trade were not always clear. The last two interviewees in Koelle's inventory did not state clearly how they were captured or by whom. They only mentioned that they were kidnapped and sold on the coast. Tut or Charles Wilhelm, a Teke speaker from Tsaye, related that at

⁴⁵ Susan Herlin Broadhead, "Trade and Politics on the Congo Coast, 1770–1870" (Ph.D., Boston University, 1971), 17–18 and 26–31; Broadhead, "Beyond Decline: The Kingdom of Kongo in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," 619–20; Vos, "The Kingdom of Kongo," 33–36.

⁴⁶ Jadin, "Rapport," 167.

⁴⁷ Curto, "A Quantitative Reassessment," 17 and 24; Joseph C. Miller, "The Political Economy of the Angolan Slave Trade in the Eighteenth Century." *Indian Historical Review* 15 (September 1988): 179; Miller, "The Numbers," 1989, 396–97; Miller, "The Numbers," 1998, 92–93.

⁴⁸ Curto, "Experiences," 403–04; Jadin, "Rapport," 167.

20 he was kidnapped and hurried to the sea. Tut had lived in Sierra Leone for 17 years by the time Koelle interviewed him. He lived in Lomley, near Freetown, with his wife, who had also come from the same land.⁴⁹ NgónGa or John Wilhelm, a Kimbundu speaker from Kasanje, said that he was abducted at 28. He spent two years in the hands of the Portuguese before being sold into the trade, but did not mention who had originally enslaved him. NgónGa was about 43 when Koelle contacted him, and he knew some five other countrymen living in Sierra Leone, but left no further details about his life.⁵⁰

JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS

Judicial proceedings also generated captives. As previously noted, in many African societies slavery was an integral part of prescribed punishments, even for full members of these societies. It is not surprising to find victims of the slave trade who were originally enslaved as criminals sentenced to banishment or perpetual exile.⁵¹ This fate could occur for several reasons. The available records list misconduct, adultery, debt, and witchcraft as warranting involuntary servitude in the Americas.

Koelle's linguistic inventory provides three examples of individuals sentenced to exile because of misconduct or adultery. Mútomp, or William Francis, a Kanyok speaker from the Katanga plateau, in present-day Democratic Republic of the Congo, said that he grew up at Mámunyikáyint, a day's journey from the Lualaba River, and had one child who could not yet walk when he was "sold on account of bad conduct." He did not elaborate on the nature of his misconduct, but said that he was sold to Mbundu dealers, who took him to Kasanje, where he was resold to Portuguese traders. Mútomp spent two years and a month enslaved in Angola before he was transported to the Americas. He had been in Sierra Leone for 12 years when Koelle interviewed him.⁵²

Okiri, or Andrew Park, from Mbeti in present-day Congo Brazzaville, said that he was enslaved at Akuara, when he was about 16, because his mother took him with her after fleeing from his father.⁵³ It is significant that Okiri suffered the consequences of his mother's flight from the matrimonial home. West Central African societies were generally matrilineal, so inheritance and the distribution of wealth normally followed

⁴⁹ Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*, 14. ⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange*, 66–67. ⁵² Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*, 14.

⁵³ Ibid.

maternal lines of descent.⁵⁴ Moreover, women were the primary agricultural producers in this region.⁵⁵ Okiri was neither his father's heir nor an important addition to the household so his father used the justice system to exact revenge. Family dynamics in West Central Africa have changed overtime, but they could clearly have contributed to the enslavement process that fed captives to the plantations and mines of the Americas.

Bunsála, or Thomas Pratt, from Obamba in present-day Gabon, said that he had been married four years when he was enslaved for adultery. The nature of his punishment is significant for our understanding of the role of gender in the process. Although Bunsála did not say whether the person with whom he committed adultery received the same punishment, it is clear that he paid a steep price for violating accepted marital conventions in matrilineal societies. This example is all the more revealing in view of the incidence of polygyny in West Central Africa. Bunsála journeyed five months to the coast, where he was taken to a slave vessel. He had been living in Sierra Leone for 15 years, with some ten other countrymen, when Koelle interviewed him.⁵⁶

In addition to adultery, failure to repay debt could result in slavery and banishment. Dsíngó, or James Job, another of Koelle's interviewees, was sold into the trade for this reason. He was taken from his hometown, Gílibe or Boõõ, near the Congo River when his eldest son was ten.⁵⁷ This penalty for debt was so common that even in the Portuguese colonies freeborns could suffer such consequences. According to Portuguese law, enslavement for debt was illegal but there is archival evidence that it in fact happened. José Curto tells the story of a soldier in the Portuguese regiment named José Manuel, who was in danger of losing his freedom because of some merchandise he had borrowed to repay debts he had incurred in the interior. The man who had lent him the items was no other than

⁵⁴ Anne Hilton, "Family and Kinship among the Kongo South of the Zaire River from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries." *Journal of African History* 24, no. 2 (1983): 190; Wyatt MacGaffey, "Lineage Structure, Marriage and the Family amongst the Central Bantu." *Journal of African History* 24, no. 2 (1983): 208; A. Richards, "Some Types of Family Structure amongst the Central Bantu." In *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, ed. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Cyril Daryll Forde (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 208. For a different point of view, see Kajsa Ekholm, "External Exchange and the Transformation of Central African Social System." In *The Evolution of Social Systems*, ed. Jonathan Friedman and Michael J. Rowlands (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1978), 115–18.

⁵⁵ Hilton, "Family and Kinship," 193; MacGaffey, "Lineage," 173–77.

⁵⁶ Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*, 14. ⁵⁷ Ibid.

Lieutenant Colonel António Leal do Sacramento, the individual who had tried to sell Nbena and her daughter.

In 1816, José Manuel set out from Benguela to purchase slaves in the central plateau of Angola. Such activity was common among militiamen, who supplemented their income by engaging in the slave trade, the principal export activity of Benguela. However, Manuel's trip did not go well. Somewhere in the interior, he was first robbed of his merchandise and then, for unknown reasons, arrested and subjected to a fine of 46 *panos*, or small pieces of cloth, each valued between 18,000 and 20,000 *réis* in Benguela. Alone and imprisoned in the interior, he had no one to turn to, but a *soba* offered to pay his fine if he agreed to repay him the 46 *panos*. José Manuel promptly accepted the terms of the offer so that he could return home immediately.⁵⁸

Once there, José Manuel tried to repay the *soba* as soon as possible. As someone who depended on the trade to supplement his income, he knew that he had to maintain good relations with African authorities in the interior. He contacted his superior, António Leal do Sacramento, and asked for a loan of 46 *panos* to cover his debts with the *soba*. As Curto noted, Sacramento was a rich man who owned a number of properties in the region as well as a vast retinue of slaves. He at first hesitated to help his subordinate, but reconsidered the request in view of the unusual terms Manuel offered. José Manuel proposed offering Sacramento his personal services for the time it took to repay the debt. According to Curto, Sacramento found this proposal particularly interesting because the value of the debt was not specified. He closed the deal with Manuel, gave him the 46 *panos*, one coat of arms, and one bottle of sugar rum, which Manuel in turn forwarded to the *soba* who released him from his obligation. Free of one debt, Manuel had incurred a worse one. He had become the personal servant and dependent of António Leal do Sacramento.⁵⁹

He continued in this role for almost three years, performing all kinds of chores for his superior. He even carried him in a palanquin, a task usually reserved for slaves. In 1818, José Manuel discovered that Sacramento considered his services fell short of the original value of the goods loaned and consequently was thinking of selling him. Alarmed by this, José

⁵⁸ José C. Curto, "Struggling against Enslavement: The Case of José Manuel in Benguela, 1816–20." *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 39, no. 1 (2005): 101–02; Curto, "Experiences," 405–06.

⁵⁹ Curto, "Struggling," 102–04; Curto, "Experiences," 406–07.

Manuel mobilized his family and contacted the Governor of Benguela, Melo e Alvim. They argued that José Manuel, in spite of having chosen to become a servant, was a free man and therefore ineligible for slave status with all the inevitable consequences. Curto claims that José Manuel and his family petitioned for the privilege of “original freedom,” a right granted to Africans by the Portuguese Crown early on in the trade, which protected those unlawfully enslaved. Melo e Alvim decided to oppose the sale and gave José Manuel and his family more time to arrange the goods necessary to settle his debt.⁶⁰

José Manuel and his family began to assemble the required items to give to Sacramento, who thereupon refused reimbursement of the original debt, demanding instead a *peça da Índia*, a prime adult slave valued at about 90,000 réis at that time in Benguela. José Manuel and his family found yet another official in the regiment who, willing to help, gave them a young female slave valued at 64,000 réis. Governor Melo e Alvim ordered Sacramento to accept this payment to resolve the issue. Sacramento took the young woman and sold her, but still refused to release Manuel. The governor, unaware the new owner had paid 70,000 réis for the woman, ordered her to be returned to Manuel’s family, who eventually persuaded Sacramento to take her in exchange for their kinsman.⁶¹ However, Sacramento, not a man to give up easily, petitioned the Governor of Angola, Feo e Torres, to intervene in his favor, initiating a judicial battle between the two governors, as in the case of Nbena. This battle had a similar outcome with one exception. José Manuel remained free but his advocate, Melo e Alvim, was arrested for insubordination and transported to answer for his actions before His Majesty.⁶²

The use of human pawns to secure goods against the delivery of slaves provided yet another potential route to transatlantic slave markets. African slave traders usually borrowed merchandise from Europeans to purchase slaves in the interior because of the general scarcity of credit on the coast. In order to secure these loans, they pledged human pawns that they redeemed after exchanging the merchandise advanced for slaves in the interior. These pawns could be slaves, but many were free people with family ties to the debtor. When Africans were unable to redeem their pawns, Europeans kept them for their own trading purposes. Paul

⁶⁰ Curto, “Struggling,” 104–05; Curto, “Experiences,” 407.

⁶¹ Curto, “Struggling,” 106–07; Curto, “Experiences,” 408–09.

⁶² Curto, “Struggling,” 107–12; Curto, “Experiences,” 409.

Lovejoy and David Richardson argue that pawning was present mostly in West Africa, especially at Old Calabar.⁶³ However, records of Africans enslaved in the interior of West Central Africa show that the practice was common there too.

In 1793, Luiz António de Oliveira Mendes presented his memoirs of the trade to Brazil to the Scientific Academy of Lisbon. He lived in Bahia while writing the manuscript, which was for the most part based on testimonies collected from people who had lived in Portuguese Angola during the eighteenth century. One of these individuals was Raimundo Jalama, who had worked at Luanda between 1760 and 1770 as an agent of the well-known Companhia Geral de Comércio do Grão Pará e Maranhão and its sister Companhia Geral de Comércio de Pernambuco e Paraíba. Jalama told Mendes several stories about the Angolan trade, one of which concerned two unredeemed pawns who were sold at Luanda, a mother and her daughter, the latter identified by historians as Lucrécia.⁶⁴ According to Mendes, Jalama only discovered the women's misfortune after he had bought them. Lucrécia's mother was suffering from what the Portuguese at that time called *banzo*, a psychological condition associated with depression. Jalama initially thought that she missed home and he tried to help by giving her familiar food, but without effect. He then investigated Lucretia's mother's situation further and discovered that her husband had pledged both his wife and daughter for a debt that he had incurred in the interior. When the husband defaulted on the debt, both were forfeited.⁶⁵

The suffering that followed enslavement as a result of debts could be devastating, and the examples in the records attract attention precisely because they are extreme. The case of Nanga, mentioned in the Introduction, is but one example.⁶⁶ In transactions involving pawns, the terms were usually implicit in the negotiations between creditors and debtors. The former advanced merchandise needed to buy slaves; the latter used relatives as guarantees. The practice was part of the moral economy based on traditional rights or customs supported by the

⁶³ Lovejoy and Richardson, "Trust," 335–36; Lovejoy and Richardson, "The Business," 67–69.

⁶⁴ Curto, "Experiences," 401. ⁶⁵ Mendes, *Memória*, 61–62.

⁶⁶ Philip Curtin and Jan Vansina believe that Nanga belonged to the Lwena ethnic group, but Koelle's remarks clearly indicate that he was a Libolo, neighbors of the Kisama. The Libolo lived a week's journey from the Kwanza River and two weeks from Luanda. The Lwena lived much farther from Luanda, near the central plateau of Angola. See Curtin and Vansina, "Sources," 204; Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*, 15.

consensus of the community.⁶⁷ As long as both parties abided by the agreement, everyone would benefit but failure to do so could trigger disaster. The revolt of Burra Bene, an African chief who lived at Cape Lopez, in present-day Gabon, provides additional insights into pawning and its potential consequences.

In 1810, Luís Joaquim Lisboa, Governor of the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe, located in the Bight of Biafra, reported to the Portuguese Crown that António José Corrêa, Captain of the brigantine *Boa Sorte* from Pernambuco, had arrived at São Tomé with pawns entrusted to him by Burra Bene. This event caused great concern among the island's traders, because those pledged were free people directly related to the chief of nearby Cape Lopez. Two were women, one of whom was the chief's spouse. According to Lisboa, the captain broke a "very ancient custom" between slave traders from Gabon and São Tomé, because he did not return the pawns after loading his vessel with slaves and leaving the coast of Gabon.⁶⁸ The island's traders were very familiar with the institution of pawnship in this region. They frequently visited Gabon to purchase slaves. Customs records from São Tomé and Príncipe indicate that between 1799 and 1811 about 55 percent of the vessels arriving with slaves came from the coast of Gabon.⁶⁹ Corrêa was clearly not cognizant of the customs governing the slave trade in this region, but the island traders understood only too well what was at stake as a result of his violation.

António José Corrêa's seizure of Burra Bene's pawns threatened a commercial system based on trust. Because of the scarcity of credit available to purchase slaves, Africans needed to be sure that their pawns would be released when they had met their commitments. Corrêa apparently did not appreciate that important point, so the island's traders petitioned the governor to order him to return Burra Bene's pawns. Corrêa initially resisted the petition but later a judicial order filed with the Crown forced him to comply. Corrêa tried to return the individuals, but it was too late to repair the damage. Governor Lisboa reported that three days after the arrival of the *Boa Sorte*, Burra Bene retaliated for the loss of his pawns by capturing and destroying the vessels of traders from

⁶⁷ Edward Palmer Thompson, *Customs in Common* (New York: The New Press, 1991), 187–89.

⁶⁸ Daniel B. Domingues da Silva, "O Tráfico de São Tomé e Príncipe, 1799–1811: Para o Estudo de Rotas Negreiras Subsidiárias ao Comércio Transatlântico de Escravos." *Estudos de História, Franca* 9 (2002): 47.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 39–41.

São Tomé and Príncipe on the coast of Gabon.⁷⁰ Pawning was an important bargaining tool subject to customary laws governing commercial relations, including the norms that determined who could be enslaved and taken to the Americas.

Finally, accusations of witchcraft could also result in enslavement. In contrast to the perceptions of some, Africans across the hinterlands of Luanda, Benguela, and Cabinda deplored witchcraft as alien to their religion. Religion played a central role in African societies in that it was one of the principal means of justifying political power, establishing norms of moral conduct, and making sense of the world in which they lived. African authorities thus usually regarded witchcraft as warranting judicial proceedings, and individuals found guilty of practicing it could be sentenced to death or have their sentence commuted to slavery. Walter Hawthorne notes that many slaves sold on the coast of Upper Guinea in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were Africans convicted of practicing witchcraft. He states that the African populations living in that region considered witchcraft one of the most serious of all transgressions.⁷¹ It was no different in West Central Africa. Two of Koelle's informants from this region claimed that they had been enslaved because members of their families were accused of practicing witchcraft. Kúmbu, or Thomas Parker, a Kikongo speaker from the Yombe region, situated north of the Congo River, said that he was enslaved because his sister was accused of practicing witchcraft. He did not give his age at enslavement, but he was already a married man and the father of a five-year-old child.⁷² Perhaps because men sold for more than women, it was Kúmbu that was sold into the trade, an indication that his family paid dearly for his sister's offense. The case of Bémbi, or William Davis, provides a further example. Bémbi was an Umbundu speaker from Pangéla, a place Koelle insists is different from Benguela. He grew up in Wodsimbúmba, a day's journey from the sea. According to Koelle, Bémbi was enslaved because his family was accused of using witchcraft to kill the king of his hometown.⁷³ Apparently, he was not directly involved in the king's murder, but his family may have decided to let him pay for their crimes, since he would fetch a high price on the coast. Bémbi was about 28 when he was enslaved.⁷⁴ A charge of witchcraft could endanger entire families.

Judicial procedures also allowed members of a society to enslave their own countrymen. This route to enslavement contrasted widely with that

⁷⁰ Ibid., 48. ⁷¹ Hawthorne, *From Africa to Brazil*, 81.

⁷² Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*, 14–15. ⁷³ Ibid., 15. ⁷⁴ Ibid.

resulting from wars or raids, because it was aimed at accepted members of society rather than outsiders. Resulting from internal affairs, decisions were made and sanctioned by the community. The demand for slaves on the coast may have increased the range of offenses punishable by enslavement and sale. How this process occurred is still not entirely clear. Linda Heywood offers some clues, pointing out that from the sixteenth century Kongo elites tried to manipulate the kingdom's laws in order to increase the number of criminals sentenced to exile. Elites behaved this way, she argues, because slaves had become the principal exchange currency in the region. Kongo rulers tried to control such abuse by creating offices with specific responsibility for determining the status of slaves sold on the coast.⁷⁵ The Portuguese had similar bureaucratic positions at Luanda and Benguela. The Governor of Angola, Miguel António de Melo, reported that such offices still existed in Luanda at the turn of the eighteenth century.⁷⁶ As demand for slaves increased, it would not be surprising that African elites felt particularly tempted to manipulate the laws governing the sale of criminals, debtors, and others on the coast of West Central Africa.

CONCLUSION

The experiences of Africans embarked from West Central Africa in the nineteenth century show that, as Robin Law has demonstrated for West Africa, African societies had specific norms governing who was eligible for sale into the trade.⁷⁷ Enslaved Africans were usually people situated at the bottom of the social hierarchy of most societies in the region's interior. They included prisoners of war, as well as civilians captured in armed conflicts. Although large-scale wars yielded significant numbers of slaves, most Africans captured in warfare came from small-scale conflicts. Enslaved Africans shipped from the region in the nineteenth century also included victims of abductions, trickery, and greed. These forms of enslavement were primarily aimed at outsiders but, though illegal, they extended to insiders. As we have seen, insiders could be

⁷⁵ Heywood, "Slavery," 9–12.

⁷⁶ António Miguel de Mello, "Angola no Fim do Século XVIII – Documentos." *Boletim da Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa* 6, no. 5 (1886): 287–88. Roquinaldo Ferreira was able to access some records of such offices and institutions, like the *tribunal de mucanos*. See Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange*, 99–100.

⁷⁷ Law, "Legal and Illegal Enslavement," 514.

legally enslaved through judicial proceedings that ended in their banishment or perpetual exile via the slave trade. These crimes included, but were not limited to, unpaid debts, adultery, and witchcraft. In the nineteenth century, Africans were enslaved through several means; some legal, some not. The fact that both outsiders and, perhaps to a lesser extent, insiders were eligible for enslavement and sale helps explain the longevity of the slave trade.

Conclusion

The origins of slaves leaving West Central Africa in the nineteenth century provide us with an opportunity to understand whom Africans regarded as eligible for enslavement and sale across the Atlantic. The data also highlight the impact of the slave trade on the region. Older claims that the majority of the slaves were prisoners of wars waged by rulers seeking foreign merchandise that cemented alliances, sustained armies, and increased their power are called into question here. This process, the argument goes, had a devastating impact on the region, with rulers seeking captives in places increasingly farther from the coast. As Joseph Miller writes, “the entire series of local transformations, viewed over three centuries of the Angolan slave trade resembled a moving frontier zone of slaving violence.”¹ In the nineteenth century, with British efforts to suppress the trade in the North Atlantic, West Central Africa emerged as the principal source of captives for the Americas. The majority were brought to work on the plantations of Cuba and Brazil. Historians believe the number of slaves embarked in this period increased significantly, leading Africans to search for captives in regions more distant from the coast. This book has argued, however, that lists of liberated Africans from Cuba and Brazil, in addition to slave registers made by Portuguese colonial officials in Angola, show that most slaves did not come from lands in the distant interior. It also provides new estimates of the volume of slave departures that show the numbers carried off remained relatively stable from the late eighteenth through to the mid-nineteenth century.

¹ Miller, *Way of Death*, 141.

Despite the British efforts to suppress the traffic, traders continued to purchase slaves in regions situated north of the Equator, such as the Bights of Benin and Biafra. Moreover, though Portuguese, Brazilian, and Spanish traders increased their activities along the coast of West Central Africa, they were able to do so because British, American, and Dutch traders had retreated from the business early in the nineteenth century, allowing the former to buy slaves in ports previously dominated by the latter. Additionally, traders began to search for other sources of slaves in the South Atlantic, such as Mozambique, in Southeast Africa. These other sources of slaves helped ensure that the numbers of those leaving West Central Africa remained stable over time, contradicting the view of historians who believe that the expansion of Portuguese, Brazilian, and Spanish activity increased the volume of the trade and perhaps the incidence of warfare in the region's interior.

Slaves were transported to the Americas through a complex network of merchants, brokers, and traders. These individuals might specialize in a specific function or segment of the trade, but they frequently took on several roles. Brokers could become merchants and finance their own slaving expeditions after they accumulated sufficient resources. This triage was flexible, but operated within environmental conditions that helped shape the trade. The gyres of the South Atlantic, for instance, contributed significantly to the development of a bilateral slaving system, with voyages beginning in the Americas as opposed to Europe. The rainy seasons in West Central Africa also influenced the trade by helping Africans determine the best seasons of the year to plant, harvest, conduct long distance trade, and wage wars.

Although these environmental conditions helped shape the trade, merchants, brokers, and traders had plenty of opportunities for individual agency. Until 1830, during the period of the legal trade, they carried slaves from traditional ports of embarkation and relied on official facilities and administration available on both sides of the Atlantic. However, after 1830, during the illegal period, they had to develop ways to bypass antislave trade cruisers in order to continue shipping slaves. Traders went to great lengths to counterfeit papers and use flags from different countries, including the United States, in order to avoid inspection or capture. They also had to find new ports to load slaves, some of which were located in remote places, where captives were maintained in barracoons. Despite these difficulties, the network of merchants, brokers, and traders continued to function into the second half of the nineteenth century.

Slaves came from approximately 21 linguistic groups and 116 ethnicities spread throughout the interior of West Central Africa. The majority came from regions relatively close to the coast, especially from the Kikongo, Kimbundu, and Umbundu linguistic groups. None of these were invaded much less conquered by the Lunda Empire in this period and the origins of those embarked give little indication of a slaving frontier moving deeper into the interior. Rather, slaves came mostly from within their own linguistic groups and were a mix of criminals condemned to banishment, kidnap victims, and prisoners of wars between neighboring societies. These forms of enslavement did not depend on the will of rulers or their thirst for power, and they probably involved far less violence than large-scale wars between different linguistic groups.

The origins of slaves also show that the demographic impact of the trade on the populations living in the interior was unevenly distributed and that Africans coped with it in different ways. As we have seen, the trade had a profound effect on the Ndongo, Kimbundu speakers who lived in the hinterland of Luanda. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Ndongo population had declined substantially as a result of years of slave trading, and had far fewer males than females. In contrast, Umbundu speakers, who lived in the central plateau of Angola, had a very different experience. Although they served as a major source of slaves, the trade's impact on the Umbundu populations was less severe, since just a small percentage of the total Umbundu population was forced into the Atlantic.

Africans were not only victims of the slave trade but also perpetrators of it. In fact, the transatlantic trade depended largely on African traders and enslavers, who captured the majority of the slaves in the interior and sold them on the coast. However, the use of the term "African" in this context is something of a misnomer given that Africans did not regard each other as Africans. They identified more with their ethnicity, polity, ruler, or religion than with the fact that they lived in the same continent. As Nathan Huggins posited many years ago, Africans who participated actively in the trade "saw themselves as selling people other than their own."²

Africans participated in the trade based on criteria as to who could be enslaved and who could not. Gender and age played an important role in this determination. Africans were often reluctant to sell adult women into the trade. Even when prices of female slaves in the Americas

² Huggins, *Black Odyssey*, 20.

increased, such as on the eve of the Brazilian abolition in 1830, Africans continued selling more males than females. They considered women too important in their own societies to sell them on the coast in the same numbers as men. In addition to their reproductive function, women were regarded as the primary food producers in many West Central African societies. Further, most societies in the region were matrilineal and practiced polygyny, so free men often married slave women in order to avoid bequeathing their inheritance to the lineage of their wives. This stress on the importance of women in society shaped the demographic profile of the slaves leaving West Central Africa.

Africans enslaved one another more for economic than political gains. Some historians believe that the number of slaves shipped from Africa bore no relationship to fluctuations in price, since most captives shipped were prisoners of wars taken in political conflicts between African rulers. However, prices of slaves sold from Luanda, the principal port of embarkation in the region, show that Africans responded positively to the demand for captives in the Americas. The more prices increased in Luanda, the greater the number of slaves embarked. This relationship between prices and slaves dispatched clearly indicates that the trade did not depend exclusively on the thirst for power of African rulers. Many Africans participated in the trade in order to obtain foreign commodities imported from Europe, Asia, and the Americas.

The principal commodities used to purchase slaves were textiles, alcohol, and weapons; none of which supplied the primary needs of the populations living in the interior. They were mostly consumer goods, which added variety to what was produced locally but did not displace local products. Africans continued making their own cloth and alcohol as well as fighting with their traditional weapons until late in the nineteenth century. Foreign imports brought to West Central Africa during the slave trade era were not among the principal causes of the later underdevelopment of the region. Additionally, these goods were introduced in such large quantities that they lost their luxury status.

Stories of those who were sold into the trade confirm that it was not just warfare that generated slaves. Although raids and wars generated large numbers of captives, Africans had many other ways of enslaving other Africans, such as legal proceedings, pawning, trickery, or simply kidnapping. It was not only outsiders who became victims. Africans also enslaved and sold people from their own linguistic and ethnic groups into the trade, a fact frequently overlooked in the history of Atlantic slavery. This practice indicates that Africans were familiar with the concept of slavery as an

institution for political, social, and economic exploitation and that this institution did not exclude insiders from being enslaved and sold across the Atlantic.

Finally, the origins of slaves leaving West Central Africa cannot be traced on a map as a frontier of violence moving continuously eastward. The range of interests, peoples, and forms of enslavement involved in the trade were so diverse that it is impossible to represent the origins as a single wave moving from the coast to the interior. Causes of enslavement and sources of slaves were clearly multiple and must have overlapped but, more important, they depended ultimately on the values, customs, and beliefs of the populations engaged in the trade. Thus, a close study of the origins of the slaves leaving West Central Africa in the nineteenth century offers new insights into whom Africans regarded as eligible for enslavement and sale across the Atlantic as well as the impact of the transatlantic trade on this vast region.

Appendix A – Slave Origins Data

The origins of slaves leaving Angola in the nineteenth century were traced using two sets of documents. The first were the lists of liberated Africans compiled by the mixed commission courts of Havana and Rio de Janeiro; the second, the slave registers of Luanda, Benguela, and Novo Redondo. The original data for the lists of liberated Africans from Cuba are available in the “African Origins” portal.¹ The data for those disembarked in Brazil as well as for the slaves registered in Angola are available in the dissertation that preceded this book, which also contains additional notes on both sets of documents.² Table A.1 summarizes the estimates described in Chapter 3. Readers who wish to generate their own estimates, or who would like to provide a different interpretation about the ethnonyms selected, are advised to use the raw data available in the materials mentioned above.

TABLE A.1 *Estimated number of slaves leaving West Central Africa by linguistic and ethnic groups, 1831–1855*

Linguistic groups	Ethnic groups	Estimated number of slaves
Bangi	Kanga	262
Bangi	Ngele	262
Cokwe	Cokwe	397

(continued)

¹ Eltis and Misevich, “African Origins.”

² Daniel B. Domingues da Silva, “Crossroads: Slave Frontiers of Angola, c.1780–1867” (Ph.D., Emory University, 2011).

TABLE A.1 (*continued*)

Linguistic groups	Ethnic groups	Estimated number of slaves
Herero	Himba	392
Kimbundu	Bondo	1,818
Kimbundu	Holo	349
Kimbundu	Hungo	1,609
Kimbundu	Kadi	492
Kimbundu	Kalandula	12,660
Kimbundu	Kasamba	262
Kimbundu	Kasanje	49,156
Kimbundu	Kipala	4,807
Kimbundu	Kisama	37,070
Kimbundu	Libolo	54,059
Kimbundu	Lunga	87
Kimbundu	Mbundu	1,062
Kimbundu	Ndembu	1,726
Kimbundu	Ndongo	126,213
Kimbundu	Njinga	38,759
Kimbundu	Ntemo	4,848
Kimbundu	Pende	262
Kimbundu	Shinje	606
Kimbundu	Songo	6,890
Kikongo	Dange	6,288
Kikongo	Kakongo	948
Kikongo	Kongo	4,709
Kikongo	Lemba	1,312
Kikongo	Madimba	262
Kikongo	Mbamba	2,290
Kikongo	Mbembe	3,102
Kikongo	Mpangu	262
Kikongo	Ngoyo	318
Kikongo	Nlaza	525
Kikongo	Nsonso	4,222
Kikongo	Nsundi	46,103
Kikongo	Okango	787
Kikongo	Pumbu	318
Kikongo	Solongo	787
Kikongo	Suku	1,399
Kikongo	Yaka	6,037
Kikongo	Zombo	436
Kota	Okota	611
Kunyi	Kunyi	5,774
Lumbu	Lumbu	2,010

(continued)

TABLE A.1 (*continued*)

Linguistic groups	Ethnic groups	Estimated number of slaves
Ndonga	Ndundo	56
Ndonga	Nkusu	517
Ndonga	Nyengo	260
Ngangela	Kangala	56
Ngangela	Luio	336
Ngangela	Luvale	2,862
Ngangela	Mbande	112
Ngangela	Mbunda	168
Ngangela	Mbwela	560
Ngangela	Ndungo	168
Ngangela	Ngangela	12,200
Ngangela	Nyemba	280
Njebi	Nzabi	6,299
Nkhumbi	Nkhumbi	11,880
Nyaneka	Kilenge	4,878
Nyaneka	Kipungu	224
Nyaneka	Kwankua	56
Nyaneka	Lenda	56
Nyaneka	Ngambo	336
Nyaneka	Wila	168
Ovambo	Dombondola	56
Ovambo	Kwanyama	224
Ovambo	Ovambo	56
Ruund	Lunda	19,501
Ruund	Ndemba	56
Teke	Mbe	433
Teke	Monjolo	16,195
Teke	Teke	56
Teke	Tio	25,157
Teke	Tsintsege	525
Totela	Totela	262
Umbundu	Donde	341
Umbundu	Ekekete	56
Umbundu	Fende	56
Umbundu	Hanya	4,257
Umbundu	Kaala	224
Umbundu	Kakonda	6,653
Umbundu	Kalukembe	504
Umbundu	Kenge	743
Umbundu	Kikuma	543
Umbundu	Kingolo	2,408

(continued)

TABLE A.1 (*continued*)

Linguistic groups	Ethnic groups	Estimated number of slaves
Umbundu	Kipeyo	2,912
Umbundu	Kisanji	672
Umbundu	Kitata	280
Umbundu	Kivanda	4,145
Umbundu	Kivula	2,184
Umbundu	Kiyaka	5,183
Umbundu	Lemba	962
Umbundu	Lumbo	56
Umbundu	Mbailundu	14,522
Umbundu	Mbongo	448
Umbundu	Mbui	19,379
Umbundu	Moma	784
Umbundu	Namba	56
Umbundu	Nano	5,153
Umbundu	Nbova	173
Umbundu	Ndombe	5,573
Umbundu	Ndulu	1,161
Umbundu	Ngalangi	9,552
Umbundu	Nganda	1,176
Umbundu	Ovimbundu	784
Umbundu	Sambu	5,688
Umbundu	Sanga	713
Umbundu	Sele	6,696
Umbundu	Soke	56
Umbundu	Sumbe	896
Umbundu	Tunda	5,545
Umbundu	Viye	33,050
Umbundu	Wambu	10,952
Vili	Loango	41,262
Yansi	Muyanji	2,100
Yombe	Yombe	32,769
Total		767,215

Source: See text.

Appendix A – Slave Origins Data

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Kikongo	Kakongo	948
Kikongo	Kongo	4,709
Kikongo	Lemba	1,312
Kikongo	Madimba	262
Kikongo	Mbamba	2,290
Kikongo	Mbembe	3,102
Kikongo	Mpangu	262
Kikongo	Ngoyo	318
Kikongo	Nlaza	525
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Ngangela	Ndungo	168
Ngangela	Ngangela	12,200
Ngangela	Nyemba	280
Njebi	Nzabi	6,299
Nkhumbi	Nkhumbi	11,880
Nyaneka	Kilenge	4,878
Nyaneka	Kipungu	224
Nyaneka	Kwankua	56
Nyaneka	Lenda	56
Nyaneka	Ngambo	336
Nyaneka	Wila	168
Ovambo	Dombondola	56
Ovambo	Kwanyama	224
Ovambo	Ovambo	56
Ruund	Lunda	19,501
Ruund	Ndemba	56
Teke	Mbe	433
Teke	Monjolo	16,195
Teke	Teke	56
Teke	Tio	25,157
Teke	Tsintsege	525
Totela	Totela	262
Umbundu	Donde	341
Umbundu	Ekekete	56
Umbundu	Fende	56
Umbundu	Hanya	4,257
Umbundu	Kaala	224
Umbundu	Kakonda	6,653
Umbundu	Kalukembe	504
Umbundu	Kenge	743
Umbundu	Kikuma	543
Umbundu	Kingolo	2,408

(continued)

TABLE A.1 (*continued*)

Linguistic groups	Ethnic groups	Estimated number of slaves
Umbundu	Kipeyo	2,912
Umbundu	Kisanji	672
Umbundu	Kitata	280
Umbundu	Kivanda	4,145
Umbundu	Kivula	2,184
Umbundu	Kiyaka	5,183
Umbundu	Lemba	962
Umbundu	Lumbo	56
Umbundu	Mbailundu	14,522
Umbundu	Mbongo	448
Umbundu	Mbui	19,379
Umbundu	Moma	784
Umbundu	Namba	56
Umbundu	Nano	5,153
Umbundu	Nbova	173
Umbundu	Ndombe	5,573
Umbundu	Ndulu	1,161
Umbundu	Ngalangi	9,552
Umbundu	Nganda	1,176
Umbundu	Ovimbundu	784
Umbundu	Sambu	5,688
Umbundu	Sanga	713
Umbundu	Sele	6,696
Umbundu	Soke	56
Umbundu	Sumbe	896
Umbundu	Tunda	5,545
Umbundu	Viye	33,050
Umbundu	Wambu	10,952
Vili	Loango	41,262
Yansi	Muyanji	2,100
Yombe	Yombe	32,769
Total		767,215

Source: See text.

Appendix B – Slave Prices Data

Information on prices of slaves leaving West Central Africa in the nineteenth century is extremely rare. The prices used here were originally collected from reports of commodities imported and exported from Luanda, the principal port of slave embarkation on the coast of West Central Africa. Colonial officials began to issue these reports in the late eighteenth century, following administrative reform in the Portuguese Empire.¹ They dispatched these reports annually to Lisbon and, during the French occupation of Portugal, to Rio de Janeiro. Unfortunately, only a few of these reports survive to the present-day.² They give the quantity, price, and total value of all merchandise, including slaves, imported and exported from Luanda.

Colonial officials reported the price of slaves in terms of annual averages calculated on the number of adult slaves embarked. Although they were generally purchased with imported commodities, colonial officials communicated the cost of slaves embarked in *réis* (sing. *real*), the Portuguese currency in Angola. Table B.1 shows the prices of slaves leaving Luanda as they appear in the reports available between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Because the value of the *real* changed significantly with inflation, these prices were deflated using an index built with prices of 35 domestic and foreign articles traded in

¹ Curto and Gervais, “The Population History of Luanda,” 4–12; Curto and Gervais, “A Dinâmica Demográfica de Luanda,” 86–90.

² Florentino, *Em Costas Negras*, 160; Joseph C. Miller, “Slave Prices in the Portuguese Southern Atlantic, 1600–1830.” In *Africans in Bondage: Studies in Slavery and the Slave Trade*, ed. Paul E. Lovejoy (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1986), 67. References to surviving reports are listed in the sources of Table C.1.

TABLE B.1 *Prices of slaves leaving Luanda as reported by colonial officials, 1780–1830*

Years	Prices in réis	Years	Prices in réis
1780	53,000	1813	75,000
1790	59,000	1815	70,000
1802	67,940	1816	68,000
1803	69,550	1817	75,000
1804	72,500	1818	75,000
1805	75,000	1819	75,000
1808	67,000	1820	75,000
1809	72,000	1823	60,000
1810	70,000	1824	65,000
1811	70,000	1825	70,000
1812	69,000	1830	150,000

Sources: 1808, 1811 and 1820: Manolo Florentino, *Em Costas Negras*, 160. 1780, 1790, and 1830: Joseph C. Miller, “Slave Prices in the Portuguese Southern Atlantic,” 67. 1802–1805, 1809–1810, 1812–1819, 1823–1825: AHU, CU, Angola, box 106 doc. 5; box 109 doc. 54, box 112 doc. 47; box 115 doc. 14; box 121 doc. 6; box 121A doc. 35; box 127 doc. 1; box 128 doc. 26; box 131 doc. 11; box 132 doc. 26; box 133 doc. 3; box 134 doc. 24; box 138 doc. 56; box 144 doc. 92; and box 159 doc. 13.

TABLE B.2 *Prices of slaves leaving Luanda deflated by decades, 1780–1830*

Years	Nominal prices in réis	Silbering indices	Reindex to 1780s	Real prices in réis
1780s	53,000	102.6	100.0	53,000
1790s	59,000	128.4	125.1	73,836
1800s	70,570	160.5	156.4	110,395
1810s	72,444	155.8	151.9	110,008
1820s	65,000	105.6	102.9	66,901
1830s	150,000	102.0	99.4	149,123

Sources: Table B.1 and Norman J. Silbering, “British Prices and Business Cycles,” 232–33.

pounds in Britain between 1779 and 1850.³ Table B.2 shows these prices deflated by decade between 1780 and 1830.

³ Norman J. Silbering, “British Prices and Business Cycles, 1779–1850.” *Review of Economics and Statistics* 5 (1923): 232–33.

Appendix C – Exchange Commodities Data

The following tables were built with data originally compiled from the customs records of Luanda. They show the value of the commodities imported through that port in thousands of *réis*. It should be noted that customs officials did not record the current value of the merchandise brought there. Rather, the numbers available are estimates that members of the trading board calculated multiplying the amount of goods imported by their annual average price. As a consequence, they should not be regarded as accurate numbers but only as approximations. Nevertheless, they provide an important indication of the principal commodities used to purchase slaves in the interior of West Central Africa.

Tables C.1 and C.2 show the total value and percentage of the commodities imported by categories: alcohol, apparel and notions, Asian textiles, European textiles, foodstuff, metals and metalware, miscellany articles, and weapons. Tables C.3 to C.10 provide the value of the principal articles imported within each of these categories. All values are in thousands of *réis*. Figures for the periods 1785–94 and 1823–25 are provided in the sources in aggregates only as opposed to individual years. The records for 1830–31 provide just a summary of the main commodities imported. Arithmetic mistakes in the sources have been corrected. Missing totals were calculated multiplying the amount of the merchandise imported by the price for which it was sold. Missing prices were estimated with basis on the average price of the same good for the years immediately before and after with data available.

TABLE C.1 *Commodities imported at Luanda by categories (in thousands of réis), 1785–1864*

Years	Alcohol	Apparel and notions	Asian textiles	European textiles	Foodstuff	Metals and metalware	Miscellany	Weapons	Total
1785–94	1,055,507.1	157,265.7	1,358,806.9	1,306,617.5	348,361.2	57,299.2	382,504.6	202,870.8	4,869,232.9
1795	175,387.9	11,346.2	128,359.0	106,328.6	31,907.4	2,436.3	76,594.6	32,705.5	565,065.5
1796	177,919.0	17,923.2	62,682.2	72,176.3	26,910.1	1,103.8	44,687.6	14,330.5	417,732.6
1797	213,989.7	30,346.2	205,632.4	258,751.6	30,745.9	1,880.3	78,739.6	15,710.6	835,796.3
1798	73,268.9	16,644.3	97,777.9	116,912.2	18,182.0	7,663.6	23,194.1	2,019.5	355,662.6
1799	86,457.2	22,184.6	145,552.5	228,993.8	31,652.3	7,337.4	42,182.2	19,900.4	584,260.3
1802	192,831.6	63,943.2	248,630.9	311,232.9	85,015.8	18,326.6	54,503.9	25,827.9	1,000,312.7
1803	175,245.4	41,150.8	233,334.8	300,692.0	70,598.2	34,652.0	63,056.8	76,928.2	995,658.3
1804	206,170.8	59,875.6	179,411.1	277,714.9	96,144.3	32,331.0	67,410.1	62,309.9	981,367.6
1805	255,923.0	20,965.0	201,954.9	529,813.5	-	-	5,242.4	49,514.0	1,063,412.8
1809	165,992.0	11,070.8	121,745.5	207,033.6	33,654.7	24,494.7	18,499.0	6,500.9	588,991.3
1810	155,576.6	22,175.5	274,180.1	320,368.8	38,407.0	13,215.1	44,061.7	12,994.5	880,979.3
1811	130,909.8	38,731.6	215,276.2	332,129.5	38,981.4	17,601.1	39,983.4	58,130.4	871,743.4
1812	167,173.0	24,273.2	264,471.9	286,677.2	47,230.4	38,206.5	32,355.6	33,386.8	893,774.5
1813	195,513.2	10,654.7	329,560.8	300,801.4	33,412.6	11,727.1	26,998.6	691.4	909,359.8
1815	203,278.1	24,035.8	282,046.3	310,429.7	55,293.8	39,109.2	41,126.8	50,573.2	1,005,892.8
1816	172,374.0	33,164.0	244,383.0	465,285.7	55,872.4	52,622.7	41,114.7	66,369.4	1,131,185.9
1817	309,129.1	46,027.1	333,067.4	496,741.8	55,741.6	49,331.5	64,946.2	152,936.4	1,507,921.0
1818	294,498.7	45,046.9	481,934.7	360,776.8	58,539.3	28,357.7	48,937.9	232,717.6	1,550,809.6

1819	221,443.4	54,935.6	687,882.9	534,125.3	60,590.3	24,419.5	60,481.8	119,924.4	1,763,803.1
1820	221,722.4	53,408.9	604,457.5	636,879.8	61,003.3	23,906.4	61,428.7	75,979.4	1,738,786.1
1823–25	962,301.7	73,484.7	588,939.8	627,094.7	190,473.3	114,388.5	116,579.9	312,088.0	2,985,350.7
1830	154,238.2	-	-	84,910.0	44,311.7	-	14,241.8	9,520.0	307,221.8
1831	259,330.0	-	-	105,430.0	49,162.1	-	20,709.0	30,625.0	465,256.1
1832	136,159.6	-	-	132,010.0	36,390.0	-	10,667.7	34,545.0	349,772.3
1837	150,628.6	76,155.2	117,854.1	811,564.8	55,741.3	23,297.0	90,380.6	181,603.4	1,507,225.2
1857	309,428.3	45,078.1	411,774.0	619,968.7	203,620.1	24,335.7	376,624.5	63,268.4	2,054,097.7
1858	190,472.0	38,880.9	354,665.0	460,611.1	248,406.4	25,576.6	268,709.3	64,362.7	1,651,683.9
1859	348,396.3	46,663.8	316,514.6	390,909.1	197,262.9	32,393.9	245,138.0	79,510.9	1,656,789.5
1861	241,168.8	47,320.7	430,995.5	325,304.1	160,169.8	28,471.7	291,139.2	60,937.3	1,585,507.1
1862	206,877.8	20,125.7	219,217.7	184,033.1	98,276.6	22,364.4	182,237.2	8,279.1	941,411.6
1863	158,209.4	16,741.6	114,430.8	160,843.6	93,393.6	29,631.3	113,059.8	11,614.7	697,924.8
1864	104,645.3	14,080.0	116,149.9	127,435.9	80,983.4	17,221.2	110,505.9	15,501.3	586,522.8
All years	8,072,166.9	1,183,699.4	9,371,690.2	11,790,597.8	2,736,435.3	803,701.8	3,158,042.7	2,184,177.4	39,300,511.6

Sources:

- 1785–94 IHGB DL 794,28
- 1795–97 BNRJ, Seção de Manuscritos 15–3-33.
- 1798 AHU, CU, Angola, box 89 doc. 79
- 1799 AHU, CU, Angola, box 93A, doc. 48
- 1802 AHU, CU, Angola, box 106 doc. 5
- 1803 AHU, CU, Angola, box 109 doc. 54
- 1804 AHU, CU, Angola, box 112 doc. 47
- 1805 AHU, CU, Angola, box 115 doc. 14
- 1808 ANRJ, JC, box 448 bundle 1
- 1809 AHU, CU, Angola, box 121 doc. 6

- 1809 ANRJ, JC, box 448 bundle 1
1809 ANRJ, JC, box 449 bundle 1
1810 AHU, CU, Angola, box 121A doc. 35
1812 AHU, CU, Angola, box 127 doc. 1
1812 ANRJ, JC, box 449 bundle 1
1813 AHU, CU, Angola, box 128 doc. 26
1813 ANRJ, JC, box 449 bundle 1
1815 AHU, CU, Angola, box 131 doc. 11
1815 ANRJ, JC, box 449 bundle 1
1816 AHU, CU, Angola, box 132 doc. 26
1816 ANRJ, JC, box 449 bundle 1
1817 AHU, CU, Angola, box 133 doc. 3
1818 AHU, CU, Angola, box 134 doc. 24
1818 ANRJ, JC, box 449 bundle 1
1819 AHU, CU, Angola, box 138 doc. 56
1819 ANRJ, JC, box 449 bundle 1
1820 ANRJ, JC, box 449 bundle 1
1823-25 AHU, CU, Angola, box 159 doc. 13
1830-32 AHU, CU, Angola, box 176 doc. 11
1837 AHU, SEMU, Angola, box 593 folder 4
1857-59 *Boletim Oficial do Governo Geral da Província de Angola*, nos. 646, 706, and 762.
1861-64 AHU, SEMU, Angola, box 629, folder 28 and box 638 folder 37.

TABLE C.2 *Commodities imported at Luanda by categories (in row percentages), 1785–1864*

Years	Alcohol	Apparel and notions	Asian textiles	European textiles	Foodstuff	Metals and metalware	Miscellany	Weapons	Total
1785–94	21.7	3.2	27.9	26.8	7.2	1.2	7.9	4.2	100.0
1795	31.0	2.0	22.7	18.8	5.6	0.4	13.6	5.8	100.0
1796	42.6	4.3	15.0	17.3	6.4	0.3	10.7	3.4	100.0
1797	25.6	3.6	24.6	31.0	3.7	0.2	9.4	1.9	100.0
1798	20.6	4.7	27.5	32.9	5.1	2.2	6.5	0.6	100.0
1799	14.8	3.8	24.9	39.2	5.4	1.3	7.2	3.4	100.0
1802	19.3	6.4	24.9	31.1	8.5	1.8	5.4	2.6	100.0
1803	17.6	4.1	23.4	30.2	7.1	3.5	6.3	7.7	100.0
1804	21.0	6.1	18.3	28.3	9.8	3.3	6.9	6.3	100.0
1805	24.1	2.0	19.0	49.8	-	-	0.5	4.7	100.0
1809	28.2	1.9	20.7	35.2	5.7	4.2	3.1	1.1	100.0
1810	17.7	2.5	31.1	36.4	4.4	1.5	5.0	1.5	100.0
1811	15.0	4.4	24.7	38.1	4.5	2.0	4.6	6.7	100.0
1812	18.7	2.7	29.6	32.1	5.3	4.3	3.6	3.7	100.0
1813	21.5	1.2	36.2	33.1	3.7	1.3	3.0	0.1	100.0
1815	20.2	2.4	28.0	30.9	5.5	3.9	4.1	5.0	100.0
1816	15.2	2.9	21.6	41.1	4.9	4.7	3.6	5.9	100.0
1817	20.5	3.1	22.1	32.9	3.7	3.3	4.3	10.1	100.0
1818	19.0	2.9	31.1	23.3	3.8	1.8	3.2	15.0	100.0
1819	12.6	3.1	39.0	30.3	3.4	1.4	3.4	6.8	100.0
1820	12.8	3.1	34.8	36.6	3.5	1.4	3.5	4.4	100.0
1823–25	32.2	2.5	19.7	21.0	6.4	3.8	3.9	10.5	100.0
1830	50.2	-	-	27.6	14.4	-	4.6	3.1	100.0
1831	55.7	-	-	22.7	10.6	-	4.5	6.6	100.0
1832	38.9	-	-	37.7	10.4	-	3.0	9.9	100.0
1837	10.0	5.1	7.8	53.8	3.7	1.5	6.0	12.0	100.0
1857	15.1	2.2	20.0	30.2	9.9	1.2	18.3	3.1	100.0
1858	11.5	2.4	21.5	27.9	15.0	1.5	16.3	3.9	100.0
1859	21.0	2.8	19.1	23.6	11.9	2.0	14.8	4.8	100.0
1861	15.2	3.0	27.2	20.5	10.1	1.8	18.4	3.8	100.0
1862	22.0	2.1	23.3	19.5	10.4	2.4	19.4	0.9	100.0
1863	22.7	2.4	16.4	23.0	13.4	4.2	16.2	1.7	100.0
1864	17.8	2.4	19.8	21.7	13.8	2.9	18.8	2.6	100.0
All years	20.5	3.0	23.8	30.0	7.0	2.0	8.0	5.6	100.0

Sources: Same as Table C.1.

TABLE C.3 *Alcohol imported at Luanda (in thousands of réis), 1785–1864*

Years	Aguardente	Jeribita	Liquors	Wine	Other	Total
1785–94	70,949.5	683,621.0	10,605.0	289,746.0	585.6	1,055,507.1
1795	7,157.0	141,078.5	-	27,120.0	32.4	175,387.9
1796	5,425.8	131,012.0	324.0	41,060.0	97.2	177,919.0
1797	7,314.2	143,700.5	144.0	62,750.0	81.0	213,989.7
1798	901.4	56,311.5	541.9	15,490.2	24.0	73,268.9
1799	881.4	60,672.0	510.0	24,083.0	310.7	86,457.2
1802	77,580.0	50,150.0	1,536.8	63,452.6	112.2	192,831.6
1803	5,883.0	112,125.0	760.5	56,328.1	148.8	175,245.4
1804	8,906.8	134,880.0	784.8	60,999.2	600.0	206,170.8
1805	179,177.0	-	586.0	76,160.0	-	255,923.0
1809	155,737.2	-	465.6	9,769.2	20.0	165,992.0
1810	1,000.0	102,520.0	829.2	51,045.0	182.4	155,576.6
1811	1,995.0	82,875.0	906.2	44,445.2	688.4	130,909.8
1812	-	123,440.0	1,348.4	41,819.4	565.2	167,173.0
1813	-	154,594.0	952.0	39,838.2	129.0	195,513.2
1815	200.0	168,073.6	850.0	33,614.5	540.0	203,278.1
1816	1,310.0	115,240.0	1,134.0	54,280.0	410.0	172,374.0
1817	1,235.0	171,562.5	546.0	135,660.0	125.6	309,129.1
1818	600.0	199,083.5	200.0	94,352.0	263.2	294,498.7
1819	1,072.1	184,090.0	4,724.5	30,834.0	722.8	221,443.4
1820	1,072.1	184,090.0	4,903.5	30,834.0	822.8	221,722.4
1823–25	604,045.0	-	7,257.8	350,570.4	428.5	962,301.7
1830	135,697.2	-	-	18,541.0	-	154,238.2
1831	203,623.5	-	-	55,706.5	-	259,330.0
1832	120,792.3	-	-	15,367.3	-	136,159.6
1837	85,788.6	-	2,158.5	57,295.1	5,386.4	150,628.6
1857	226,507.3	-	5,058.5	75,089.5	2,773.0	309,428.3
1858	126,625.0	-	8,910.0	53,276.0	1,661.0	190,472.0
1859	235,419.2	-	6,168.5	102,146.6	4,662.0	348,396.3
1861	140,624.3	-	4,193.5	93,396.0	2,955.0	241,168.8
1862	156,911.5	-	5,979.4	40,028.7	3,958.2	206,877.8
1863	108,141.1	-	5,243.6	37,760.5	7,064.1	158,209.4
1864	60,150.8	-	3,105.8	36,917.7	4,471.0	104,645.3
All years	2,732,723.2	2,999,119.1	80,728.0	2,219,776.1	39,820.6	8,072,166.9

Sources: Same as Table C.1.

TABLE C.4 *Apparel and notions imported at Luanda (in thousands of réis), 1785–1864*

Years	Barrets	Clothing	Corals	Hats	Other	Total
1785–94	17,178.0	46,646.8	7,518.0	29,391.3	56,531.6	157,265.7
1795	1,272.0	1,101.8	5,247.0	2,769.0	956.4	11,346.2
1796	30.0	7,727.1	3,519.0	4,288.8	2,358.3	17,923.2
1797	903.0	11,252.8	2,664.0	7,023.6	8,502.8	30,346.2
1798	264.8	3,558.3	294.6	4,957.2	7,569.3	16,644.3
1799	113.7	4,557.4	1,637.0	5,268.8	10,607.8	22,184.6
1802	857.7	8,841.1	39,158.0	7,137.3	7,949.1	63,943.2
1803	1,049.1	16,354.2	8,640.0	7,182.0	7,925.6	41,150.8
1804	7,976.4	15,447.0	6,448.0	9,869.4	20,134.8	59,875.6
1805	1,186.5	7,877.5	-	11,533.4	367.6	20,965.0
1809	85.0	6,924.3	-	1,346.0	2,715.6	11,070.8
1810	750.4	6,388.5	1,782.0	4,535.2	8,719.4	22,175.5
1811	2,215.4	9,297.1	12,280.0	6,279.4	8,659.7	38,731.6
1812	1,305.6	6,313.4	736.0	6,842.6	9,075.6	24,273.2
1813	708.6	2,684.8	1,656.0	2,022.6	3,582.7	10,654.7
1815	1,824.0	5,232.8	1,152.0	6,207.0	9,620.0	24,035.8
1816	2,976.0	6,033.6	3,200.0	7,495.0	13,459.4	33,164.0
1817	5,520.0	4,932.0	3,968.0	6,494.0	25,113.1	46,027.1
1818	1,464.0	7,237.8	9,600.0	5,729.5	21,015.6	45,046.9
1819	1,563.9	17,950.7	8,178.0	19,196.0	8,047.0	54,935.6
1820	1,563.9	18,133.5	8,178.0	17,628.0	7,905.5	53,408.9
1823–25	8,688.0	35,521.4	12,082.0	8,737.0	8,456.4	73,484.7
1830	-	-	-	-	-	-
1831	-	-	-	-	-	-
1832	-	-	-	-	-	-
1837	5,604.0	22,582.2	5,499.2	37,242.5	5,227.3	76,155.2
1857	4,892.0	13,993.5	14,274.6	11,108.0	810.0	45,078.1
1858	2,862.0	11,631.9	13,038.0	11,349.0	-	38,880.9
1859	610.0	10,453.2	21,005.0	14,595.6	-	46,663.8
1861	3,716.6	19,942.6	12,100.0	10,885.0	676.5	47,320.7
1862	2,899.1	10,175.8	80.0	3,428.6	3,542.2	20,125.7
1863	678.7	10,191.3	22.5	996.0	4,853.1	16,741.6
1864	1,366.7	8,364.3	560.5	294.1	3,494.5	14,080.0
All years	82,125.0	357,348.6	204,517.4	271,831.8	267,876.5	1,183,699.4

Sources: Same as Table C.1.

TABLE C.5 *Asian textiles imported at Luanda (in thousands of réis), 1785–1864*

Years	Cadeás	Chitas	Coromandéis	Lenços	Zuartes	Other	Total
1785–94	274,915.6	151,602.4	223,429.5	130,560.6	357,997.0	220,301.8	1,358,806.9
1795	11,406.2	12,352.7	52,878.0	5,054.4	39,079.6	7,588.1	128,359.0
1796	5,545.6	14,845.7	10,808.0	2,962.4	18,821.6	9,698.9	62,682.2
1797	20,478.7	47,409.0	38,304.0	2,669.6	69,375.8	27,395.3	205,632.4
1798	12,475.5	12,490.7	17,165.0	5,610.0	29,999.0	20,037.7	97,777.9
1799	16,685.1	12,731.1	28,220.4	2,641.4	61,959.6	23,314.8	145,552.5
1802	39,874.3	22,415.4	39,721.0	28,276.4	65,165.7	53,178.2	248,630.9
1803	49,742.4	36,834.7	56,975.5	17,057.1	29,017.4	43,707.7	233,334.8
1804	36,990.0	27,440.8	27,200.0	12,968.0	33,992.0	40,820.3	179,411.1
1805	-	43,190.1	67,325.0	29,041.0	-	62,398.8	201,954.9
1809	-	12,245.4	26,585.0	13,478.4	40,665.0	28,771.7	121,745.5
1810	28,009.0	12,101.9	35,524.0	32,399.9	115,099.3	51,046.0	274,180.1
1811	31,705.0	8,250.3	35,524.5	3,158.1	103,071.9	33,566.5	215,276.2
1812	30,400.1	5,617.5	53,486.4	14,707.7	113,449.0	46,811.2	264,471.9
1813	39,186.6	6,557.3	116,883.0	11,871.8	93,902.0	61,160.1	329,560.8
1815	36,852.0	6,425.5	51,772.5	18,274.6	114,402.0	54,319.7	282,046.3
1816	47,115.0	9,317.0	76,500.0	24,400.0	28,135.0	58,916.0	244,383.0
1817	142,720.0	6,224.0	79,740.0	2,712.0	54,565.0	47,106.4	333,067.4
1818	177,084.8	2,724.0	228,904.0	5,804.0	20,850.0	46,567.9	481,934.7
1819	79,343.0	95,370.3	105,088.0	119,771.8	157,894.0	130,415.8	687,882.9
1820	79,343.0	95,370.3	105,088.0	344.4	193,626.0	130,685.8	604,457.5
1823–25	18,466.0	111,472.2	103,472.0	45,951.0	205,248.0	104,330.6	588,939.8
1830	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1831	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1832	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1837	-	36,422.5	-	-	62,313.1	19,118.5	117,854.1
1857	-	254,892.0	-	-	95,826.0	61,056.0	411,774.0
1858	-	171,908.0	-	-	129,985.0	52,772.0	354,665.0
1859	-	184,478.0	-	-	76,761.6	55,275.0	316,514.6
1861	-	267,349.7	-	-	92,855.9	70,789.9	430,995.5
1862	-	149,318.1	-	-	35,231.5	34,668.1	219,217.7
1863	-	82,807.7	-	-	14,382.7	17,240.5	114,430.8
1864	-	74,770.5	-	361.0	17,641.5	23,376.9	116,149.9
All years	1,178,337.9	1,974,934.8	1,580,593.8	530,075.5	2,471,312.2	1,636,436.1	9,371,690.2

Sources: Same as Table C.1.

TABLE C.6 European textiles imported at Luanda (in thousands of réis), 1785–1864

Years	Baetás	Chilas	Fazendas	Lenços	Panos	Other	Total
1785–94	170,070.5	63,432.0	-	-	285,023.2	788,091.8	1,306,617.5
1795	-	9,072.0	-	9,879.0	32,073.2	55,304.4	106,328.6
1796	-	4,963.0	-	4,022.0	22,105.0	41,086.3	72,176.3
1797	-	16,114.0	-	100,393.0	34,224.0	108,020.6	258,751.6
1798	26,714.4	8,267.4	-	4,545.4	11,356.8	66,028.2	116,912.2
1799	26,283.7	14,110.2	-	4,868.6	58,376.5	125,354.8	228,993.8
1802	39,947.3	27,621.0	-	4,643.6	86,967.1	152,053.9	311,232.9
1803	37,039.0	28,944.0	-	7,074.4	53,050.1	174,584.6	300,692.0
1804	58,860.0	15,000.0	-	6,748.6	38,731.3	158,375.0	277,714.9
1805	38,768.1	50,340.0	-	1,965.0	63,077.2	375,663.2	529,813.5
1809	30,127.2	20,545.0	-	1,153.2	37,457.2	117,751.0	207,033.6
1810	33,574.5	43,844.0	-	14,571.5	62,719.1	165,659.7	320,368.8
1811	54,050.8	51,700.0	-	21,677.2	60,580.5	144,121.0	332,129.5
1812	28,895.7	69,672.0	-	12,596.8	78,743.3	96,769.4	286,677.2
1813	39,023.0	59,109.8	-	19,554.6	98,497.1	84,617.0	300,801.4
1815	33,605.3	68,812.5	-	12,700.0	107,981.8	87,330.1	310,429.7
1816	73,151.8	72,810.0	-	13,067.0	125,111.0	181,145.9	465,285.7
1817	14,294.4	74,610.0	-	27,368.8	228,094.0	152,374.6	496,741.8
1818	13,104.2	-	-	26,495.2	153,782.6	167,394.9	360,776.8
1819	65,507.1	154,400.0	-	19,497.5	131,845.1	162,875.7	534,125.3
1820	65,507.1	154,400.0	-	138,928.9	131,845.1	146,198.7	636,879.8
1823–25	32,149.0	99,828.0	21,405.6	46,658.0	48,411.4	378,642.7	627,094.7
1830	-	-	84,910.0	-	-	-	84,910.0
1831	-	-	105,430.0	-	-	-	105,430.0
1832	-	-	132,010.0	-	-	-	132,010.0
1837	31,408.4	-	575,641.1	67,380.8	73,068.0	64,066.5	811,564.8
1857	11,390.0	-	457,447.2	105,742.0	7,824.0	37,565.5	619,968.7
1858	36,741.0	-	333,340.8	61,905.8	10,185.0	18,438.5	460,611.1
1859	19,870.0	-	274,629.6	77,081.5	10,065.0	9,263.0	390,909.1
1861	14,100.0	-	213,765.6	85,963.1	3,560.0	7,915.4	325,304.1
1862	4,766.8	-	104,415.5	57,330.3	1,297.0	16,223.6	184,033.1
1863	3,707.4	-	112,165.1	33,680.0	2,294.0	8,997.1	160,843.6
1864	4,476.3	-	54,149.6	54,081.2	410.0	14,318.8	127,435.9
All years	1,007,132.7	1,107,594.9	2,469,310.1	1,041,573.0	2,058,755.3	4,106,231.8	11,790,597.8

Sources: Same as Table C.1.

TABLE C.7 *Foodstuff imported at Luanda (in thousands of réis), 1785–1864*

Years	Olive oil	Rice	Sugar	Vinegar	Wheat flour	Other	Total
1785–94	42,649.6	42,517.5	17,630.0	39,200.0	66,830.4	139,533.7	348,361.2
1795	8,416.0	3,435.0	7,891.2	1,520.0	4,200.0	6,445.2	31,907.4
1796	1,792.0	2,302.5	2,904.0	4,350.0	10,584.0	4,977.6	26,910.1
1797	5,600.0	3,487.5	4,488.0	3,880.0	10,180.8	3,109.6	30,745.9
1798	754.8	1,468.8	5,036.2	1,295.2	4,129.1	5,498.0	18,182.0
1799	5,112.0	4,557.6	5,357.8	1,218.0	3,407.0	11,999.9	31,652.3
1802	7,210.0	5,556.0	6,188.4	3,429.0	45,294.0	17,338.4	85,015.8
1803	6,265.0	4,624.0	8,773.5	2,108.5	24,572.4	24,254.8	70,598.2
1804	5,400.0	9,366.0	19,172.5	7,152.0	27,891.6	27,162.2	96,144.3
1805	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1809	3,450.0	1,755.0	2,234.0	254.0	8,335.7	17,626.1	33,654.7
1810	2,420.0	3,318.0	5,859.7	470.0	7,902.0	18,437.3	38,407.0
1811	4,650.0	3,920.0	6,062.4	971.0	5,272.5	18,105.5	38,981.4
1812	2,750.0	5,400.0	7,906.2	114.0	10,587.5	20,472.7	47,230.4
1813	1,250.0	3,180.0	5,838.9	1,040.0	11,089.8	11,013.9	33,412.6
1815	3,200.0	4,320.0	13,991.6	264.0	13,875.0	19,643.2	55,293.8
1816	4,500.0	6,000.0	15,402.0	216.0	8,250.0	21,504.4	55,872.4
1817	1,150.0	7,440.0	20,344.0	1,830.0	1,750.0	23,227.6	55,741.6
1818	1,900.0	7,200.0	31,840.4	1,380.0	1,680.0	14,538.9	58,539.3
1819	4,588.5	3,060.0	10,639.2	3,400.0	12,754.0	26,148.7	60,590.3
1820	4,588.5	2,952.0	10,685.2	3,400.0	12,754.0	26,623.7	61,003.3
1823–25	17,337.0	15,344.0	20,237.0	2,040.0	45,800.0	89,715.3	190,473.3
1830	2,600.0	888.8	11,634.0	2,700.0	24,170.4	2,318.6	44,311.7
1831	5,500.0	530.6	15,624.0	7,950.0	16,394.4	3,163.1	49,162.1
1832	1,000.0	1,530.8	8,106.0	7,575.0	15,465.6	2,712.6	36,390.0
1837	3,079.6	3,389.3	10,889.9	8,213.6	6,498.0	23,671.0	55,741.3
1857	9,084.0	20,965.3	58,095.0	7,599.0	53,538.8	54,338.1	203,620.1
1858	8,540.0	30,772.0	65,570.3	21,127.0	48,561.5	73,835.6	248,406.4
1859	10,746.8	9,523.0	47,698.6	8,798.0	41,392.0	79,104.6	197,262.9
1861	4,416.3	7,463.9	24,031.0	10,001.7	27,843.3	86,413.5	160,169.8
1862	3,991.5	5,376.4	24,361.8	3,076.7	22,967.4	38,502.8	98,276.6
1863	3,978.2	5,286.1	16,072.1	2,447.2	18,424.3	47,185.8	93,393.6
1864	3,014.4	4,169.2	7,738.2	3,905.1	21,999.6	40,157.0	80,983.4
All years	190,934.1	231,099.2	518,302.8	162,925.1	634,395.0	998,779.2	2,736,435.3

Sources: Same as Table C.1.

TABLE C.8 *Metals and metalware imported at Luanda (in thousands of réis), 1785–1864*

Years	Cutlery	Ironware	Lead	Nails	Wire	Other	Total
1785–94	324.0	7,690.0	2,645.8	12,000.0	-	34,639.4	57,299.2
1795	97.9	2,080.0	112.0	-	-	146.4	2,436.3
1796	-	800.0	44.0	-	19.8	240.0	1,103.8
1797	276.5	1,200.0	46.0	-	0.0	357.8	1,880.3
1798	3,694.2	1,206.6	80.0	-	92.3	2,590.4	7,663.6
1799	657.3	247.9	302.0	354.0	1,201.3	4,574.9	7,337.4
1802	1,947.7	1,375.0	975.6	4,233.8	142.8	9,651.7	18,326.6
1803	1,066.4	2,795.0	505.5	15,789.4	105.8	14,389.9	34,652.0
1804	2,004.8	3,258.0	3,480.6	5,985.3	975.0	16,627.4	32,331.0
1805	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1809	1,371.3	-	48.0	22,234.2	44.4	796.8	24,494.7
1810	2,324.0	220.0	267.0	1,977.3	314.5	8,112.2	13,215.1
1811	5,854.9	100.0	496.8	1,146.0	456.0	9,547.4	17,601.1
1812	5,431.5	129.0	399.3	27,548.0	34.0	4,664.8	38,206.5
1813	3,587.8	217.6	264.0	2,239.5	80.4	5,337.8	11,727.1
1815	8,728.4	236.0	455.0	25,524.0	70.0	4,095.8	39,109.2
1816	5,812.0	299.0	547.5	41,648.0	120.0	4,196.2	52,622.7
1817	9,830.2	176.0	1,164.0	30,360.0	300.0	7,501.3	49,331.5
1818	8,264.8	132.0	1,932.0	10,806.0	600.0	6,622.9	28,357.7
1819	6,775.4	-	514.8	1,520.0	7,315.8	8,293.5	24,419.5
1820	4,138.3	-	514.8	2,112.0	7,315.8	9,825.5	23,906.4
1823–25	17,146.2	-	22,562.4	42,803.7	28,434.0	3,442.2	114,388.5
1830	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1831	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1832	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1837	100.0	8,954.5	667.8	-	12,212.5	1,362.2	23,297.0
1857	6,115.0	10,831.8	1,320.0	-	-	6,068.9	24,335.7
1858	13,410.0	8,080.6	352.0	-	-	3,734.0	25,576.6
1859	5,551.0	17,389.0	1,342.5	-	-	8,111.4	32,393.9
1861	3,513.5	9,910.0	2,566.1	140.1	35.2	12,306.8	28,471.7
1862	4,617.0	11,430.1	447.4	-	218.6	5,651.3	22,364.4
1863	3,760.9	11,683.2	746.4	2,097.0	639.6	10,704.2	29,631.3
1864	2,212.5	8,780.9	111.5	423.0	734.4	4,958.9	17,221.2
All years	128,613.6	109,222.1	44,910.7	250,941.3	61,462.1	208,551.9	803,701.8

Sources: Same as Table C.1.

TABLE C.9 *Miscellany articles imported at Luanda (in thousands of réis), 1785–1864*

Years	Beads	Chinaware	Cotton	Drugs	Furniture	Soap	Tobacco	Other	Total
1785–94	53,762.7	12,604.0	-	31,900.0	4,000.0	-	31,252.4	248,985.5	382,504.6
1795	2,800.0	2,580.0	-	393.6	21,960.0	48.0	4,775.6	44,037.4	76,594.6
1796	2,600.0	660.0	-	931.2	22,068.0	144.0	4,639.2	13,645.2	44,687.6
1797	18,100.0	615.0	-	1,978.8	24,660.0	144.0	6,696.8	26,545.0	78,739.6
1798	4,389.4	668.8	-	805.2	820.0	255.0	3,909.9	12,345.9	23,194.1
1799	6,131.4	1,476.0	-	2,104.5	787.8	383.8	6,563.5	24,735.1	42,182.2
1802	14,644.4	1,827.0	-	4,695.9	4,910.5	78.6	6,636.0	21,711.5	54,503.9
1803	25,465.2	3,660.0	-	3,625.3	2,476.0	251.9	11,735.2	15,843.2	63,056.8
1804	14,298.0	4,358.6	-	6,404.0	2,998.0	415.5	17,093.6	21,842.3	67,410.1
1805	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,734.0	1,508.4	5,242.4
1809	180.0	1,486.0	130.0	1,312.4	25.6	674.2	8,489.3	6,201.5	18,499.0
1810	12,989.2	2,732.5	865.4	2,580.3	276.8	8,578.8	5,383.6	10,655.1	44,061.7
1811	2,522.0	11,046.0	2,722.2	2,174.0	1,989.6	1,036.8	4,010.4	14,482.4	39,983.4
1812	2,466.0	2,522.8	1,474.0	2,543.0	576.8	3,246.0	6,285.9	13,241.1	32,355.6
1813	3.0	2,765.0	1,504.5	4,635.0	210.0	956.6	8,189.7	8,734.8	26,998.6
1815	1,782.0	2,566.0	125.0	1,686.4	3,405.5	2,328.0	14,661.4	14,572.5	41,126.8
1816	2,460.0	2,780.0	150.0	2,147.8	6,674.8	1,236.0	8,869.9	16,796.2	41,114.7
1817	3,306.0	4,411.0	250.0	2,648.1	9,625.4	2,432.0	14,010.4	28,263.3	64,946.2
1818	2,115.0	5,096.6	381.3	2,874.8	4,366.8	2,885.8	1,213.4	30,004.3	48,937.9
1819	18,661.0	5,610.0	72.2	11,162.0	297.6	2,834.5	961.8	20,882.7	60,481.8
1820	18,661.0	5,610.0	72.2	10,662.0	297.6	2,834.5	1,111.1	22,180.3	61,428.7
1823–25	2,323.2	4,410.0	2,106.0	4,530.9	624.4	3,239.6	31,211.0	68,134.8	116,579.9
1830	-	2,766.8	-	-	-	3,504.0	7,738.5	232.5	14,241.8
1831	-	3,115.8	-	-	-	6,096.0	11,023.5	473.7	20,709.0
1832	-	2,741.9	-	-	-	2,964.0	4,667.5	294.3	10,667.7
1837	6,358.3	12,689.4	7,070.0	4,566.2	2,263.5	1,322.6	9,341.4	46,769.2	90,380.6
1857	8,232.5	19,488.0	188,163.0	7,138.0	2,531.0	38,912.6	30,333.0	81,826.4	376,624.5
1858	25,506.8	21,302.0	153,868.0	13,872.0	2,859.0	3,011.7	17,498.5	30,791.3	268,709.3
1859	16,903.0	15,599.5	105,281.0	10,345.0	9,029.5	4,073.9	26,136.3	57,769.8	245,138.0
1861	7,687.0	10,248.3	152,982.8	8,555.5	9,347.0	33,411.5	9,418.9	59,488.1	291,139.2
1862	9,071.7	7,172.1	76,276.6	4,693.7	3,001.2	3,082.9	21,240.8	57,698.3	182,237.2
1863	8,347.4	9,022.2	30,118.6	2,065.2	1,867.8	4,958.3	12,256.9	44,423.5	113,059.8
1864	8,948.6	5,358.2	29,727.7	1,152.4	1,648.0	9,292.2	11,729.3	42,649.5	110,505.9
All years	300,714.6	188,989.4	753,340.4	154,183.2	145,598.2	144,633.1	362,818.8	1,107,765.0	3,158,042.7

Sources: Same as Table C.1.

TABLE C.10 *Weapons imported at Luanda (in thousands of réis), 1785–1864*

Years	Ammunition	Blade weapons	Firearms	Gunpowder	Total
1785–94	403.2	41,315.4	110,230.2	50,922.0	202,870.8
1795	-	16,848.0	5,952.5	9,905.0	32,705.5
1796	-	3,568.0	857.5	9,905.0	14,330.5
1797	19.2	1,112.4	4,639.0	9,940.0	15,710.6
1798	0.4	720.4	848.7	450.0	2,019.5
1799	7.5	10,106.6	9,538.8	247.5	19,900.4
1802	159.2	14,218.5	4,429.4	7,020.8	25,827.9
1803	8,576.0	8,657.2	31,391.0	28,304.0	76,928.2
1804	6,000.0	6,009.9	27,800.0	22,500.0	62,309.9
1805	-	-	7,464.0	42,050.0	49,514.0
1809	-	50.9	200.0	6,250.0	6,500.9
1810	129.9	834.0	274.0	11,756.6	12,994.5
1811	268.0	1,762.8	8,539.0	47,560.6	58,130.4
1812	27.0	1,320.8	639.0	31,400.0	33,386.8
1813	64.0	552.4	75.0	-	691.4
1815	60.0	1,607.2	606.0	48,300.0	50,573.2
1816	45.0	656.4	668.0	65,000.0	66,369.4
1817	18.0	878.4	1,540.0	150,500.0	152,936.4
1818	12.0	699.6	3,206.0	228,800.0	232,717.6
1819	156.0	6,833.6	11,374.8	101,560.0	119,924.4
1820	500.0	9,534.6	11,714.8	54,230.0	75,979.4
1823–25	34,180.0	3,452.0	30,096.0	244,360.0	312,088.0
1830	-	-	-	9,520.0	9,520.0
1831	-	-	-	30,625.0	30,625.0
1832	-	-	-	34,545.0	34,545.0
1837	230.6	16,039.5	86,941.0	78,392.4	181,603.4
1857	-	-	27,820.0	35,448.4	63,268.4
1858	-	2,600.0	21,295.0	40,467.7	64,362.7
1859	-	100.0	20,178.0	59,232.9	79,510.9
1861	-	1,490.0	30,902.7	28,544.6	60,937.3
1862	19.0	-	8,248.1	12.0	8,279.1
1863	8.0	-	3,212.6	8,394.1	11,614.7
1864	-	-	2,210.0	13,291.3	15,501.3
All years	50,883.0	150,968.6	472,891.0	1,509,434.8	2,184,177.4

Sources: Same as Table C.1.

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Box 78 doc. 57
Box 83 doc. 66
Box 85 doc. 28
Box 89 doc. 79
Box 93A doc. 48
Box 106 doc. 5
Box 109 doc. 54
Box 110 doc. 33
Box 112 doc. 47
Box 115 doc. 14, 45
Box 121 doc. 6, 32
Box 121A doc. 31, 32, 35, 36
Box 125 doc. 46
Box 127 doc. 1
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Box 132 doc. 26
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Box 147 doc. 34
Box 159 doc. 13
Box 176 doc. 11
Cod. 1627
Cod. 1634
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Index

- A Cultural History of the Atlantic World*, 8
abolition
 Brazil, 21, 36
 Great Britain, 16, 21, 23, 28, 29, 36
 impact on slave trade, 17, 37
 Portugal, 30, 55, 63
 United States, 16
Afonso I, Dom, 156
African consumption patterns, 126–40
African Diaspora history, 3
African history, 3
African Origins Portal, 12, 172
age, 111–20, 169
aguardente, 133
Akuara, 158
Alagoas, 44
alcohol, 132–34
Alecura, 63
alemanha, 131
alfândegas, 54
Allada, 6, 148
Almeida e Vasconcelos, Manoel de, 22, 56,
 150
Amaral, José Rodrigues Coelho do, 76
Amazon Basin, 25
Amazonia, 40
Ambaca, 64, 138
ambaquista, 64
Ambona, 63
Ambriz, 32, 50, 75, 150
ambulantes, 64
Angela, 150
Angola, 42
 highlands, 34, 82, 86, 96
 slave registers, 12, 73, 75, 172
Angola muskets, 134
Angolan Wars, 144
Antônio, Gabriel José, 49
apparel and notions, 139
Aro, 5
Astréa, 154
Atlantic gyres, 39
Avellar, António Severino de, 51
avelórios, 137
aviados, 64
Azeredo Coutinho, José Joaquim da
 Cunha, 25
baés, 131
baetás, 131
Bahia, 44, 46, 53, 130
 internal slave trade, 26
 slave destination, 26
 slave trade with Cabinda and Molembo,
 19, 20
 sugar exports, 25
Balanta, 5, 156
Bandeira, Pedro Rodrigues, 48
baneanes, 130
banzo, 162
Barbosa, João de Oliveira, 157
barracoons, 63, 119
beads, 137
Bellagamba, Alice, 10
Bémbi, 164
Bene, Burra, 163

- Bengal, 130
bengala, 130
 Bengo River, 60, 61
 Benguela, 12, 34, 53, 75, 96
 slave population, 76
 Benguela current, 40
 Benguela Velha, 34, 63, 119
 Bermuda, 150
 Bight of Benin, 6, 19, 130, 147
 Bight of Biafra, 5, 85, 130, 163
 bilateral trade, 40
 Birmingham, 134
 Birmingham, David, 4, 147
Boa Sorte, 163
 Boahen, A. A., 4
Boletim Oficial de Angola, 7
 Boma, 92, 118
 Bomara, 63
 Bondo, 137
 Boôô, 159
 Boserup, Ester, 102
 Braga, 135
 Brant Pontes, Felisberto Caldeira, 152
 Brazil, 17, 18, 26, 28, 40, 49
 agricultural renaissance, 25, 37
 independence, 17, 35
 port opening, 21, 24, 27, 37, 49
 Brazilian current, 40
bretanhas, 131
brins, 131
 Britain. *See* Great Britain
 British Caribbean, 17, 25
 British West Indies. *See* British Caribbean
 Bunsála, 159
búzios, 137

cabeça, 113
 Cabinda, 22, 32, 51, 53
 Portuguese occupation, 32
 slave trade to Bahia, 20
cacimbo, 69
 Caonda, 96
cadeás, 128, 132
calamanhas, 131
cambaiá, 130
 Cambay, 130
 Campbell, Gwyn, 102
 Camundongo, 80
 Cândido, Mariana, 7, 10, 96
 Cape Lopez, 163
 Cape Mole, 63

 Cape Town, 80
 Capello, Hermenegildo, 109, 134, 137
 Caraúna, 106
carlangânis, 128
 Carpo, Arsénio Pompeu Pompílio de, 63
Carreira da Índia, 130
 Carreira, Ernestina, 131
 Carvalho e Melo, Sebastião José de, 44
casimiras, 128
cassadizes, 128
cassas, 128
 Cavazzi de Montecuccolo, Giovanni Antonio, 109
 Ceará, 44
 centralized societies, 52, 93, 156
 centralized states. *See* centralized societies
chilas, 131
 Childs, Galdwyn, 112
 China, 130
chitas, 128, 132
 Church Missionary Society, 142
 Clarence-Smith, William Gervase, 51
 Clark, William, 105
 Cliometrics. *See* quantitative history
 Cochrane, Thomas, 35
 Cokwe, 135
Companhia Geral de Comércio de Pernambuco e Paraíba, 44, 162
Companhia Geral de Comércio do Grão Pará e Maranhão, 44, 162
conchas, 137
 Congo Brazzaville, 158
 Congo River, 32, 75, 82, 86
 Consale, Henrique, 152
 Constantino, Manoel José, 119
 Constitutions of the Archbishopric of Bahia, 111
contarias, 137
contas, 137
 Coporolo River, 96
coromandéis, 128, 130
 Coromandel Coast, 130
 Corrêa de Sá e Benevides, Salvador, 43
 Corrêa, António José, 163
 Corrie, William, 50
 cotton, 25, 138
 Coutinho, Anselmo da Fonseca, 55–60
 Coutinho, António da Fonseca, 56
crês, 131
crias de pé, 114
crias de peito, 114

- Cuanza Norte, 46
 Cuba, 36, 50, 51
 Cunene River, 84
 Curtin, Philip, 9, 82, 122
 Curto, José, 7, 133, 148, 149, 151, 160
- Dahomey, 6, 147
 Damão, 130
damascos, 128
 Dande River, 61
 Davis, Natalie Zemon, 9
 Davis, William. *See* Bembi
 decentralized societies, 5, 52, 93, 156
 decentralized states. *See* decentralized societies
 Democratic Republic of the Congo, 158
 Dias, Jill, 61
 Dias, João de Oliveira, 154
dingizi, 92
 Diu, 130
 doldrums, 39
 Dombe Grande, 96
 Domingos, 152
dongo, 97
dórias, 128
dotins, 128
 Douro River, 133
 drought, 61
 Dsíku, 151
 Dsíngó, 159
 Duque de Bragança, 76
- efeitos próprios*, 45, 54
 Efik, 5
 Ekekete, 96
elefantes, 128
 Elende, 96
 Eltis, David, 5, 12, 60, 102, 113, 147
 Engerman, Stanley, 9, 12, 57, 102
 England. *See* Great Britain
 enslavement, 170
 adultery, 1, 159
 debt, 97, 159
 eligibility, 142, 167
 experiences, 14
 judicial proceeding, 97, 144,
 158–65
 kidnapping, 144, 158
 pawning, 161–64
 warfare, 152
 witchcraft, 97, 164
- Equimina, 119
 ethnonyms, 77
- facas flamengas*, 136
 Fage, J. D., 4
 famine, 61
feirantes, 64
feiras. *See* slave fairs
feitorias, 54
 Feo e Torres, Luiz da Mota, 154, 161
 Fernandes, Manoel da Silva Ribeiro, 22, 52
 Ferreira, Roquinaldo, 7, 50, 51, 66, 94, 127,
 133
Flor do Mar, 60
 Florentino, Manolo, 104
 Florida, 50
 Fogel, Robert, 9
 Fonseca, Manoel Pinto da, 49
 foodstuffs, 138
 Fourah Bay Institute, 142
 France, 36, 132
 Francis, William. *See* Mútomp
 Franque, Francisco, 53
 Freetown, 2, 142
 French Caribbean, 17
 French Revolution, 14
fuka, 97
- Gabon, 159, 163
gangas, 128
 Garcia V, Dom, 157
garrazes, 128
 gender, 103–11, 169
genebra, 133
 Georgia, 50
 Germany, 132
 Ghana, 155
 Gílibe, 159
 Ginzburg, Carlo, 9, 10
 Goa, 130
 Goiás, 24
 gold, 24, 43
 Gold Coast, 6
 Gonçalves, Henrique. *See* Consale,
 Henrique
 Gonçalves, Manuel Pereira, 154
 Graham, Maria, 105
granadas, 137
 Great Britain, 2, 17, 36, 49, 131
 credit, 28, 37
 royal navy, 26

- Great Britain (cont.)
 slaving fleet redeployment, 28
- Green, Toby, 9
- Greene, Sandra, 10
- Grenada Point, 63
- Guinea Bissau, 5
guingões, 128
- Gujarat, 130
- Gutiérrez, Horácio, 114
- hafuka*. *See fuka*
- Haiti, 16
- Haitian Revolution, 16, 23, 25, 29, 36
- Hamburg, 132
- Handler, Jerome, 105
- Hanya, 96
- Havana, 12, 75
- Hawthorne, Walter, 5, 156, 164
- Henriques, Isabel Castro, 65, 136
- Heroína*, 155
- Heywood, Linda, 88, 98, 150, 165
- holanda*, 131
- Holo, 93
- Hoover, Jeffrey, 6
- horses, 148, 149
- Hubbell, Andrew, 5
- Huggins, Nathan, 169
- Hungu, 93, 148
- Ibibio, 5
- Icolo River, 61
- Igbo, 5
- Illustrated London News*, 106
- Ilunga, Chibinda, 136
- Imbangala. *See Kasanje*
- India, 130
- Industrial Revolution, 25, 49, 101
- Inikori, Joseph, 134
- Ireland, 131
- irlanda*, 131
- Ivens, Roberto, 109, 134, 137
- ivory, 135
- Jalama, Raimundo, 162
- Jamaica, 155
- Jambusar, 130
- jambuseiro*, 130
- Jamestown, 150
- Jekyll Island, 50
- jeribita*, 133
- jerked beef, 27
- João VI, Dom, 24
- Job, James. *See Dsíngó*
- Junot, Jean Andoche, 24
- Junta de Comércio*, 67
- just war, 148
- Kadióngo, 152
- Kaimatúba, 151
- Kakonda, 34, 96, 98, 151
- Kakongo, 32, 88
- Kalukembe, 96
- Kanyok, 158
- Karasch, Mary, 79
- Kasai River, 74, 81, 84, 86, 135
- Kasanje, 65, 93, 94
 Imbangala, 74, 146
 Imbangala traditions, 4
- Jaga, 146
- Kásas, 152
 kingdom, 4, 66, 74, 76
- Kasongi, 96
- Katanga, 158
- Kenge, 96, 98
- kesila*, 97
- khimba*, 92
- Kibangu, 93
- Kikongo, 118, 137, 138
 enslaved, 85, 88, 108
 enslavement, 88–93
 weavers, 128
- Kilongo, 32, 63
- kimbares*, 64
- Kimbundu
 enslaved, 85, 88, 108
 enslavement, 93–95
 language in Luanda, 80
- Kingolo, 96
- Kinguri, 4, 6, 7
- Kipeyo, 96
- Kisama, 93, 152
- Kisanji, 98
- Kitata, 96
- Kivanda, 96
- Kivula, 96
- Kiyaka, 96, 98
- Klein, Herbert, 12, 102
- Klein, Martin, 4, 10, 102
- Koelle, Sigismund Wilhelm, 2, 142
- Kokelo, 53
- Kongo
 headman, 144

- kingdom, 32, 88, 92, 146, 156
 slave traders, 150
 Koster, Henry, 105, 107
 Kúmbu, 164
 Kwango River, 18, 86, 109, 134, 147
 Kwanza River, 7, 34, 60, 63
 Laet, Johannes de, 42
 Lamar, Charles, 50
 Lancashire, 25
lapins, 128
 Law, Robin, 165
 Le Veen, Philip, 123
 Leiria, João de Alvelos, 62
 Leitão, Manoel Correia, 147
lemba, 92
lenços, 128, 131
 Levi, Giovanni, 9
 Lewis, Frank, 60
liamba, 137
 liberated Africans
 lists, 12, 73, 75, 172
 Libolo, 1, 93
 Lisboa, Luís Joaquim, 163
 Lisbon, 32, 75, 132
 Livingston, David, 135, 138
Lloyd's Register of Shipping, 27
 Loango, 22, 32, 51, 75
 Loge River, 32
 Lomley, 158
 Long Island, 50
longuins, 128
 Lopes de Lima, José Joaquim, 61, 95, 119
 Lopes, Elias Antônio, 48
 Lovejoy, Paul, 8, 18, 162
 Lualaba River, 158
 Luanda, 12, 33, 34, 53, 75, 80, 82, 108
 cavalry, 148
 Dutch invasion, 43
 slave population, 76
 Luba
 hunters, 4, 74
 warlords, 18
 Lucala River, 45
 Lucrécia, 162
 Luina River, 45
 Lunda, 65
 conquest, 7
 dissidents, 4, 74
 empire, 73, 87
 enslaved, 86
 ethnicity, 81
 expansion, 4, 6, 11, 147
 expatriates, 4
 history, 6
 traditions, 6
 warlords, 18
 Luso-African Creoles, 53
 Macau, 130
madapolões, 128
 Mafoi, James
 Nkóngal, 152
mafouk, 52
mafuko. *See mafouk*
 Magyar, László, 97
 Maianga, 60
 Makololo, 135
malafu, 133
malavu. *See malafu*
 Malebo Pool, 64
 Mambári, 135
mambouk, 52
mambuco. *See mambouk*
mamodins, 128
 Mámunyikáyint, 158
 Manners, Isaac. *See Dsíku*
 Manning, Patrick, 4, 18, 85
 Manuel, José, 159–61
 Maranhão
 internal slave trade, 26
 slave destination, 26
 Maria, Dona, 56
 Maria, Dona Ana, 56
 Marinho, Joaquim Pereira, 49
 Martin, Phyllis, 53
 Massango Nangumbe, 153
 Mato Grosso, 24
 Mayumba, 32, 63, 75
 Mbailundu, 34, 95, 96, 98, 109, 153
 Mbamba Lubota, 93
 Mbanza Kongo, 93
 Mbanza Ngoyo, 53
 Mbeti, 158
 Mbongo, 96
 Mbrize, 93
 Mbui, 96, 98
 Mbundu, 158
 McIntyre, Kimberly, 60
 Mediterranean, 25
 Meillassoux, Claude, 87
 Melo e Alvim, Manoel de Abreu, 154, 161

- Melo, Miguel António de, 46, 60, 165
Mesa do Bem Comum, 44
 metals and metalware, 139
metins, 128
 Miers, Suzanne, 102
 Miller, Joseph, 4, 8, 9, 18, 61, 65, 73, 74, 85, 102, 127, 133, 135, 167
 Minas Gerais
 gold exports, 24
 internal slave trade, 26
missangas, 137
 Mississippi River, 84
 mixed commission courts, 18, 31, 36, 75, 115, 172
 Moçâmedes, Baron of, 56
 Molembo, 22, 32, 51
 slave trade to Bahia, 20
 moral economy, 162
 Morrison, John. *See* Kadióngó
 Muatianbo. *See* Muatianvo
 Muatianvo, 81
 Mugádu, 144
 Muséwo, 152
musselinhas, 128
 Musulu, Marquis of, 32
 Mútomp, 158
mutopa, 137
 Muxicongo, 80

 Namba, 96
 Nanga, 1, 2, 162
 Nano Wars, 109
 Nawej II, 6
 Nbena, 153–55
 Ndembu, 93, 148
 Ndombe, 96, 153
 Ndongo, 93, 94, 118, 146, 169
 Ndulu, 96, 98
 Negreiros, André de Vidal, 43
 Netherlands, 132, 133
 New York, 50
 Ngalangi, 96, 98
 Nganda, 98
 Ngangela, 98
ngola, 94
 Ngóniga, 158
 Ngoyo, 32, 53, 88
 Njinga, 93
 Nkhumbi, 98
 Nkóngal, 152

 Noronha, Fernando António de, 55, 56, 62
 North Atlantic, 17, 18, 39
 Northrup, David, 5
 Nova Oeiras, 45, 140
 Novo Redondo, 12, 34, 53
 slave population, 76
 Nsoyo, 52
 Nsundi, 92, 151
 Nwokeji, Ugo, 5, 12, 103
 Nyankwa, 98

 Obamba, 159
 Okiri, 158
 Old Calabar, 162
 Olinda, Bishop of. *See* Azeredo Coutinho, José Joaquim da Cunha
 Oliveira Mendes, Luiz António de, 162
 Oppen, Achim von, 8
 oral traditions, 74
Ordem de Cristo, 48
 original freedom, 161
 Ouidah, 6, 148
ovallo. *See* walo
 Ovambo, 98

paliacate, 130
palmos, 113
 Pangéla, 164
panos, 131
panos da costa, 130
 Pará
 slave destination, 26
 Paraíba, 44
 Park, Andrew. *See* Okiri
 Parker, Thomas. *See* Kúmbu
patavares, 128
 Patterson, Orlando, 87
 pawning, 1
peça da Índia, 45, 112
 Pedro, Prince, 157
 Penedo, 63
 Pernambuco, 44, 46, 105
 cotton exports, 25
 Dutch invasion, 42
 slave destination, 26
 sugar exports, 25
 Petro, Toki. *See* Muséwo
 Pierce, William, 150
piezas de Índia. *See* *peça da Índia*
Polyglotta Africana, 2, 142, 151

- polygyny, 159, 170
pombeiros, 64
pombo. *See pombeiros*
 Porto, 132
 Porto da Lenha, 119
 Portugal, 17, 18, 36, 40, 49
 court transference, 21, 24, 37, 132
 Pratt, Thomas. *See Bunsála*
preferências, 45
presídios, 94
 Príncipe, 163
 Public Granary of Luanda, 60, 61
 Pulicat, 130
pumbu. *See pombeiros*
 Punjab, 130
 qualitative history, 9
 quantitative history, 9
 Quiandua, Quirimbo, 153
 Quicombo, 34, 63
 Quilengues, 96
quimbares, 64
 Quinta da Boa Vista, 48
quintais, 60, 63
 Quissuca Quialaceta, 152

Rainha dos Anjos, 60
reviro, 66
 rice, 25, 156
 Richardson, David, 162
 Rio de Janeiro, 12, 53, 75, 105
 internal slave trade, 26
 population growth, 24
 rice exports, 25
 slave destination, 26
 sugar exports, 25
 Rio Grande do Norte, 44
 Rio Grande do Sul, 27
riscadinhos, 131
 Robertson, Claire, 102
 Rodovalho, João Máximo da Silva, 119
roncalhas, 137
 Rouen, 132
ruão, 131
 Ruund, 81, 86, 87, 152

 Sacramento, António Leal do, 153–55,
 159–61
 Saint Domingue, 25
 slave rebellion. *See* Haitian Revolution
 Saldanha da Gama, António, 56
 Salinas, 34, 63
 Sambu, 96, 98
sanas, 128
 Sanga, 96
Santa Casa da Misericórdia, 48
Santo António e Almas, 60
 Santos e Silva, Dona Ana Joaquina dos, 54
 Santos, Maria Emilia Madeira, 65
São João Batista, 150
 São Miguel Fort, 60
 São Paulo
 internal slave trade, 27
 São Tomé, 85, 163
 Schrag, Norm, 92
 Scientific Academy of Lisbon, 162
 Sele, 98
 Senegambia, 122
sertanejos, 64
 Seville, 112
 shells, 137
 Shinje, 93
 Shumway, Rebecca, 6
 Sierra Leone, 2, 26, 143
 Silva Corrêa, Elias Alexandre da, 138
 Silva Correia, Guilherme José da, 51
 Sindh, 130
 Sintra, Elias Coelho, 48
 slave
 caravans, 65
 demographic profile, 12
 fairs, 66
 origins, 7, 12
 price, 13, 43, 104, 122–25, 176
 slave trade
 1758 Portuguese tax reform, 45, 54, 114
 1831 Brazilian prohibition law, 19
 1839 Lord Palmerston's bill, 31, 36
 1845 Lord Aberdeen's act, 31, 36
 African motives, 13
 Bahia with Cabinda and Molembo, 19
 commercial networks, 51
 commercial strategies, 57
 culture, 42
 distribution by departures, 32
 distribution by destinations, 27
 economy, 42
 estimates, 11
 evolution, 17, 25
 history, 7

- slave trade (cont.)
 Iberian carriers, 24
 impact, 167
 length of journey, 85–86
 length of voyage, 40
 mortality rate, 42, 57
 nineteenth-century, 2
 organization, 11
 origins, 3
 ownership concentration, 48, 58
 patterns of wind and sea currents, 38–46
 seasonal variations, 67
 ship carrying capacity, 41
 size, 19
 state formation and imperial expansion, 3
 taxation, 29, 51
 slavery, 7, 125–26, 142, 170
 slaving frontiers, 18, 169
 smallpox, 62
 Smart, John. *See* Nanga
sobados, 94
sobas, 94, 97
 Songo, 93, 152
 Sousa Coutinho, Francisco Inocêncio de, 45
 South America, 28
 South Atlantic, 17, 18, 39, 40
 South Carolina, 50
 South Equatorial current, 40
 Southeast Brazil, 46
 Spain, 17, 18
 Sparks, Randy, 6
 Stilwell, Sean, 87
 Strickrodt, Silke, 10
 sugar, 25
 Sumbe, 98
 Surat, 130
surrate, 130
- Tagus River, 133
 Tala Mungongo, 76
 Tams, George, 61
 Teke, 157
Ten Views in the Island of Antigua, 105
 textiles, 128–32
The Atlantic Slave Trade, 9
 Thornton, John, 6, 8, 73, 92, 95, 98, 128, 135, 149, 150
Time on the Cross, 9
 Tob, Thomas. *See* Mugádu
- tobacco, 137
 Torres, Manoel Barbosa, 113
 trade diaspora, 5
Transformations of Slavery, 8
Treasurer, 150
 treaties
 1810 Anglo-Portuguese, 17, 29, 49
 1815 Anglo-Portuguese, 17, 20, 29
 1817 Anglo-Spanish, 17, 29
 1826 Anglo-Brazilian, 17, 21, 30, 35
 triangular trade, 40
 Trombeta, 46, 140
 Tsaye, 157
 Tuite, Michael, 105
 Tut, 157
- Umbundu, 109, 112, 131
 enslaved, 85, 88, 108
 enslavement, 95–99
 United States, 25, 36, 49, 50, 83
 Upper Guinea, 25, 156, 164
- Vansina, Jan, 4, 6, 8, 73
vara, 112
vara craveira, 113
 Vasconcelos, António de, 148
 Vellut, Jean Luc, 6
 Vieira, João Fernandes, 43
 Vili
 enslaved, 108
 weavers, 128
 Virginia, 150
 Viye, 34, 95, 96, 97, 98, 109, 135
volantes, 64
 Voyages Database, 11, 12, 19, 115
- walo*, 133
 Wambu, 34, 96, 98, 109
 Wanderer, 50
Way of Death, 8
 weapons, 134–36
 West Africa, 19, 26, 162
 West Central Africa, 3, 18, 26, 28, 40, 49, 51, 81, 83
 West Wind Drift, 40
 Wilhelm, Charles. *See* Tut
 Wilhelm, John. *See* Ngóniga
 wine, 133
 Wodsimbúmba, 164

- Yaka, 88
Yombe, 92, 151, 164
Zaire, Guilherme do. *See* Silva Correia,
 Guilherme José da
Zambeze River, 84, 135
Zenza River, 61
zimbo, 137
Zimmermann, Catherine
 Mulgrave, 155
Zimmermann, Johannes, 155
zuartes, 128, 132

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Toby Green is currently a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at King's College London. He has published several books, the most recent of which is *Inquisition: The Reign of Fear* (2007). His books have been translated into ten languages. He is a director of the Amilcar Cabral Institute for Economic and Political Research. His articles have appeared in *History in Africa*, the *Journal of Atlantic Studies*, *Journal of Mande Studies*, and *Slavery and Abolition*. Green has also written widely for the British press, including book reviews for the *Independent* and features for *Financial Times*, the *Observer*, and the *Times*. He has given lectures at various institutes, including the Universities of Cambridge, Lisbon, Oxford, and Paris-Sorbonne as well as Duke University and the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.

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*For Emily, Flora and Lily, whose love and support made this
book possible, and for Paulo, without whose
generosity of spirit it would not exist.*

*In memory of those whose suffering
is the subject of this book*

Since God created this world,
wherever prosperity is found,
people will follow it,
and in turn they will have relations.

*Sayo Mane*¹

¹ NCAC/OHAD, Cassette 550A: an elder from Kolda, Casamance; interview and translation by Bakary Sidibe.

Contents

<i>List of Maps</i>	<i>page</i> xi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xix
<i>Glossary</i>	xxi
Introduction: Rethinking the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade from a Cultural Perspective	I
PART ONE THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ATLANTIC CREOLE CULTURE IN WESTERN AFRICA, CIRCA 1300–1550	
1. Culture, Trade and Diaspora in Pre-Atlantic Western Africa	31
2. The Formation of Early Atlantic Societies in Senegambia and Upper Guinea	69
3. The Settlement of Cabo Verde and Early Signs of Creolisation in Western Africa	95
4. The New Christian Diaspora in Cabo Verde and the Rise of a Creole Culture in Western Africa	120
5. The New Christian/Kassanké Alliance and the Consolidation of Creolisation	149
PART TWO CREOLISATION AND SLAVERY: WESTERN AFRICA AND THE PAN-ATLANTIC, CIRCA 1492–1589	
6. The Early Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade from Western Africa	177
7. Trading Ideas and Trading People: The Boom in Contraband Trade from Western Africa, circa 1550–1580	208

8. Cycles of War and Trade in the African Atlantic, circa 1550–1580	231
9. Creole Societies and the Pan-Atlantic in Late-Sixteenth-Century Western Africa and America	260
Conclusion: Lineages, Societies and the Slave Trade in Western Africa to 1589	278
<i>Bibliography</i>	287
<i>Index</i>	325

Maps

1. Map of Western Africa: Rivers of Guinea and Cabo Verde Islands	<i>page 6</i>
2. Map of Peoples and Cultures in Upper Guinea, and the Zones of Their Territories	32
3. Map of Extent of Kaabu Federation	47
4. Atlantic World Circa 1550	190

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Cambridge, May 2011

Abbreviations

AG	As Gavetas da Torre do Tombo (1960–1975)
AGI	Archivo General de las Indias
AGN	Archivo General de la Nación, Bogotá
AHNCV	Arquivo Histórico Nacional de Cabo Verde
AHP	Arquivo Histórico Portuguez (Freire, Anselmo Braancamp et al. (eds.))
AHU	Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino
ANS/NP	Archivo Notarial de Santander, Notaria Primera de Pamplona (documentary resource in the AGN)
ASV	Archivio Segretto Vaticano
BA	Biblioteca da Ajuda
CEA	<i>Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History</i> (Hopkins/Levtzion eds.)
CGSO	Conselho Geral do Santo Oficio (documentary resource in IAN/TT)
CN	<i>Colecção de Notícias para a Historia e Geografia das Nações Ultramarinas, que Vivem nos Dominios Portuguezes, ou Ihes são Visinhas.</i>
CRP	<i>Crónicas de Rui de Pina</i> (Almeida ed.)
HGCV: CD	História Geral de Cabo Verde: Corpo Documental
IAN/TT	Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais da Torre do Tombo
MMAI	<i>Monumenta Misionária Africana: Primeira Série.</i> (Brásio, António ed.)
MMAII	<i>Monumenta Misionária Africana: Segunda Série.</i> (Brásio, António ed.)

NCAC/OHAD	National Council for Arts and Culture, Oral History and Antiquities Division, Banjul
NE	Negros y Esclavos (documentary resource in the AGN)
NGC	<i>A New General Collection of Voyages and Travels: Consisting of The Most Esteemed Relations, Which Have Hitherto Been Published in any Language: Comprehending Every Thing Remarkable in its Kind, in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America.</i>
NPB	Notaría Primera de Bogotá (documentary resource in the AGN)
NT	Archivo Histórico de Boyacá, Notaría Primera de Tunja (documentary resource in the AGN)
PV	<i>Primeira Visitação do Santo Officio Ás Partes do Brasil: Denunciações da Bahia, 1591–1593.</i>
RD	<i>Raccolta di Documenti e Studi Pubbliccati Dalla R. Commissione Colombiana del Quarto Centenario della Scoperta dell'America</i>
SG	Sociedade da Geografia

(Note: AHU documents are usually without folio numbers, so it is only possible to refer to the document in the reference).

Glossary

Alcalde	Mayor (in Portuguese: <i>alcaide</i>).
Alforria	Act by which masters freed slaves in their wills.
Almadía	Word of Arabic origin used by Portuguese to refer to canoes in West Africa in the fifteenth century and by Columbus when he first reached the New World.
Almoravids	North African warriors, many of them Berbers, who swept into Spain in the late eleventh century and took over control of the affairs of the land, which had formerly been controlled by the Caliphate of Córdoba.
Almoxarifado	The institution handling state finances in a particular locale (in Spanish: <i>Almojarifado</i>).
Almoxarife	Administrator of royal domains.
Arrobas	Measure of weight equivalent to approximately fifteen kilogrammes.
Asiento/Asentistas	Contract/Holders of the contract (in this book, related to the slave trade).
Auto da Fe	Inquisitorial procession culminating in the reading of sentences and the punishment of the condemned.
Barafula	Measure of cloth made in Cabo Verde used as a measure of exchange in Guiné and known as far away as Cartagena.
Buur	Jolof kings.

Câmara	Council, Assembly
Capitanias	Captaincies; used to refer to administrative units of the <i>Ultramar</i> apportioned to the supervision of a captain.
Carrera de Índias	Spanish system developed in the 1560s of exporting looted goods back from the New World to Europe in convoys of ships rendezvousing in key ports in America and the Caribbean.
Cimarrones	Escaped slaves in the New World.
Consejo	Council (of state).
Conselho Ultramarino	Arm of Portuguese government charged with supervising affairs in Portuguese overseas possessions in this period.
Contratadores	Holders of the contract to ship slaves to Spanish America.
Conversos	Converted Jews; the term is associated with Spanish converts to Christianity, especially in the fifteenth century.
Convivencia	The period of life in the Iberian peninsula when the faiths of Christianity, Islam and Judaism co-existed; the phrase is generally taken to refer to those territories under Christian control.
Corregedor	Local governor.
Creole	Language of mixed African and European roots developing as a vernacular in Western Africa during the sixteenth century.
Creolisation	The cultural and linguistic processes through which Creole developed.
Cristãos Novos	The Portuguese term for Jews who had converted to Christianity (in Spanish: <i>cristianos nuevos</i>).
Cristãos Velhos	The Portuguese term for Christians who had no Jewish or Moorish ancestry (in Spanish: <i>cristianos viejos</i>).
Cruzados	Portuguese currency: a gold coin.
Crypto-Jew	Someone who keeps secretly to the Jewish faith while professing to be a Christian.

Diaspora	A group of people forming a community in spite of extensive geographical dispersion.
Dyula	Diaspora of Mandinka traders in West Africa.
Encomienda	Parcel of land given to colonists in the New World under Spanish administration.
Escrivão	Scribe or registrar.
Escrivão do Almoxarifado	Registrar of the royal exchequer.
Escrivão da Correição	Registrar of the local governor.
Ethnonym	Literally, “ethnic name”: ethnic designation used for a group in Upper Guinea.
Feitor	Factor.
Feitoria	Depot for the organising of exports (principally slaves) from the African coast.
Fidalgos	Nobles, often minor and in straitened circumstances; also used by Caboverdean authors to describe lineage heads in Upper Guinea.
Fueros	Local charters of rights in towns in Aragón and Castilla.
Griot	Praisesinger in Senegambian and Upper Guinean communities. Thought by some to derive from <i>criado</i> , Portuguese for “retainer”.
Grumetes	Term for servants/shipmates commonly used by Caboverdeans and <i>lançados</i> of African retainers/servants in Upper Guinea.
Ingenio	Sugarcane plantation (Portuguese: <i>Engenho</i>).
Judiaria	Jewry.
Juiz dos Orfãos	Judge responsible for assigning homes to orphans.
Kriolu	Creole language of Cabo Verde and Upper Guinea.

Ladino	Non-Iberians (e.g. Jews, slaves) who speak Spanish.
Lançados	People of Portuguese origin living in Guiné in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These people were also known as <i>tangomãos</i> .
Limpeça de Sangue	Purity of blood, i.e., absence of Jewish or Moorish antecedents (in Spanish: <i>limpieza de sangre</i>).
Lusophone	Portuguese-speaking.
Mandinguisation	Process by which decentralised communities on the Upper Guinea coast absorbed elements of Mandinka culture from the thirteenth century onwards.
Manuelline	The adjective referring to King Manoel I of Portugal (1495–1521).
Maravedí	Spanish coin, derived from Arabic; its value declined progressively from the medieval through to the early modern periods.
Matrilinear	Society where inheritance passes through the maternal line, e.g., societies from Upper Guinea, Jewish societies.
Meirinho Mor	Chief bailiff.
Mestiçagem	The process of the mixing of races (in Spanish: <i>mestizaje</i>).
Mestiços	People of mixed racial background.
Moradores	Residents; in this period used to signify residents with certain rights.
Ouvidor	Special Magistrate.
Ouvidor Geral	Chief Magistrate.
Panos di Terra	Cloths woven on Cabo Verde and used for exchange in Upper Guinea.
Panyarring	Common phrases used across Guinea Coast for “man-stealing” in the eighteenth century.
Parecer	Opinion, often legal.
Patrilinear	Society where inheritance passes through the paternal line, e.g., Senegambian societies and Iberian societies.
Pidgin	Bartering language, a prototype for Creole, used as a means of trade and communication in early Atlantic Western Africa.

Pieza de Esclavo	Literally, a “piece of slave”; slaves were not accounted as individuals but against the benchmark of the <i>pieza</i> , which was equivalent to one able-bodied healthy male slave (in Portuguese: <i>peça de escravo</i>).
Procurador	Prosecutor.
Provedor	Supplier, Purveyor.
Provedor da Fazenda	Supplier to crown property.
Real/Reais	Unit of currency in Portugal.
Reconciled	A term for a penitent of the Inquisition who has been punished in a variety of ways but readmitted to the church.
Reconquista	Reconquest of Iberia from Moslem rule.
Relajado	Someone condemned by the Inquisition to be burnt or, if they repented and died as a Christian, garrotted by the secular authorities (in Portuguese: <i>relaxado</i>).
Rendeiros	Tax collectors.
Resgate	Originally meaning “ransom”, comes to refer to the process of trading goods in exchange for slaves in Upper Guinea.
Reyes Católicos	King Ferdinand of Aragón and Queen Isabela of Castile, who united the kingdoms of Aragón and Castile at the end of the fifteenth century.
Rua Nova/Vila Nova	Areas where converted Jews lived in Portuguese towns and cities.
Sanbenito	Penitential cloak worn by those who had been penanced by the Inquisition.
Sargento Maior	Sergeant-Major.
Senhores	Portuguese for “[slave]masters”
Sistema de Castas	System developed in the New World in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which categorised people according to the proportion of their European ancestry.
Tabanka	Term used for fortified village in Upper Guinea by end of the sixteenth century.
Tangoma	Creolised Upper Guinean woman associated/married to <i>lançados</i> .

“Tierra Firme”	Literally “firm land”: phrased used by Spanish to distinguish the American continent from the Caribbean islands in the sixteenth century.
Ultramar	Overseas Portuguese possessions.
Vadios	Escaped slaves in the highlands of Santiago, Cabo Verde, who forged the nucleus of Caboverdean society in the seventeenth century: the Caboverdean equivalent of <i>cimarrones</i> .
Vintena	Tax owed to the Portuguese crown in the early years of the Caboverdean colony, equivalent to one-twentieth of takings.

Introduction

Rethinking the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade from a Cultural Perspective

In 1725 the English Captain George Roberts wrote a description of the Cabo Verde islands off the coast of West Africa (hereafter, Cabo Verde). He offered a glimpse of the former “glories” of this archipelago, which had been at the heart of the Atlantic world when that world was in the process of its tortured formation. In the late sixteenth century, Roberts wrote, there was “great Trade at St. Jago [the largest and most populous island, today called Santiago], Fuego [Fogo], Mayo, Bona Vista [Boavista], Sal and Brava … especially in Negros. They had Store of Sugar, Salt, Rice, Cotton, Wool, Ambergrease, Civet, Elephants’ Teeth, Brimstone, Pumice-Stone, Spunge, and some Gold”.¹ A close reading of Roberts’s text reveals the source of such riches, for, he wrote, “Saint Jago formerly was the great Market for Negro Slaves, which were sent from thence immediately to the West Indies”.²

Just four years before Roberts’s book was published, an English surgeon, John Atkins, travelled between the peninsula of Cape Verde (where present-day Dakar is located; hereafter, the Cape Verde peninsula) and Whydah (present-day Benin). He described how “*panyarring* is a Term for Man-stealing along the whole Coast”.³ The headmen he met in the region of present-day Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia were called *caboceers*.⁴ The term *panyarring* derived from the Portuguese *apanhar*, meaning to “catch” or “seize”, and may also have been related to the term *penhorar*,

¹ NGC, Vol. 1, Book 2, 630.

² Ibid., 654.

³ Atkins (1970: 53).

⁴ Ibid., 58.

to “pledge”.⁵ Its use, along with *caboceer* – derived from the Portuguese *cabeça*, meaning “head” – showed how important the Portuguese role had been in procuring slaves and negotiating with African authorities. Research has indeed shown how slaves in Atlantic West Africa were usually either seized in warfare, offered for ransom after a raid, or pledged as security for credit and then sold into the Atlantic trade if the credit was not repaid.⁶ Atkins’s definition of *panyarring* suggests that by the eighteenth century the emphasis was increasingly on violence. As Atkins’s compatriot Roberts implied, this process had begun on the African coast adjacent to Cabo Verde.

That this was a focal zone of the early trans-Atlantic slave trade is not a new discovery. Using James Lockhart’s estimates for Peru, Philip Curtin suggested that between 1526 and 1550 almost 80 per cent of the slaves in the New World came from the region.⁷ J. Ballong-wen-Menuda, Ivana Elbl and John Vogt showed that the early slave trade from Benin, Kongo and the Angola region fed the gold trade at Elmina, the sugar plantations of São Tomé and the trade in domestic slaves to Portugal.⁸ This facilitated the prominence of Cabo Verde in the first slave trade to America; it would sit at the heart of early trans-Atlantic movements and ideas.

Yet like most parts of the African Atlantic, the region remains understudied in the early period. It was still possible for one of the key figures in the study of Atlantic slavery, David Eltis, to write not so long ago that the region “did not have strong trade connections with the Atlantic before 1700”.⁹ The reasons for this lack of emphasis are varied. Anglo-American schools of history have concentrated on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁰ Research on the earlier period is sparse and has concentrated on the lives of slaves in Spanish America.¹¹ There is therefore

⁵ I am grateful for this definition to Everts (forthcoming, 2012: n15).

⁶ Baum (1999); Thornton (1999: 3).

⁷ Curtin (1975: 13); Lockhart (1968: 173).

⁸ Ballong-wen-Menuda (1993) shows that Elmina procured slaves from Benin and São Tomé (Vol. 1, 160), with 800 slaves taken annually from São Tomé to Elmina in the early sixteenth century, (*ibid.*, Vol. 1, 344–57). Elbl (1997)’s work shows that by 1520 most slaves in the Atlantic came from the Gulf of Guinea, bought by the settlers of São Tomé. Vogt (1979: 57–8, 70) describes the inter-regional trade between Benin, Elmina and São Tomé.

⁹ Eltis (2000: 167).

¹⁰ On this eighteenth/nineteenth century historiographical emphasis, see Newson/Minchin (2007: 1).

¹¹ Most recently Carroll (2001); Bennett (2003); Navarrete (2005); Maya Restrepo (2005). Such work builds on Bowser (1974). A recent break with this tradition is Newson/Minchin (2007). Mendes’s (2007) doctoral thesis presents important findings on the early Atlantic trade, especially between Senegambia and Iberia. The early trans-Atlantic trade remains without a proper study.

a curious – and important – void. Surprisingly, this book offers the first full analysis of the rise of the trans-Atlantic slave trade from the area I term Western Africa, following George Brooks.¹²

This is a subject whose implications are large. In the fifteenth century, when European ships first arrived on the West African coast to procure slaves, the economic difference between Africa and Europe was not vast; yet by the nineteenth century, there was no denying the gulf.¹³ Atlantic slavery had a powerful connection to this nineteenth-century economic discrepancy which had such influence on the colonial and post-colonial histories of Africa, being a necessary though not a sufficient cause of it. In those intervening four centuries, the militarism of large predatory states affected wider productive processes in the West African agricultural sector.¹⁴ The proliferation of wars between states and micro-level conflicts between villages to extract labourers whose productive work benefited the economies of different societies and continents could only be negative. By the colonial era, the impact on the output, economic diversification and political stability of African societies had become apparent. There is therefore no doubting the importance of this subject, and by looking at the rise of Atlantic slavery in Western Africa we may see how it helped to change political economies and social institutions from the beginning, and how trans-Atlantic cultural and economic influences developed very early.

Many readers will feel that this focus raises concerns as much moral as historical. In present-day Guinea-Bissau, for instance, people are as well aware as any scholar of the significance of this subject. Not far from the modern town of Gabú, named after the powerful pre-colonial state of the same name, a friend once remarked to me: “The slave trade is over. You are not a slaver and I am not enslaved. It was our ancestors who did that, and so we must forget history.” When I suggested that forgetting history condemned people to repeat the errors of their ancestors, he replied: “But if I remember, I’m going to get angry.”

I hope that my friend will like this book and that it may even help to change his mind. Moral dimensions, as Ralph Austen wrote, “are a

¹² In a path-finding work, Brooks (1993b) uses the term “Western Africa” to include Senegambia (the area between the Senegal and Gambia Rivers), Upper Guinea (the area between the Gambia and Sierra Leone) and Cabo Verde, as I do here. Rodney (1970) dealt with the early Atlantic slave trade in part but omitted the first century of African-European exchanges which was when the trade originated.

¹³ Inikori (1982b: 15).

¹⁴ On Upper Guinea, see Baum (1999: 121–3), Hawthorne (2003) and Fields-Black (2009: Chapter 6).

concern behind any production of slave trade history".¹⁵ Slavery has been a universal human institution and remains widespread, but Atlantic slavery holds an unusual importance for thinking about modernity, foreshadowing as it did racial consciousness and the industrialisation of global economies. Ultimately, any study of this process stands or falls on the integrity of its text, and a moral context should not lead to a moralising approach.¹⁶ What we need to grasp is that ours is a world deeply connected to and shaped by the history discussed here, and yet it is irreparably distant from it.

PROBLEMS WITH A QUANTITATIVE APPROACH TO ATLANTIC SLAVERY

This book supports a growing body of work which argues for a shift in the focus of historical studies and the consequent memorialisation of Atlantic slavery. Whereas such studies have often concentrated on the quantitative issue of the numbers of slaves involved in the trade, a tendency which has been enhanced by the online publication of a revised version of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database (www.slavevoyages.org), work by scholars such as Judith Carney, Edda Fields-Black, Walter Hawthorne, Linda Heywood and John Thornton, and Gwendolyn Midlo Hall have shown the significance of a culturally centred approach.¹⁷ Although their work remains controversial and has provoked dispute, it has shown the importance of understanding the histories of West Africa during the Atlantic era from the perspective of changing productive practices and social institutions; it has also emphasised the need to see human transfers from West Africa to the Americas not only through the prism of the labour needs of the plantation economy, but also in terms of identity, production and the built environment.¹⁸ This book is supportive of such work; it argues that a quantitative emphasis distracts attention from seeing how the advent of Atlantic slavery affected African societies, and from

¹⁵ Austen (2001: 236, 239).

¹⁶ As Mendes (2007: 15) notes, discussions of Atlantic slavery tend to be moralising and omit the reality that most large-scale civilisations rely on forced labour. Austen (2001: 243) notes how, in Europe, discussion of the slave trade is approached through the lens of abolition. As the 2007 bicentenary of abolition of the slave trade by the British parliament confirmed, this permits an inauthentic and self-congratulatory moral narrative.

¹⁷ Carney (2001); Fields-Black (2009); Hawthorne (2003; 2010); Heywood/Thornton (2007); G. Hall (2005).

¹⁸ For some of the disputes which have arisen, see the discussion on "Black Rice" in the *American Historical Review* (115/1), January 2010.

thinking through what the cultural, political and social consequences of this phenomenon were.¹⁹

To make this point, I concentrate primarily on events in Western Africa itself. This requires engagement with cultural histories. Slaves sold into the Atlantic system via Cabo Verde in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries came from present-day Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and the Casamance region of what today is southern Senegal. In the late fifteenth and first half of the sixteenth centuries, they also came from the Jolof and Sereer peoples who lived between the Senegal and Gambia Rivers in Senegambia.²⁰ The deep interconnections between these sub-regions of Western Africa emerge in accounts of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The Caboverdean trader André Alvares d'Almada described in the 1590s how dyes were procured in the Nunes River (present-day Guinea-Conakry) and shipped north to the São Domingos River (present-day Guinea-Bissau), where they were exchanged for slaves and provisions.²¹ The Dutch sailor Dirck Ruiters wrote in 1623 how salt was taken from the Caboverdean islands of Maio and Sal to Sierra Leone and traded there for gold, ivory and kola nuts. The goods obtained in Sierra Leone were then taken north of the Gambia to Joal and Portudal, where kola was traded for cotton cloths. The Caboverdean traders then went south to Cacheu on the São Domingos River, where the rest of the goods from Sierra Leone were exchanged for slaves. From Cacheu, the traders returned to the archipelago.²²

This rich network of trade could not have developed without some pre-existing frameworks of both commercial and cultural exchange. It turns out that the former great wealth of Cabo Verde, alluded to by the Englishman George Roberts in the eighteenth century, depended not only on the commercial realities of slavery but also on those cultural exchanges which allowed the slave trade to develop in the first place.

¹⁹ Though some scholars have criticised “culturalist” paradigms as static and homogenising of the complexity of human societies, I share the view of Ulf Hannerz (1996: 31–63) that the idea of “culture”, though imperfect, is ultimately one of the best explanatory ideas we have to understand how human societies operate in both material and ritual terms. Hannerz powerfully argues that culture is acquired in social life; thus its acquisition varies according to social contexts which themselves reflect shifting material and ritual patterns of given times and places; this shifting context allows cultures to change along with that context, so that the idea of “culture” does not enforce a static view.

²⁰ For a fuller description of these sub-regions of Western Africa, see below, *Chapter 1*, Introductory Section.

²¹ MMAII: Vol. 3, 342.

²² Cit. Brooks (1993b: 157).



MAP I. Map of Western Africa: Rivers of Guinea and Cabo Verde Islands.

Here we glimpse why studies of Atlantic slavery in an African context must focus on cultural questions as well as on quantitative data.

The quantitative focus derives from Philip Curtin's famous "census" of Atlantic slavery.²³ Yet although Curtin made many important contributions to the study of African societies, his estimates of slave exports for the sixteenth century were far too low. His figures proposed an average of 1,098 slaves a year leaving Senegambia and Upper Guinea (cf. note 12 for definitions of both these geographical zones) for America and Europe between 1526 and 1550.²⁴ They suggested an annual average of only 421 slaves exported from all of Upper Guinea in the period 1551–1595.²⁵ However these figures are unsustainable. They take no account of the vast contraband trade, in which evidence shows that slave exports were four and even five times the officially registered cargo.²⁶ They also ignore the evidence implying social change in Upper Guinea which does not tally with these low numbers. Moreover, it is impossible to square these figures with the labour needs of the New World following the demographic collapse of the Native Americans in the sixteenth century, a need which could not have been met by such a small influx of African labour.

Rightly, these figures have been derided as indicative of a "great level of underestimate".²⁷ Historians have attempted to recalibrate them. Eltis suggests doubling Curtin's estimate of 75,000 slave exports for the sixteenth century to 150,000.²⁸ The new Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database proposes a revised estimate of 196,940 slaves shipped to the Americas between 1501 and 1590 at an annual average of 2,188, of which 143,316 came from the part of Africa examined by this book, producing an annual average of 1,592.²⁹ Yet even this does not do justice to

²³ Curtin (1969).

²⁴ Ibid., 101.

²⁵ Ibid., 108–10; Bühnen (1993: 83).

²⁶ For evidence on this, see Green (2007b: 246); and also Wheat (2009) for the seventeenth century. Cf. also below, Chapters 6 and 7. Mark and Horta's analysis of the contraband trade in the second decade of the seventeenth century also suggests the need to substantially increase estimates for exported slaves from Upper Guinea (Mark/Horta 2011: 165–71).

²⁷ Inikori (1982b: 20); see also Barry (1998: 39–40).

²⁸ Eltis (2001: 23–4); see also Mellafe (1975: 72–3), who suggests doubling the ratio of slaves/tonnage of shipping allowed for by Curtin to account for the contraband trade. Curtin criticises this because it is double the ratio permitted by the contracts (Curtin 1969: 24 n.13). However, Mellafe's strategy brings us much nearer the reality than Curtin's approach.

²⁹ www.slavevoyages.org, data accessed May 15, 2011. Much of this important new research was carried out by António Mendes. See Mendes (2007: 451–73) and Mendes (2008).

the need to rethink this early trade. It is still possible for scholars to imply that Western Africa was not a region where enslavement for the Atlantic trade was commonplace.³⁰ Moreover, these figures themselves still represent significant underestimates. They only allow a 10 per cent surplus for contraband and nothing at all for undocumented illegal voyages.³¹ Yet several important scholars of the sixteenth-century Atlantic trade are broadly agreed of both the importance of the contraband trade and the difficulties of using official figures as a benchmark to estimate them.³²

This book shows that this approach is unsatisfactory. Important new documentary records which I discuss here reveal that even to raise these annual average estimates from Western Africa to approximately 2,500 slaves per year from 1525–50 and 5,000 per year from 1550–1590 represents a conservative approach (cf. Chapters 6 and 7). Yet these are not the sort of records which can readily be accommodated by the requirements of existing tools of quantitative analysis, such as those on which the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database are founded. It may indeed be that the records used in this book indicate the methodological problems inherent in trying to produce a database, broadly using the same techniques, when that database covers a vast temporal period in which the institutional context of metropolitan power lying behind the production of records varied enormously.

So in spite of the significance of the quantitative findings in this book, I do not take a quantitative approach. The problem is that the quantitative approach “remains locked into the same questions that scholars have asked since the publication of Philip Curtin’s *The Atlantic Slave Trade*”.³³ In general, a reliance on quantitative methods depends on the comprehensiveness of imperfect European bureaucracies, as Hall and Hawthorne have argued.³⁴ It may well be that, as Joseph Miller once suggested, gross export figures “have no meaning either in human terms or in perceiving the operational complexity and diversity of the [trans-Atlantic slave] trade”.³⁵ As António Mendes has written, the responses of societies to this trade are a great deal more complex than the mechanical

³⁰ Heywood/Thornton (2007: 48) – “West Central Africa ... was the one region in Africa ... where enslavement for the Atlantic trade was commonplace”.

³¹ Mendes (2007: 470) and (2008: 80) allows 10 per cent surplus for contraband.

³² Amaral (1996: 68) argues that the contraband from Angola to Brazil was very large from 1575 onwards; and Torrão (2010: 8) notes the difficulties of the separation of official figures from the contraband trade.

³³ G. Hall (2010: 139).

³⁴ G. Hall (2010); Hawthorne (2010a).

³⁵ Miller (1976b: 76).

compilation of the statistics of the trade can allow.³⁶ The database is of course important, and it is proving extremely useful to historians trying to match up origins of slaves in Africa and destinations in America, which can show how African skills were employed in the Americas. And of course, David Eltis and David Richardson are right to suggest that there are connections between quantitative discoveries and cultural patterns and influences. Indeed, this is exemplified by this book's argument for an increased volume of trade in the sixteenth century, which is of course connected to the increased patterns of violent disorder in Western Africa and the consequent socio-political corollaries emphasised here.³⁷ Other approaches, however, need to be considered. Indeed, as Eltis himself has perceptively written elsewhere, “in the end any economic interpretation of history risks insufficient probing of the behaviour of people. At the very least, it will run the risk of missing the cultural parameters within which economic decisions are made”.³⁸

This book thus looks primarily at cultural, political and ritual changes in Western Africa, dealing step by step with the early trans-Atlantic trade. It does not discuss the details of European individuals holding licences to ship slaves and the operation of their financial arrangements.³⁹ That is not to say that in an African context economic issues do not matter; they illustrate the problems of economic development which hamper African societies today, the origins of which may be related to the nature of the economic exchanges connected to the Atlantic slave trade and the trajectory of agricultural production in Africa (cf. Chapter 3). Yet the cultural, political and social consequences of that trade matter as much, if not more, from an African perspective. For if, as Stephan Bünen notes, in the second half of the sixteenth century 20 per cent of all New World slaves came from just one Upper Guinean people – the Brame – one must ask why.⁴⁰ This is a question which debating Curtin's figures or analysing the credit operations in the European banking system will never answer. It is a question which forces us to go beyond the narrow focus of “number”.

³⁶ Mendes (2007: 15): “les réponses sont plus complexes que ne le laisse entendre la compilation des chiffres monstrueux de la traite atlantique”. This is also recognised in Eltis (2000: 2).

³⁷ Eltis/Richardson (2008b).

³⁸ Eltis (2000: 284).

³⁹ This is the subject of a book very soon to be published by Maria Manuel Ferraz Torrão of the Instituto de Investigaçāo Científica Tropical of Lisbon, who in her research also deals with issues of quantification, destinations of slaves in the Spanish Americas and the interplay of Portuguese and Spanish empires in the early Atlantic.

⁴⁰ Bünen (1993: 101); see also O'Toole (2007) for more data on the Brame in Peru and for a nuanced picture of Brame “ethnicity” in the Americas.

CREOLISATION AND THE SLAVE TRADE IN WESTERN AFRICA

Bühnen suggested that the reason for the predominance of Western Africa in the Atlantic slaving networks of the sixteenth century lay in local factors, and surely he is right.⁴¹ Yet we must also go beyond local explanations to look at a more pervasive Atlantic phenomenon: that of creolisation. For the beginning of this major phenomenon in world history – the trans-Atlantic slave trade – cannot be separated from the development of one of the first Creole societies in the Atlantic world.

In this book, I support the culturally centred body of literature on Atlantic slavery mentioned in the previous section through the development of creolisation. By looking at the phenomena of creolisation and the slave trade together, we see how the two were related. The relevance of local factors to this process may relate to how existing cultural formations in Western Africa facilitated the rise of what was, along with São Tomé, the first Atlantic Creole society. By also showing the importance of Western Africa to the early trans-Atlantic slave trade, I argue that this region's experience created patterns which helped to set the tone for the trade from West-Central Africa to the Americas recently analysed by Heywood and Thornton.⁴²

Indeed, the importance of these early developments in Western Africa emerges most fully when we consider the broad influence this period had. As Curtin wrote with regard to plantation slavery, this period “established the relationships that continued into the period of more extensive trade that was to follow”.⁴³ Yet the relevance of the sixteenth century is not confined just to practicalities. It also relates to ideological transformations, as the English borrowed wholesale from the Iberians in their ideas concerning the New World. Explorers such as Raleigh borrowed Spanish phrases such as “*tierra firme*” to describe their findings.⁴⁴ From the early sixteenth century onwards, they discussed widely with the Spanish in the Americas.⁴⁵ Once installed in Barbados in the 1620s, the English turned to Brazil to borrow both the techniques of sugar plantation and refinery as well as the use of enslaved African labour to maximise sugar

⁴¹ Bühnen (1993:102).

⁴² Heywood/Thornton (2007).

⁴³ Curtin (1998: 43). Torrão (2010: 1) also holds study of the sixteenth century as key if we are to understand how the systems of the seventeenth century emerged.

⁴⁴ Hakluyt (1904: Vol. 8, 298): “we arrived upon the coast, which we supposed to be a continent and firme lande”.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Vol. 10, 2, on English presence in Puerto Rico in 1516. On the early influence of the Spanish on the English in America, see Elliott (2006: 11–12, 15).

mill profits.⁴⁶ Barbados was the first mass sugar production site for the English in the Caribbean, and many of the most influential early colonists of South Carolina came from this island.⁴⁷ Subsequently, these North American colonists even borrowed the Spanish word *negro* to refer to their own African slaves.⁴⁸ Thus, the way in which the trans-Atlantic slave trade took shape during its first century, and its connection to the parallel development of creolisation, was pivotal to the subsequent economy and ideology of the Western hemisphere.

However, there are problems with the concept of “creolisation”, particularly with its varied uses in African and Atlantic contexts. In discourse related to African Americans, it has come to relate to the question of whether or not there was any cultural continuity from Africa in the diaspora.⁴⁹ In Herman Bennett’s analysis of imperial Mexico, the term refers to the development of a legal consciousness by African slaves.⁵⁰ In Sierra Leone, the Krio culture refers to that which developed following the arrival of freed African American slaves from the late eighteenth century onwards.⁵¹ A different meaning still is employed by Megan Vaughan, whose use of the term derives from the fact that Mauritius was an unsettled island prior to the early modern period.⁵²

Modern Creole studies emphasise an overriding linguistic phenomenon, which is the formation and use of a vernacular Creole language.⁵³ This is how I use the term “creolisation” here. In this interpretation, the cultural process implied these days by creolisation – of the development of hybrid societies – is given an empirical historical basis by its connection to a definite historical process demonstrated through linguistic change. It is a more precise term than “hybridity”, being grounded in the context of the specific power relations which went with the creation of Atlantic Creole languages.⁵⁴ Indeed, as this book shows, Western Africa was a key site in which the power relations related to Atlantic creolisation were first developed. By looking in detail at this process, we may see

⁴⁶ Dunn (1973: 72).

⁴⁷ Ibid., 111–5.

⁴⁸ Jordan (1974: 35).

⁴⁹ See Price/Mintz (1992); Berlin (1996; 2000); Carney (2001); Heywood/Thornton (2007); Fields-Black (2009).

⁵⁰ Bennett (2003: 2–3).

⁵¹ Wyse (1989) has one of the best analyses of the Krio of Sierra Leone.

⁵² Vaughan (2005: 2).

⁵³ Woolford (1983: 5).

⁵⁴ On this conceptual distinction between creolisation and hybridity, see Cohen/Toninato (2010a: 14).

what characterised these relations and how the conditions arose in which they evolved.

Western Africa was one of the first sites to see the development of an Atlantic Creole language, and it is because of this that I use the term “creolisation”. The latest research suggests that Caboverdean Kriolu had already become a “pidginised” *lingua franca* by the end of the fifteenth century; it was a vernacular in Cabo Verde by the middle of the sixteenth century and a vernacular of the trading settlements of Upper Guinea by the early seventeenth century.⁵⁵ Thus Western Africa offers a historical example of Atlantic linguistic creolisation in the period examined in this book. There are other debates to be had with regard to processes of identity formation and the degree to which the Creole language was constitutive of a new collective identity for some.⁵⁶ However, where the question of language formation is concerned, the evidence is comprehensive. Indeed the very idea of linguistic creolisation emerged in Western Africa, where it was first used by Jajolet de la Courbe in 1685.⁵⁷ The region thus has a certain chronological primacy in both the development of Creole societies and the development of the idea of the “Creole”, and so it is difficult to study its cultural histories in an Atlantic context, as this book proposes, without reference to this idea.

This process of Creole language formation is, however, deeply connected to associated socio-cultural changes, and it is this which makes it an important prism for assessing the trans-Atlantic slave trade from a more cultural perspective. The development of a new language may reflect new social forces. Where social interactions and exchanges are intense, linguistic change follows.⁵⁸ In a social context creolisation may, as Wilson Trajano Filho suggests, therefore be a metaphor “to refer to the processes of social and cultural change involving a mass of people with different ties of social and political belonging”.⁵⁹ It is in this sense

⁵⁵ Lang (2006: 57) argues convincingly that the large number of grammatical features in Kriolu deriving from Wolof point to this periodisation, as the vast majority of Jolof slaves coming to Cabo Verde arrived in the foundational period of the colony. See also Jacobs (2009; 2010) and Veiga (2000: 37) for this periodisation. Jacobs (2009: 352) shows that Kriolu had become a vernacular in Upper Guinea by the 1620s.

⁵⁶ On creolisation as involving the development of a new collective identity with an ethnic referent, see Knörr (2010: 353). Seibert (forthcoming, 2012) argues that this creolisation did not occur in Upper Guinea.

⁵⁷ Holm (1988: Vol. 1, 15).

⁵⁸ Woolford (1983: 1–2).

⁵⁹ Trajano Filho (2003: 4): “uma metáfora para...referir aos processos de mudança social e cultural envolvendo uma massa de gente com diferentes laços de pertencimento social e político”.

that cultural theorists have used the term over recent decades, as a sort of “master metaphor” for processes of cultural mixing in the era of globalisation.⁶⁰ In this book we will see that mixed cultural practices did develop in Western Africa in the sixteenth century and that they were connected to the very early forms of economic globalisation that developed at the same time, which illustrates how, as in our contemporary era, economic globalisation and cultural hybridisation often go together.⁶¹

Although secondarily employed as a metaphor for such mixtures, however, creolisation in this book is primarily tied to the specific historical situation which, although allowing such cultural mixtures to occur, also facilitated the rise of this early Atlantic Creole language. The key point is that that historical situation was associated with the rise of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, which occurred earlier in Western Africa than elsewhere in the African Atlantic, and thereby laid down early markers for the process in the wider Atlantic world.

Back in the 1970s, the Jamaican writer Edward Kamau Brathwaite suggested that the study of creolisation was inseparable from the study of slavery. This book thus does as Brathwaite did for Jamaica, and interconnects the study of creolisation and slavery, though this time in a Western African historical context.⁶² Such work has been undertaken by Heywood and Thornton for Central Africa, but it remains to be completed in Western Africa.⁶³ At its most exciting this “creolisation model” can show that “Africa was a place where the Atlantic trade had produced deep historical transformations that were not just the result of European imposition, but of the internal dynamics of African societies”.⁶⁴ However, it must also emphasise the differences which emerged. Within Western Africa we will find that the processes of creolisation varied in the different locales of Santiago, Fogo and Upper Guinea (something itself illustrated by the different Kriolu dialects of these locales today). Moreover, there were important cultural differences between Western Africa as a whole and the Kongo/Angola region. Linguistic diversity was much richer in Western Africa than in Central Africa.⁶⁵ This warns us against loose use of terms such as “Creole,” which mar the otherwise interesting work of Heywood and Thornton.

⁶⁰ Hannerz (1996: 66); Cohen/Toninato (2010a: 5–7).

⁶¹ Gruzinski (2002: 4).

⁶² Brathwaite (1971: vii).

⁶³ Heywood/Thornton (2007). Though note Nafafé (2007), whose work provides a thorough basis from which to continue in this area.

⁶⁴ Naro/Sansi-Roca/Trekee (2007b: 3).

⁶⁵ Heywood/Thornton (2007: 56).

Thus a core point to emerge from a culturally centred analysis rooted in the idea of creolisation is the greater differentiation of the Atlantic export slave trade in an African context. The work of Hawthorne and Martin Klein has illustrated that the old “predatory state thesis” which saw the slave trade as bolstering expanding African slaving empires requires revision.⁶⁶ There was not one Atlantic slave trade, but many trades wreaking many different effects, and indeed the African capacity to influence the early Atlantic emerges in this diversity of African-European relations.⁶⁷ Detailed analysis of developments related to the trade in one particular context can help to remind us of the need to differentiate our understanding, and not to fall into the trap of generalisation which so often means, as Claude Meillassoux eloquently put it, that African societies become the “laboratories for retarded fantasies”.⁶⁸

RETHINKING AFRICAN AGENCY IN THE ATLANTIC WORLD

Atlantic history is one of the fastest-growing fields of historical research. As David Armitage has put it, “we are all Atlanticists now”.⁶⁹ Studying the Atlantic allows historians to examine the way in which the trading networks developed in the early modern world were forerunners of the interconnected systems which underpinned the rise of the global industrial economy of the nineteenth century.⁷⁰ It illustrates how global factors affected particular societies and how the rise of a “world history”, characterised by multiple connections linking disparate locations required this integration of global and local forces. However, in this new literature the role of African societies has been conspicuously absent. The recent dearth of studies by Africanists on the early modern period is a major cause of this, but more general narratives have also failed to give an adequate account of the place of African societies in the Atlantic.⁷¹

This book shows that this situation is inadequate. By studying the first century of Atlantic history in detail through events in Western Africa, we see not only the importance of Western Africa in the developing picture

⁶⁶ See Hawthorne (1999; 2001; 2003); Klein (2001).

⁶⁷ A point made by Eltis (2000: 164).

⁶⁸ Meillassoux (1991: 21).

⁶⁹ Armitage (2002: 11).

⁷⁰ Baily (2005).

⁷¹ Abulafia (2008) is an egregious recent example. There are exceptions to this picture, such as Thornton (1998), the more recent work of Law (2004), and an important article co-authored by Law and Mann (see Law/Mann [1999]). See also Green (2009). But in general there are very few publications on “the African Atlantic”.

of Atlantic slavery and creolisation, but also how African societies helped to shape the early Atlantic. In particular, it is argued that mercantile diasporas in the Iberian Atlantic emerged in part through the contact which members of those diasporas had with societies of Western Africa, in which such cross-cultural trading diasporas had long exerted influence. Because recent works have emphasised the role of mercantile diasporas and ideas of shared identity in the rise of the Atlantic system, it becomes clear that the importance of diaspora trading networks to the Atlantic world cannot be separated from the contact which those networks had with African societies.⁷²

For students of African history, the importance of African contacts in the emergence of early global diasporic networks may come as little surprise. In general, the recognition by scholars such as André Gunder Frank of the importance of diasporas in pre-industrial trade was stimulated by research on African history by scholars such as Abner Cohen and Paul Lovejoy.⁷³ Curtin's path-finding work on the importance of diasporas in cross-cultural trade focussed significantly on diasporas in African history.⁷⁴ Subsequently, debates between Avner Greif, Jeremy Edwards and Sheilagh Ogilvie on the role of private reputation and corporate identity in long-distance diaspora trade, and the significance of this for understanding the place of cultural patterns in economic development, developed out of the data on "Maghribi" traders and their commerce in medieval North Africa.⁷⁵ Yet in spite of the importance of African history for the study of diasporas in cross-cultural commercial networks, historians have not before seen the connection of trans-Saharan histories to the emergence of Atlantic connections.

This book argues that this connection is central, and therefore reasserts the centrality of African societies to the study of early modern diasporas and to the early Atlantic world. Such an emphasis is important in a context where the place of diasporas in early modern cross-cultural trade is an increasingly important question for historians. In an influential work concentrating on the Sephardic Jews of Livorno, Francesca

⁷² See especially Herzog (2003); Studnicki-Gizbert (2007); Ebert (2008).

⁷³ Frank (1998: 62); A. Cohen (1969; 1971); Lovejoy (1973; 1978).

⁷⁴ Curtin (1984).

⁷⁵ Greif (1993; 2008); Edwards/Ogilvie (2008). Ogilvie and Edwards have disputed Greif's assertion that the reliability of these early trade networks was assured by private reputation and a form of "coalition" shared by people with a collective identity, rather than through legal mechanisms; Greif (2008) argues convincingly that their view of the place of legal mechanisms in the trade of "Maghribi traders" is a poor interpretation of the facts.

Trivellato has criticised both Curtin and Greif for embracing a static view of culture.⁷⁶ Although appearing to derive many of her ideas on the role of diasporas in transmitting reliable information from Greif, she chides him and Curtin for arguing that there was a tendency among members of diasporas to become absorbed by their hosts and cease to be able to act as go-betweens.⁷⁷ However such a view appears to draw from an essentialist view of “culture” and an over-concentration on the place of the eighteenth-century Sephardic diaspora which she analyses. Trivellato’s failure to engage with African histories means that her argument cannot acknowledge the ways in which, as this book shows, in African and New World contexts the cultural frameworks of various diasporas – including the New Christians, themselves closely related to the Sephardim (cf. Chapter 4) – did become absorbed into one another in the early modern period. Such mutual reciprocity was a by-product of the development of long-distance trade networks on the one hand; and, on the other, of the long-standing history of cultural pluralism in West Africa which meant that trading communities characterized by the ability to retain distinctive original cultural features and yet also adopt traits of the host culture were widespread (cf. Chapters 1 and 8). Such a combination of distinctiveness and hybridity seems contradictory from a Eurocentric perspective, but from the African point of view it is in keeping with the long-standing “interpenetrating multiculturalities that characterize so much of the region”.⁷⁸ Thus this book’s focus on these African-Atlantic contexts shows that a more nuanced view of cross-cultural trade is required, one which is alive to the cultural distinctiveness and influence of each region of the world; from this perspective, the maintenance of cultural distinctiveness, mutual influence and absorption of one culture by another, and simultaneous distinctiveness and reciprocal influence were all equally strong possibilities.⁷⁹

Thus returning to an analysis of the African diasporic movements from which many of the contemporary debates on cross-cultural trade derives is important, for it offers a reminder of how the persistent failure of so much mainstream historiography of the early modern period to engage

⁷⁶ Trivellato (2009).

⁷⁷ Ibid., Chapters 6–8 on the importance of reliable information for the functioning of long-distance diasporas; 17, 276 for these critiques of Curtin and Greif.

⁷⁸ The phrase is from Farias (1999: 164). On Africa as a part of the emergent global economic system that predated European expansion, see Bayart (2000: 218), and as in some ways more open commercially than Europe, see Mendes (2007: 9).

⁷⁹ See Antunes/Silva (2011) for an argument that Western Africa did offer a different context for cross-cultural trade in the early modern era.

with African history limits the available perspectives, and also supports this book's more general argument as to the centrality of cultural perspectives to an understanding of economic networks. To compound this issue, this African role in early Atlantic history was moreover concealed by ultra-nationalist ideologies for many decades. For far too long the historiography of Western Africa was dominated by the colonial perspective of Portugal's mid-twentieth-century Salazar regime, which saw African history as beginning with the Portuguese "discoveries" of the fifteenth century.⁸⁰ In this narrative, "history" began with Nuno Tristão's passing of the River Senegal and Dinis Diaz's arrival at the Cape Verde peninsula in 1444. However, the experiences which the Portuguese sailors had on the African coast depended on preceding exchanges and historical events dating to an already distant past. In Upper Guinea, peoples had come under pressure since the thirteenth century from the Mandinka of the famous Mali empire in their push towards the coast, a pressure which had affected the structure of their societies and the way they responded to newcomers (cf. [Chapter 1](#)); with the arrival of the Portuguese, the peoples of Upper Guinea would find themselves between Mandinka and Atlantic powers, a situation which brought new changes.⁸¹

Yet Salazarist historians tended to pass over preceding African forces in these exchanges. Along with historians of the other European colonial powers in the twentieth century, they created a narrative in which "active" Europeans helped to shape a new African reality. There was little reconstruction of earlier African histories which may help to grasp how Africa affected the early Atlantic.⁸² Thus as a new wave of historians of the region such as Brooks, Fields-Black and Hawthorne have shown, a full account of the emergence of the Atlantic system here must begin with events before 1440.

In order to illustrate one way in which narratives of Atlantic history may be "Africanised", I begin before the 1440s with events in Western Africa which helped to shape the first African-European exchanges. I argue that the cultural framework found by European navigators in

⁸⁰ An example of this trend is the work of Antonio Brásio (e.g., Brásio 1962). This is a serious problem because Brásio's published collections of documents (MMAII) remain the best available source of published documentation for Western Africa. On the ideological problems related to the region's historiography, see Green (2007b: 5–16).

⁸¹ Barry (1998: 27). "Mandinka" is the ethnonym used specifically in the old Kaabu region by people known more widely in West Africa as "Mande" or "Malinké". It is therefore the ethnonym used in this book except where the discussion is more widely of Mande peoples in West Africa.

⁸² On the importance of this, see Ballong-wen-Menuda (1993: Vol. 1, 79–83).

the fifteenth century influenced the nature of their exchanges, the places where they settled, and their ability to form the settled trading communities which were essential to the operation of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the sixteenth century. By then integrating this picture with important new documentary finds related to early African-European relations, I show how the “pre-Atlantic” history of Western Africa was decisive in the emergence of these early Atlantic communities.

Indeed, this is where the question of African “agency” in the Atlantic world intersects with the idea of creolisation we looked at in the previous section; for the nature of the mixed societies which emerged here in Atlantic West Africa depended on the pre-existing frameworks of both partners. From the African perspective, as we have just seen, this involved Upper Guineans who had adapted to the Mandinka expansion, and from the European side, New Christians, who were descendants of Jews who had been forced to convert to Christianity by Manoel I in 1497. New documentary evidence discussed here shows that sixteenth-century European settlements in Upper Guinea contained a majority of New Christians, and, in collaboration with Peter Mark and José da Silva Horta’s work on Jewish communities in seventeenth-century Senegambia, I advance the argument that it was the quality of adaptability inherited by both Upper Guineans from their relation to the Mandinka and by members of the New Christian diaspora from their pre-existing position in Portugal that helped to mould the Creole societies of Western Africa⁸³; by illustrating the nature of the Atlantic slaving networks of the sixteenth century and how they were connected to these Creole societies, this book also offers a suggestive mechanism as to how the phenomenon of creolisation as developed in Western Africa subsequently influenced developments elsewhere in the Atlantic world.

Indeed, integrating the New Christians into the picture decisively connects the patterns of creolisation in West Africa to the wider Atlantic world, which makes the case for the importance of the history of African diasporas mentioned earlier. It turns out that the pre-existing frameworks of diasporic trade connections common among both the trans-Saharan and New Christian traders were crucial in integrating the Atlantic networks

⁸³ See Mark/Horta (2011: 17); like Mark and Horta, this book therefore foregrounds the importance of the theme of diaspora in understanding this history (*ibid.*, 15). There is no significant published study of the New Christians in this region, although in addition to this work by Mark and Horta there are recent studies of the Sephardim in seventeenth-century Senegambia by Mendes (2004), Mark and Horta (2004; 2005; 2009;) and Green (2005; 2008a and 2008b).

of interest to many scholars today.⁸⁴ Indeed, the New Christian networks in the early Atlantic may well have been directly connected to the functioning of earlier trans-Saharan networks (cf. Chapter 2). Western Africa became part of what I call the “pan-Atlantic”, where African experiences affected how Europeans perceived and “discovered” the New World before events in the New World in turn affected Africa. A further key finding to emerge from this book is thus that this “pan-Atlantic” emerged earlier than historians generally allow.

The accommodation of New Christian diaspora networks within West Africa was vital to the process of forging this pan-Atlantic in the sixteenth century. The development of creolisation in Western Africa, it turns out, was facilitated by the existing practices of both African and New Christian diaspora merchants. One of the most important aspects of this analysis of African and New Christian diasporas is that it moves beyond traditional binaries – Black/white and dominant/subaltern – and beyond current polarised disputes to posit a mixed past.⁸⁵ However, the apparent paradox is that this history of commercial and cultural mixing – the mixture that helped to create linguistic creolisation – occurred at a time of the first stirrings of modern racism. For Africans, this saw the association of slavery and skin colour leading to increasingly institutionalised prejudice in the wider Atlantic world beyond the African coast, whereas for New Christians the emphasis on Old Christian ancestry – so-called *limpeza*, or “purity of blood” – saw their growing marginalisation within Iberian society.⁸⁶

Although ideas of race remained unfixed in the sixteenth century, they were beginning to harden. Thus as this book unfolds, one of its ironies is the need at times to integrate this latent and essentialist discourse of “race” into an understanding of how the mixed cultural and linguistic communities of Atlantic Western Africa developed in the sixteenth

⁸⁴ Trading diasporas have long been important to West Africa and indeed still are. For the trade diaspora of the Wangara in Central Sudan in the sixteenth century, see Lovejoy (1978); for the trade diaspora of the Hausa of post-colonial Nigeria, see A. Cohen (1969). For the scholarship on early Atlantic networks of New Christians, see for example Wachtel (2001); Israel (2002); Schorsch (2008).

⁸⁵ Prime among these polarities is the “Black Athena” debate. See for example Bernal (1991); Lefkowitz (2008).

⁸⁶ On the developing association of skin colour and slavery in fifteenth-century Valencia, see Blumenthal (2009). However, Blumenthal agrees with Medeiros (1985) and Russell-Wood (1978) that this picture, though nascent, was not institutionalised until later in the sixteenth century; a contrary position on this is taken by Sweet (1997). For new perspectives on the growing marginalisation of New Christians in the Iberian Atlantic, see Schwartz (2008); and Yovel (2009).

century. Because of its contrary register to the discourse of creolisation, the question of race emerges only in a minor key in this book. However, in the final chapters I draw on the marked changes by 1600 to argue that these conflicting discourses of mixed creolisation and emergent and essentialist racism were connected in the early Atlantic world, and that the connection lay in the hyper-mobility and rupture with previous labour patterns which distinguished the early Atlantic from the worlds that preceded it, and from which both discourses emerged.

Through engaging with these themes, this book illustrates how peoples of Western Africa had an important place in building the Atlantic world, and that this was indeed a relevant location in the birth of economic and ideological currents associated with modernity (see especially [Chapter 4](#)). This sort of argument, of course, runs counter to the ideas concerning the historical place of African societies which emerged in the colonial era, and now, in the twenty-first century, different ideologies challenge these ideas. Many cavil at talking about African agency in these centuries for fear of blaming the evils of slavery on Africans themselves; and indeed, some scholars, in a desire to demonstrate such agency in the early Atlantic, come dangerously close to abetting this position.⁸⁷ However, debates on African agency do not have to get caught up in the issue of blame for the Atlantic slave trade. Indeed, almost all large-scale societies have practised or benefited from some form of forced labour. To hold that African societies cannot or should not have done so is thus to hold a paternalistic myth of the noble savage and thereby to replicate, unconsciously, older historiographies. This is not to say that Africans were to “blame” for the slave trade, but rather that the export of slaves emerged through a complex process in which Africans most certainly were not without agency.⁸⁸ Nor is it to give European sugar consumers and slavers absolution from the greed which was a key driver of the trade. It is to accept that people often behave badly and to seek to understand how the behaviour of all parties here helped to shape the emergent modern world, at the same time acknowledging, as I do in this book, that far from having “complete control” over the slave trade, it was always those African societies who were most under pressure from a combination of local and Atlantic forces that experienced its most pernicious effects (cf. Conclusion).

⁸⁷ See for example Thornton (1998: 74): “the slave trade ... grew out of and was rationalised by the African societies who participated in it and had complete control over it until the slaves were loaded onto European ships”.

⁸⁸ The very association of the ideas of “guilt” and “blame” with this subject today itself reveals statements of value rather than fact, the importance of which probably derives from narratives of guilt and redemption which emerged with the Abolitionist movement.

Indeed, what this integration of the question of agency to that of Atlantic slavery and creolisation may show us is precisely the limits of that agency, ideologically and historically. We need to recognise the acuity of Walter Johnson's analysis: that the very idea of agency itself smuggles in a notion of the universality of liberal ideas such as freedom and independence which were vital to the self-identification of white elites in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; on Johnson's analysis, therefore, the idea of agency itself in some senses represents what he describes as a "white" form of address in a Black conversation.⁸⁹ For although this book shows how and why societies of Western Africa influenced the emergence of the Atlantic world, it also points up limits to that agency through the cycles of violent disorder which the Atlantic in turn brought to bear on Western African societies. It emerges that although pre-existing African cultural and economic patterns were vital to shaping the formation of the early Atlantic, within a few decades the demand side of the Atlantic economy had begun radically to affect the way in which African communities defended themselves, built alliances and structured their societies. Here the book supports the work of Walter Rodney, who more than forty years ago argued for the influence of this early Atlantic trade on cycles of violent disorder and practices of enslavement in Western Africa.⁹⁰ This book shows in detail how these cycles of violence developed and how they affected the cultural, political and social frameworks within which peoples lived in Western Africa.

So although for ideological reasons related to perceptions of African history in the epoch of twentieth-century imperialism we must recognise African agency, we should at the same time not be afraid to see the limits of this idea; we must recognise that even its positing is in some senses a response to the earlier assumptions of white racism. Otherwise, as Rosalind Shaw recognises, "when we celebrate the agency of those who have been the objects of transregional European enterprises (via colonization, missionization, or the Atlantic slave trade) without adequately distinguishing the very different agency of colonizers, missionaries or slave traders, we risk writing neorevisionist histories".⁹¹ Thus as this book shows, of course we must recognise the role and autonomy of African societies in this period, but we must do so whilst also grasping the very real constraints which the institution of Atlantic slavery imposed on both slaves and the African societies from which they came.

⁸⁹ W. Johnson (2003: 115, 120).

⁹⁰ Rodney (1965); *idem.*, (1966). Rodney's ideas were strongly disputed by Fage (1969b).

⁹¹ Shaw (2002: 19–20).

SOURCES AND STRUCTURE

This book draws on several extended periods spent in the Casamance, Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde between 1995 and 2011. It includes material derived from interviews and observations relating to cultural practices there.⁹² Such experiences formed my initial entrée into thinking about the region, and subsequently I have followed them up with archival and library work to complement them. I have also drawn on published collections of oral traditions of the peoples of Upper Guinea.

For written sources I have used archives in Colombia, Gambia, Portugal, Spain and the Vatican. Much published material has also been consulted. I have drawn from the Spanish accounts of their conquest of the Americas in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. These sources have not been examined before in writing the history of Western Africa, but they supplement the published accounts of André Alvares d'Almada, André Donelha and the documents published by António Brásio.

The evidentiary base includes tables of slave “ethnicities” in Spanish America (1548–1600; see Tables I.1 and I.2). These tables offer the most complete picture yet of slave “ethnicities” in the Americas in the sixteenth century. They draw on findings from Nueva España (now Mexico), the Nuevo Reino de Granada (now Colombia) and Perú, as well as from Panamá and the Caribbean islands. They are thus fairly representative, bearing in mind that different African peoples were used for different labour tasks in the Americas. They allow us to reinterpret Almada and Donelha, corroborating some of their observations and permitting new interpretations. Though there are problems with these “ethnic” identifications, scholars are broadly agreed as to their value.⁹³

This evidentiary base is supplemented by new findings from the Archive of the Indies in Seville and the inquisitorial archives in Portugal, which permit a re-examination of changes in African polities and societies in this period. Some readers may worry as to the reliability of inquisitorial sources, but there is a general consensus among scholars of the Inquisition that such information cannot be discounted.⁹⁴

This approach is analogous to Ray Kea’s combination of archival and published oral histories for the Gold Coast.⁹⁵ However, it retains

⁹² An illustration of one aspect of my experience of Upper Guinea is Green (2001).

⁹³ For a good discussion of the value of these identifications, see Hawthorne (2010b: introduction).

⁹⁴ Gitlitz (1996: 77–8) suggests that “most of what [the inquisitors] wrote is mostly accurate”. See also Green (2007b: 335).

⁹⁵ Kea (1982: 8).

TABLE I.1. *Upper Guinean Origins of Slaves
in the Americas, 1547–1560*

“Ethnic Group”	Numbers Recorded
Bainunk (known as Bañol)	27 = 6.12%
Biafara	101 = 22.90%
Bioho	3 = 0.68%
Brame (known as Bran)	88 = 19.95%
Cocoli	4 = 0.91%
Criollo de Cabo Verde	1 = 0.23%
Kassanké (known as Casanga)	12 = 2.72%
Jolof	84 = 19.05%
Pullo (known as Fula)	2 = 0.45%
Mandinga	39 = 8.84%
Nalu	5 = 1.13%
Sape	39 = 8.84%
Sereer (known as Berbesi)	36 = 8.16%

Sources: *Archivo General de las Indias; Archivo General de la Nación (Bogotá); Carroll, Blacks in Colonial Veracruz; Inchaustegui, Reales Cédulas ... de Santo Domingo; Lockhart, Spanish Peru, 1532–1560; Millares Carlo/Mantecón, Índice y Extractos ... de Notarías de México.*

This table illustrates the origins of Upper Guinean slaves in the Americas in the mid sixteenth-century. Four hundred forty-one slaves’ origins are annotated, most of whom were tabulated by Carroll and Lockhart, but some of whom have been located by myself in the archives. I have also used records collated by Incahustegui and Millares Carlo/Mantecón. The major American colonies are covered in this picture, Carroll focussing on Mexico and Lockhart on Peru, whereas Incahustegui’s data covers Hispaniola.

Readers should note, however, that although Spanish scribes did note down with reasonable accuracy what they perceived as the ethnicities of slaves arriving in the Americas, sold in deeds of sale, etc., that these identifications in themselves are not watertight. Sometimes the “ethnicity” was more a representation of the area from which a slave had been taken than a precise “ethnic” identity. Indeed, Spanish scribes usually noted that an individual came from the “land of xxxx” (*tierra de x ...*). With this caveat in mind, however, this information can still tell us much about the areas which traded most heavily, and is in all likelihood as good a window as we can have onto how this picture fluxed over the course of the sixteenth century. Those wishing to engage further in the question of the reliability of these ethnic identifications are advised also to consult Hawthorne (2010b: *Introduction*).

a dependence on external written sources. Some readers may feel that dependence on these sources weakens this book. Personally, I prefer the approach of Mendes, who argues that “the sources produced by Portuguese colonists should not be automatically dismissed under the heading of Eurocentrism, but rather interpreted in their context and interrogated as

TABLE I.2. *Upper Guinean Origins of Slaves in the Americas, 1560–1600*

Group	Numbers, 1560–1567	Numbers, 1568–1577	Numbers, 1578–1589	Numbers, 1590–1600
Arriata	○	1 = 0.13%	○	○
Baga	○	1 = 0.13%	○	○
Bainunk	10 = 2.17%	37 = 4.81%	64 = 8.38%	54 = 10.59%
Balanta	○	7 = 0.91%	○	6 = 1.18%
Biafara	52 = 11.28%	167 = 21.72%	172 = 22.51%	143 = 28.04%
Bioho	8 = 0.67%	36 = 4.68%	18 = 2.36%	21 = 4.18%
Brame	70 = 15.18%	212 = 27.57%	187 = 24.48%	155 = 30.39%
Cocolí	1 = 0.22%	7 = 0.91%	5 = 0.65%	7 = 1.37%
Criollo de Cabo Verde	○	10 = 1.30%	2 = 0.26%	2 = 0.39%
Floup	○	3 = 0.39%	○	6 = 1.18%
Jalonké	○	○	1 = 0.13%	○
Jolof	2.5 = 5.42%	30 = 3.90%	48 = 6.28%	18 = 3.53%
Kassanké	9 = 1.95%	32 = 4.16%	40 = 5.24%	8 = 1.57%
Lamba	1 = 0.22%	○	○	○
Mandinga	30 = 6.51%	45 = 5.85%	59 = 7.72%	35 = 6.86%
Nalu	7 = 1.52%	27 = 3.51%	14 = 1.83%	19 = 3.73%
Pepel	○	2 = 0.26%	○	○
Pullo	2 = 0.43%	2 = 0.26%	2 = 0.26%	○

Sape	190 = 41.2%	130 = 16.91%	99 = 12.96%
Sereer	20 = 4.33%	14 = 1.82%	53 = 6.94%
Susu	30 = 6.51%	6 = 0.78%	0
Volon	6 = 1.3%	0	0

Sources: *Archivo General de las Indias; Archivo General de la Nación (Bogotá); Bowser, The African Slave in Colonial Peru; Navarrete, Cimarrones y Palenques en el Siglo XVII; Tardieu, Origins of Slaves in the Lima Region in Peru (Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries)*

This table tabulates the ethnic origins of slaves from the Upper Guinean region in the Americas between 1560 and 1600. Two thousand five hundred individuals are tabulated here, giving an average of roughly 600 per decade or 60 individuals per year. This is not an inconsiderable statistical sample.

The sources are varied. I have put together Bowser's and Tardieu's figures for Peru with Navarrete's for Colombia. The only possible overlap (i.e. individuals who may have been cited twice) is between the figures of Bowser and Tardieu, and this is unlikely to be statistically significant because Tardieu's figures cite far higher proportions of Brames and Sapes than do Bowser.

To these figures I have added 1,150 transcriptions of my own from the Archivo General de la Nación in Bogotá and the Archivo General de las Indias in Seville.

The main documents used in Bogotá for this table were the following:

- Archivo Histórico de Boyacá, Notaría Primera de Tunja: Legajos 1-69, Rollos 1-20
 - Archivo Notarial de Santander, Notaría Primera de Pamplona Rollo 1507294
 - Negocios Exteriores, Legajo 4, fols. 714 - 784
 - Negros y Esclavos, Antioquia, SC43/Legajo 1, fols. 997-1018
 - Negros y Esclavos, Antioquia, SC43/Legajo 4, fols. 731-745
 - Negros y Esclavos, Cundinamarca, SC43/Legajo 8, fols. 686-924
 - Notaría Primera de Bogotá: Vols. 1 - 5B, 9-11A, 13
- The main documents used in Seville for this table were the following:
- Contraduría 1174, No. 6, fols. 12v - 16v
 - Escríbanía 2A, fols. 471v-473v, 493v - 498r
 - Escríbanía 165A, fols. 109r, 109v, 111r, 113r, 115r
 - Justicia 518, No. 1, fols. 36v - 44v
 - Justicia 996, No. 2, Ramo 3
 - Panamá 33, no. 83
 - Patronato 234, Ramo 6, fols. 416v - 419r

The statistics compiled here may usefully be compared to Alejandro de la Fuente's for the period 1570-94 for Havana (Fuente 2008: 106). These are given in percentages, but broadly bear out the numerical spread provided by my own research.

to their reliability".⁹⁶ There is a sense in which texts inscribe memories, and rather like photographs, *become* memories of events. Although they only give a partial view of an event, questions of identity and the past are often increasingly caught up in the way in which that past is presented in texts, and thus the use of texts is undeniably important.

Moreover, passing archival sources over for the exclusive use of oral history is impractical. As Peter Mark and Donald Wright have argued, oral history before the eighteenth century becomes too sketchy to provide detailed and reliable accounts.⁹⁷ The material from the Oral History Archive in the Gambia used in this book has allowed the integration of African perspectives into aspects of the text, and my hope is that to some degree it balances the preponderance of written records which I have used, but even the voluminous material stored there is too vague in terms of chronology, and too focussed on various key events, to be used in isolation from other sources. Keepers of oral histories are just as open to ideological diversion as writers of modern history, and both Charlotte Quinn and Wright have noted how the griots of the region around the Gambia River appeared unreliable as sources of factual information.⁹⁸ Hawthorne uses oral information for aspects of the seventeenth century, and Robert Baum for the eighteenth century, but very few authors argue that specifics beyond there emerge in oral data.⁹⁹ Fields-Black's linguistic research has proved rich for analysing the *longue durée* of the Nunes River region, but such methods cannot analyse detailed decade-by-decade changes such as this work attempts.¹⁰⁰ This is not a situation confined to Western Africa. Some decades ago Miller noted for the Imbangala and Mbundu of West-Central Africa (present-day Angola) that oral traditions for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have little to say about individuals and rather deal largely with institutional changes.¹⁰¹ It is of course possible to use oral information to recover some aspects of the distant past, if not its year-by-year details, and where possible I have done so, but this approach could not serve as a replacement for written information.

This book is the first in an anticipated two volumes dealing with the trajectories of West African societies and the trans-Atlantic slave trade

⁹⁶ Mendes (2007: 60): "les sources produites par le colon portugais ne doivent pas être machinalement invalidées au titre d'un européo-centrisme, il faut les replacer dans leur contexte et poser leur fallibilité".

⁹⁷ Wright (1991); Mark (1985: 2).

⁹⁸ Quinn (1972: xvii); Wright (1991: 401–3).

⁹⁹ Baum (1999); Hawthorne (2003).

¹⁰⁰ Fields-Black (2009).

¹⁰¹ Miller (1976a: 12).

between 1300 and 1700. This first volume commences circa 1300, with the Mandinka expansion into Upper Guinea and Senegambia, and ends in 1589. This date marks an important moment with the construction of the Portuguese fort at Cacheu, a move which followed the first in a series of terrible droughts afflicting Cabo Verde between 1580 and 1610. This building project was undertaken by Caboverdeans fleeing famine and migrating to the coast, bringing with them their Kriolu language and implanting it as a vernacular in the Cacheu region, which was subsequently taken across the Atlantic to form the kernel of the Papiamentu Creole of Curaçao.¹⁰² Hereafter, although the trans-Atlantic slave trade remained important in Western Africa, the main accent moved gradually to West-Central Africa. This was therefore a watershed in the history of the region's creolisation and of the Atlantic slave trade as a whole, and thus marks an appropriate point to end the volume.

The book is divided into two parts. Part 1 is a regional history of the emergence of creolisation in Western Africa (1300–1550), throughout which the importance of Atlantic slavery and slave production is emphasised, and the socio-cultural context for the commercial networks which facilitated the rise of the trans-Atlantic slave trade is elucidated. Here we see how the pre-Atlantic relationship between Upper Guineans and Mandinka rulers shaped attitudes of cultural accommodation and receptivity to diaspora traders (Chapter 1); how this history influenced the first exchanges between Africans and Europeans in the second half of the fifteenth century (Chapter 2); how this was in turn influenced by the settlement of Cabo Verde and the development of regional networks and identities spanning these islands and the coast (Chapter 3); how this picture was then affected by the arrival of the New Christian diaspora in the early sixteenth century (Chapter 4); and how all this led to the emergence of an alliance between New Christians and the Kassanké of Casamance, which accompanied something like a creolised situation in parts of Western Africa by around 1550 (Chapter 5).

Part 2 spans the years 1492–1589 and integrates this regional history with wider global factors involving the Atlantic world. This half of the book deals in detail with both the trans-Atlantic slave trade and its cultural, political and social consequences in Western Africa. We see both how the emergence of creolisation in Western Africa influenced the Atlantic world and also how Atlantic factors in turn affected events in Western Africa. Part 2 shows how the “pan-Atlantic” emerged early and

¹⁰² The exciting new evidence for this is detailed in Jacobs (2009; 2010) and Quint (2000).

how extensive the trans-Atlantic trade was by the 1540s (Chapter 6); how there was an explosion in contraband in the slave trade and the intensification of pan-Atlantic connections in the second half of the sixteenth century (Chapter 7); how these events influenced cycles of war and trade in Western Africa (Chapter 8); and how the emergence of a “Creole” identity in the late-sixteenth-century in Western Africa was therefore the result of this fusion of local and global forces related to the birth of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the sixteenth century (Chapter 9).

The book thus offers a thematic structure around a broadly chronological base, allowing us to see how creolisation and slavery were connected. By integrating the regional development of creolisation in Western Africa with global forces, the shape of the book illustrates one of its key points: that the emergence of what we may call world historical connections in the sixteenth century was a consequence of the interaction of analogous local and global forces on all sides of the Atlantic world. This structure indeed shows how events in Western Africa served, in part, as a prototype for what followed.¹⁰³ For not only was this the first locale of Atlantic creolisation, but Cabo Verde, together with São Tomé, formed the first locale in which slavery ceased to be multi-racial, as had always hitherto been the case in Europe and North Africa.¹⁰⁴

We cannot shirk this history. As Patrick Manning suggests, “the influence of slavery has extended beyond the economy to transform human emotions and trouble the human spirit”.¹⁰⁵ What are we to make of the fact that in the 1970s, in the Douala region of Cameroon, informants of the French priest De Rosny still dreamt of being led off by strangers, their hands tied, to the sea?¹⁰⁶ Is it a coincidence that the word long used in English to describe slavery, “bondage”, now refers to a form of sexual fetish involving forced restraint and whipping?¹⁰⁷ Such questions force us to confront the enormity of these issues and the deep-rooted influences they may still have on the psychological and physical reality of being alive today.

¹⁰³ T. Hall, (1992: Vol. 1, 48).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, Vol. 2, 632.

¹⁰⁵ Manning (1990: 1).

¹⁰⁶ Cit. Argenti (2007: 106).

¹⁰⁷ This relates to the work of the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre, who believed that the dynamics brought about by master-slave relations decisively affected Brazilian sexuality. See Sweet (2003: 66).

PART ONE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ATLANTIC
CREOLE CULTURE IN WESTERN AFRICA,
CIRCA 1300-1550

Culture, Trade and Diaspora in Pre-Atlantic Western Africa

Western Africa is a region marginalised in the world's geopolitics. Yet it was not always so. The coast stretching from the baobab-sprinkled scrubland by the Senegal River down to the creeks and forests of Sierra Leone saw exchanges between Africans and Europeans in the fifteenth century which formed a prototype for the relationships between European imperial emissaries and others that have defined so much subsequent world history.

The cultural world established in Western Africa at the time of these exchanges did not spring from nothing. Rather, it developed from antecedents which had shaped fifteenth-century societies on the Upper Guinean coast. By the 1440s, this was a region where already for several centuries there had been a tradition of accommodation to the presence of powerful and at times violent outsiders who represented the commercial and political interests of the empire of Mali.

To understand the historical picture which emerged by the fifteenth century, it is important to know something of the different groups which lived there at this time. There were two main geographical sub-regions of continental Western Africa. To the north, the Senegambian region between the Senegal and Gambia Rivers was Sahelian in character. The land was dry. The Jolof lived in the interior to the north, the Mandinka settlements were along the Gambia River, and the Sereer inhabited the creeks of the Saluum delta along the coastline north of the Gambia. Some way inland along the Senegal River, the Pullo established themselves at Fuuta Tooro in the late fifteenth century: The Pullo migrated in search of pastures for their cattle and were also to be found in number throughout the region. Because there were no tsetse flies communicating sleeping



MAP 2. Map of Peoples and Cultures in Upper Guinea, and the Zones of Their Territories.

sickness, horses and cattle were able to live there. In general, this was an area of fairly centralised polities. By the time of the Portuguese arrival in the fifteenth century, the Jolof polity consisted of five sub-kingdoms, each with a viceroy, whereas the Mandinka presence operated as an arm of the powerful trading empire of Mali.

To the south of the Gambia River lay a more fertile forested area that stretched south to Sierra Leone, generally known as Upper Guinea. In contrast to the Senegambian region, this area was characterised by smaller-scale, decentralised political units that flourished in an area of marshland and swamps, which made centralised control hard to impose. Tsetse flies were found south of the Casamance River, which made cattle-raising and maintaining cavalry difficult. All this made political units smaller and contributed to an area of great human and political complexity. “In less than twenty leagues [approximately 100 kilometres] there are two or three nations [to be found]”, Almada wrote in the 1590s.¹ There were numerous small polities in the coastal regions of present-day Guinea-Bissau, and their oral histories describe migration from regions farther inland following the Mandinka expansion of the thirteenth century. Among the more important groups were the Bainunk-Kassanké, Balanta, Biafada, Bijagó, Brame, Cocoli, Floup, Landuma, and the Nalu. However, in spite of the difficulties of centralised control, the Mandinka related to Mali exercised hegemony over some of the groups living there, who as a consequence exhibited some acculturation to the Mandinka and also shared some cultural and productive practices. Inland from the coast, occupying much of the plateau inland from the coastal belt that straddles the borders of present-day Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal, was the Kaabu federation, a loose-knit collection of Mandinka states which asserted independence from Mali in the late fifteenth century. South of the borders of present-day Guinea-Bissau lived numerous groups, including the Baga, Jalonké and Volón, who intermingled with the Mandinguised Susu and the lineages of Sierra Leone called Sape by the Portuguese.

This chapter examines the relationships that these peoples had both with one another and with the Mandinka in the centuries preceding the creation of the Atlantic world. It underlines the role of trans-Saharan trading diasporas in aspects of commercial and cultural practice in Senegambia and Upper Guinea in this era, and suggests that this pattern was significant when European mariners arrived, assisting in the

¹ On tsetse fly distribution, see Fields-Black (2009: 45–6); for Almada, see MMAII: Vol. 3, 231.

formation of communities vital to the success of early trans-Atlantic trade. Its primary contribution to the historiography is to foreground the role diasporas had in the historical process in Western Africa and to connect this pattern to subsequent developments in the early Atlantic era. However, although I place the role of diasporas within the political paradigm of the Mali empire, I am also wary of understanding this era through what might be called an imperial straitjacket; the personal connections and shared values of diaspora networks were, as this chapter and book show, just as significant as the policies of centralised powers in shaping patterns of change in the late medieval and early Atlantic eras.

The pattern linking Senegambia and Upper Guinea to Mali dates to the latter half of the thirteenth century. The social situation which developed then in Upper Guinea has been called “primary creolisation”.² Although we should recognise that this era offered a very different historical context to that in which Atlantic creolisation occurred, there are certain shared characteristics which make this term a useful comparator, particularly when trying to see how events in pre-Atlantic Africa may have influenced the early Atlantic. By looking at this primary creolisation, this chapter shows that analysis of the Atlantic Creole world in Western Africa must acknowledge the influence of this preceding history.³

In writing this pre-Atlantic history there are methodological problems. Direct written sources are scant. While one or two historians have reconstructed elements of pre-fifteenth-century history through mixing oral and written traditions or through ethno-linguistics, this is a notoriously difficult enterprise; and as we saw in the Introduction, some historians doubt that detailed histories of this type can be constructed.⁴ Moreover, such written sources as do exist are problematic. Most were written between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries by Islamic scholars for whom, as Paulo Farias argues, the lands of the Sahel were simultaneously objects of desire and dread.⁵ Thus these sources do not offer objective accounts of Sahelian societies. Meanwhile, fifteenth-century Portuguese accounts

² For the term “primary creolization”, see Trajano Filho (2003: 13–4).

³ This role of Western Africa’s earlier history is touched on in Mark/Horta (2005: 48–50). On landlord-stranger relationships, see Brooks (1993b).

⁴ The unquestioned exceptions are Boulègue (1987a) and Fields-Black (2009); even here, though, the detail for pre-fifteenth-century events is limited.

⁵ Farias (2003: cxv). See also Farias (1974) on the silent trade as a myth exposing this sort of dread: The attractiveness of the myth of dumb barter was that one did not actually have to engage with these “others” in order to reap great profits from their lands through the trade in gold. See CEA 21, 28 and 29 for accounts from the tenth and eleventh centuries by Arab scholars of the gold of Ghāna.

of Mali may well have been projections of the Portuguese intuition about their own power and authority rather than an objective account of power relations.⁶ Archaeological evidence can be helpful in constructing patterns, but the best that can be developed is a general overview.

Rather than offering a detailed chronological account, therefore, this chapter presents a wider pattern. Although oral sources may not be reliable on specifics, they help to understand fluxes of migration and exchange. The extensive collection of oral histories held in Fajara by the National Council of Arts and Culture of The Gambia offers an important window onto these processes. They can be blended with such written sources as we do have and help in developing persuasive hypotheses. This chapter therefore synthesises these oral traditions, other published oral accounts, and ethno-linguistic considerations with these written sources, coupled with oral traditions from my own interviews. The resulting analysis works towards an explanatory paradigm for social change along the Western African littoral prior to the Atlantic era.

DIASPORAS OF COMMERCE AND RELIGION: GHĀNA, MALI AND THE MANDINKA EXPANSION OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

“We originated from Tumbuktu in the land of the Mandinka: the Arabs were our neighbours there ... All the Mandinka of the West came from Mali to Kaabu”.⁷

Thus begins the *Ta:rikh Mandinka de Bijini*, a source from a village near Bafatá in present-day Guinea-Bissau. As with this text, all known oral traditions there describe the arrival of the Mandinka in Upper Guinea from the east and their formation of the kingdom of Kaabu in the plateau between the Fouta Djalon mountains and the creeks and forests of the coast. This expansion is said to have begun in the second half of the thirteenth century.

Mandinka expansion into Upper Guinea and Senegambia had far-reaching consequences. After a century or more of fragmentation following the collapse of the empire of Ghāna in the mid-eleventh century, Mandinka power was consolidated into the empire of Mali under the rule of Sunjata Keita (fl. 1235).⁸ There then followed the migration

⁶ Horta (2000: 116).

⁷ Giesing/Vydrine (2007: 51): “Nous sommes originaires de Tumbuktu dans le pays des Mandinka: les Arabes y étaient nos voisins ... Tous les Mandinka de l’Ouest sont venus du Mali jusqu’au Kaabu”.

⁸ On the likely historical existence of Sunjata, see Wilks (1999: 47, 53).

of Mandinka into Kaabu under Sunjata's general, Tiramaghan Traore, with the intimate connection of Kaabu to Mali indicated by the fact that "Kabou" means "region" in the Soninké spoken by the migrants.⁹ Mandinka influence near the coast thus post-dates the middle of the thirteenth century, although it had probably been preceded by the arrival of smiths and traders. Between 1100 and 1500 there was a dry period which saw geographical boundaries shift, and this may have encouraged the migration of smiths who possessed important ritual power for Mande peoples.¹⁰ According to some accounts, the smiths went first to prospect new gold deposits with their iron manufactures and were followed by traders connecting this product to the caravans of the Sahara.¹¹ Some oral traditions indeed recall that there were Mandinka already living in the Kaabu region when Tiramaghan's followers arrived.¹² The Mandinka smiths formed new ritual power associations. Their arrival in increasing numbers may have enabled the consolidation of Mali's power in the region. Although it is important to recognise that the evidence for this movement of smiths is scant and debated, the importance of smiths to the gold trade and political power in Upper Guinea may be reflected in the widespread oral traditions that hold that the Mandinguised Bainunk king Gana Sira Bana always sat on a gold chair.¹³

The renewed Mande unity which accompanied the rise of Mali and the migration of smiths to areas such as Upper Guinea may have been a response both to the changing climatic conditions and to the increasing importance of the trans-Saharan trade, which most accounts see as beginning to flourish in the tenth century, and which expanded rapidly from the late eleventh century onwards.¹⁴ It was the trans-Saharan trade that allowed connections between the gold fields of Upper Guinea, the Bambuk uplands in the foothills of the Fouta Djalon to the south, and Mediterranean products to the north; these connections were provided

⁹ Ba (1981: 23–4).

¹⁰ Brooks (1993b: Appendix A) established this climatic periodisation; see also Fields-Black (2009: 91–2). On the ritual power of Mande smiths, see McNaughton (1988). Hawthorne (2003: 31), like Brooks, sees smiths and merchants leading this migration as due to the dry period. However, Colleen Kriger (1999: 9) suggests that the evidence for this passage of the smiths southwards is limited to a projection from twentieth-century ethnographic research and is very hard to prove.

¹¹ Brooks (1993b: 46–51).

¹² NCAC/OHAD, Cassette Transcription 466B, page 56.

¹³ According to an oral tradition which I collected from a Balanta elder in Simbandi-Balante, Casamance, in March 2000; confirmed subsequently from an interview with Seydhou Fall in Goudomp, Casamance, in April 2011.

¹⁴ Nixon (2009: 220).

through the itinerant Mandinka traders known as the *dyula*. The growing strength of the smiths reflected an increase in trade and demand for gold. However, gold was not the only commodity in demand, and this expansion cannot have been entirely separated from the trans-Saharan slavery which accompanied the gold trade; indeed Meillassoux suggests that Mandinka unity against brigandage and this slave trade was also important to the rise of Mali.¹⁵

However, it is difficult today to say how relevant the trans-Saharan slave trade was to the relationships which Mandinka smiths may have had with Upper Guineans. Some oral traditions do suggest a connection, with Tiramaghan Traore's success in the eyes of Sunjata being proved when he arrived at the latter's court with "countless slaves" following a war against the Jolof.¹⁶ As this account suggests, considerable violence must have accompanied the selling of slaves into the trans-Saharan trade. This violence may well have affected smaller political units in areas such as Upper Guinea, whereas Mande unity against this problem may have been a factor in political developments.¹⁷ Yet admitting this is not the same thing as declaring that this practice of slavery involved people selling members of their own lineage, which is Meillassoux's suggestion. Some historians have cast doubt on this account, interpreting it instead as a projection of nineteenth-century slave-raiding history among the Mandinka onto the foundational myths of the Mandinka past – something which may confirm the difficulties of using oral histories as guides to such distant events.¹⁸

Instead of seeking certainty, therefore, we must trace general patterns. Clearly, the rise of Mandinka power in the Sahel and their influence in Upper Guinea was contemporaneous with the expansion of the trans-Saharan trade following the eleventh century. This coincidence was probably significant. Moreover, because the selling of people into slavery was a significant part of that trade, the direction and channelling of the violence associated with trans-Saharan slavery, together with the mining activities and ritual power which the Mande smiths accrued in new territories, may have been important to Mali's influence in Upper Guinea.¹⁹ The empire

¹⁵ Meillassoux (1991: 143–7).

¹⁶ NCAC/OHAD, Cassette transcription 566, page 11.

¹⁷ On the importance of the trans-Saharan slave trade to Ghāna and Tekrur, see Bovill (1958: 83–4); Lydon (2009: 58).

¹⁸ Farias (2007: 295).

¹⁹ Ibn Battuta's 14th-century account is clear on the large numbers of slaves in Mali – CEA, 304–5.

of Mali formed under Sunjata Keita thus filled a power vacuum that had emerged in the Sahel following the demise of Ghāna; it began to influence peoples in Upper Guinea through its increasing power, and it did so as trans-Saharan connections intensified.

In this picture, the place of religion and religious trading diasporas in the Sahel is important.²⁰ Ghislaine Lydon has argued that the activities of trans-Saharan traders were structured and organised through Moslem religious practice.²¹ As Curtin saw, this Islamic religious practice could have both an exclusivist and a proselytising character. It was important for members of the initial trading communities to secure conversions among their host communities, but in time the adoption of an exclusive and distinctive religious practice also became important to maintaining the corporate identity of the trading communities.²² How this worked in practice can be traced through the trajectories of the trading polities such as Ghāna and Mali, which influenced areas like Upper Guinea through their demand for the region's products.

Ghāna's wealth had been founded on its gold and the trade with Islamic merchants from North Africa that this produced. One of the consequences of this trade was the emergence of a complex approach to Islam in Ghāna. Prior to the adoption of Islam, under pressure from the Almoravids in 1076–7, the capital was divided into two towns, one of which was Moslem and one of which was not (although it contained a mosque).²³ Moreover, although the king himself was not Moslem, many of his advisers were.²⁴ Islam was thus influential and important in Ghāna, but it was not a state religion. Until the 1076–7 conversion in Ghāna, the influence of Islam was exerted through trading diasporas and acculturation.²⁵

In these circumstances, the character of the Islamic faith practised in sub-Saharan Africa was distinctive. Far from being simply North African

²⁰ Ibn Battuta suggested that Sunjata Keita converted to Islam at the same time as founding Mali (*ibid.*, 295). However Bovill (1958: 86) places the conversion of Mande leaders to Islam to the early twelfth century (cf. also below in this chapter, for oral data to support this latter view).

²¹ Lydon (2009: 3).

²² Curtin (1984: 49).

²³ One of the best sources for the rise of the Almoravids is Al-Bakri, (CEA: 70–3). See *ibid.*, 98, on the adoption of Islam. Ibn Abī Zar' (*ibid.*, 235–48) also discusses the Almoravids. For the division of Ghāna's capital into an Islamic and a non-Islamic town see *ibid.*, 79–80 – the account of Al Bakri; recent archaeological finds would suggest that a similar pattern pertained at Djenné in present-day Mali.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

²⁵ Farias (2003: cxix–cxxi).

expatriate centres, trading settlements tended to be mixed.²⁶ There was a definite space for the old non-Islamic religious traditions, and indeed the strategy adopted by Islamic trading diasporas of incorporating aspects of their host cultures into their practices was integral to their success.²⁷ A certain cultural and religious interchange became inevitable, and this history was decisive in the way that members of long-distance and outsider trading diasporas were viewed in West Africa.

In spite of this hybridised religious practice, however, Islam was key to the expansion of trade and political centralisation. As Lydon has argued, Islam's promotion of literacy was key to the ability of merchants to draw contractual agreements and dispatch commercial letters.²⁸ Such activities were far from being confined to groups of itinerant North Africans. Mandinka were swift adherents to Islam after the collapse of Ghāna, making the religion part of their spiritual and cultic practices without erasing all older beliefs and rituals. The religion's spread from Ghāna was rapid, with oral traditions putting the arrival of Islamic Mandinka in the Gambia at the mid-twelfth century.²⁹ Islam was essential to the acceptance of the Mandinka by diaspora traders from North Africa whose commerce brought so much power and wealth. Its adoption by the Mande ruling caste reflected the growth of plural identities among ruling circles, where one (Islamic) religious face was presented to members of this powerful trading diaspora and another (hybrid) ritual face was presented to populations at home. This strategy cemented the place of cultural flexibility as an important strategy of power brokering in the Sahel.

The centrality of this nuanced approach to Islam to the rise of Mali emerges in the foundational myth of the empire of Sunjata Keita. Over the next two generations following the arrival of Islam in the Gambia region circa 1150, Mande peoples forged the empire of Mali, some of them claiming descent from Bilāl Ibn Rabāh, Mohammed's Black companion and the first Muezzin of Islam.³⁰ Such claims, incorporated in the epic of Sunjata, provided an orthodox Islamic heritage and revealed the importance of Islam to Mali's ideology; and yet even here this Islamic

²⁶ Nixon (2009: 220 and 244). Nixon's excavations at Essouk-Tadmakka in northeastern Mali show that this important trading settlement also contained a mixed community of Islamic and non-Islamic traders.

²⁷ Farias's (1999) analysis of the Gesere praisingers in the Borgu and their incorporation of Islamic and non-Islamic dating for the practices of some ceremonies is revelatory here; on his analysis, this dates to the sixteenth century.

²⁸ Lydon (2009: 3).

²⁹ Cissoko/Sambou (1974: 111–15).

³⁰ Levzion (1980: 54–5).

idiom co-existed with local cultural forms and the idea of occult power.³¹ Although visitors from North Africa such as Ibn Battuta saw a blending of Islamic and non-Islamic forms in the practices he observed, religious traditions in West Africa are open to co-existence of different spirit shrines and practices, and such co-existence reflects a plural approach to religion, such as that suggested by the strategy of the Mande ruling caste, rather than necessarily a blending.

On this interpretation, the rise of the Almoravids in the mid-eleventh century led to important cultural and political changes in the Sahelian region. Historians have long held that there were material effects also, because the flow of gold and slaves from the Sahara northwards rapidly increased, doubtless facilitated by the Almoravid presence in Morocco and Spain.³² The Almoravid rise in the southern Sahara coincided with the fall of the Soninké empire of Ghāna, where African religions predominated, and the Soninké dispersal into fragmented states.³³ As it was the Islamic Almoravids who oversaw the Saharan trade from then on, it is apparent that successful trade in the Sahelian region was connected to contact with the Islamic world.³⁴ To underline this, the Almoravids appear to have cut out important and culturally mixed trading centres on the southern fringes of the Sahara, such as Tadmakka and Tegdaoust, and established their own centres farther south.³⁵ Fervent religious belief and messianic zeal were ever the companions to ruthless trade in medieval West Africa, as they would be later in the sixteenth-century Atlantic world.³⁶

Yet this connection of proselytising Islam and the growth of the trans-Saharan trade was particular to this phase of Sahelian history. Subsequently, the emperors of Mali did not proselytise producers of gold.³⁷ This gold production depended on the smiths associated with

³¹ For an analysis of how the Sunjata epic is syncretic of the Islamic concept of grace laced with power and the Mande concept of occult power, see J. Johnson (1999: 18). Interestingly, such strategies are used by other groups today to claim an orthodox Islamic heritage. Some Bainunk claim that the first Bainunk came from a quarter of Mecca called Baynounka – from an interview with Ansumane Manga in Singuère, Casamance, April 2011.

³² Levzion (1980: 41); Lydon (2009: 72); Nixon (2009: 248–9).

³³ Levzion (1980: 45–7).

³⁴ On the connection between the rise of the Almoravids and the collapse of Ghāna, see Mota (1954: Vol. 1, 135). On the Almoravids, see Farias (1967).

³⁵ Nixon (2009: 249).

³⁶ Or as Subrahmanyam (1993: 49) puts it: “[T]hose who were so religiously motivated could often be equally the persons in whose breasts the most fervently mercantilist spirit resided”.

³⁷ See for instance the account of Ibn al-Dawādārī (CEA, 250). Mansa Musa, on his famous pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324–5, recounted in Cairo that whenever they had tried to conquer the land where the gold was produced, the gold production had disappeared.

the practice of non-Islamic rituals and cultic practices, whose influence was, as we have seen, already significant in Upper Guinea. These rituals were probably related to the actual production and mining of gold, and thus Mali could not insist on the conversion to Islam of miners or smiths and preferred receiving gold in the form of tribute payments. This attitude towards non-Moslems was an acknowledgement of the complex ritual and religious situation of the Sahel and of the co-existence of both the exclusivist and proselytising versions of Islam in the region; it was an expression of the plural cultural outlook that was one of the consequences of the arrival of diaspora merchants from North Africa.

Following the expansion of trade under the Almoravids in the twelfth century, a strong imperial force emerged in the Sahel in the thirteenth century as Mali was founded. Trade and religion were the keystones to new Mande power. Diasporas of “outsider” merchants who were distinguished by their difference from the predominant religio-cultural practices of the Sahel were thus an important feature of this period. It was indeed precisely the distinctiveness of these diaspora communities that was most important, for it was this which allowed them to act as cultural go-betweens bridging the Sahara; as Curtin noted, without this difference, the capacity for diaspora traders to act as cross-cultural brokers vanished.³⁸

Such connections spread. The diaspora of Wangara merchants linked areas such as Gao, in the far east of present-day Mali, with the Borgu (borderlands of present-day Niger and Nigeria) from perhaps the late thirteenth century until the rise of the Songhay empire in the late fifteenth century. Indeed, the strength of the Wangara diaspora may have influenced the rise of Songhay.³⁹ The importance of diaspora merchants to the caravan trade emerges in the fact that the very gold fields which underpinned the trans-Saharan trade were thought by North African traders to lie in a land called “Wangara”.⁴⁰

The importance of the Wangara who operated within Mali illustrates the commercial orientation of the empire and shows how a strong connection had developed in West Africa between long-distance trading diasporas and religious belief. This connection is underscored by the fact that Jews residing in North Africa and the Saharan oases were also

³⁸ Curtin (1984: 38).

³⁹ Farias (1996: 263); idem., (2003: clxxii); Lydon (2009: 64–5).

⁴⁰ Bovill (1958: 67).

important long-distance traders in the caravan trade. The cloths made by teams of Jewish weavers in North Africa were an important product in the trans-Saharan trade, and both Jews and their Islamic counterparts developed what Lydon calls a “paper economy of faith”.⁴¹ The interconnection of diasporas of religion and trade would prove greatly significant when a new long-distance mercantile diaspora, that of the New Christians, arrived in the region in the sixteenth century.⁴²

As the Almoravids pushed the sites for the main trading settlements related to the Saharan trade farther south, these developments came to affect the communities that lived in Upper Guinea, and thus this interconnection of religion and long-distance trade became significant there. However, in contrast to their kin in Mali, the Mandinka who arrived in Kaabu in the thirteenth century, following the smiths, retained the old non-Islamic rites.⁴³ Indeed, some oral traditions hold that the founder of Kaabu, Tiramaghan, only left Mali when it adopted Islam.⁴⁴ Other traditions, meanwhile, give Tiramaghan himself an orthodox Islamic heritage, claiming fancifully that he married Mohammed’s grand-daughter.⁴⁵ Such divergences suggest that Islam was a complex factor in the formation of Kaabu, and could have been a faultline of sorts between the peoples of Kaabu and Mali. This is also implied by Sereer oral traditions, which, according to Henri Gravrand, suggest that the migration of Guelwaar princes from Kaabu to the Siin region north of the Gambia river occurred circa 1335–40, following the Battle of Trubang in which the issue of religion may have been a trigger.⁴⁶

However, as we have seen here, Islam was not as purely observed in West Africa as such a polarising narrative might suggest. It may well be that one of the major differences between Kaabu and Mali was not so much ritual – though this undoubtedly must have been important – as commercial, given the connections we have seen between Islam and long-distance trading diasporas. For while the Soninké of Kaabu remained

⁴¹ Lydon (2009: 3); Lydon even talks of a “Jewish era in the Sahara” (*ibid.*, 69). On the Jewish clothmakers and the trans-Saharan trade see Prussin (2006: 333, 344–5).

⁴² On the role of religion in African trading diasporas, see Farias (1996) and Lovejoy (1978) for the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and A. Cohen (1969; 1971) for more recent manifestations.

⁴³ Thus Niane (1989: 12) concurs with the seventeenth century French traveller Jajolet de la Courbe, who called Kaabu a pagan kingdom. However by the seventeenth century it was very tolerant of Islamic *dyula* traders – this tolerance may itself have been because the *dyula* themselves leavened their Islam with non-Islamic rituals.

⁴⁴ For this version see Niane (1989: 19 n7).

⁴⁵ NCAC/OHAD, Transcribed Cassette 020, page 16.

⁴⁶ Gravrand (1981: 50).

animist, the traders were Islamic, as in Mali.⁴⁷ Thus the trigger of the battle of Trubang could just as easily have been commercial as religious. It may, therefore, have been the connection of religion to trade which was the source both of the cohesion of Mali in the thirteenth century and of the differences which developed between Kaabu and Mali.

Following the rapid expansion of the Mandinka under Sunjata Keita during the thirteenth century, matters had stabilised by around 1300. By that time, political and cultural influence from Mali was strong on the Atlantic coast. Writing in the second half of the fourteenth century, Syrian-born historian Al ‘Umari referred to “Takrur” – the lower valley of the Senegal River – as being under the control of Mali.⁴⁸ In his passage through Cairo in 1324–5, Mansa Musa, emperor of Mali, told how his empire stretched to the Atlantic.⁴⁹ Linguistic evidence confirms Mandinka influence at this time among the Jolof of Senegambia, because the Mandinka word *fará* was used to designate numerous dignitaries.⁵⁰ Oral traditions of the Balanta suggest raids also dating from this era on their coastal villages by Mandinka horse warriors.⁵¹ Although these raids did not lead to direct political control, they expressed the potential of Mandinka power. Thus in the coastal regions of Casamance and present-day Guinea-Bissau, although decentralised polities of the mangrove creeks and channels of the coast were never subordinate to the Mandinka and retained their own structures of authority, Mandinka power from Mali was always proximate.⁵² Such traditions illuminate how the expansion of Mali allowed Mandinka in Upper Guinea to develop a sort of hegemony in the area.

Mali’s influence spread from the Lower Senegal as far south as the area occupied by the Biafada, near the Rio Grande in present-day Guinea-Bissau. That this was the southern limit of Mandinka influence is shown by the fact that when the Italian sailor Alvise de Cadamosto arrived there in 1456, he was unable to find a common language.⁵³ Writing in the first

⁴⁷ Person (1981: 63).

⁴⁸ CEA, 261–2; Boulègue (1987a: 44). This observation must not be taken as definitive, because Islamic scholars frequently referred to “Mali” as “Takrur” in their texts.

⁴⁹ CEA, 267

⁵⁰ Boulègue (1987a: 45).

⁵¹ Personal communication from José Lingna Nafafé.

⁵² Hawthorne (2010b: Ch 2) explicates the interplay of Mandinka elites in the interior plateau region of Guinea-Bissau and their relationship with coastal peoples.

⁵³ Hair (1966: 14–5). Hair suggests that the common language between the first Portuguese sailors and the peoples of Senegambia and Upper Guinea was Arabic. Some Portuguese sailors would have spoken Arabic following the long history of Islamisation of Iberia, and the Mandinka *dyula* traders brought Arabic into the towns in which they traded.

decade of the sixteenth century, Duarte Pacheco Pereira noted that the Biafada were subordinate to the “king of the Mandinkas” and suggested that many of them were Moslems.⁵⁴ Writing at about the same time, Valentim Fernandes described how the peoples of this river were subject to Mali and observed that most rulers in the area were Moslem.⁵⁵ By contrast, south of this region the influence of Sape lineages was stronger, and writing towards the end of the sixteenth century, Almada noted how the Nalu, immediately to the south of the Biafada, were very different to them “in language and clothing and everything else”.⁵⁶ The source of these differences may have related to the absence of Mandinka influence, and from what we have seen here this was a pattern which had developed some time before.

However, although there was little political influence from the Mandinka south of Biafada territory, there were connections between this region and Mali. Similar crops were grown in Sierra Leone under the Sape lineages as in the Mandinka-influenced areas of the Grande – rice and millet – and the iron used to produce tools to clear mangrove swamps was produced by Mande groups.⁵⁷ There was much iron in Sierra Leone among the Mande Susu people, and this was likely produced by analogous associations of smiths as those we have seen farther north.⁵⁸ Iron was also found on the coast of present-day Guinea-Conakry, but it was brittle and of inferior quality to that produced by the Mandinka smiths, which was probably sought after and may have been exchanged in small quantities in markets.⁵⁹ Biafada markets were famous, and

Moreover both Portuguese and the languages of Senegambia and Upper Guinea contained words of Arabic origin. The absence of a common language in the Rio Grande region demonstrates that this was the limit of the Mandinka influence.

⁵⁴ MMAII: Vol. 1, 648: “*sujeitos a el-rei dos Mandinkas*”. Brooks (1993b: 260) suggests that this was an error and true only of the *dyula* traders encountered by his informants.

⁵⁵ MMAII, Vol. 1, 721.

⁵⁶ For Fernandes on the Sapes, see *ibid.*, Vol. 1, 722; for Almada on the Nalu, see *ibid.*, Vol. 3, 339 – “*são mui diferentes no linguagem e no trajo e no mais*”.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, 648, 656. Pacheco Pereira says that the Sapes and Cocolis in this area were subject to Mandinka hegemony and grew these crops.

⁵⁸ On the iron among the Susu, see Pacheco Pereira (*ibid.*, Vol. 1, 655); Fernandes also noted the large amounts of iron in Sierra Leone in the fifteenth century (*ibid.*, Vol. 1, 734). Fields-Black (2009: 145–54) shows decisively that Susu iron technology was important to Nalu and Baga peoples in their agriculture from the fifteenth century onwards; she disputes, however, that such tools were always imperative to rice production, but holds that they were in widespread use by 1500.

⁵⁹ Fernandes describes the brittle iron produced north of Sierra Leone – MMAII: Vol. 1, 722. Fields-Black (2009: 99) shows that iron was known by the distant ancestors of fifteenth-century Baga, Sape and Temne peoples, but as local knowledge was apparently supplanted by Susu smiths this would seem to confirm Fernandes’s account here.

as markets are often in border areas, it was probably here that these exchanges occurred.⁶⁰

What emerges from this picture of Mandinka expansion is therefore a complex mosaic of influences. The formation of a strong Mandinka power in the mid-thirteenth century was related both to the expansion of the trans-Saharan trade in gold and slaves and the rise of Islam in the Sahel. By the fourteenth century the political power of Mali stretched to the lower Senegal valley, and by the fifteenth century (and perhaps earlier) as far south as present-day Guinea-Bissau. Cultural influences accompanied the spread of political power, and Mandinka words entered the languages of the Jolof around the Senegal valley. Religion also acted as a vector of political and commercial acculturation; embedded Mandinka cultural influences, with Arabic vocabulary accompanying Mandinka into the languages of Upper Guinea, were testament not only to the spread of the Mandinka, but also to the acculturation which the Mandinka themselves had displayed towards the diaspora merchants from North Africa. The power of the Mandinka and of their shared outsider religion was expressed through the growing ritual significance of amulets made by itinerant scholar-traders by using Islamic script, which were known as *gris-gris* and were used throughout Upper Guinea.⁶¹

Thus several interlocking factors were at work. The formation of Mali, the expansion of trade, the presence of diaspora merchants professing an outsider religion, and the growth of that religion itself were all interconnected. This meant that the ritual power associations formed by the smiths who produced the iron used to work the gold deposits were deeply connected to the expansion of trans-Saharan trade. For it was the increasing demand for gold which enhanced the smiths' power and influence in the economy of Mali as a whole and, perhaps, thereby helped to enhance the reputation of their power associations and magical powers in Upper Guinea.⁶² Who else but people with extremely powerful magical aides could withstand the pressure of the emperor of Mali to adopt Islam, when Islamic adherents themselves were increasingly perceived as holders of strong occult powers?

Two consequences of great importance emerged from this constellation of factors. The first was the way in which economic utility and power

⁶⁰ I am grateful to Olukoya Ogen of Osun State University for this point.

⁶¹ Green (2001). On the prevalence of these *gris-gris* in the late fifteenth century, see HGCV: CD, Vol. 1, 123.

⁶² For the role of gold in the medieval Mediterranean economies, see Godinho (1969: 101–33).

became associated with ritual power in Upper Guinea, something which, as Baum has shown among the Diola of the Basse Casamance, was a connection that continued throughout the Atlantic era.⁶³ A second and equally long-lasting effect of this pattern was the emerging importance of diasporas in the mercantile culture of West Africa and the strong connection which diaspora members had to new or foreign religions. Under these conditions, membership of an alien religion such as Islam, far from being a handicap, was a trading advantage. Yet the process of cultural accommodation flowed in two directions, as aspects of the diasporic trading religion themselves were influenced by local ritual practices, and it was this complex interplay of reciprocal cultural influences from both host and guest cultures which was to be of fundamental importance when the first Atlantic traders began to arrive.

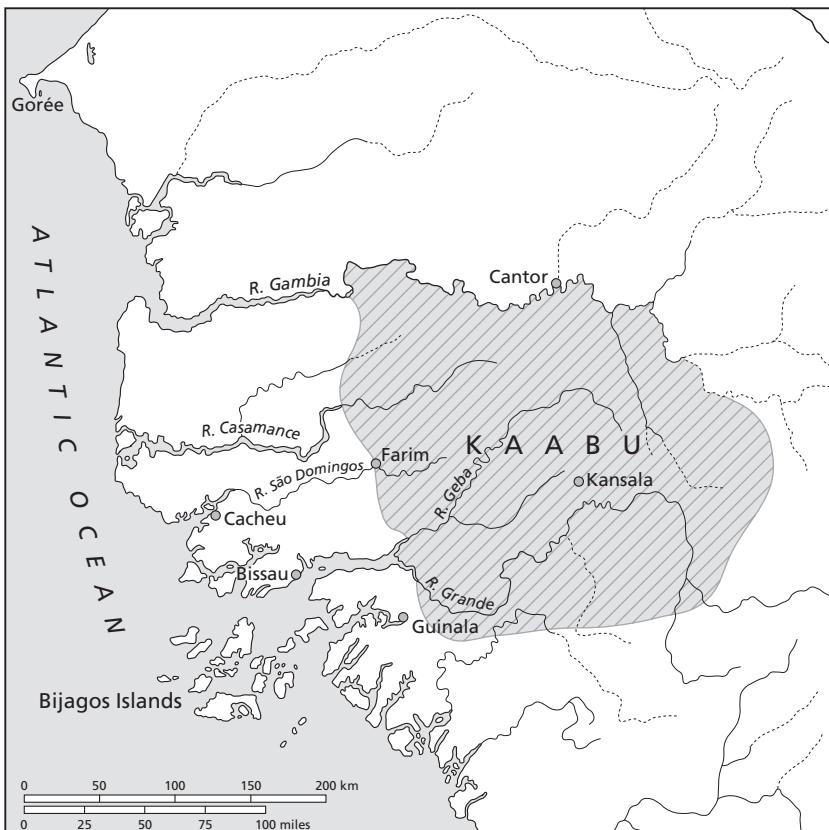
ACCOMMODATION AND EXPANSION IN THE FORMATION OF KAABU

The relationship of commercial and cultural accommodation which developed between members of North African trading diasporas and West African rulers and their peoples continued in the thirteenth century. It was transferred with the Mandinka migration towards the Atlantic coast and the formation of Kaabu. Kaabu was the most important polity of the pre-colonial era in Upper Guinea. In time, it grew into a large federal structure spreading from the southern Gambia River states to the Grande River and across the plateau between the coastal lowlands and the Fouta Djalon mountains. Its heartland was between the Upper Casamance, around the present-day town of Vélingara, and the north-eastern reaches of present-day Guinea-Bissau. It was here that its capital, Kansala, was located.

Many different peoples co-existed in this zone. The creeks and forests of the coast were impossible to subdue because of the difficulty of using mounted armies there. They were populated by groups whose oral histories recount their movement from further inland in part as a response to the Mandinka migrations. According to oral traditions, at the time of the Mandinka arrival in Kaabu in the thirteenth century, the land in the creeks and forests of what is today Guinea-Bissau was all bush.⁶⁴ Some

⁶³ Baum (1999) illustrates how certain shrines among the Diola of the Casamance emerged in response to the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

⁶⁴ NCAC/OHAD, Transcribed Cassette 566, page 11; Transcribed Cassette 491B, page 6. Confirmed also in an oral interview with Antonio da Silva Mango, Bula, Guinea-Bissau, April 2011.



MAP 3. Map of Extent of Kaabu Federation.

traditions hold that the villages of the Bainunks who lived there then were five days or more distant from one another.⁶⁵ Doubtless what human settlements existed were concentrated in the dispersed settlements known as *moranças*, a type of settlement which persisted into the sixteenth century in some communities.⁶⁶ This influenced the peoples who migrated, the “Balantoos, Naloos, Kanyabatiis, Karooninkaas, Joolaas, and Mankaanyis and the Papeloos”.⁶⁷ Traditions describe how these groups, together with the Bijagó and the Floup, arrived all together in what is now Guinea-Bissau.⁶⁸ Finding themselves surrounded by jungle and swamps, many of

⁶⁵ NCAC/OHAD, Transcribed Cassette 566, page 11.

⁶⁶ Hawthorne (2003).

⁶⁷ NCAC/OHAD, Transcribed Cassette 491B, page 6.

⁶⁸ Oral interview with Antonio da Silva Manga, Bula, Guinea-Bissau, April 2011.

these groups worked together. The Brames, who later became Mancanha, Manjaco, Papel, joined together to form an empire known as Tancabaceira around a capital of Cobiana, in the area south of the later Portuguese settlement of Cacheu.⁶⁹ Soon villages were constructed and a new pattern of human settlement emerged in the region.

Gradually, a definitive settlement pattern was constructed during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. At the farthest west were the Bijagó, who inhabited the archipelago of the same name in the Atlantic ocean. The numerous islands found here make it a mistake to see the Bijagó as one “ethnic group”. There were, and still are, important differences between the islands, and two major languages were spoken on the archipelago by the early seventeenth century, and probably earlier.⁷⁰ The identification of Bijagó as one group probably has more to do with the geographical unity of the region than with political and cultural realities.⁷¹

On the mainland, opposite these islands, were the Biafada and Brame, and also at this early stage perhaps the Floup, whose traditions suggest that they later migrated north to present-day Casamance. The Brames possessed many different lineages which came to live largely under Mandinka hegemony, and they tended to define themselves according to specific regional origins (whether from Cacheu, Baserral, Bajola or the island of Pecixe).⁷² As the pre-colonial period went on, the multiplicity of Brame lineages coalesced into three broad “ethnicities” of Mancaigne, Manjaco and Pepel, but this in turn saw the fragmentation of allegiance to a broader “Brame” identity. Farther north in the Casamance were the Bainunk, on many accounts the oldest group of the region.⁷³ Like the Brames, many (though not all) of the Bainunk accommodated Mandinka authority, and one of their lineages, the Kassanké, acculturated significantly to the Mandinka and became the most powerful group in the region. This accommodation did not categorise all groups however, and Balanta and Floup groups, who had the most decentralised forms of political organisation, remained outside significant Mandinka influence.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Sandoval (1627: 93) emphasises the different languages spoken in the Bijagos islands.

⁷¹ Thus islands in the Orangozinho and Orango region today have separate kings or lineage heads. Thefts occur between members of the different lineages, and hospitality is not always shown to people from one island by those of another.

⁷² Sandoval (1627: 92) describes this in detail.

⁷³ NCAC/OHAD, Transcribed Cassette 566, page 11; confirmed in an interview with Ansumane Manga, Singuère, April 2011.

Kaabu was therefore founded in a situation of great human complexity. Owing to its Mande roots, Kaabu has widely been seen as the western outpost of the Mali empire, even though, as we have seen, there were differences in religious emphasis between Kaabu and Mali. To add to these religious differences were strong discrepancies in other cultural practices which developed with this Mandinka migration. The notion of an “imperial” Kaabu and of its relationship to Mali may indeed be more a projection of imperial narratives onto African history rather than an account of what this polity was like, because Kaabu emerged from the blending of many traditions rather than the imposition of a few.⁷⁴

The establishment of Kaabunké hegemony in Upper Guinea may have been gradual. Oral tradition holds that Kaabu’s power lasted for 606 years until its fall to the Pullo of the Fouta Djalon in 1867.⁷⁵ Naturally this cannot be taken as a precise time span, but if we take a figure of around six centuries, this would put its formation circa 1250–80, which is in keeping with the tradition we saw earlier that the kingdom was founded by Tiramaghan, a general of Sunjata Keita’s army and, by some accounts, his cousin.⁷⁶ Yet it is unlikely that the establishment of Kaabu came from immediate conquest. Oral histories suggest rather a gradual spread of influence through the formation of alliances. Tiramaghan’s army followed the earlier migration of Mandinka smiths and traders who themselves had probably formed alliances with lineages from the region.⁷⁷ A similar pattern of kingdom building through the development of voluntary alliances has been suggested for the formation of other important African polities of this early pre-colonial era, notably by Thornton for the Kingdom of Kongo.⁷⁸

This pattern of cross-lineage alliance building by the Mandinka smiths was replicated by Tiramaghan’s army. The oral histories of disputes which accompanied the marriages of Kaabunké men to women from the local area reveal both that the Kaabunké compromised and that these alliances were common.⁷⁹ Thus the arrival of the Mandinka led to changes in lineage patterns in Upper Guinea and the formation of new alliances. The oral histories of mixed marriages between Kaabunké and

⁷⁴ Hawthorne (2003: 30).

⁷⁵ See for instance Innes (1976: 113).

⁷⁶ Niane (1989: 19 n7).

⁷⁷ Mark (2007) offers a useful primer on the unreliability of narratives of “conquest” for Western Africa at this time, suggesting again that what seemed rapid to outside observers often may have masked a longer-term process.

⁷⁸ Thornton (2001: 110); see also Randles (1968: 57–8).

⁷⁹ See for example the story recounted by the griot Bamba Suso in Innes (1976: 77–9).

local groups indicates that there was a certain realignment of lineage, and such realignments were fundamental in shaping the ways in which the new polity was constituted.

Following this line of thought, a reasonable suggestion is that the waves of Mandinka began to exert a growing influence after their arrival with Tiramaghan, and that by the fourteenth century they were in political control of what was to become the Kaabu federation of states, in part through the multiple new lineage alliances that they had made.⁸⁰ On this account the formation of alliances was much more relevant than any idea of absolute Mandinka authority. Such a picture, as we shall see later in this chapter, is in keeping with the importance of lineage to comprehending the social composition of societies in Africa at this time.⁸¹ The idea of the imposition of some absolute Mandinka power may be more a hangover of imperialist historiography than a representation of what happened.⁸²

Kaabunké influence was soon widespread in Western Africa. Nowhere is this better exemplified than by the formation of the Sereer kingdom of Siin to the north of the Gambia.⁸³ It was in the fourteenth century that, according to Gravrand, the existing Sereer-Cosaan of the Siin-Saluum delta fused with Kaabunké incomers known as the Gelwaar, forging the Sereer group who became important Atlantic trading partners in the sixteenth century with the foundation of the state of Saluum *circa* 1500 under the eleventh king of Siin, Mbeyan Ndor.⁸⁴ Although Kaabunké specialists have seen the resulting culture as reproducing Kaabunké organisation, this may reflect over-reliance on Gelwaar traditions which minimise earlier Sereer achievements: archaeological evidence shows that the Sereer-Cosaan made large amounts of pottery, and may have traded smoked fish and oysters for iron and cotton cloth from the interior.⁸⁵ Certainly, neither the Sereer-Cosaan nor the Kaabunké group was absorbed by the

⁸⁰ This outline would fit with Cissoko/Sambou's (1974: 5) view that Kaabu's control over Upper Guinea dates to the fourteenth century.

⁸¹ On lineage, see Miller (1976b: 76–7).

⁸² See Fields-Black (2009: 112–15) on how such models have unconsciously influenced accounts of the Mande in Upper Guinea.

⁸³ Gravrand (1983: 239). Known in the earliest Portuguese sources as the “Berbesins”, “Berbesin” was a corruption of the Wolof term for the Sereer king, *Buur-ba-Siin* (Boulègue 1987: 16, 58; Horta 1996: 78).

⁸⁴ Gravrand (1983: 52–3). On Mbeyan Ndour, see the explanations provided by Hassoum Ceesay at the National Museum of the Gambia.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 39; C. Lopes (1999: 57, 93). On the pottery and trade of the Sereer-Cosaan, see the explanations provided by Hassoum Ceesay at the National Museum of the Gambia in April 2011.

other. The new Sereer people retained the Sereer name and language but adopted Kaabunké culture, religious rites and chieftaincies.⁸⁶

The creation of this culture in the fourteenth century thus represents, on the one hand, a continuation of Mandinka expansion beyond the borders of the Mali empire.⁸⁷ Yet on the other hand this expansion was tempered by the adoption of some characteristics of the people of the Saluum delta. Thus events in the Saluum may illustrate the sort of primary creolisation which was mentioned at the start of this chapter. Given the oral histories of the mixing of Mandinka and local peoples in what became the Kaabu heartland, this strategy in the Saluum was probably a continuation of that previously adopted there.

Oral history from Kaabu confirms this hypothesis. On these accounts, as we have seen, the Mandinka mixed rapidly after their arrival there, living in the same villages and taking the names of their Bainunk wives. The Traoré clan of Tiramaghan adopted the name Sané in this process, and the new arrivals adopted the matrilineal inheritance characteristic of the region and different from the traditional patrilineal inheritance of other Mande groups.⁸⁸ Thus the processes which accompanied the consolidation of the Kaabunké did not simply involve the forcible imposition of an external culture and ideology. Rather, as with the earlier incorporation of North African trading diasporas into the Sahel, there was a two-way interaction. Although the Mandinka did impose a strong veneer of their own customs in Upper Guinea, they also adapted to those which they found – an analogous process to that which occurred among the Sereer-Cosaan.

We can therefore learn much about the Upper Guinea region of distant times from oral history. We do not learn the specifics of events and dates but rather glimpse changing patterns. Mandinka adoption of matrilinearity, intermarriages and the formation of new lineages suggest cultural accommodation. Whereas all societies have within them a capacity for such accommodation and syncretism, these qualities can emerge more strongly at certain times; in this case, the connection to long-distance trade in key commodities and the political power associated with incomers appear to have been pivotal both for the Mandinka of Mali in their

⁸⁶ Gravrand (1983: 160).

⁸⁷ Boulègue (1987a: 47).

⁸⁸ Niane (1989: 39); Person (1981: 62). Oral traditions on the matrilinearity of Kaabu are many – see, for instance, NCAC/OHAD, Transcribed Cassette 553A, page 9; Transcribed Cassette 550A, page 7. On the patrilineal inheritance typical of Mande societies in the region of the present-day republic of Mali, see J. Johnson (1999: 11–12).

relationship to North African diasporas and for Upper Guineans in their relationship to Mandinka ones.

The key finding to emerge is that right from the start cultural change was a two-way process, and was not characterised by the simple imposition of Mandinka practices. Yet at the same time, this should not blind us to the fact that the Mandinka rapidly came to constitute a dominant influence. Their language became the key to trade, and, as we shall now see, a certain process termed the “Mandinguisation” of culture began. Although the Mandinka themselves accommodated themselves to the practices and rituals of those who lived in Upper Guinea, so too the peoples of Upper Guinea learnt to adapt to the powerful newcomers.⁸⁹ It was this legacy which would prove crucial with the onset of Atlantic trade in the fifteenth century.

ACCULTURATION IN UPPER GUINEA

This section of this chapter seeks to understand this process of acculturation to the Mandinka and what it may have signified for subsequent events. As we have seen, intermarriage of Mandinka and other groups was one important factor in the spreading of the Mandinka cultural world. The development of new shared kinship entailed some sort of identification with Mandinka practices. Added to this was the role of diaspora traders in spreading commerce and ideas, bringing with them as they did the goods and symbols of the rich trans-Saharan trade.

Yet the idea of Mandinguisation needs to be treated with care. The view of early sixteenth-century Portuguese writers such as Pacheco Pereira, that peoples in Upper Guinea had adopted Mandinka customs, may reflect Portuguese perceptions regarding the superiority of “imperial” peoples such as the Mandinka (and themselves) rather than reality. Indeed, the very idea of Mandinguisation was invented by Portuguese colonial officials who may have seen their role in a similar light.⁹⁰ The views of writers like Pereira may also reflect the fact that the Portuguese contact with peoples in Upper Guinea was often mediated by the Mandinka themselves or by groups that had heavy Mandinka influences, such as the Kassanké, as is evidenced by the fact that, as we shall now see, the Portuguese often adopted names for groups in the region with Mandinka derivations. So we must begin from the realisation that, whilst the political and economic

⁸⁹ On Mandinka as a language of trade, see Horta/Dias (2005: 475).

⁹⁰ The key to this was Carreira (1947).

power of the Mandinka gave them a pre-eminence in exchanges in Upper Guinea through the role of Mali, it was not the sole factor.

When we cast around to see what characterised these changes, an important clue may lie in language. In Upper Guinea in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Mandinka was certainly a lingua franca, if not a vernacular among non-Mandinka groups. Even today it is perhaps the most common second language in the Casamance and parts of northern Guinea-Bissau. By the eighteenth century this situation was identified by outsiders for trading transactions with Kaabu, and it probably developed much earlier.⁹¹ Just as the widespread power of English in the early twenty-first century is testament to the global hegemony of the United States, so the adoption of Mandinka as a language of cross-kinship communication is testament to Mandinka power in Upper Guinea. The role of language in the spread of Mandinka culture is very important. It reveals that Upper Guinea of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries really was a place in which intense cultural exchanges are demonstrated by linguistic changes. Although this did not lead to the formation of a vernacular Creole, it does emphasise that the term primary creolisation is appropriate, at least as a metaphor for cultural mixing of the sort discussed in the Introduction.

Although the economic and political power of the Mandinka must have constituted a major factor in this process, we must not lose sight of the perceived ritual power of the Mandinka and particularly their smiths. The magic powers held to reside with the power associations formed by Mandinka smiths would certainly have influenced the acceptance of Mandinka customs. The political importance of ritual power is suggested by the very many oral histories which depict the role of ritual in political conflicts, the most famous of these being that between Sunjata Keita and Sumunguru for control of Mali.⁹² The connection of ritual to political power is discernible today by the fact that many in Guinea-Bissau still hold the Mandinka as having the strongest marabouts, which are said to be found near Gabú in the old Mandinka heartlands.⁹³

Thus in Upper Guinea a combination of economic, political and ritual factors saw acculturation to the Mandinka in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, although some local practices were adopted by the Mandinka.

⁹¹ Havik (2004b: 123) and Mané (1978: 120).

⁹² This is by no means the only example. A Balanta story of their incursion into Bainunk territory also describes a war fought through magic powers – in a tradition I collected from Balanta elders in Simbandi-Balante in March 2000.

⁹³ For more detail on this see Green (2001).

Some specialists have described how Kaabunké cultural qualities eventually spread to “all the other ethnic groups of the region, in forms of political organization, social structures, the economy, cultural symbols, [and] linguistic borrowings”.⁹⁴ Certainly, there was strong acculturation to the Mandinka by the time of the Portuguese arrival.⁹⁵ As Cadamosto wrote on his arrival in Casamance in 1456, “we were told that this river was called Casa Mansa which meant that the river belonged to a black Lord called Cassamansa”.⁹⁶ As *Mansa* is the Mandinka term for “ruler” or “lord”, Mandinka influence in the Casamance at this time is clear. The “Casa Mansa” whom Cadamosto was told about referred to the ruler of the Kassanké, a Bainunk lineage.

It is clear from the Mandinguised name of their ruler that the Kassanké had adopted Mandinka practices. Yet for some specialists the Kassanké dynasty was, like the Gelwaar of the Sereer, originally a Mandinka dynasty which had adopted local customs, in this case Bainunk ones.⁹⁷ Most others see the Kassanké as a kinship line of the Bainunk who had heavily Mandiguised themselves and their practices.⁹⁸ This is probably most consistent with linguistic findings that show the languages of the Bainunk and Kassanké are mutually intelligible dialects.⁹⁹

Cadamosto’s evidence on Casamance thus indicates a strong Mandinka influence over the Kassanké, whose Mandinguisation accompanied their political power. Moreover the influence of the Mandinka on Bainunk peoples stretched beyond the Kassanké kinship branch. The Bainunk themselves began to practice a sort of federal structure of kinship analogous to the federation of allied states found in Kaabu, and their acculturation to the Mandinka can be seen in the fact that according to Carlos Lopes, many Bainunk today pretend to be Mandinka.¹⁰⁰ A dictionary compiled by French traders in the late seventeenth century shows that many Bainunk words were Mandinka in origin, further emphasising the dominant position of the Kaabu Mandinka in this relationship.¹⁰¹

⁹⁴ C. Lopes (1999: 23): “todas as outras etnias da região; formas de organização política, estruturas sociais, económicas, signos culturais, intercepções linguísticas, etc.”.

⁹⁵ See G. Midlo Hall (1992: 29), who holds that by the fifteenth century “all of Upper Guinea had long exhibited a lamina of Mande civilization”.

⁹⁶ MMAII: Vol. 1, 364: “Dissene che questa fiumara se chiamava la fiumara de Casa Mansa zoe a dir la fiumara de un signor nominado Cassamansa negro”.

⁹⁷ Boulègue (1980: 482); Gaillard (2000a: 14).

⁹⁸ Niane (1989: 32); Roche (1976: 24–5).

⁹⁹ Mota (1954: Vol. 1, 233).

¹⁰⁰ On federal structure, see Lespinay (2000: 211); on Bainunk pretending to be Mandinka, see C. Lopes (1999: 60).

¹⁰¹ Lespinay (2000: 210).

This interconnectivity between Bainunk and Mandinka reached a deep level in Bainunk affiliations. Oral histories collected in the 1970s by Christian Roche suggest strong identification by Bainunk of their past with Mandinka migrations, with some traditions claiming that the Bainunk were forced out of their lands by the Kaabunké.¹⁰² On this account the Bainunk king Gana Sira Bana Biaye was obliged to move to Casamance, but as the name Gana Sira Bana is itself Mandinka, the level of Mandinka influence even at this time of supposed forced migration was clearly intense.¹⁰³ Another oral tradition holds that an ally of Gana Sira Bana in Ingore (present-day Guinea-Bissau; just twenty miles/thirty kilometres across the Senegalese border from Brikama, site of the Bainunk court) was a Bainunk king called Nunkuntamba, also a Mandinka name.¹⁰⁴ Nothing expresses it more clearly than the fact that the name “Bainunk” may derive from the Mandinka words *abai*, meaning “hunt him,” and *nunko*, meaning “he who has been hunted”.¹⁰⁵ Moreover it is significant that this was the ethnonym adopted by the Portuguese themselves, revealing that often when they thought they were describing peoples of the African coast in their own terms, they were in fact using the eyes of other powerful outsiders, the Mandinka.

The influence of the Mandinka in Casamance stretched beyond the Bainunk. It has also been identified by specialists on the Floup of Casamance as transforming their cultural practices.¹⁰⁶ We can surmise that this influence was important along the entire littoral between the Senegal and Cacheu Rivers from Fernandes’s observation that “the Mandinka can be differentiated from the Jolof in their language, but in their faith and their customs they are identical”.¹⁰⁷ Of course, this assertion may reflect an inability to differentiate in the eyes of Fernandes’s informants, but we have seen earlier in this chapter that the influence of the Mali empire on the Jolof of the Lower Senegal was intense by the

¹⁰² Roche (1976: 22).

¹⁰³ Ibid., 22–3.

¹⁰⁴ From a tradition I collected from a Balanta elder in the village of Simbandi-Balante in March 2000.

¹⁰⁵ Roche (1976: 22). Brooks (1993b: 87) holds rather that “Bainunk” may be a generic term for “trader”. Some of today’s Bainunk elders prefer an etymology which sees them originating from a quarter of Mecca called Baynunka – from an interview with Ansumane Manga, Singuère, Casamance, April 2011.

¹⁰⁶ Linares (1992: 147). Known more widely today as the “Jola”, this ethnonym only became widespread in the nineteenth century; “Floup” was more common in the period which this book deals with.

¹⁰⁷ MMAII: 700: “Os de Mandiga sō differeciados cō os de Gyloff em a lingua, mas em a fē e custumes som huūs”.

latter fourteenth century, and therefore Fernandes's claim is not to be dismissed out of hand; rather, it may well illuminate the same process which has been observed here for Casamance.

Mandinka influence in Upper Guinea in these centuries matters greatly when we try to understand the first African-European exchanges of the mid-fifteenth century. The arrival of outsiders bearing goods and political and religious changes through long-distance trade was nothing new. The capacity of the peoples of Upper Guinea to adapt to such outsiders and incorporate them into society was also nothing new. Accommodation to a powerful external force and incorporation of some of its practices were precisely the qualities which exchanges with the Kaabunké had inculcated. Yet, as we have seen so far in this chapter, this accommodation was not just an acceptance of a dominant power; rather, it was coupled with the imposition of local values as new lineages were formed, and these new kinship lines developed their own loyalties and practices which derived from local custom.

In Senegambia and Upper Guinea, Mandinka power derived both from their connections to the trans-Saharan trade and from the ritual power associated with it. As we have seen, key to the development of this power by Mali had been its receptivity to and treatment of trading diasporas, as well as its accommodation to the Islamic religion professed by diaspora members. It is surely significant, then, that in Upper Guinea the Mandinka themselves came to constitute a sort of diaspora, thereby replicating the pattern which emerged in the trans-Saharan trade. Mandinka groups spread heavily to the Gambia and influenced the Sereer-Cosaan, Kassanké and Biafada. Thus did the importance of diasporas in Western African culture and commerce spread from their role in the trans-Saharan trade to Upper Guinea through the intermediaries of the Mandinka.

In the Casamance, the Mandinka brought trade and with it a hint of the great world beyond. Social structures changed through a growing commercialisation and opening to the outside world. At the time of the European arrival, the Bainunk were famed for their markets, which were held every eight days, and to which people came from as far off as fifteen leagues (approximately forty-seven miles/seventy-five kilometres); there were also markets farther south among the Biafada.¹⁰⁸ These markets formed a powerful means of furthering Mandinka influence. Here, members of groups who had not acknowledged some form of Mandinka

¹⁰⁸ Mark (1985: 12); Nafafé (2007: 78). On the Biafada and the Mandinka, see Mota (1970: 6–9).

political authority, such as the Balanta, the Bijagó and the Floup, were able to secure goods from the *dyula* from the trans-Saharan trade and also perhaps some iron products forged by local smiths. Thus Mandinka political, cultural and ritual power was expressed at these markets to groups not under their direct control, because the ritual power of the smiths was well-known and the commercial and political power of the Mandinka was asserted in the long-distance trade practised by the *dyula*. In this way trade and exchange formed a powerful means of spreading Mandinka influences even among those groups of Upper Guinea who were not politically subordinate to them.

Equally as important as trade in terms of Mandinka influence on society was production. Fields-Black has shown that rice-growing technology was ancient in Upper Guinea already by the fifteenth century.¹⁰⁹ Rice was grown by Mandinka lineages in the Gambia area by the fifteenth century, and probably long before.¹¹⁰ The ability to farm rice in large quantities derived increasingly from the iron made by the smiths, and thus greater agricultural production affirmed both Mandinka ritual power and enhanced the power of Mandinka.

Thus the ritual power of the smiths, the trans-Saharan trade and the social changes produced by changing agricultural techniques were all interconnected. Mandinka influence had partially integrated Upper Guinea into the trans-Saharan trade of gold and slaves in return for horses and other commodities; and it had prepared the ground for the region's willingness to participate in what at first appeared to be a similar trade with the white and bearded people who emerged from those strange ships that began to appear from the sea.¹¹¹

PRIMARY CREOLISATION AND ATLANTIC CREOLISATION

The sort of primary creolisation described in this chapter proved a foretaste of the creolisation which accelerated with the formation of Atlantic communities in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Such exchanges, however, were not just between Mandinka and others, but they also

¹⁰⁹ Fields-Black (2009).

¹¹⁰ Hawthorne (2003: 155).

¹¹¹ The importance of horses in this context emerges in an oral tradition that the Bainunk king Gana Sira Bana was so powerful that he could point his horse in any direction and the forest would part for him – this illustrates how horses, power and trans-Saharan trade were interconnected in the pre-Atlantic world. From a tradition I collected in Simbandi-Balante in March 2000.

characterised the relationships between many of the decentralised groups of the region.

We can begin examining this pre-Atlantic primary creolisation by looking at Casamance. Drawing on informants whose knowledge of Casamance probably stretched back to the 1480s, Fernandes wrote in 1506 that “the Casamance River is a great trading river ... in this kingdom people of all nations [gerações] are mixed together, Mandinkas, Floups, Balantas and others”.¹¹² In other words, by the fifteenth-century Portuguese arrival, this was what would be termed today a multi-cultural zone, where peoples from different kinship lines co-existed under the rule of the Kassanké, following the Kassanké’s own heavy acculturation to the Mandinka.¹¹³ Oral traditions confirm this view, stating that peoples from different groups would often intermarry, with Balantas, Floups and Papels all intermarrying.¹¹⁴ This would imply that Mandinka power had created a situation where those living under that power co-existed in a large political space. Co-existence in this space precipitated a sharing and mixing of local cultures. Such cultural mixing of different groups has indeed often been a feature of large polities, which of their nature tend to embrace many different peoples.

Evidence for a long-standing sharing of practices exists. In addition to Fernandes, we should look at Almada, who in his prologue described how “the kingdoms of the blacks and their languages are as many and various as their diverse customs, because everywhere in less than 20 leagues [approximately sixty-two miles/one hundred kilometres] there are two and three nations all mixed together, with some of the kings minor and others powerful, the one subject to the other, and ... their sects and customs and the laws of their government and oaths come, for the most part, to be all as one”.¹¹⁵

As with Fernandes’s description, Almada talks of different nations [*nações*] being mixed together and moreover draws a connection between this multi-cultural mixing and the sharing of customs (which come “to be all as one”). Elsewhere, he gives a specific example of a practice shared by

¹¹² MMAII: Vol. 1, 712: “Ryo de Casamansa he huu ryo de muyto resgate ... E neste reyno ha gēte mesturada de todas gerações como Mandinkas, falipes, balan[t]as etc...”.

¹¹³ This point is made well by Nafafé (2007: 75).

¹¹⁴ NCAC/OHAD, Transcribed Cassette 466B, page 7.

¹¹⁵ MMAII: Vol. 3, 231: “Os reinos dos negros sejam tantos e as linguagens tão várias como os costumes diversos, porque em cada espaço em menos de vinte léguas há duas e três nações, todas misturadas, e os reinos uns pequenos, e outros grandes, sujeitos uns aos outros, e ... suas seitas e costumes e as leis do seu governo e juramentos venham, pela maior parte, a ser todos uns”.

Jolof, Mandinka and Sereer, describing how a Jolof king had once decided that because kings had many wives and that the wives' children could not all be the king's, it was possible that one of these children would inherit the kingdom illegitimately, and that for this reason the king's nephews – his sister's sons – should inherit the kingdom, "a law, which until today is kept in the kingdoms of the Jolofs, Sereers and Mandinkas".¹¹⁶ Almada's description here is of the matrilinearity which, as we have seen, was a practice adopted by the Kaabu Mandinka in contrast to the patrilinearity of other Mande groups. Whatever the general accuracy of Almada's text, it surely does convey the reality of this shared practice among Jolof, Mandinka and Sereer.¹¹⁷

To complement this evidence from Almada and Fernandes, ethnographic material suggests the sharing of practices. This can be noted for instance among the Brame. As a whole, the Brame have a history of shared linguistic and cultural practice, and in the fifteenth century this was intense.¹¹⁸ Moreover, the Brame sub-group known today as the Pepel have linguistic and cultural similarities with the Floup. The two exhibit a linguistic affinity which is indicative of some past shared history.¹¹⁹ Even the distinguishing regalia of ritual leaders observed among the Pepel in the late seventeenth century were identical with those used by their counterparts in Floup communities north and south of the Lower Casamance River: a red cap and an iron staff of office.¹²⁰ Wider similarities can also be found between the Floup and other groups in the region: Manjaco and Bainunk ritual offerings and shrines resemble in general those of the Floup.¹²¹ South of the Grande River, Fields-Black has identified strong sharing of cultural practices between the Nalu and Baga peoples of present-day Guinea-Conakry in the *D'mba* masquerade.¹²²

Meanwhile, there were shared practices across the whole region between Casamance and the Rio Grande. Almada described how all

¹¹⁶ Ibid., Vol. 3: 238: "*uma lei, que é até hoje guardada nos mais Reinos dos Jalofo, Barbacins e Mandinkas*".

¹¹⁷ The texts of Almada and Donelha are analogous sources to the oral histories which modern historians use for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Horta (2000: 120, 122) makes the important point that these texts were primarily collations of oral histories and accounts, indicators of an oral culture in Upper Guinea.

¹¹⁸ Mota (1954: Vol. 1, 147, 164–5).

¹¹⁹ Carreira (1964: 241). Indeed, some oral traditions of the Manjaco (a sub-group of the people known as the Brame in the sixteenth century) claim that they descend from the Floup – see NCAC/OHAD, Transcribed Cassette 434C, page 3.

¹²⁰ Mark (1985: 9).

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Fields-Black (2009: 130–1).

noblemen [*fidalgos*: or perhaps, lineage heads] wore iron rings and a type of rattle on their hands, exemplifying the role of iron in ideas of power in the region.¹²³ He noted how in all Guinea paternal uncles were “held as fathers of their nephews”.¹²⁴ Among the Bainunk, Bijago, Brame and Kassanké, meanwhile, it was the custom for the *fidalgos* to ride cows or oxen using ropes as a bit.¹²⁵

In short, it is clear that the spread of Mandinka power into Upper Guinea and the formation of a powerful loose-knit federation of states overseen by the Kaabu Mandinka coincided with cultural exchanges and borrowings not only between the Mandinka and others, but also between the peoples of the region.¹²⁶ Such practices were also common among peoples not under their authority, such as the Nalu and Baga. To the north of the Grande River, it may have been that the creation of a larger political space encouraged this process by breaking down the boundaries between the different lineages and facilitating their co-existence. Thus it was the strength of Mandinka power in West Africa as a whole, cemented through the long-distance trade and adhesion to Islam, that facilitated the potential for cultural flexibility in the Upper Guinea region.

Indeed, even those groups who resisted the Mandinka in some sense defined themselves culturally through this resistance. We have already seen how the ethnonym “Bainunk” may derive from Mandinka words relating to “he who has been hunted”. The Balanta illustrate the same phenomenon. The Balanta are thought to derive their ethnonym from the Mandinka “balanto”, or “those who resist and do not reciprocate”.¹²⁷ In the Balanta case, the nature of this resistance varied. Though some Balanta clearly did resist the Mandinka expansion and fled to the creeks of the coastal areas, others – now known as the Balanta-Mane – stayed farther inland and intermarried.¹²⁸ Nevertheless, the oral traditions of both Balanta-Mane and other Balanta coincide in seeing their origins as having been in the east and in conflicts with Mandinka invaders.¹²⁹

¹²³ MMAII: Vol. 3, 327.

¹²⁴ Ibid., Vol. 3, 326. This custom continues to this day.

¹²⁵ Ibid., Vol. 3, 327.

¹²⁶ Hawthorne (2010b) concurs with the idea mooted here of a “cultural zone” of shared practice and belief in Upper Guinea.

¹²⁷ Havik (2004b: 95); Hawthorne (2003: 32); Roche (1976: 47).

¹²⁸ See Hawthorne (2003: 32–3) for a good summary of these different responses to the Mandinka push from the east.

¹²⁹ In Simbandi-Balante in March 2000, I witnessed this myself. My informant, a Balanta-Mane wearing Mandinka dress, described the typical Balanta origin story concerning their migration from the east.

Thus though many Balanta did resist the Mandinka, the very name they used to describe themselves did so in terms of their relationship with the Mandinka.¹³⁰

When we consider the Mandinka meanings of these two ethnonyms, Bainunk and Balanta, we perhaps reach to the core of what we have called here primary creolisation. We must recognise that this was not the same process as that which occurred in the Atlantic, for vernacular Creole languages did not develop and Mandinka remained a language largely of trade; here certainly the concept of creolisation is invoked as the sort of “master metaphor” so popular among cultural theorists. Yet at the same time, events here foreshadowed the process of cultural exchange in the Atlantic, for this primary creolisation both facilitated the exchange of practices and, as in the Atlantic, was also predicated on violence. The way in which hunting, resistance and subordination are implied in these ethnonyms make it clear that exchanges with the Mandinka were not exactly peaceful. Violence escalated with primary creolisation, both among these peoples and others of the region. On one foundation story, the founder of the Sereer culture, Waal Paal, was an escapee slave who had been seized by Kaabunké slave raiders and forced to work as a goatherd before returning to the king of Siin and establishing himself.¹³¹ Because, as we have seen, Sereer culture was itself a hybrid of Sereer-Cosaan and Kaabunké culture, this story may well reveal the violence which accompanied this process of accommodation and may hint at events elsewhere. Moreover, as we have seen, the trans-Saharan commerce itself involved a heavy trade in slaves, some of whom may well have come from victims of the violence which accompanied these processes of change. When asked how ancient Kaabu lived prior to the arrival of the Europeans, one informant described how “by then there was only war. The Soninkés fed on that”.¹³²

Thus this pre-Atlantic pattern also offered a foretaste of the cycles of violent disorder which Atlantic trade would begin in Western Africa. It is difficult to imagine how things could have been any different. The imposition of new cultural and economic realities such as the Mandinka embarked upon in Upper Guinea in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries

¹³⁰ It should be noted, however, that the origins of this name are unclear, with some sources pointing to the Balanta as soldiers of the Pullo warrior-king Koli Tenguella (cf. Chapter 2), who refused to accompany him back north from the Fouta Djalon to Fouta Tooro. Cf. Ba (1981: 25); and also information from an interview with Seydhou Fall, Goudomp, Casamance, April 2011. However, these sources tend to be external from the Balanta’s own narrative, which define their resistance in relation to the Mandinka.

¹³¹ Gravrand (1983: 28–33).

¹³² NCAC/OHAD, Transcribed Cassette 550A, pages 58–9.

has always been accompanied by violence, whether there, in the Atlantic world of the early modern era, or in Africa again in the colonial era. The Bainunk and Balanta namings and the Sereer foundation story imply that Mandinka expansion was accompanied by slave-raiding. Certainly, in the mid-fifteenth century the sale of slaves into long-distance trade was not a new phenomenon.¹³³ Thus primary creolisation meant both a sharing and a violence; this was a legacy which was to have its own consequences through mutual suspicion and people hunting when the era of Atlantic trade began.

CREOLISATION, LINEAGE AND NAMING IN THE PRE-ATLANTIC AND ATLANTIC WORLDS

The casual visitor to Western Africa today may pick up a guidebook describing the peoples of the region. For Senegal, for instance, they will find out about “the Wolof”, “the Sereer” and “the Diola”. Here is a projection of the ethnic essentialism which engulfed African and European societies in the era of colonialism. Yet this chapter has shown how the historical reality of the peoples of Senegambia and Upper Guinea is infinitely more composite than ethnic nationalism can allow.

As we have seen, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century barriers to inter-cultural mixing were never so high that they could not be overcome. The peoples known with ethnic labels today had ancestors in these times who would not have recognised themselves in these labels. Identity was not perceived in terms of “ethnicity”, an invention of racist anthropologists of the nineteenth century.¹³⁴ Lineages and kin connections were of far greater importance in determining how people related to one another, and these could and did cut across imposed Western “ethnic” boundaries. This was of particular significance in Upper Guinea because, as Martin Klein and Paul Lovejoy have pointed out, lineage structures in Africa are in general more pervasive in non-Islamic societies.¹³⁵ Thus if we want to understand the ways in which Creole communities formed in Upper Guinea, the place of lineage becomes key.

It becomes clear that lineage, and not some form of proto-ethnic identity, matters most here when we recall that the very names which the

¹³³ Mendes (2007: 11).

¹³⁴ On “ethnicity” as a primordialist and racist invention, see Amselle (1998: 22–6) and Banks (1996: 158, 190). On the development of “ethnicities” in Upper Guinea, see Brooks (1993b: 28).

¹³⁵ Klein/Lovejoy (1979: 185).

Portuguese used to denote the peoples of the region were themselves projections. As we have seen in this chapter, the likelihood is that early communication between Africans and the Portuguese was carried out using the Mandinka as intermediaries and the shared language of Arabic, which some Mandinka and Portuguese held in common. This being the case, the names by which the Portuguese learnt to call the peoples of the region were likely imparted to them by the Mandinka, a hypothesis substantiated by the fact that many of these names are Mandinka in origin.¹³⁶ These names were themselves imprecise attributions which ignored differences between some of the peoples to whom they were attributed. Both Bainunk and Kassanké, for instance, claimed that the Portuguese used the name indiscriminately to describe what were in reality several distinct groupings in the Casamance region.¹³⁷

Powerful and expansionist societies have often found it useful to classify their foreign subjects, and such classification is of its nature artificial. What was true of the British in the nineteenth century was also true of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century, and, it would appear from this discussion, the Mandinka before them.¹³⁸ The history of the “naming” of the peoples of Upper Guinea thus fits well with the hypothesis that this was a region which was the meat in the sandwich between two powerful forces, the Mandinka and the Portuguese. Both collaborated together in giving the names by which the peoples of the region are known today.

This was a history which, on an ideological level, saw the Atlantic turn into a battleground between the imperial typology of classification on the one hand, and on the other what Jean-Loup Amselle calls “mestizo logics,” which accept “original syncretism” rather than trying to create artificial differences on a classificatory basis.¹³⁹ In many areas of the Americas, the Caribbean and Europe, the typology of classification was in the ascendant, with the well-known legacies of institutionalised racism and socio-political hierarchies which persist to this day. However, in Senegambia and Upper Guinea “mestizo logics” offered a stronger governing principle for the peoples who lived there, meaning that people were quite able to hold flexible and even multiple identities; they could be affiliated both with particular villages and lineages, and also to wider political units such

¹³⁶ This hypothesis was made by Mota (1954: Vol. 1, 144–5).

¹³⁷ Ibid. The point that the term “Bainunk” encompassed several different groups is made by Rodney (1970: 8).

¹³⁸ On how this process worked for slaves taken by the Portuguese to America, see Mellafe (1964: 158).

¹³⁹ Amselle (1998: 10).

as that of Casamance. There would of course have been major perceived caste differences between those who were and were not involved in the long-distance trade, in the religious and ritual differences this implied, and in the blacksmithing art; but such distinctions would have been less intense for many Upper Guinean groups who relied on the Mandinka for their connections to this wider world and who, as this chapter has shown, were more willing to share in one another's practices.

This matters to this study on the level of articulation of and identification with difference. Although all cultures are hybrids of different linguistic and social habits from different groups, not all cultures recognise this and articulate it in their social identity. Classificatory cultures ignore this reality and try to bury it beneath artificial differences. Areas where "mestizo logics" prevail do articulate this syncretism, however, and this chapter has shown that Senegambia and Upper Guinea were such places. As I have suggested, it was the particular constellation of factors surrounding the trans-Saharan trade, the role of diasporas, and the power of the Mandinka which may have generated the tendency towards primary creolisation at this time. West Africa was doubtless no more or less inherently disposed than any other region of the world towards such cultural exchange; rather, the economic, political, religious and social conditions that prevailed in the pre-Atlantic era had shaped a particular outlook which would be of great importance. In a region where the distances between ecological zones north and south of the Sahara were much larger than the ordinary and where long-distance trade in the early modern era was generally conducted by diasporas, the particular socio-cultural and political features associated with such cross-cultural trade were liable to be especially accentuated.¹⁴⁰

Conceptualising how this syncretism was articulated in the psychologies of the pre-Atlantic world thus requires a move away from the idea of "ethnicity". The much more African-centred ideas of kinship relations and lineages is more useful. Thus when looking at the Bainunk and Kassanké, it may be more appropriate to think of them not as cultures more or less acculturated to the Mandinka, but as different lineages who had taken the decision to acculturate to or resist the Mandinka.¹⁴¹ It may be that the terms "Bainunk" and "Kassanké" themselves encapsulated more than one lineage involved in such a decision, but the key factor would seem to

¹⁴⁰ Curtin (1984); on the importance of diasporas in the early modern era, see Frank (1998: 62).

¹⁴¹ The idea of Bainunk and Kassanké as competing lineages is in Mark (1985: 15).

be that differences between the Bainunk and Kassanké were not articulated on the level of culture or language (which were very closely related); boundaries and loyalties were instead provided by kinship ties, and as the Kassanké intermarried with Mandinka the ties between them and the Bainunk would have lessened.

These ideas are also helpful when looking at some of the other groups of the region. Writing in the early seventeenth century, Manoel Alvares described how the Brames were “like the Bainunk” and had “many kings”.¹⁴² More accurate might be to see these “kings” as heads of lineage, something which would also fit with how the Brames are now seen as subdivided into Mancanha, Manjaco and Pepel. Indeed, this way of understanding Upper Guinea was not entirely foreign to informed observers of the time: Alonso de Sandoval, a Jesuit based in Cartagena de las Indias, described in 1627 how “under the caste and name of Balantas there are many different castes of this nation, of whom some don’t understand others”.¹⁴³

The advantages of understanding the pre-Atlantic Upper Guinea coast through lineages rather than cultures emerge most strongly with the Floup. The Floup are now generally known as the Diola, but according to Baum, the Diola did not use the term as a mode of identification until the onset of the colonial era and their increasing integration into a multi-ethnic Senegal. Until the twentieth century, they only used the name of their sub-group and did not consider themselves to be truly “at home” outside of their quarter of their home town, which exemplifies how lineage, home and identity were all closely connected and demonstrates that “supra-lineage” national identities existed mainly in the eyes of outsiders.¹⁴⁴

These observations confirm the accuracy of Bennett’s view that “in [Upper] Guinea of the fifteenth through sixteenth centuries ... individuals largely identified themselves on the basis of lineages and occasionally state structures, both of which were tenuous”.¹⁴⁵ When we consider how this affected the historical context of the African entry into the Atlantic world, it is perhaps most important for us to note the very fluidity highlighted by Bennett here, the fact that lineages of their nature may change rapidly, and with them, allegiances. For as identities changed with new lineages (as with inter-marriages with Mandinka for instance), so

¹⁴² SG, *Etiopia Menor...*, fol. 20v.

¹⁴³ Sandoval (1627: fol. 61v).

¹⁴⁴ Baum (1999: 27, 62–3).

¹⁴⁵ Bennett (2003: 6).

practices inevitably became more open to these new allegiances. Thus the flexibility of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries may have developed not only from changes deriving from Mandinka influence, but also because this acculturation was articulated through a framework of lineage.

A second important consideration for us of this ideology of lineage is the concept of what Africanists have called “wealth in people”. This is the concept of accumulated value most current in pre-Atlantic societies of the west coast of Africa, and may have been dependent as Miller suggests on the high mortality of the region and the consequent fragility of future claims to wealth not predicated on a guaranteed supply of labour.¹⁴⁶ This created an entirely different economic rationale to that of Europe, where land constituted the primary form of revenue-producing property.¹⁴⁷ In Africa wealth derived from control of people, not from control of land. Some have argued that this perspective is vital to understanding African participation in the Atlantic trade because lineage chiefs and rulers rapidly began to acquire more followers through their acquisition of new trade goods from the Atlantic.¹⁴⁸

The ideology of lineage was probably fundamental to the development of the concept of “wealth in people”. Supra-kinship national identities such as those imposed from the outside would not necessarily have lent themselves as easily to this worldview; in the framework of lineage, however, it is clear that the larger and more extensive the lineage, the greater the degree of wealth in that lineage. Hence this discussion illustrates another way in which perceiving the exchanges of pre-Atlantic Africa and their influence on the early Atlantic requires conceptualisation through the notion of lineage.

Understanding that external ideologies cannot explain how Western African societies saw the Atlantic turn also helps to elucidate one of the central themes of this chapter, that of the role of diasporas. We have seen how the mercantile diaspora of Islamic merchants from North Africa was crucial in creating a flexibility of outlook among the Mandinka ruling clans, and also how the subsequent migration of Mandinka towards the Atlantic created similar tendencies among the peoples there. In each of these two cases, the incoming diaspora brought powerful ideas, rituals and wealth, and forced a certain amount of cultural accommodation. Yet this accommodation could not override local practices and beliefs, which

¹⁴⁶ Miller (1988: 47–8).

¹⁴⁷ Thornton (1998: 74).

¹⁴⁸ This is the general argument of Miller (1988).

remained very strong and which today provide the greatest explanatory power when we try to interpret how these changes were perceived.

The argument of this chapter about the flexible identities and growing openness of peoples in Senegambia and Upper Guinea to external influences emerges most strongly in this context of diaspora and lineage. The mixture of cultural practices was facilitated particularly by the organisation of society according to lineage lines, where inter-marriage with the Mandinka would create kinship ties which themselves brought the cultural mixtures highlighted here. Thus although the context of this world was often violent, the creation of new lineages and the allegiances these brought with them would have gone some way to promoting acceptance of this situation. Moreover, the fact that these lineages were themselves connected to centres of wealth and political power through the Mandinka diaspora of merchants must have been attractive and fostered accommodation.

The importance of lineage also brought the willingness to consider forging new alliances if other emissaries of a powerful external force arrived – as soon they did. In 1455, the Genoese sailor Alvise de Cadamosto navigated down this flat coastline that had seen so many changes over the preceding two centuries. South of the Cape Verde peninsula there were still trees and evidence of fertility where today there is arid scrub filled with gnarled and twisted shapes of baobabs. Then he reached the Wolof kingdom of Cajor, where the Damel or king welcomed him and offered him “a young girl aged 12 or 13 and very beautiful ... for service in my chamber, which I accepted”.¹⁴⁹

Of course even by this time Europeans were not a novelty. Their ships had been coming for ten years. Extensive changes can occur in such a short period of time, as human beings have seen in our days with the growth of the Internet from a position of relative unimportance in the late 1990s. In the light of those ten years, the Damel was probably already aware of how the new seaborne traders could be worked to his advantage in his relationship with the Jolof ruler farther north. It would obviously be to his benefit if he could forge a new alliance.

Such nuances were lost on Cadamosto, who doubtless would not also have imagined how events during the preceding two centuries in Senegambia and Upper Guinea could have influenced his reception. Yet clearly these changes had shaped the way in which Cadamosto and those like him were received. And when we think of the Damel’s offer of a

¹⁴⁹ MMAII: Vol. 1, 322.

pretty girl for service in Cadamosto's chamber, we may not be too far from the mark if we imagine that he had in mind a new kinship alliance which could transform his lineage's prospects. The Damel may have been playing the long game, but Cadamosto and others like him had more immediate desires for personal riches and gratification. Over the coming centuries it would be these desires which would be served by the forces which oversaw the rise of the Atlantic world.

The Formation of Early Atlantic Societies in Senegambia and Upper Guinea

Although the Atlantic world began in Western Africa, this important fact is rarely to be gleaned from most works of Atlantic history. Yet the Spanish settlement and conquest of the Canary Islands in the late fifteenth century only gathered pace as a direct response to Portuguese activity there.¹ Almost thirty years separated the Portuguese arrival at the Senegal River in 1444 from their arrival at what became the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) in 1471.²

The birth of this Atlantic world in Western Africa was multifaceted. Primary creolisation in Upper Guinea and the process of state formation in medieval Portugal shaped an early Atlantic economy influenced profoundly by violence and its legacies. Yet on the other hand, these conditions had enabled a tradition of cultural sharing to develop in Western Africa. It was this combination of violence and flexibility which came to characterise Creole societies both here and elsewhere in the Atlantic world.

This chapter begins the examination of how this position developed and offers new perspectives on these vital first African-European exchanges. A variety of written sources is used. Chronicles of European mariners, with their inevitable quota of bias, are mixed with accounts by Islamic scholars. Oral traditions collected by sixteenth-century writers, and others stored in the Oral History Archive in Fajara, are also used. The chapter shows that the first encounters in the 1440s were not between peoples that were unknown to each other and that, in fact, continuity

¹ Elliott (2006: 16).

² For explorations of the Gold Coast, see Vogt (1979: 7–9).

with the previous trans-Saharan and Mediterranean economies was a key factor in shaping initial exchanges.

Thus I suggest here a need for a new perspective on the early Atlantic world in the phase before the Spanish voyages to America. My argument is that neither Africans nor Europeans saw this world as being revolutionarily new. Indeed, elements of continuity enabled the first steps towards the creation of a mixed society to be taken on the West African coast. It turns out that the long-standing role of diasporas and outsider groups in the region's trade and the influence which such conditions had had in creating a sort of cultural receptivity were vital stages in the development of the Atlantic's first Creole communities. We also see how pre-existing political configurations determined patterns of settlement for Europeans and the shaping of these very early mixed communities, as well as how these configurations were then influenced by the patterns of the new Atlantic trade.

In examining these exchanges, I place the importance of the slave trade in the foreground. Historians have traditionally seen the motivation of the early Portuguese trade as having been to procure better supplies of gold, but in contrast to this earlier emphasis, this chapter shows that the strongest early impact in Western Africa was in exacerbating cycles of violence and political instability that had already emerged with Mandinka expansion and the trans-Saharan slave trade. We see here how the earliest steps towards mixed societies in the African Atlantic occurred within the prism of a trade in slaves, which makes apparent the interconnection of Atlantic creolisation and slavery examined throughout this book; we also see how the demand side from the Atlantic influenced the development of patterns of violent disorder in Western Africa, as Rodney argued in the 1960s. Thus the chapter shows how the continuities between trans-Saharan and Atlantic long-distance trades facilitated the intensification of violence that was heralded by Atlantic trade and that contributed significantly to political and social changes in Western Africa. The suggestion is that this contribution was as strong, if not stronger, as the process of climatic change previously highlighted by George Brooks.³

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUITIES IN THE FIRST ATLANTIC EXCHANGES IN WESTERN AFRICA

The first exchanges between Africans and Europeans in Western Africa were not those of strangers. As early as 1413 Iberian officialdom knew

³ Brooks (1993b).

something of sub-Saharan African polities. In that year, a document written in Seville referred to “*un negro de jelofo Mandinka* [a Black of Jolof Mandinka]”, which, although a confused statement, illustrates some knowledge of the peoples south of the Sahara.⁴ Then in 1415, during their conquest of Ceuta in Morocco, Bartolomé de las Casas wrote in his *Historia de las Indias* that the Portuguese heard of the extent of Africa beyond Fez into the desert, where the Azenegues lived, “and that these people bordered with the blacks of Joloph”.⁵ Therefore, although the sea beyond Cape Bojador in southern Morocco was frightening and unknown to the Portuguese, this was not so of the land and the peoples who lived there.⁶ By the time of their arrival among the Jolof thirty years later, the Portuguese also appear to have known that the desert was the world of Arab and Berber groups and that Black Africans lived beyond it. Zurara, author of the earliest account of the Portuguese presence in Africa, wrote that when the Portuguese ships reached two palm trees by the River Senegal “they knew that there began the land of the blacks”.⁷

Not only were the Jolof known to the Portuguese at least by name when their ships arrived on the Senegal River in the 1440s, but the cultural context in which they lived was also familiar. As in Europe, the Jolof world was one of expansionist monarchs with large mounted armies.⁸ The prevalence of Islam and the presence of North African diaspora traders were resonant both of the Portuguese trading outposts in North Africa and also of Castille, which would not complete the conquest of Granada for almost fifty years. The long-standing presence of Jewish diaspora traders in Sahelian regions would also have been a source of familiarity.⁹ Religious familiarity brought with it linguistic familiarity. Not only did North Africans speak Arabic, but some of the Jolof did also; the Portuguese language contains many words of Arabic origin, and there remained then many Arabic speakers in Iberia.

There was also much continuity in this early coastal African trade with the commerce of the trans-Saharan caravan route.¹⁰ Indeed, the Portuguese

⁴ Mathieu (1982: 183). This statement could even refer to the tributary status of the Jolof to Mali.

⁵ Las Casas (1966b: Vol. 62, 174): “*y estos confinaban con los negros de Joloph*”. Las Casas may have been projecting sixteenth-century knowledge into the fifteenth century; he may, alternatively, have had access to sources now lost.

⁶ On fears of what lay beyond Cape Bojador, see Delumeau (1978: 42) and Green (2006: 27).

⁷ MMAII: Vol. 1, 27: “*pellas quaes conheceron que ally se começava a terra dos negros*”.

⁸ This point is made by Abulafia (2008: 92).

⁹ A good discussion of this presence is in Lydon (2009: 65–70).

¹⁰ Mendes (2007: 6).

knew this. As Mendes has discovered through groundbreaking archival research, the Portuguese base established at Arguim, in present-day Mauritania, relied on the same trans-Saharan networks that had supplied the ports in North Africa, which hitherto had traded with Lagos and Lisbon in Portugal and with Genoa and Venice in Italy.¹¹ Moreover, not only were these networks themselves continuities, but the traders who operated them had a foot in both the Iberian and West African worlds. Mendes has shown that the principal agents in the early Portuguese cloth trade at Arguim – one of the main articles of exchange – were Moroccan Jews descended from the Sephardic Jews who had fled Spain following the anti-Semitic riots of 1391.¹² Meanwhile, the Portuguese commissioned textiles in their enclaves in Morocco, such as Safi and Azemour for sale in Arguim and Senegal, from Sephardic Jewish weavers who had previously been involved in preparing cloth for the trans-Saharan trade.¹³ New research by Mark and Horta also suggests links between the Sephardic Jewish sword-makers in late-fifteenth-century Morocco and Western Sahara with a subsequent trade in weapons that developed in West Africa in the sixteenth century.¹⁴ The presence of Iberian Jews connected to these trans-Saharan trading networks also is shown in the maps of Jewish cartographers of Majorca of the late fourteenth century, which depicted the empire of Mali with relative accuracy (and notable even-handedness).¹⁵

As this evidence suggests, some of the continuities that emerged in this early Atlantic trade came through the Iberian Jewish community. Iberian Jews had had increasing connections to the trans-Saharan trade following the large-scale migrations to North Africa which followed the 1391 riots. Even before 1391, the Jewish traders of Barcelona and Aragon had long offered Spanish monarchs access to West African gold through a network with the Jews of Tlemcen (Algeria) and Sijilmāssa (southern Morocco); and after 1391, Iberian Jews settled throughout Morocco and their connections quickly spread south of the Sahara.¹⁶ The extent of the interconnections between Iberian Jewish trading networks and the trans-Saharan trade may emerge through the work of Ismaël Diadié Haïdara, who has

¹¹ Ibid., 377.

¹² Ibid., 448.

¹³ Prussin (2006: 345).

¹⁴ Mark/Horta (2011: 125 n.61).

¹⁵ On these connections see Bovill (1958: 113–4). For a more recent discussion of Cresques' 1375 Catalan Atlas, see Nafafé (2007) and Prussin (2006: 329).

¹⁶ Lydon (2009: 69–70).

developed an interesting theory concerning the origins of Mahmūd Kâ 'ti, the author of the earliest written history of Mali and Songhay, known as the *Tārīkh al-Fattāsh* (written in the early sixteenth century).¹⁷ Haïdara argues that Kâ 'ti was in fact a member of the Cota family from Toledo, and although his genealogy of Kâ 'ti is open to doubt depending on the reading of an Arabic text without diacritic markers, it is certainly known from his work that Kâ 'ti's father migrated from Toledo to Tumbuktu in 1468.¹⁸ The Cotas were infamous New Christians [converted Jews] in Toledo, and the tax collector Alonso Cota had been a source of public rage during the 1449 riots in the city; these led to the establishment of the first discriminatory statutes against New Christians in Iberia, known as the statutes of *limpieza de sangre*, or “purity of blood”.¹⁹

This suggestive role of the Iberian Jews illustrates that across much of West Africa at least some familiar networks integrated the old Mediterranean trade with the new Atlantic African one.²⁰ Moreover, just as the Jolof and their mercantile culture of trans-Saharan links influenced by Islamic and Jewish traders were not alien to the Portuguese, the reverse was also true. Writing of his arrival at Cantor [Kantora, later the northernmost tip of Kaabunké power] on the Upper Gambia in 1448, Diogo Gomes told how “soon word spread throughout the land that the Christians were at Cantor, and people came from everywhere, from Tambucutu [Tumbuktu] in the north and in the south from the Gabei hills [perhaps the Fouta Djalon mountains of Guinea-Conakry] and from Quioquum, a large walled city [probably Kukyia, near Gao in the far east of present-day Mali]”.²¹ Naturally, there was hyperbole in this statement – it cannot be true that people travelled well over a thousand miles from Gao to the Upper Gambia just to see Gomes (they could have travelled a similar distance northwards across the Sahara to do the same, and done some trade into the bargain). Yet Gomes’s report may contain some

¹⁷ Haïdara (1999: 22–4); See also Lydon (2009: 86).

¹⁸ Hofheinz (2004: 156, 164); the doubt concerns whether or not Kâ 'ti's father, whom Hofheinz calls “Ali the Goth”, was not in fact a Moslem leaving Toledo rather than a member of the Cota family.

¹⁹ On Alonso Cota, see Green (2007a: 25–6).

²⁰ This mirrors the situation for the distribution of sugar produced in the Atlantic in the sixteenth-century European economy, which followed the existing redistribution networks linking Portugal with Flanders and northern Italy – Ebert (2008: 17–20).

²¹ MMAII: Vol. 1, 194: “*logo soou a fama por todo o país que estavam os cristãos em Cantor, e correram de toda a parte para ali, a saber, do norte de Tambucutu, e moradores, do lado do sul, para a Serra Gabei; e vieram gentes de Quioquum, que é uma grande cidade cercada de muralha ...*”. Kantora is thought to have lain approximately 25 miles/40 km east of the modern town of Basse Santa Su.

accuracy in the description of people coming to see him, albeit not from such a great distance. Clearly, therefore, people knew what a Christian was and would travel just to see one. Probably the many diaspora traders had told of the world north of the Sahara, and many people in West Africa had also travelled across the desert. For at this date Mali was an outward-looking region, more so than many parts of Europe.

We know for instance that Mansa Musa was said to have slaves from Turkey and other Mediterranean regions in the early fourteenth century.²² For centuries there had been deep commercial and cultural connections between centres such as Gao, Timbuktu and the Islamic kingdom in Granada, with architects from Al-Andalus coming to the Sahel to work for the Emperor of Mali, and books and commodities all regularly changing hands.²³ People from Mali commonly passed through North Africa, and by the mid-1450s there was an annual caravan of pilgrims from Mali making the pilgrimage to Mecca.²⁴ Such traditions dated at least back to the first quarter of the fourteenth century, when the entourage which accompanied Mansa Musa on his famous pilgrimage to Mecca was said to have included 14,000 slave girls alone.²⁵ The cosmopolitan nature of the region is confirmed by notarial records linking the Genoese and the trade from Ceuta via Sijilmāssa to Senegambia, which indicate the presence of goods in the Sahel from as far afield as China, the East Indies, Turkestan and Flanders.²⁶

Thus there was considerable knowledge of the worlds north of the Sahara in Mali, certainly among members of the ruling lineages. Diogo Gomes's information corroborates this. People there knew of the Christian world beyond the Sahara and they probably also knew that some of the goods which they traded across the desert were further traded on to it. They were interested in this world. However, it probably also frightened them. Surely members of the ruling circles in contact with diaspora traders would have heard of the Portuguese inroads in Morocco and of their raids on the desert coast of the Sahara following the conquest of Ceuta in 1415. To peoples of West Africa, members of the North African trading diasporas represented a powerful culture. News that the Christians

²² CEA, 265 for the slaves from Turkey – the account of Al' Umari.

²³ Haïdara (1997).

²⁴ CEA, 360–1. Here, Ibn Taghrī Birdī describes such a caravan departing Cairo in 1455 and then states that in 1456, owing to brigandage, “none of the Maghribīs or Takrūrīs made the Pilgrimage”. See also Godinho (1969: 122).

²⁵ CEA, 351; the evidence of Al-Maqrīzī: doubtless an exaggeration, but even so it suggests a large number.

²⁶ Lydon (2009: 76).

had defeated representatives of this culture at Ceuta must have been disquieting. Thus though the arrival of Christians was not necessarily unexpected, it probably was alarming.

So when we think of these exchanges beginning so swiftly and easily between Africans and Europeans, we should begin from the realisation that what today is often projected as an unexpected encounter was not like that at all. Each had already found out something of the other through the traders which linked them both, both the North African Moslems and members of the Ibero-Moroccan Jewish diaspora. Moreover, not only did they know something of one another, but they were peoples who had much in common.

The first exchanges were concentrated in Senegambia, therefore, not only because of geographical proximity, but also precisely because of these points of familiarity. As we saw in the previous chapter, the limit of mutual intelligibility between Africans and Europeans was at the Rio Grande in Upper Guinea where the Biafada lived. The fact that communication was easier in the area to the north of this must have shaped the fact that trade was most intense there at first. Although historians have seen the failure of Portuguese navigators to go beyond the coast of present-day Liberia between 1462 and 1471 as caused by internal Portuguese politics, this ignores the fact that the Portuguese certainly found Senegambian cultures more accessible than those farther south.²⁷

Moreover, the Islamic influence in Senegambia was vital in the beginnings of the slave trade to Europe. Those deemed legitimately enslaved in Iberia in the 1450s were generally war captives purloined in frontier raids with the Moslems of Granada or in North Africa.²⁸ War had always been the main justification for enslavement, and in medieval Iberia this custom, inherited from the Romans, had altered to concentrate on the capture of those belonging to a different faith.²⁹ The fact that Jolof were Moslem meant that the purchase of slaves from them could easily be reconciled with existing practices of enslaving Moslems from Granada and North Africa.³⁰ Most slaves in fifteenth-century Iberia were Islamic, and in Valencia, to take one example, Moslems were the only group that could be penally enslaved.³¹ Indeed, some scholars hold that

²⁷ For a statement of the traditional view, see Ballong-wen-Menuda (1993: Vol. 1, 45–6).

²⁸ Franco Silva (1979: 17).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 37–8.

³⁰ Jolof slaves arriving in Valencia in the 1480s included two named Ali and one named Amet (Cortes 1964: 223, 230).

³¹ Blumenthal (2009: 14).

the earliest Portuguese chronicler of West Africa, Zurara, deliberately portrayed Africans in the guise of Moors and the military skirmishes through the traditional religious language of the *reconquista*, so as to justify enslavement.³² Such ideological trickery continued even after the procurement of African slaves. Once they reached Europe, the Jolof were said to have warlike tendencies and not to be of peace even though they had been bought and not captured; maintaining this fiction and the appearance of a just war against an Islamic foe provided a continuity with the older slave system and also served as a segue to the commercial orientation that followed.³³

Continuities thus turn out to be important in both practical and ideological terms in the formation of the first Atlantic-African connections. Islamic influence created a point of cultural contact between Jolof and Portuguese and shaped the ideological and practical contours of the early slave trade to Europe. However, for the Portuguese, Islam was a barrier as well as a bridge. The importance which diaspora merchants professing Islam had for the Jolof in the trans-Saharan trade meant that there was no desire to break this connection. The king, or *Damel*, of Cajor encountered by Cadamosto in 1455 (and called Budomel by him) may have been friendly and receptive, but he was in no hurry to adopt the sailors' religion; his court was filled with "Arabs who he has continually in his house almost as we do our priests because it is they who show him the [Islamic] law".³⁴ The Portuguese never shifted this pattern.

Thus in Senegambia there was never any doubt that Islam was an entrenched religion of trade which had circulated through the mercantile activities of the trans-Saharan trading diasporas. This related to the circumstances of the Jolof rise to pre-eminence. As we saw in the previous chapter, the Lower Senegal River was subordinate to Mali in the fourteenth century, and thus the growth of the power structure encountered by the Portuguese in Senegambia was related to Mali's rise, which as we saw in the previous chapter itself related to the acceptance of a version of Islam as a religion of trade. If by the fifteenth century the Jolof had freed themselves of Mali's authority, therefore, this does not mean that the Islamic religion was not related to ideas of kingship and authority that European sailors found among them.³⁵

³² Baxter Wolf (1994: 468); Blumenthal (2009: 41); Saunders (1982b).

³³ Franco Silva (1979: 38): The slaves were described as "*de buena guerra e non de paz*". See also Blumenthal (2009: 20).

³⁴ MMAII: Vol. 1, 326–7: "*arabi chel tien continuamente in chassa quasi como dissamoli nostri preti perche sono quelli che li mostra la leze*".

³⁵ On Jolof's independence from Mali in the fifteenth century, see Boulègue (1987a: 23).

There was a further corollary of this situation which would affect Portuguese engagement with this world. The relationship between peoples in Western Africa and Islam meant that religion itself – and specifically, as we have seen, a monotheistic religion brought from outside the region – was deeply connected to the activities of foreign trading diasporas in a context often connected to the transport of slaves.³⁶ This would be important when members of a new trading diaspora holding to a monotheistic faith also arrived, in the shape of the New Christians. Moreover, these New Christians had trading ties, and probably family connections, to the Jewish traders in Morocco who, from their workshops in the Portuguese enclaves in Morocco, controlled the trade in cloth near Arguim.³⁷ Probably, they were also connected to other centres of recent Jewish settlement in the Saharan region following the 1391 riots in Spain and the migration of Jews to North Africa. These two factors placed these New Christians in a very advantageous position when another trade for slaves through the medium of cloths was initiated for the Atlantic trade. There would soon be striking similarities between the two trades, and some scholars argue for a definite historical link between the indigo-dyed cloths made by Jewish weavers and used in the trans-Saharan trade on the one hand, and on the other, the prevalence of this later cloth trade from Cabo Verde and the subsequent development of indigo-dyed fashions in the region of present-day Guinea-Bissau.³⁸

THE BEGINNING OF AN ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE TO EUROPE

In spite of the continuities which existed, however, Atlantic trade brought ruptures to Senegambia. The most immediate impact was through the Atlantic slave trade to Iberia, which began at once. Of course there had been already a long-standing trade in slaves across the Sahara, as we saw in the previous chapter. However, the addition of the Atlantic vector in trade to the existing Saharan one intensified cycles of violence

³⁶ On the connection of the trans-Saharan diaspora to the slave trade, see Seck (forthcoming, 2012).

³⁷ This can be deduced from the ground-breaking work of Mendes (2007: 448–50), who shows how New Christian merchants of Antwerp had strong links to Sephardic Jews of Taroudant, Morocco, an important caravan centre in the 1530s. The New Christians of Antwerp also had strong connections to sugar mills in São Tomé and to subsequent New Christian and Jewish families of the Senegambian region, and thus it is very likely that they also were connected to the New Christian families trading in Western Africa in the early sixteenth century. See Green (2008a: 87–8, 91); Mendes (2007: 371).

³⁸ Prussin (2006: 345–7).

and instability in the region by placing an even greater emphasis on the demand side.

The traditional view has been that it was gold, not slaving, which was the primary focus of these Portuguese voyages.³⁹ Yet although the Portuguese voyages were motivated in a macro-political sense by the desire for gold, on the micro level of the motivations of the sailors themselves, things were very different.⁴⁰ After a failed attempt to seize slaves near the isle of Gorée in 1445, Rodrigo Annes was quoted by Zurara as having said to his men: “You already know that the people of this land are not as easy to enslave as we wished”.⁴¹ The detail may not be accurate, but Zurara captured here the ordinary sentiment of sailors, revealing how private motivations and enterprise shaped early African-European exchanges more than state design and policy.⁴²

Although gold may have been the political motivation for Portuguese expansion, this was not how this expansion was perceived in Senegambia. The impact of slaving on the Atlantic coast itself was certainly transformative. Around 1445 the first slaves were being taken in the region of the Senegal River.⁴³ Yet already by the time that Zurara was writing, probably in the late 1450s, the villages by the shore had been “depopulated by those who went there in ships from our country”.⁴⁴ This illustrates the impact the Atlantic trade had already had in Senegambia. Ships involved in this early trade may have become targets for pirates. In 1452 some brigands from the Andalusian ports of Seville, Moguem and Palos robbed a Portuguese caravel returning from Africa with sixty-six slaves on board.⁴⁵

Thus just ten years after the European ships arrived in Senegambia, there had been significant changes in levels of security, at least for those Africans living near the coast. That this sort of insecurity was widespread was shown by Cadamosto, when he recounted in 1456 near the Gambia that people “do not stray far from their country because they cannot go safely from one country to the next for fear of being seized by the blacks and sold by them as slaves”.⁴⁶ For those outside the elites of Senegambian

³⁹ Voiced by, for instance, Fage (1969a: 54–5).

⁴⁰ The key work on the role of gold in this trade is Godinho (1969: 149–63).

⁴¹ MMAII: Vol. I, 39 – “Já sabees que a gente desta terra nom hé assy ligeira de filhar como nós deseiamos”.

⁴² On the importance of private enterprise in Portuguese navigation, see Ballong-wen-Menuda (1993: Vol. I, 45–9).

⁴³ MMAII: Vol. I, 187.

⁴⁴ Ibid., Vol. I, 50 – “despovoradas per os que lá foram em os navyos desta terra”.

⁴⁵ Albuquerque/Santos (1993: Vol. I, 36).

⁴⁶ Ibid., Vol. I, 358: “non se alargano molto dal suo paexe perche non vano securi da um paexe al altro per non esser prexi pur da negri et esses vendudi per schiavi”.

society – slaves used in agriculture and as members of the royal household, for instance – the increase in violent disorder was perilous. Naturally, this related to the trans-Saharan trade, but, like the emptying of the villages on the coast, it most likely also related to the new seaborne trade. This is supported by Cadamosto's 1455 account of the Jolof king's slave trade:

He maintains himself with many robberies and he always has many slaves which he gets partly from his own country and also from neighbouring countries and he uses these slaves in many ways, principally in sewing crops in lands which belong to him and also by selling many of them to the Azenegue [Western Saharan] merchants who trade horses and other things with him, and by selling them to Christians ever since they have started to trade in the lands of the blacks.⁴⁷

This passage suggests that the Jolof trade in slaves through Azenegue merchants to the Portuguese at Arguim and in Senegal had already diverted some of its exports from the trans-Saharan trade. We should of course be wary of assuming that this new trade led to an increase in slave exports. We can, however, look to other indirect signs that there may have been such an increase. Given Cadamosto's assertion that the Jolof king procured his slaves from both his own country and from his neighbours, any increased supply would have to have been accompanied by increased war against his neighbours and a cycle of military procurement. In Senegambia military procurement required cavalry, and by 1462 there is evidence that there was an increased demand for cavalry from many groups. This demand for cavalry was accompanied by increasing political instability, which is suggestive of military confrontations. Taken together, the rise in military procurement and political instability suggest that there had been an increase in wars and thus in prisoners of war who, as Cadamosto's evidence suggests, were often sold as slaves.

The evidence for this comes from an expedition of Diogo Gomes in 1462. Gomes had been sent by King Afonso V of Portugal to the Saluum delta occupied by the Sereer to take authority over any Portuguese ships he found trading there. Afonso was worried about uncontrolled trade in slaves for horses, a fear underlined in a letter of March 28 of that year when he had referred to the "many people buying horses and embarking

⁴⁷ Ibid., Vol. 1, 316: "Questo se mantien con altre robarie chel fa et ha sempro molti schiavi negri chel fa pior si nel suo paexe como neli altri paesi vexini a lui e de questi tal schiavi el se ne servie in molti modi e principalmente lo i fa lavor a seminar certe terre e posses-sione deputada a lui e ancho molti de loro ne vende azanegi merchantanti che capitano de li con cavali e altre cosse e ancho ne vende a christiani depoi che hano comenzado i diti christiani merchandar nele parte de negri".

them for Guinea".⁴⁸ When Gomes arrived in the Saluum delta, he indeed found that the price for which the Portuguese could sell their horses had halved from twelve slaves per horse to six.⁴⁹ Gomes himself sailed with ten horses, enough, so he said, to purchase one hundred to one hundred fifty slaves. Arriving among the Sereer he found two ships, both of which had brought horses to trade. He also found the Jolof king Buur Gebil sheltering there, having fled after an attack from a rival.

It is thus clear both from Afonso V's letter and from Gomes's account that the Sereer were buying horses hand over fist in these years, and also that there were upheavals among the Jolof elites. These factors were connected. Although for many people in Senegambia the new coastal trade had brought instability, lineage heads saw it as an opportunity. The Sereer were buying horses, and the new cavalry offered them a chance to fight on more equal terms with the Jolof who hitherto had much better access to horsepower. At the same time, such possibilities wrought instability among the Jolof, allowing figures such as Buur Gebil to be challenged and also subsidiary Damels on the coast to get direct access to cavalry and thus begin to threaten the central authority. That this trade was increasing is suggested also by the fall in value of the horses brought by the Portuguese from one horse for twelve slaves to one horse for six, suggesting an increasing demand for slaves and thus an increasing number of horses required for the trade.

Thus this evidence supports the hypothesis of an increased cycle of military procurement and the increased political instability which this cycle had helped to create, an instability whose by-products included prisoners of war that could be sold into the slave trade. The rapidity with which subsidiary Jolof Damels and Sereer lineage heads engaged with the Portuguese illustrates how much they had learnt from the way in which Jolof and Mandinka elites had built up their own power through the trans-Saharan trading diaspora. That is, it shows the importance of access to long-distance mercantile diaspora traders in Senegambia. Here we may see an early example of what Jean-François Bayart has called extraversion in African polities, whereby political power was wielded through the "control of the economic benefits flowing from dependence on the exterior environment".⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Albuquerque/Santos (1993: Vol. I, 116) – "achamos que hora novamente muitos com-prão cavallos e os embarcão para Guinee".

⁴⁹ MMAII: Vol. I, 202; and also for the rest of the information in this paragraph.

⁵⁰ Bayart (2000: 231). Farias (2003: cxvi) sees early trans-Saharan trade as a form of extraversion.

Worlds can change swiftly with a new discovery or technology. Initial changes following the opening of the Atlantic coast for trade depended on the importance of existing political balances in Senegambia. As we have seen, the European arrival affected the balance of slave exports and most likely exacerbated the conflicts which contributed to the supply cycle. However, although demand increased, the initial mechanism of supply was merely the intensification of the violence that underlay the slave-procurement process already in existence for the supply of the trans-Saharan trade. It was in this sense a continuation of what had gone before. There was nothing revolutionary about slavery or slave-trading in the African and Mediterranean worlds of this era. These practices were utterly normal.

Thus the Portuguese trade initially capitalised both on this existing process and on existing tensions. Soon after their arrival the centre of Jolof power in the middle Senegal valley was challenged by their subordinates on the coastal periphery. According to Münzer – writing in the mid-1490s – the Damel of Cajor was already in conflict with the Jolof king at the time of the Portuguese arrival and used the new supply of horses to expand his campaign.⁵¹ This may or may not be true, but certainly Münzer's evidence implies that the Damel must have capitalised on the Portuguese presence almost at once to fulfil his ambitions. The cycle of war which developed was to have a major impact on the profile of slaves traded to Europe in the second half of the fifteenth century, with nearly 85 percent of the slaves shipped to Valencia between 1479 and 1516 said to be from the “land of Jolof”.⁵² Some Mandinka slaves were also recorded, but no slaves were recorded from areas farther to the south prior to 1497.⁵³

The impact of this trade on Senegambian society emerges in a petition to the Portuguese king made by the Parliament of Évora in 1472. Here the king was urged not to allow slaves to be exported outside Portugal, “because, Master, [the slaves] constitute an important population in your Kingdoms, and they are the cause of new lands being opened and woods being cleared and marshes being opened and of other benefits”.⁵⁴

⁵¹ MMAII: Vol. 1, 235–6.

⁵² The figures are 2,487 out of 2,944 with a specified provenance. See Hair (1980). The ethnonym referred to the land of provenance and thus generically to Senegambia; the slaves themselves may have been Jolof, Mandinka, Pullo or Sereer.

⁵³ Cortes (1964). Soares/Torrão (2007: 137) concur with this reading of the evidence, noting that only after 1497 do Sapes begin to emerge in the documentation, with Sereer found after 1502, Cocoli after 1505, Pullo after 1506 and Biafada after 1509.

⁵⁴ MMAII: Vol. 1, 453 – “porque senhor, fazem grande povoacām em vosos Reynos, e sam causa de se fazer terra novas e romper os matos e abrir pauuys e outros proveitos”.

This is evidence both of a large volume of slaves being shipped from Senegambia and also of their impact in a Portuguese society still coping with the effects of depopulation following the Black Death of 1348.⁵⁵ It reveals that labour needs brought on by the population shortage must in part have driven the expansion and slaving activities of the Portuguese elite, which was accustomed to subsisting within a predatory, militaristic paradigm.⁵⁶

These internal tensions among the Jolof were soon superseded by other symptoms of the trade. Beginning in the 1460s Pullo migrations transformed the region, leading to conflicts in areas as different as Fuuta Tooro on the banks of the Senegal in the north and Kaabu and the Rio Grande in the south.⁵⁷ The Pullo migrated with large numbers of cattle and may also have had some horses deriving from a trade with the Portuguese on the Upper Senegal River.⁵⁸ By the 1480s there was a line of Pullo power running between the Fouta Djalon mountains and Senegambia. Equally important, these migrations also helped catalyse the independence of Kaabu from Mali.⁵⁹ On their way to the Fouta Djalon, the Pullo fought the Kassanké in Casamance, and the experience which the Kaabunké had in defending themselves from the Pullo enhanced their military status and their independence from Mali, whose power was then being eroded by Songhay.⁶⁰

The Pullo migration was largely prompted by a desire for new pastures, perhaps to satisfy increasing livestock herds.⁶¹ These increasing herds coincided with the last decades of the dry period between 1100–1500, when competition for pastures in arid areas by the River Senegal was intense. Many Pullo melted away en route as they found good grazing land, and the army was finally defeated by the Biafada at the Grande

⁵⁵ For the contribution of slave imports to redressing the labour shortage following the Black Death, see Godinho (1981: Vol. 4, 152). The Senegambian origins of these slaves can be deduced from the Valencia evidence and the fact that, as we saw at the start of the chapter, the Portuguese had only reached the Gold Coast the year before this petition, in 1471.

⁵⁶ Estimates of numbers of slaves imported to Portugal at this time range from 33,500 before 1492 (Curtin 1969: 115–16; almost certainly an underestimate) through 80,000 before 1492 (Russell-Wood 1995: 148) and to 150,000 from 1441 to 1495 (Godinho 1981: Vol. 4, 161).

⁵⁷ On the Pullo migrations and their effects on the region, see Niane (1989: 55–61).

⁵⁸ Brooks (1993b: 127).

⁵⁹ Barry (1998: 20–1).

⁶⁰ On the conflict between the Pullo king and the Kassanké in these years, see Sandoval (1627: 38v). The decisive break of Songhay from Mali was in 1489.

⁶¹ Brooks (1993b: 199).

River before dispersing. At the Gambia River, it was later said, the Pullo had been so many that each soldier had thrown a stone into the river and thereby created a ford.⁶² This oral tradition implied more the size of that wave of migration than an actual event, and it is a tradition often associated with cycles of power and migration in Upper Guinea.⁶³ There was a need for new stories to make sense of the countless changes brought on by the Atlantic, for even with these events far from the coast, Atlantic trade had played a role. Although as Brooks argues, climatic stresses were key, a part of the success of the Pullo migrations must have stemmed from divisions among the Jolof triggered by Atlantic trade; and meanwhile, as the Mandinka of Kaabu and the peoples of Casamance who had acculturated to the Mandinka looked beyond Mali for support in their conflicts with the Pullo, they turned to the new power on the horizon, the Europeans in their ships.⁶⁴

Thus the Pullo migration marked a watershed, encouraging both the political independence of Kaabu from Mali and greater alliances between peoples south of the Gambia with seaborne traders. The success of the Pullo army and the growing insecurity of the region attested to by Cadamosto meant that self-defence, and the iron needed to fashion the weapons to achieve this capability, was increasingly important. Demand for iron following the Pullo migrations and the ability of Atlantic traders to supply this played a major role in the expansion of links to Upper Guinea from the 1480s onwards. Thus were new alliances formed in an attempt to deal with the new relationships which maritime traders had themselves helped to bring about by arriving on the coast with horses to trade for people who themselves were seized in the wars which the new horses were used to fight. By 1480, with the Pullo migrations in full flow, the violent circle of Atlantic trading and slavery had begun.

Indeed, whereas the impact of the early trade on the region has to be inferred from a complex reading of sources such as Cadamosto and Diogo Gomes, by this point in the later fifteenth century the picture becomes clearer. Jean Boulègue estimates that by the second half of the fifteenth century eight hundred to one thousand Senegambian slaves were being sold annually from Arguim, and this was a considerable increase

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ See NCAC/OHAD, Cassette 566, page 12, for an account of Tiramaghan crossing the Gambia River in this manner. Some Bainunk traditions also hold that their king, Buba Manga, built a bridge across the Casamance River near his court at Brikama in the same way – from an interview with Ansumane Manga, Singuère, Casamance, April 2011.

⁶⁴ See Brooks (1993b: 199) on the role of climatic stresses.

on the previous trans-Saharan trade to Morocco.⁶⁵ By 1480 the trade had spread into other regions, with Mandinka slaves reaching the slave markets at Seville.⁶⁶ These Mandinka probably came from the Gambia region, and their presence is reflective of this extension of exchange beyond the Damel of Cajor and the Sereer. Here, then, were new cycles of violence and power which had swiftly carved their own space in African society.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN WESTERN AFRICANS AND THE PORTUGUESE IN THE FIFTEENTH-CENTURY ATLANTIC

In order to consolidate this new slave trade, the Portuguese required several types of engagement. Although the first fifty years of African-Portuguese relationships were initially characterised all too often by fear and misunderstandings, as the commercial and political changes precipitated by the Atlantic trade were cemented, the seeds of what became the first mixed communities connected to Atlantic trade also emerged in Africa.

On the institutional level, the first type of engagement needed by the Portuguese was that of political relationships with African rulers. Such diplomatic missions were feasible in areas of centralised government such as among the Jolof and in Mali, and, farther south, in Benin and Kongo. This need was swiftly understood, and the Portuguese monarch João II (1481–95) embarked on a sustained programme of diplomacy in Africa among the Jolof of Senegal, the Obas of Benin and the rulers of Kongo; he also sent ambassadors inland to Mali, Mossi, Songhay and Timbuktu.⁶⁷ The embassy to the Court of Mali was still recalled by that emperor's grandson fifty years later.⁶⁸

However, it is important to realise that the political engagement of the Portuguese did not stem from some proto-colonial policy. The changes which Portuguese rulers hoped to impose on African societies related essentially to the hope of diverting some of the existing trade. There was no attempt to found colonial outposts in this early period, and indeed as we shall see in subsequent chapters, the Portuguese monarchy tried to

⁶⁵ Boulègue (1987a: 88). If accurate, this estimate confirms the earlier supposition that the birth of the Atlantic trade had increased the quantity of slaves being sold from Senegambia.

⁶⁶ Documents illustrating this are found in Albuquerque/Santos (1993: 257–8).

⁶⁷ On this policy of João II, see Mota (1954: Vol. 2, 10) and Ryder (1969: 28–9). On the embassies to Mali and Timbuktu, see João de Barros – MMAII: Vol. 1, 561–2.

⁶⁸ As recounted by Barros – ibid., Vol. 1, 562.

impose draconian penalties on those who did settle on the African coast. Although lip service was paid to the desire to bring about ideological change, this was not a priority. There was a pretended zeal of Christian evangelisation throughout, and although this became important in Kongo, it was not essential to the Portuguese. When it became clear that the Islamic Jolof could not be conquered and would not convert, trade went unimpeded. Indeed, one of the main Christian and political goals – the formation of an alliance against Islam if the mythical Christian King “Prester John” could be found – related far more to shoring up the political situation against the perceived Islamic threat in Portugal than it did to changing Africa.

At the political level, the most concerted attempt at Portuguese official engagement in Senegambia occurred in 1488 with the case of Bumi Jéléen (known in Portuguese sources as Bemoim). Bumi Jéléen was a Jolof prince who came on a caravel to Portugal in 1488 to seek assistance in a civil war that had developed between himself and a rival for the kingship.⁶⁹ The occurrence of a civil war among the Jolof again confirms the growing cycle of instability that has been traced for this period in the preceding sections of this chapter. Bumi Jéléen’s decision to seek support in Portugal indicates how far strategies of extraversion had already been diverted from the pre-existing trans-Saharan trade into an Atlantic dimension. It also offers a very early example of what was to become a long-standing policy of the Portuguese in Kongo and Angola, whereby the Portuguese supported claimants to the throne in the hope of installing puppet rulers.⁷⁰

Bumi Jéléen was well received in the Portuguese court; he was treated as a visiting king and dressed in the clothing of a Portuguese nobleman. This was during the monarchy of João II, who, in line with his active policy of diplomacy in Africa, sent Bumi Jéléen back to the Senegal River with a Portuguese fleet of twenty armed caravels. However, on their arrival at the mouth of the Senegal River, the captain-general of the fleet, Pero Vaz de Cunha, stabbed Bumi Jéléen to death, claiming treason; other accounts simply said that Cunha was afraid of dying of disease and killed the Jolof prince so that he could turn back.⁷¹ The Portuguese mariners had shown

⁶⁹ Indeed, Russell (1995: 162) sees this event as pivotal in the history of relationships between the Portuguese and African kings in this era.

⁷⁰ See for instance Hilton (1985: 53–5).

⁷¹ The main accounts of the Bumi Jéléen affair are all collated in MMAII: Vol. 1, 529–63.

See also Francisco de Lemos Coelho’s account in Peres (1953: 96). On Bemoim as Bumi Jéléen, see Boulègue (1987a: 75).

that they would not treat an African prince as a superior, and indeed João II failed to punish the culprits on their return to Portugal because of the serious penalty he would have had to impose.⁷² Meanwhile, Bumi Jéléen's Jolof companions on the return voyage to the Senegal River were left on the Caboverdean island of Santiago.⁷³

In many ways, therefore, this Portuguese diplomatic intervention was a failure. By siding with Bumi Jéléen only to kill him, they had destroyed their chances of building up a relationship of trust with future Jolof monarchs; their alliance with him could not have been pleasing to his now-unimpeded rivals. Moreover, the affair had emphasised how many barriers of both fear and discrimination there were to the creation of partnerships between Africans and Europeans. Those who had not spent long periods in Western Africa, such as Bumi Jéléen's killer, Pero Vaz de Cunha, were afraid of diseases and other potential threats. Certainly, the Portuguese voyages in Africa were accompanied by extraordinary levels of mortality; in a letter of circa 1497 to the *Reyes Católicos* of Aragón and Castile, Ferdinand and Isabela, Christopher Columbus wrote that over half the population of the kingdom of Portugal had died in the exploration of Guinea.⁷⁴ Many of these sailors doubtless also articulated these fears through a discriminatory discourse. Although scholars such as Debra Blumenthal do not believe that racism was a fully articulated ideology in Iberia at this point, and although there were both positive and negative images of Africans in Europe, there is an important body of evidence that in the late fifteenth century there was an increasing connection between negative ideas of slavery and skin colour in Iberia.⁷⁵ This too must have directed the ways in which Portuguese sailors accompanying

⁷² See Rui de Pina's account – MMAII: Vol. 1, 549.

⁷³ According to Lemos Coelho – see Peres (1953: 96).

⁷⁴ Las Casas (1966b: Vol. 62, 255) – “si se cuenta la gente del reino de Portugal, y las personas de los que son muertos en esta empresa de Guinea, se fallaría que son más de la mitad del reino”. In this passage Las Casas quotes in full a letter of Columbus's to which he had access. This can only be an exaggeration, but it is probably indicative of a gruesome reality, or – just as importantly – of how reality was perceived.

⁷⁵ Sweet (1997: 166) emphasises the pre-existing racial stereotypes in Iberia inherited from Moorish culture and suggests that these were becoming universalised by 1492. Blumenthal (2009) argues forcefully against this position, suggesting that although the large number of African slaves in Iberia in the fifteenth century began to see an association between skin colour and slavery, this was not universalised by the end of the fifteenth century – a picture supported by Medeiros (1985) and Russell-Wood (1978), who both share this view but argue that colour racism quickly came to predominate by the end of the sixteenth century. On the positive and negative images of Africans, see Nafafé (2007: 28–31).

Bumi Jéléen perceived Senegambia, and contributed to the barriers to partnerships between Africans and Europeans.

Whereas Europeans feared death, Africans feared enslavement; they compartmentalised this fear by associating Europeans with cannibalism and witchcraft. When Cadamosto reached the Gambia River in 1455, he was told that people did not want to enter into friendship with the Europeans since they had learnt that the “Christians ate human flesh and that we bought blacks only to eat them”.⁷⁶ The accusation of cannibalism was symbolic of the fear with which the new European traders were seen. It further showed also that Europeans were perceived through the prism of witchcraft, because in Western Africa cannibalism was associated with witchcraft.⁷⁷ Here were white witches who had come literally to “eat” others by taking them away.⁷⁸

From an African perspective, such barriers to mixed communities thus existed at the level of discourses of enslavement-related ritual. However, prejudice stemming from fear of these foreign traders appears to have been less marked than they were for many Europeans. This was largely because Sahelian communities were accustomed to light-skinned outsider traders and, indeed, as we saw in Chapter 1, had already incorporated them into their social frameworks. Although it is likely that there was some familiarity with race as a marker of difference in the medieval Sahel, this was not generalised; according to Bruce Hall, “race” itself had a more cultural meaning than it developed in the subsequent Atlantic world.⁷⁹ Comparatively light-skinned North Africans were common

⁷⁶ MMAII: Vol. 1, 348 – “christiani manzavemo carne humana e che compravemo negri salvo per manzarli”. This belief ran deep in Senegambia. When Geraldini visited the Damel of Cajor in 1519, he was told that “a century ago a legend was told that those of our hemisphere were white and that we ate blacks from Africa; but that around 30 years ago this nonsense had been rejected, once commerce with the Portuguese had begun” (Geraldini 1977: 87) – “corría, de siglo atrás, la leyenda de que los de nuestro hemisferio éramos blancos y que nos comíamos a los negros Etiopes; pero que hacía 30 años que habían abandonado tal patraña, al comerciar con los portugueses.” When juxtaposed with Cadamosto’s evidence, the likelihood would be that this idea only dated from the start of Jolof-Portuguese exchanges.

⁷⁷ Thus according to some traditions, Tiramagahan Traoré’s father, Daamansa Wulading, began to accrue power when he defeated a great witch called Duukamisa who used to eat more than one thousand people per year – NCAC/OHAD, Transcribed Cassette 566.

⁷⁸ On cannibalism and witchcraft, see Hawthorne (2010b: Chapter 6). Moreover, we know from both Angola (Miller 1988: 4–5) and Cameroon (Argenti 2007: 55) that this accusation of cannibalism was widespread in the African Atlantic. For a Eurocentric perspective on cannibalism in the Atlantic world, see Abulfafia (2008: xvi).

⁷⁹ B. Hall (2005).

enough in Senegambia and Upper Guinea, and Diogo Gomes met one from the Algerian town of Tlemcen on the Gambia River in 1448.⁸⁰

Thus one of the greatest barriers to the creation of mixed trading communities in Western Africa was Africans' and Europeans' mutual fear of one another, a fear grounded in various combinations of mutual difference, the ubiquity of mortality, and the challenges of these new exchanges.⁸¹ What such barriers revealed was that there was a deep need for trust at a more localised level between African and European traders. This was a sort of trust which could only be built up if each was prepared to learn more about the other. Such communities could only develop if Europeans were prepared to spend some time living in the region and Africans were prepared to receive them, and it was in the last fifteen years of the fifteenth century that this first began to occur to any significant extent.

As we have seen, the first Portuguese exchanges in West Africa were largely confined to Senegambia. However, this pattern changed in the 1480s. The two major contributing factors were the Pullo migration and the resultant need which Upper Guineans had of new allies, and the fact that the Portuguese had damaged their links with the Jolof monarchy following their failed support of Bumi Jéléen. Both these factors meant that it was at about this time that Portuguese first began to live among African communities south of the Gambia River and intensify trading relationships there. Allied to this was the increasing understanding among the Portuguese of the importance of rivers to successful trading along West Africa's coast; there was a much greater preponderance of rivers south of the Gambia.⁸²

Writing in the first decade of the sixteenth century, Valentim Fernandes wrote of the "many Portuguese Christian merchants visiting and trading with the Blacks" in the area of the Casamance River.⁸³ The same pattern pertained in the São Domingos river.⁸⁴ Fernandes was dependent for his work on informants who knew the region, and therefore one can surmise that this information refers to exchanges which must have developed some time before. He compiled his work at the end of the first decade of

⁸⁰ MMAII: Vol. 1, 195.

⁸¹ On the role of fear in early exchanges in Atlantic Africa, see Green (2006).

⁸² For example, at around this time, in 1499, Álvaro de Caminha, the captain of São Tomé, described his achievements to Manoel I as including the discovery of "many new rivers, in which there are many slaves and [there is] much ivory" – "*descobryndo muitos Rios Novos, em os quaes há muitos escravos e muito marfim*": MMAI: Vol. 1, 167.

⁸³ MMAII: Vol. 1, 712 – "*muytos christãos estâtes mercadores q tractâ cō aquelles Negros*". See also Mark (1985: 17).

⁸⁴ MMAII: Vol. 1, 717.

the sixteenth century, thus these settlements probably began well before the year 1500.

The initial establishment of these settlements had depended on multiple factors. From the African perspective, the political changes and growing instability prompted by ecological fragility and Atlantic trade prompted rulers in Upper Guinea to seek new sources of support. However, this decision was shaped also by the long-standing tradition in the region, which we saw in Chapter 1, in which diaspora traders were well known and accepted in the region. Thus proximate environmental and political causes were necessary conditions for the first seeds of mixed communities in Western Africa, but they alone were not sufficient; without the preceding cultural and economic histories tied to the Mandinka expansion, the authorities of the Casamance and São Domingos regions might have opted for a very different course of action.

From the European side, meanwhile, the development of these mixed communities grew out of the perceived need for slaves to feed growth in both the wider Mediterranean economy and, as we shall see in the next chapter, the local Caboverdean one. Not only were African slaves an important source of labour in underpopulated Portugal, as we have seen, but they also increased Portugal's commercial links with other parts of southern Europe. The establishment of the *Casa dos Escravos* and of an *Almoxarife dos Escravos* in Lisbon in 1486, which showed the increasing importance of slaving to Portugal, centralised a trade which had hitherto been confined to the Algarve.⁸⁵ Large numbers of these slaves were re-exported from Portugal to different cities in Spain, enhancing Portugal's economic strength in the region.⁸⁶ If this growth was supported by the slave trade, few saw any need to question the moral basis of this new expansion. Why after all should we expect Portuguese mariners to have valued the lives of Africans whom they seized or bought for slaves when they did not appear to give much value to their own lives? The vast mortality of these early voyages shows that had they done so, they would not have embarked from the Mediterranean port of Lagos in the first place.

CHANGING POLITICAL AND TRADING RELATIONSHIPS IN WESTERN AFRICA, CIRCA 1490–1510

The advent of these commercial settlements on the West African coast in the 1490s was symptomatic of wider changes in Western Africa in

⁸⁵ Vogt (1973a: 2–4).

⁸⁶ An excellent study involving data on this trade to Valencia is Blumenthal (2009).

which the accent of Atlantic engagement switched from Senegambia to Upper Guinea. Although the Atlantic slave trade continued to be strong in Senegambia for a while yet, as the sixteenth century developed the focus there would switch away from slaving to trade in commodities such as hides, ivory and wax sold to English and French traders. Such trade does not, however, appear to have involved much residence on the part of Europeans in Atlantic trading settlements of the coast. Creolised communities living in mainland Africa came to be connected to the slave trade, which increasingly was conducted south of the Gambia from Upper Guinean ports on the Casamance, São Domingos and Grande Rivers.

By 1500, the extent of the slave trade was significant. Duarte Pacheco Pereira, writing in 1505, gave estimates for the whole region from the Senegal River to Sierra Leone of 3,500 slaves exported annually.⁸⁷ He described a flourishing trade on the River Senegal, in Cajor, among the Sereer, in Casamance and on the Rio Grande.⁸⁸ His figures have been criticised by Ivana Elbl as obviously exaggerated.⁸⁹ But this view depends on the idea that the account books kept by royal officials were accurate. Because they did not allow for cheating and contraband, this is a problematic assumption.⁹⁰ Indeed, we know that around this time, as early as 1505, there were accusations of contraband by the slave traders of São Tomé, and so it is a reasonable assumption that such practices had already taken hold in Western Africa. Given the greater longevity of the trade in this region, it is possible that this practice had indeed been borrowed from Western Africa by traders in São Tomé.⁹¹ In fact, Pereira's figures are broadly in keeping with other estimates of the time.⁹² Certainly, Cocolí, Jalonké, Sape and Sereer slaves began to be recorded in Europe from 1497 onwards with relative frequency, which confirms his remarks regarding the increasing sourcing of African slaves from areas south of Senegambia.⁹³

⁸⁷ MMAII: Vol. 1, 658.

⁸⁸ Ibid., Vol. 1, 630–48.

⁸⁹ Elbl (1997: 68).

⁹⁰ See Newson (2006: 157) on the unreliability of early slave export figures from Africa and the connection of this to contraband.

⁹¹ MMAI: Vol. 1, 206 – “os rendeyros e tratadores que ora som da Ilha de Sâthomé, nó g[u] ardam cõ muta parte os taxas ordenadas do que devê mâdar dar por peça”. The practice was widespread enough for the crown to ban all slaves being taken from Kongo other than in the royal ships in 1519 (*ibid.*, Vol. 1., 429).

⁹² Elbl herself cites two of these estimates, one by Chá' Masser that at least 2,000 slaves arrived annually in Portugal in the 1500s, and the other of the port inspector Bernardo Segura of 1516 that the total slave-trading potential is 6,750 in 1517 (MMAI: Vol.1, 379) – see Elbl (1997: 35).

⁹³ Cortes (1964: 293, 306, 338, 347, 363, 383, 428, 432, 433, 444, 457).

Changes in social organisation may be better indicators of the impact of the slave trade than the game of guestimating export figures. We have already seen something of this in this chapter with the rise of the Pullo and the growing independence of Kaabu from Mali, both related in part to the onset of Atlantic trade. The evidence is that these processes accelerated at the end of the fifteenth and the start of the sixteenth centuries, reinforcing the picture of how the birth of the Atlantic trade was a necessary but not sufficient condition of political fragmentation and civil strife.

The clearest example of this is among the Jolof. Although there still appears to have been a united Jolof political unit in the late fifteenth century that included the provinces of Jolof, Cajor, Waalo, Bawol and Siin, it was unravelling. The Sereer polity of Saluum was founded around 1500 from a constellation of Gelwaar/Sereer chieftaincies which previously had been preyed on by the Jolof cavalry for slaves.⁹⁴ The independence of the Sereer derived from their strengthened military capacity, a result of their new ability to procure horses in the trade for slaves. Meanwhile, the Jolof empire fragmented into its constituent kingdoms following uprisings on the coast and the rise of Pullo power in Fouta Toro circa 1510.⁹⁵ The weakness brought about by competing power interests bolstered by the Atlantic trade had precipitated a decisive shift in political organisation in Senegambia. Kingdoms like Cajor and Siin had new access to horses and could free themselves from the old Jolof heartland.

The effects of this on the Jolof are expressed through the evidence that the vast majority of slaves in early America were Jolof, most likely war captives procured through attacks from Cajor and the Sereer.⁹⁶ The first major slave revolt on Hispaniola, which took place in December 1521, was undertaken by slaves who were mostly Jolof.⁹⁷ The Jolof quickly gained a reputation for being “arrogant, disobedient, agitators and incorrigible, responsible for uprisings among the [B]lacks and for the deaths of some Christians”; in 1532 a law was passed decreeing that Jolofs should no longer be taken to America.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Curtin (1975: 10); Boulègue (1987a: 17).

⁹⁵ Boulègue (1987a: 160).

⁹⁶ That there were regular slave raids from Cajor in this era is shown by Geraldini (1977: 79), who recounts in 1519 that while in Cajor the king had “occasion of making ... certain expeditions [i.e. raids]”: “*ocasión de hacer ... ciertas expediciones*”.

⁹⁷ Saco (1879: Vol. 1, 131); Deive (1989: 33).

⁹⁸ Saco (1879: Vol. 1, 158): –“*soberbios, inobedientes, revolucionarios, incorregibles y autores de los alzamientos de negros y de las muertes de algunos cristianos*”. However, the evidence from Tables I.1 and I.2 proves that this law was routinely ignored.

That these changes in the balance of political power were connected to the rise of the Atlantic world is accepted by historians.⁹⁹ The Jolof themselves recognised this all too well. Awareness that the Atlantic trade had precipitated the growing weakness of Jolof power may have been manifested in sporadic hostility directed at Portuguese ships, particularly around the Cape Verde peninsula. Portuguese ships bound for India in 1505 were refused water there and instead sailed on to Cajor, where they were supplied.¹⁰⁰ Two years later, fifteen sailors aboard Vasco Gomez d'Abreu's fleet bound for India were seized, again in this region, and were only ransomed with difficulty; and yet again, the fleet was well received in Cajor.¹⁰¹ Clearly, the Damel of Cajor saw the Portuguese as vital, and indeed he had an ambassador at the Portuguese court in Lisbon in 1515, but perhaps those loyal to the traditional seat of Jolof power resented the Portuguese disruption, their alliance with Cajor, and their recent support for Bumi Jéléen as well.¹⁰²

Political changes were not limited to the unravelling of Jolof's concentrated power. South of the Gambia River, they also included the independence of the federation of Kaabu from Mali. The association of Kaabu's rise with Atlantic trade is apparent in both oral and written histories. By 1500 Kaabu was a political force, referred to by Pacheco Pereira as a powerful kingdom.¹⁰³ Historians see Kaabu's independence from Mali towards the end of the fifteenth century as connected to an increasing autonomy derived from the growing commodity and slave trade with the Atlantic, and perhaps also with the need for greater self-reliance which followed the Pullo migrations of the 1470s and 1480s.¹⁰⁴

Thus the political instability and reorientations which developed from the 1460s to the 1480s continued at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries. With some kingdoms, such as Jolof, this precipitated fragmentation, and yet with others, such as Kaabu, there was rather political consolidation. Moreover, just as the political effects varied, so did the nature of the slaving economy. In Senegambia most slaves appear to have been captured through war, as the evidence we looked at earlier in this chapter from Cadamosto made clear. As we also saw earlier, Geraldini witnessed the Damel of Cajor embarking on a military

⁹⁹ This is the general argument of Boulègue (1987a). See also Fage (1980: 302).

¹⁰⁰ Castanheda (1979: Vol. 1, 211).

¹⁰¹ Ibid., Vol. 1, 308–9.

¹⁰² On the ambassador in Lisbon, see MMAI: Vol. 15, 29.

¹⁰³ See C. Lopes (1999: 77–8); for the passage from Pereira, see MMAII: Vol. 1, 642.

¹⁰⁴ Havik (2004b: 21); Barry (1998: 20–2). See also Rodney (1970: 12); Curtin (1975: 8).

campaign in 1519, and though this was clearly a regular occurrence, these Jolof derided the peoples of Guinea (i.e., south of the Gambia) who lived “without the least security, since there brothers and relatives ... sell one another to traders from far distant lands”.¹⁰⁵ This suggests that raids between neighbouring villages, perhaps related through kinship, were not unknown south of the Gambia. Whereas in Senegambia wars between large groups were the major source of slaves, in Upper Guinea slaves were already being procured through intra-lineage and village raids of the sort which came to be much more widespread in later generations.¹⁰⁶

What emerges from this complex pattern is that effects of the new Atlantic trade were not uniform and depended on pre-existing social and political configurations. On the social level, as we have seen, the very possibility of mixed Atlantic trading communities depended on the willingness of Upper Guinean elites to welcome and make some accommodations with members of trading diasporas as they had learnt to do previously with the Mandinka. On the political level, meanwhile, the nature of political organisation and how centralised power was structured in a given area was particularly important.¹⁰⁷ In previously centralised regions such as that of the Jolof, the tendency was towards fragmentation, with existing political structures unable to control their representatives, who had new access to sources of military strength such as cavalry, in far-flung peripheries. In broadly decentralised regions, however, such as those in Upper Guinea, the smaller political units meant that rulers could retain control, but that in order to do so they needed to make alliances with the newcomers. It was the combination of both pre-existing cultural and political factors which thus facilitated the settlement of Europeans in these areas and allowed the first steps to be taken towards Atlantic Creole communities on the African mainland. Meanwhile, the new configurations allowed for the rise of new centralised states like Kaabu in areas where these had not been so strong previously; the new patterns as a whole were embedded through the intensification of cycles of violent disorder precipitated by the labour demands of the new Atlantic economy.

When we try to imagine what the atmosphere of such a distant time and place was like, the historical record is not our friend. First-hand

¹⁰⁵ Geraldini (1977: 135): “sin seguridad alguna, ya que allí los hermanos y consanguíneos ... venden a mercaderes de remotísimas naciones a sus propios hermanos y consanguíneos”.

¹⁰⁶ Baum (1999); Hawthorne (2003).

¹⁰⁷ On the relationship of the slave trade to centralised and decentralised societies, see Hawthorne (2001) and M. Klein (2001).

accounts of actual arrivals and exchanges or dialogues on the Western African coast are few. However, there may be aides to help us imagine some of these exchanges. With the colonisation of the Caribbean island of Hispaniola in the 1490s, connections rapidly sprang up between Western Africa and the Caribbean (cf. [Chapter 6](#)), and the atmosphere of exchanges among the Spanish in Hispaniola may convey something of what was then going on in Western Africa. When Las Casas arrived in Hispaniola for the first time, in 1499, he wrote:

We cast our anchors in the port of Santo Domingo, and before any man among us had jumped ashore some of the residents here came down to the beach, and some of those on the ship who had been here before asked those who they recognized in a loud voice ... “What news? What news is there in the land?”, to which the others answered, “Good, good, there is much gold, a grain of so many pounds was found, and there is war with the Indians which means that there will be many slaves”. There was much happiness and rejoicing among those on the ship when they heard the news.¹⁰⁸

Turning from the Caribbean to Western Africa, we know from casual accounts that there was a constant back and forth of ships along the coast. Diogo Gomes came upon two ships trading among the Sereer when he arrived in the Saluum in 1462, and Amerigo Vespucci came upon another two when he reached the Cape Verde peninsula in 1501.¹⁰⁹ Also, of course, these sightings of sails would have led to exchanges of news among the sailors. With a slaving culture as embedded as it was, and with the wars between Sereer, Jolof and Pullo that had developed partly as a consequence of this, it is not too ahistorical to imagine that exchanges similar to this one observed by Las Casas may have taken place, where slavers rejoiced at the wars of African peoples and the prospect of the captives which would be sold to them as a result.

¹⁰⁸ Las Casas (1966b: Vol. 63, 178) – “echamos anclas en este puerto de Sancto Domingo, antes que hombre de nosotros saltase en tierra, llegáronse a la playa algunos de los aquí vecinos, y los de la nao, algunos que habían estado acá, preguntando a los que cognoscían, á voz alta ...” “Qué nuevas, qué nuevas hay en la tierra?”, responda, “buenas, buenas, que hay mucho oro, que se cogió un grano de tantas libras, y que hay guerra con los indios porque habrá harto esclavos, etc.” De las cuales nuevas hobo en la nao harta alegría y regocijo”.

¹⁰⁹ On Vespucci, see Formisano (1992: 19). On Gomes, see MMAII: Vol. 1, 202.

The Settlement of Cabo Verde and Early Signs of Creolisation in Western Africa

In his account of the settlements on the Casamance and São Domingos Rivers discussed in the previous chapter, Valentim Fernandes stated that the main trading partners of these settlements were Caboverdeans.¹ Here we get a glimpse of how, as we shall see in this chapter, the settlement of Cabo Verde from the 1460s onwards was a key factor in both the development of Creole communities in Western Africa and in the emergence of the trade networks of the early African Atlantic.

The ten large islands and numerous islets of Cabo Verde were initially settled by European sailors in the 1460s. In the sixteenth century there were two main inhabited islands, Santiago and Fogo. The archipelago offered a base for Europeans trading in Africa and swiftly became connected to the African coast, so that both islands and the coast were integrated into a single geopolitical zone. Economically, neither can be studied alone in this early period.² Thus while recognising the priority of pre-existing African factors in shaping Atlantic exchanges in Upper Guinea, we must also accept the integration of Cabo Verde into the picture. This is particularly important for the understanding of the development of Creole communities; the Creole culture which emerged in Western Africa was one that spanned both the islands and the coast and did so because of the heavy interconnections between the two zones.³

This chapter explores the first settlement of Cabo Verde. Although traditional historiography has tended to emphasise settlement and

¹ MMAII: Vol. 1, 717.

² A point made by Torrão (1991: 237).

³ Horta (2000: 101); Mark (2002: 14).

colonisation, by looking in detail at economic data I show how dependent the settlement on Cabo Verde was on slave labour and thus how crucial slavery was to this very early colonial settlement. Slaves were essential to the labour provided on plantations, which provided the cotton that Cabo Verde grew to weave the cloths that were used for exchange on the African coast. They were also needed for labour in the construction of a colonial outpost which had to be built from scratch in these desolate islands. In this chapter, this analysis is linked to the relationships which Caboverdeans began to develop in Upper Guinea in the late fifteenth century and to the new emphasis on slaving which this required there.

This process turns out to be central not only to the emergence of the first Atlantic slave trade to Europe which we saw in the last chapter, but also to the emergence of a Creole culture. By the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the earliest signs of a Caboverdean Creole language emerged. This was still a pidgin language of communication, not yet a fully fledged vernacular. However, as Caboverdeans travelled to and from West Africa for trade, they took both this mixed language and the mixed cultural forms that were developing on the islands with them. Thus as we see in this chapter, the islands developed a key role in the emergence of an Atlantic Creole society in Western Africa in the early sixteenth century, thereby offering an early indication of just how far the processes of creolisation and slavery would be connected in the Atlantic world.

Yet at the same time, as we saw in the last chapter, this role was only made possible by the pre-existing commercial and cultural configurations of Upper Guinea, which determined which areas of the African mainland were open to this process. Thus the most important new aspect of the argument I put forward here is that the development of creolisation across Western Africa was made possible through a combination of internal and external factors, and not by the subordination of the internal to the external as an earlier historiography once suggested. It was because of a fusion of local West African factors and wider, more global ones that the Creole world born in Cabo Verde could be transferred to the African mainland.

THE SETTLEMENT OF CABO VERDE AND EARLY TRADE WITH THE WEST AFRICAN COAST

When the first Portuguese ships reached the Senegal River in the mid-1440s, the islands of Cabo Verde had not even been spied by European

mariners. However, around 1460 Cabo Verde was settled by Genoese and Portuguese sailors.⁴ Simultaneously way-stations to more distant points of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans and bases from which to trade with the nearby African coast, without these islands the subsequent history of Western Africa would have been very different. The intensification of the slave trade in Senegambia and Upper Guinea in the late fifteenth century was partly facilitated by the settlement of the islands and the more frequent exchanges which this settlement facilitated. Thus to understand how Creole society here evolved with Atlantic trade, we must also understand how Caboverdean society evolved and was interconnected to the African mainland. This is particularly important given the meaning I ascribe to creolisation in this book, with the latest research demonstrating that the Kriolu language itself developed on Cabo Verde before being transferred to Upper Guinea.⁵

One of the first Europeans to set foot on Cabo Verde was Diogo Gomes. He described a verdant scene: “There were many fish there. On land we found many strange birds and rivers of fresh water ... There were many ducks there. There was also a large quantity of figs ... there are large numbers of these trees. And we also saw much pasture there”.⁶ Yet such pastoral scenes were not to last. The sixteenth century saw over-exploitation of the islands’ delicate ecosystem and their desertification. From the moment the process of colonisation began, this outpost of the nascent Portuguese empire was set on a collision course with nature and history.

Cabo Verde was permanently occupied by the Portuguese in 1462 with the founding of the settlement of Ribeira Grande, the first European city built in the tropics.⁷ The principal focus was to settle the islands, but this was not easy. In 1466, trading privileges had to be given by the Portuguese crown to residents of Ribeira Grande to encourage settlement, thereby instituting a mechanism for population which was later copied

⁴ There is a tedious literature relating to the discovery of the islands and who was the “first” to set foot on them. Caboverdean historians have challenged the view that the islands were unknown before the Portuguese “discovery” of them. A useful summary of this literature is Green (2007b: 5–7).

⁵ Jacobs (2009: 320 n.1 and 352 n.51; idem., 2010).

⁶ MMAII: Vol. 1, 203 – “Havia ali grande pescaria. Em terra, porém, achamos muitas aves estranhas e rios de agua doce ... Havia aí muitos patos. Também era grande a fartura de figos ... destas árvores há grande número. E ali também vimos farta pastagem”.

⁷ AG, Vol. 11, 32: Carta de Privilégios dos Moradores da Ilha de Santiago, June 12, 1466: “como averia quatro anos que elle começara povorar a sua ilha de Santiago...”; see also J. Barreto (1938: 65).

on São Tomé.⁸ This had some effect. Three years later the *capitanias* or captaincies of Ribeira Grande and Alcatraz were founded on Santiago, and the Portuguese crown made the first contract of trade for the Guinea coast with Fernão Gomes.⁹ Thus one can say that the first administrative and human settlement of the islands took roughly ten years, from their “discovery” in 1460 to an effective level of settlement and their administrative organisation in 1469. These ten years must have involved intense maritime trade because the majority of the materials used to build houses in Ribeira Grande were imported from Portugal: lime, floor, roof and wall tiles, calc for mortar and plaster, limestone for door and window frames, columns, arches and rib-vaults, marble for tombstones, and wood for construction.¹⁰

One should not underestimate the psychological importance of this process of settlement, for what went on in Cabo Verde was very different from events in the other Atlantic archipelagos already settled by the Portuguese, the Azores and Madeira. Whereas these other islands had familiar geographical and climatic conditions, the “island Sahel” of Cabo Verde belonged to a different register.¹¹ It may not have been the heat itself which was so alien – the summers of the Iberian plains were every bit as hot as the conditions in the African Atlantic – but rather the aridity. The desolation of this desert necklace of islands cast adrift in the Atlantic was discouraging to Europeans, and the Portuguese were unable to settle the islands alone. Many Catalans and especially Genoese joined the Portuguese among the Europeans who lived there.¹² One of the first two captains of the island, Antoni di Noli, credited with having discovered them by the Portuguese crown, was Genoese. Indeed the Genoese,

⁸ AG, Vol. 11, 32: Carta de Priviliégios dos Moradores da Ilha de Santiago, 12 June 1466. For São Tomé, see MMAI, Vol. 1, 50–1 (a decree of 1485); for the letter of privileges in *ibid.*, Vols. 1, 183 and Vol. 4, 21 for 1500.

⁹ For the dates of the *capitanias*, see J. Barreto (1938: 67). Gomes’s contract dated from November 1469 (for more details, see M. Silva 1970: Vol. 25, no. 97, 27); Gomes had previously been the receiver of all slaves and goods from Guinea since 1456 – Vogt (1973a: 2), Ballong-wen-Menuda (1993: Vol. 1, 47 n.8).

¹⁰ Richter (2009: 156) and also in personal communication. This process thus prefigured the export of large amounts of construction materials to Elmina for the construction of the Portuguese fort there in 1482; following the Elmina expedition, similar shipments of such materials followed to Kongo.

¹¹ On the different ecological conditions of the Atlantic islands, see Crosby (1986: 72–3) and Henriques (2000: 31). The phrase “island Sahel” is Correia e Silva’s – see the title of Correia e Silva (1996). For a discussion of how this different register affected the psychologies of the colonists, see Green (2006).

¹² T. Hall (1992: Vol. 2, 599) is good on the Genoese links. See also Bentley Duncan (1972: 19).

operating under the aegis of powerful merchants such as Bartolomeu Marchionni, dominated the early supply of slaves from Senegambia to Lisbon and Cabo Verde.¹³ Thus from the very start, control of the islands and the operation of the slave trade from mainland Africa were connected.

Once a process of efficient settlement had begun by 1470, attention turned to integrating Cabo Verde into the economy of the new trading zones which had already opened up on the African coast. Here, the royal privileges granted in 1466 were fundamental. The Portuguese crown allowed the islanders to trade anywhere between the Senegal River and Sierra Leone, but the area beyond Sierra Leone was granted in exclusivity to Fernão Gomes in his 1469 contract. The Portuguese crown also stipulated that only goods and crops from the Caboverdean islands themselves could be used in trade to the African coast. Very rapidly the islanders settled on horse-breeding and the cultivation of cotton, selling horses and weaving cloths known as *panos di terra*, which were used as items of exchange on the coast where good-quality cloths were a valued commodity and a sign of prestige.¹⁴ Both strategies in the formation of this early Atlantic commercial circuit were continuities from the existing trans-Saharan trade, in which horses and the trade in cloths through Morocco had been important for many years (cf. Chapters 1 and 2). Thus the first development of the Caboverdean economy involved continuities with the old long-distance trading economy of Western Africa, just as the first Portuguese exchanges in Arguim, Cajor and Siin had done.

There was however a hiatus in the early formation of Caboverdean society, with a Spanish attempt to seize the islands in the mid-1470s. The late 1470s saw the Spanish trying to encroach on Portugal's African trade at every point between the Cape Verde peninsula and the Gold Coast, but these tensions were resolved by the 1479 Treaty of Alcaçovas and thereafter Cabo Verde's integration into the geopolitical and cultural space of Western Africa was secured.¹⁵ The trade of the islands had been sufficient for the first *almoxarife* – or administrator of state property – to be established in 1471, and an accountant followed the Alcaçovas treaty

¹³ Mendes (2007: 342–51).

¹⁴ On cotton see E. Lopes (1944: 52); J. Barreto (1938: 70); on horse-breeding, see Brooks (1993b: 127), and on the importance of horses in general, see T. Hall (1992). Law (1980: 53) suggests that the value of horses in the slave trade declined because a horse-breeding system was established in the Senegambia and Upper Guinea regions. However, perhaps more likely is that the value declined as the demand for slaves increased in the sixteenth century.

¹⁵ Rumeu de Armas (1956: 103); Castilian attacks on Cabo Verde ran from 1475–77.

in 1480.¹⁶ This suggests that the development of both horse-breeding and cotton plantations took place throughout the late 1460s and the 1470s and was sufficient for the trade with the coast to be profitable by 1480. The cotton plantations required slaves to labour in the fields and in cotton processing, and thus a significant trade in slaves with the coast must also have been under way by the early 1470s at the latest. The importance of slaving to early society may be underlined by the fact that the phrase “*largo do pelourinho*” (“Pillory Square”) also means “marketplace” today in the Kriolu of Santiago Island, which shows how slave sales and markets were seen as synonymous from very early in the colony.¹⁷

Thus very quickly Cabo Verde was integrated into the picture of slave trading which we saw in the previous chapter for Senegambia. This illustrates why the early history of Western Africa may provide clues as to the origins of various aspects of the subsequent Atlantic and African Atlantic worlds. By 1471, the year in which Portuguese mariners first reached the Gold Coast, the economic space of Western Africa had become more or less integrated. Clearly the processes by which that space was formed affected how Portuguese sailors then developed exchanges on the Gold Coast, in Benin, Kongo and elsewhere in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.¹⁸

Cabo Verde’s economy was very rapidly seen as a prize. By as early as 1469, two Sevillian traders, Joham and Pero de Lugo, were trading cudbear (a lichen) from Cabo Verde to Portugal.¹⁹ Ships from Madeira were being provisioned by people in Cabo Verde and sent to trade in Upper Guinea by 1472, whence slaves were most likely despatched to work on Madeira’s sugar plantations.²⁰ These years saw a boom in the sugar industry on Madeira. Whereas circa 1450 the island did not consume more than one-third of its wheat production, by 1479 Madeira had become an importer of wheat, largely because land which previously had been used to cultivate wheat now held sugar plantations and vineyards.²¹ Although this sugar boom was not entirely dependent on slave labour, the availability of African slaves played a part.²²

¹⁶ Z. Cohen (2007: 72).

¹⁷ Richter (2009: 69).

¹⁸ One could compare Cabo Verde’s swift integration to subsequent events in São Tomé.

This island only developed its first sugar plantations after 1486, and yet by 1499 it was pivotal to the Portuguese trade linking Benin and Elmina – see Ballong-wen-Menuuda (1993: Vol. 1, 161–3, 330–4).

¹⁹ HGCV: CD, Vol. 1, 23.

²⁰ Ibid., Vol. 1, 25 – a document of February 8, 1472.

²¹ Godinho (1981: Vol. 4, 233–5).

²² Mendes (2007: 356) shows that slavery was not the only aspect of this development on Madeira.

The profitability of this early trade between Cabo Verde and the African coast is underlined by the number of illegal traders. In 1474 the crown passed a law concerning the illegal trade of inhabitants of Cabo Verde in “Guinea”.²³ Yet with Cabo Verde so distant from Portugal, the crown was impotent. The authorities on the island of Santiago mentioned the illegal trade again in 1481, and individuals were accused in both 1484 and 1490 of trading illegally from Santiago to Sierra Leone for gold, slaves and ivory.²⁴ Meanwhile, the French traveller Eustache de la Fosse found a further two ships at the Cape Verde peninsula in 1479.²⁵ Thus a generation after the first European ships arrived at the Senegal River in 1445, European trade operating through Cabo Verde was a fixture of the commercial pattern of life in Western Africa, stretching from Senegambia south to Sierra Leone.

We have already seen in the previous chapter that the development of this new Atlantic commercial space in Senegambia had contributed to a cycle of violent disorder. The increasing insecurity was naturally also related to how Caboverdeans integrated into the framework. It is no coincidence that the earliest specific reference of the peoples with whom Caboverdeans traded, from 1484, points to the “river Gambia in the straits of Banhuine [Bainunk]”.²⁶ This fact may be related to the Pullo migrations. The Gambia was a Mandinka-dominated area, and thus the Bainunk referred to here were almost certainly the Mandinka-influenced Kassanké with whom the Pullo fought during their migrations (cf. [Chapter 2](#)). Very likely, this openness of the Kassanké to trade with the Caboverdeans in the 1480s was related to a need to create new alliances in the new circumstances. Here, we see concrete evidence to support the argument made in the last chapter, that the Pullo migrations led to peoples in Upper Guinea turning to Atlantic traders in order to make alliances: The nearest Atlantic traders were of course Caboverdeans, and it was people from these islands who were in the best position to take advantage of this new situation as it developed.²⁷

²³ AG, Vol. 2: 487–9.

²⁴ Torrão (1991: 245–6).

²⁵ MMAII: Vol. 1, 468.

²⁶ Albuquerque/Santos (1993: 380); this document refers to a journey up the Gambia in 1483–4, mentioning the “*rio de Guambia no estreito de Banhuine...*”.

²⁷ Cf. Brooks (1993b: 199), who cites Almada’s assertion that the Pullo ravaged every Mandinka community they passed on the north bank of the Gambia, and says that the implications of the migration remain to be assessed. One of them may have been this increased commerce south of the Gambia with the Caboverdean and Portuguese traders.

When Caboverdeans entered into the economy in force, the accent of regional trade in Upper Guinea shifted towards slaving and away from the commodity trade in goods such as kola and salt, which hitherto had predominated. For what Caboverdeans needed above all else was labour to forge their new economy. They demanded slaves. As we saw in Chapter 1, although oral histories do suggest that Kaabunké raided for slaves in areas of Upper Guinea in the pre-Atlantic era, Rodney made a strong argument that slavery cannot have existed as an institution here prior to the arrival of the Europeans, because it was not mentioned by any of the early Portuguese sources which otherwise noted the practices of African societies in some detail.²⁸ In an interesting gloss on this point, Trevor Hall later noted that some of these early accounts did, however, cite the existence of slavery as an institution in Islamic societies of Senegambia, but not among non-Islamic societies farther south along the coast.²⁹ To this one could add evidence from West-Central Africa, where again early Portuguese reports from Kongo note the existence of slavery. These details thus support Rodney's argument here and suggest that the emphasis on slaving which emerged with the connections to Cabo Verde represented a change in the practices of Upper Guinea.

One wonders if this emphasis of the new Caboverdean trade disturbed the lineage heads who were involved. They were probably more concerned with shoring up the security of their lineages than worrying about the individuals who were sold as slaves. Yet we should not pass over the role of ritual and belief here. Many people in Senegambia and Upper Guinea believed that their spirits would return home on their deaths even if they were sold into slavery.³⁰ Lineage heads shared this belief. Probably they thought that by sacrificing some of their number or capturing members of rival lineages, they were strengthening their lineage in return for a sacrifice which, for the individual and the lineage concerned, would not be permanent. Human beings throughout history have shown an extraordinary facility in choosing moral positions that justify their behaviour; for the lineage heads, this could have constituted a moral discourse which legitimised the practices that evolved as the slaving economy and consequent cycles of insecurity expanded with the

²⁸ Rodney (1966: 433–4).

²⁹ T. Hall (1992: Vol. 1, 74 n.48).

³⁰ Brooks (1993b: 262). Hawthorne (2010b: Chapter 6) notes how “the spirits of both the good and the evil, most all thought from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, continued to live on earth, affecting the living on a daily basis”. The lives of the dead and the living are still believed to intersect today – see Green (2001: 227–8).

development of trans-Atlantic trade and the consolidation of the links with Cabo Verde.

THE MIXED SOCIETY IN CABO VERDE AND THE FIRST SIGNS OF CREOLISATION

In the previous chapter, we saw how the first development of mixed Atlantic communities in Upper Guinea began as a consequence of these African-European exchanges. It became clear that preceding African cultural and political configurations were essential in this process. However the formation of mixed Atlantic communities required both African and European partners, and the European partners came from Cabo Verde. By the 1490s, when the first seeds of mixed European-African communities had emerged in Casamance, they had already had thirty years to develop as Cabo Verde was colonised.

It was in this period that the first signs of creolisation developed on the islands, something which the Caboverdeans took with them as they plied to and from the settlements in West Africa for slaves. Proximity shortened the length of trading journeys and enabled Caboverdeans to carry them out more frequently than could mariners from Portugal, accelerating exchanges between Africans and others. The origins of this emerging mixed society in Cabo Verde are therefore very important to understanding the nature of early creolisation in the Atlantic world. As we shall see here, these origins were fundamentally connected to the processes of slavery and institutional violence which were constitutive of the historical condition of Creole societies in the Atlantic.

The cultural world of Cabo Verde in these early years was mixed. Not only were Europeans a mixture of Aragonese, Genoese and Portuguese, but there were also of course a large number of Africans from diverse origins. As the necessity of slave labour increased to build this new society and consolidate its trading links in the last years of the fifteenth century, the first traces of the Kriolu language developed, initially as a pidgin to ease communication between the African and European architects of this new society.³¹ With this mixed language went a certain mixture of cultures, and by 1501 there were accusations that people from Cabo Verde were travelling to the African coast to sell fake charms in imitation of

³¹ Lang (2006); Jacobs (2009: 352 n.1). This argument follows from the large number of Wolof words in Santiago Creole and the fact that Wolof slaves only predominated in the trade to the islands in the fifteenth century.

those adopted locally, which indicates how ideas travelled from Africa to Cabo Verde and affected the ideas of both Africans and Europeans who lived there.³²

This Atlantic cultural and linguistic framework was still very new. It went with other changes which were equally irreversible. Most apparent of these were the mixed-race children who were born of the sexual relations between male masters and female slaves. This population was an inevitable consequence of the colonial condition of Cabo Verde; on the practical, physical level, this was due to the absence of European women on the islands, and on the ideological level it was due to the belief in fifteenth-century Iberia that, as Blumenthal has shown, “it was a master’s prerogative to have sex with his slave women … an enslaved woman’s body was at the complete disposal of her master”.³³ Naturally, there were important correlations for both gender relationships and the status of the new mixed-race class.

In the Salazar era there used to be a tendency among some historians of Cabo Verde to romanticise the early exchanges of Africans and Europeans on the islands. In an influential book on the island of Santiago, the esteemed historian Ilídio do Amaral wrote of how the island’s Creoles were “born of the harmonious fusion of the White with black slaves” (sic, including capitalisation).³⁴ However, the notion that the skewed power relations of male European slavers and their female African slaves could possibly have led to a harmonious fusion is difficult to sustain.³⁵ The evidence of Blumenthal and the work of scholars such as Thomas Burnard on Jamaica and James Sweet on Brazil make the relationship between slavery and sexual exploitation in the Atlantic world abundantly obvious.³⁶ It is difficult to see how Cabo Verde could have been any different, and thus the emergence of this first mixed society was predicated on violence, just as the primary creolisation of Upper Guinea had been in the pre-Atlantic era.

Part of the consolidation and codification of this violence emerged through the administrative structure which developed on the islands. R. I. Moore has suggested that the expansion of the administrative class in the medieval period was related to the development of structures of

³² HGCV: CD, Vol. 1, 123.

³³ Blumenthal (2009: 87–8).

³⁴ Amaral (1964: 19): “nascido da fusão harmoniosa do Branco com os escravos negros”.

³⁵ The sexual exploitation by European colonists of their female African slaves in the early Caboverdean colony is cited also by T. Hall (1992: Vol. 1, 294–5); this is of course not to stigmatise the society that followed, but rather to place it in a broader context.

³⁶ Burnard (2004); Sweet (2003).

persecution in European societies.³⁷ In Cabo Verde administrative structures developed very rapidly, coinciding with the initial violence which characterised both the slave trade on which the islands were founded and the sexual exploitation of female slaves. The consolidation of settlement in Santiago through the 1470s helped in the settlement of the nearby island of Fogo; the first church was built there in 1480.³⁸ The accounts of the 1490s imply growing efficiency.³⁹ By 1495 there was a sufficient slave population on Santiago for a church to be built for the Black African confraternity, *Nossa Senhora do Rosário*.⁴⁰ By 1500 there would be a public jail in Ribeira Grande with an employed jailer.⁴¹

This administrative consolidation related to the new slave trade. This was the real economic motor of the region; violence and conditions of inequality were fundamentally connected to creolisation in the Atlantic from the beginning.⁴² Integrating into a new administrative structure, and developing a legal consciousness regarding it, has been seen by Bennett as an indicator of Creole identity in the Atlantic world.⁴³ On Cabo Verde, administrative control was a precondition for establishing the institutional framework of slavery within which creolisation developed. The historical conditions of the development of a Creole community on the islands were thus inseparable from these developments, just as the voluminous sources of the voyages of slaving ships used to build the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database also testify to the fundamental relationship that linked bureaucracy and slavery. Thus administration of the islands' slave population and of the profits of its labour reflected the institutionalisation of violence and its connection to the process of creolisation in the Atlantic world.⁴⁴

³⁷ Moore (1987).

³⁸ Cerrone (1983: 14).

³⁹ See the accounts of the Almoxarife of Cabo Verde, Afonso Annes do Campo, of 1491–3, producing for the crown 1,914,050 from the sale of slaves (AHP, Vol. 1, 95), and the accounts of Pisival Machado of monies received in Cabo Verde owing to the king (AHP, Vol. 5, 240).

⁴⁰ Richter (2009: 132). The church was built from 1495 through to the 1510s (*ibid.*, 250). It is today the best-preserved church in *Cidade Velha*, the modern name for the old city of Ribeira Grande.

⁴¹ HGCV: CD, Vol. I, 123–4, 131–2, 139.

⁴² S. Hall (2010: 29) emphasises the place of the condition of inequality in understanding Atlantic creolisation.

⁴³ See Bennett (2003: 2–3).

⁴⁴ Of course I draw here on Michel Foucault's well-known work on the history of institutions of violence. Historians dependent on the records of such institutions cannot themselves escape a relationship with this violence even as they seek to understand it.

Thus as with the genesis of the cultural world of Upper Guinea in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Creole society which began to emerge in Cabo Verde in the last decades of the fifteenth century was characterised by violence and flexibility. The violence of the imposition of the new society emerges casually and on many levels. It is apparent of course in the fact of slavery and also from the first recorded account that we have of African *grumetes* in Cabo Verde, dating from 1463.⁴⁵ According to a letter of Afonso V of December 18 of that year, some *grumetes* had rebelled against their shipmasters when arriving at Cabo Verde and had fled ashore after killing some of them.⁴⁶ These were probably the very first escaped slaves on Cabo Verde.

Yet among this violence there was also fluidity and accommodation. The adoption of elements of African languages within the early pidgin which developed on the islands and of some African ritual practices show that the violence of Atlantic slavery was tempered by elements of reciprocity. Even sexual relationships were complex and not always characterised by violence, especially on the African coast. Cadamosto's "acceptance" of a "beautiful girl" of twelve or thirteen offered by the Damel of Cajor may not meet modern standards of gender relations, but nor was it necessarily a case of sex through the imposition of the Venetian's will.⁴⁷ This was indeed a general pattern in West Africa. Farther south, in Elmina, the Frenchman Eustache de la Fosse pretended a prudish outrage when a young girl asked him if he wanted to *choque-choque*.⁴⁸ According to Valentim Fernandes, whites were offered women to sleep with among the Mandinka of Gambia and Casamance, "and this from friendship and not by force".⁴⁹ As we have seen, on Cabo Verde, where master-slave hierarchies characterised relationships in a way that they did not in Africa, sexual relations were probably more coercive. However, these three pieces of evidence should warn us against assuming that it was always so, or that the violence which characterised some aspects of this world characterised all of them.

In Cabo Verde at the end of the fifteenth century, two human experiments coalesced: the birth of the Atlantic slave trade and the first stirrings of an Atlantic Creole society. These factors gave this locale an unusual

⁴⁵ *Grumetes* were servants/attendants of Caboverdean and Portuguese traders in Upper Guinea.

⁴⁶ Albuquerque/Santos (1993: 136).

⁴⁷ For Cadamosto's account of this, see MMAII: Vol. 1, 322.

⁴⁸ Ibid., Vol. 1, 472.

⁴⁹ Ibid., Vol. 1, 702 – "por boa amizade, e nã por força".

importance as the Atlantic world was born. The islands' strategic value was recognised swiftly. When the Treaty of Tordesillas was drawn up in 1494 to delineate the "dominions" of Portugal and Spain, Cabo Verde became the reference point for the line of demarcation.⁵⁰ These isolated volcanic slabs represented the westernmost extremity of the known world. When Columbus developed his rationale for a voyage to the West, he noted that the last unknown space of the sea was between the "far east and the said islands of Cabo Verde".⁵¹ However, the islands represented not only the last physical outpost of the Old World; they were also the first step towards the social realities of the New.

THE PLACE OF SLAVERY IN EARLY SIXTEENTH-CENTURY CABOVERDEAN SOCIETY

In order to understand just how closely the expansion of Atlantic slavery and the development of creolisation were connected, it helps to look further at the intensification of Cabo Verde's slave economy in the early sixteenth century. For if this was the era when mixed societies in Western Africa were just beginning to develop on both Cabo Verde and in Upper Guinea, it also saw the expansion of this economy and of the connections which it required across the region.

That slavery was the lynchpin of the Caboverdean economy was widely known. After Columbus visited the islands on his third voyage to the New World in 1497, he wrote in 1498 to the Spanish monarchs, the *Reyes Católicos* Ferdinand and Isabella, that "in these past days when I went to Cabo Verde, where the people have a great trade in slaves and are always sending ships to obtain them and receiving them in the port, I saw that even the cheapest slaves in the worst condition were being sold for 8,000 maravedís".⁵² However, by the 1490s the Caboverdean economy appeared to have diversified substantially. Affonso Annes do Campo, *almoxarife* of Cabo Verde, recorded receiving taxes between 1491 and 1493 paid in slaves, ivory, rice, millet, cotton, biscuit brought from Portugal, horses and pepper.⁵³ Similar records for 1498 reveal taxes paid in horses, gelded goats, cotton, goat and ox hides, and slaves.⁵⁴ Writing in

⁵⁰ This point is made by Ameal (1966: 105).

⁵¹ Las Casas (1966b: Vol. 62, 56) – "entre el fin oriental y las dichas islas de Cabo Verde".

⁵² Ibid., Vol. 63, 323 – "estos días que fui á las islas de Cabo Verde, de donde la gente dellos tienen gran trato en los esclavos, y de continuo envian navíos á los recatar, y están á la puerta, yo ví que por el más ruin demandaban 8.000 maravedís".

⁵³ AHP, Vol. 1, 95.

⁵⁴ Ibid., Vol. 5, 240.

1505, Pacheco Pereira described how Cabo Verde exported goatskins and cowhides to Portugal and how cotton was cultivated both on Santiago and the other islands.⁵⁵ The desire to diversify economic production was underlined by attempts to grow sugar by the end of the fifteenth century, although the aridity made this industry impractical.⁵⁶

The taxes due to the Caboverdean *almoxarifes* were paid by Caboverdean ships that traded in Guinea. These tax records thus imply a diversity of production. However, on closer analysis we can see that many of these productions required a servile population in Cabo Verde, for instance in the harvesting of cotton and sugar and the butchering of goats and oxen for hides. Thus by the end of the 1490s the hierarchies required for the social organisation of a slave society were in place on the islands to ensure the regular payment of taxes. That this social organisation depended on reliable ties with African polities is shown by the fact that these slaves were fed in part by the millet and rice brought over from the mainland, part of which was paid in taxes to the state treasury.⁵⁷ Thus, of the fourteen ships officially logged as returning from Upper Guinea to Cabo Verde in 1514, ten brought millet or rice; the following year eleven out of sixteen did so; and by 1528 all the fourteen ships returned with millet and seven of them also brought rice.⁵⁸ By the early sixteenth century, this role of Western Africa in the provisioning of the new Atlantic economies was increasing rapidly; by 1504, ships plying between Elmina and Lisbon apparently stopped in the region of Upper Guinea to provision with rice, while by 1514 at the latest slave ships plying from São Tomé to Portugal also stopped in the Senegambian region for provisions to feed their slaves.⁵⁹

Already, therefore, the Caboverdean – and wider African-Atlantic – economy was extracting surplus produce from African agricultural units and using it to feed its slave-oriented production and export system. This may have been a continuity of existing practices feeding the trans-Saharan trade, in which caravans also required provisions; there is some evidence of the transference of foodstuffs and culinary skills from sub-Saharan Africa to the north.⁶⁰ Yet this Atlantic extension created new pressures

⁵⁵ MMAII: Vol. 1, 637.

⁵⁶ Schwartz (1985: 12–3).

⁵⁷ This very early reference to taxes in rice confirms Fields-Black's (2009) argument on the longevity of rice growing in Upper Guinea.

⁵⁸ Torrão (1991: 265–7).

⁵⁹ On ships from Elmina, see Mark/Horta (2011: 140); on the São Tomé trade, see MMAI: Vol. 4, 76.

⁶⁰ See Seck (forthcoming, 2012), who holds that couscous was a grain originating in sub-Saharan Africa.

on local production systems. This extra demand for food supplies may have been influential in accelerating processes of change in production techniques in Upper Guinea and the labour systems used for cultivation; we know that the arrival of the Portuguese was connected with new tools used in cultivation.⁶¹ Moreover, this system did not only lead to changes in agricultural organisation; it also created a direct link between extracting both “surplus” produce and “surplus” labour from Africa and the development in Atlantic islands of a productive system based on slavery.

In this light, it emerges that the socio-economic impact of the development of the slave mode of production in Cabo Verde stretched well beyond the islands themselves. The consequence of the new system was that these African productive surpluses requisitioned for the Caboverdean economy were essentially lost to Africa in exchange for non-productive items of consumption, display, and military apparel, and were transferred instead to the economic systems being built by Europeans in the Atlantic. As this economic system grew, it required the development of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the sixteenth century, and the nature of this dependence on surplus African production accelerated through the demands of provisioning ships for the Middle Passage (cf. Chapter 7). This is of the first importance in understanding the economic trajectories of African and European societies in the early modern period. Over thirty years ago, the historian Jan de Vries argued influentially that one of the keys to the broader growth of the European economy that prefigured industrialisation, in the period between circa 1650 and 1750, was that agriculturalists increased output substantially without this increase being wiped out by population growth.⁶² In England, for example, increased output and a stable population ensured low grain prices and the diversification of the non-agricultural sector.⁶³ Although De Vries’s argument overplayed internal factors in growth at the expense of understating the influence of imperial systems of economic (and, indeed, agricultural) exploitation, his work made a strong argument that this process of successfully harnessing the fruits of enhanced agricultural production was one of the catalysts of the Industrial Revolution.⁶⁴ But in Africa, although there were indeed increased outputs, much of the surplus represented by the increase was lost to the local economy and could never be re-invested there. Though the same dynamic did not pertain everywhere on the continent, this may prove to be an important consideration when trying to

⁶¹ Hawthorne (2003: 43–8).

⁶² Vries (1976: 47).

⁶³ Ibid., 76–82.

⁶⁴ For a strong counter-argument to this perspective, see Inikori (2002).

answer the question posed by Inikori and raised in the Introduction as to why the discrepancy between African and European economic outputs had become so marked by the dawn of the colonial era in the late nineteenth century.

Thus although there clearly were other factors in the decline of production and manufacturing diversity, such as the rise in wars and consequent instability in harvests, this factor is obviously significant in understanding the evolution of production in Atlantic Africa in the early modern period.⁶⁵ Moreover, it is important to emphasise that the growth of the Atlantic economy in the sixteenth century would have been impossible without the appropriation of these surpluses from productive systems in Africa. By the seventeenth century, the centrality of securing provisions for slaves was apparent to all those involved in this aspect of the Atlantic economy. In 1643 Dutch officials in Luanda, Angola, were forced to curtail slaving voyages to Calabar because of the lack of provisions to feed the slaves.⁶⁶ Moreover, it was the consistent absence of sufficient provisions for the slaves and the Dutch colonists there which was one of the main causes for the failure of the Dutch to retain the colony, leading to its recapture by Portuguese from Brazil in 1648.⁶⁷ Without these agricultural surpluses, it was simply not possible to feed slaves sufficiently on the Atlantic crossing, or, in the local Caboverdean context, those on the arid islands of the archipelago. Thus without the use of these surpluses, it would have been impossible for the European colonies in the New World to grow.

The transfer of these labour and production surpluses was therefore key to the construction of Caboverdean society in these years and to the development of the social hierarchies which permitted a diversified economy. For although diversification of sorts is implied through the different productive occupations of Cabo Verde, in the raising of wild cattle for hides and the cultivation of cotton and sugar, it was impossible without slavery. Statistical and personal records show that the new economic and social systems were underpinned in their entirety by slavery. When on October 24, 1512, the residents of Ribeira Grande on Santiago protested

⁶⁵ On these other factors in an Angolan context, see for instance Parreira (1990: 26–7).

⁶⁶ Jadin (1975: Vol. 1, 428).

⁶⁷ See the repeated complaints in the documents published by Jadin; *ibid.*, Vol. 1, 323, 390; Vol. 2, 644, 883, 1077. Similarly, accounts of slave voyages note both their purchasing of provisions from coastal peoples in Africa and that they frequently had to cut short slaving expeditions due to shortages of provisions – see the account of a trip to Calabar in the 1640s in Anguiano (1950: 180).

about a new decree that all slaves had to be brought directly from the coast of Guinea to Lisbon, not via Cabo Verde, they emphasised that “the said island [Santiago] does not have any other merchandise or trade except for the bringing of slaves, because cotton is only a merchandise which is offered to the merchants who come from [Lisbon]”.⁶⁸ According to the petitioners, the new decree would have a devastating effect: “It is very damaging to the said island and is ruining everything. And it will also affect many other merchants and squires, knights and even poor noblemen who earn their livings through [the trade]”.⁶⁹

This petition emphasises the place of slaving in the islands’ economy. Cotton, the petitioners said, was only used to sell to merchants from Lisbon – the “other merchants and squires” – who used it to buy slaves in Africa. Its economic importance derived from the slave trade. That was all the trade that there was, and so profitable was it that the accounts of the *almoxarife* of the Guinea trade for the years 1510–13 showed that, after Elmina, the African locale from which the Portuguese crown derived the greatest profit was Cabo Verde. The Cabo Verde contract was sold for 3,130,999 reis, as opposed to 1,616,000 for Sierra Leone, 1,363,500 for the Gambia River and 1,212,000 for the “rivers of Guinea” (present-day Casamance and Guinea-Bissau).⁷⁰ When we consider this information, the central place of slaving in the Caboverdean economy is overwhelming.⁷¹

Indeed, the Portuguese crown itself was well aware of this reality, and the authorities emphasised that slaving should be the main business of the Caboverdean traders. In February 1517, Manoel I protested that residents of Santiago were going to Sierra Leone to procure “ivory, wax, iron and other forbidden goods”.⁷² He ordered that they should not go to Sierra Leone, but to the areas where they were permitted to go (the Senegambian and Upper Guinean locales to the north), where they should only “trade for slaves for their service and work”.⁷³ In other words, it was royal policy to limit the trade of the Caboverdean islanders in goods such as wax and

⁶⁸ MMAII: Vol. 2, 54 – “Por que da dita Ilha nō teē outras mercadurias que trazer soomente espravos, porque o algodão nō hē mercadoria que faça soomente pero os mercadores que vaom da dicta cidade [de Lisboa]”. For the decree see *ibid.*, Vol. 2, 51–2.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* – “é muito danoso à dita ilha e lança em tudo a perder. E ainda a outros muitos mercadores e outros muitos escudeiros, cavaleiros e ainda fidalgos pobres que nela se remedeiam a sustem sua vida”.

⁷⁰ AHP, Vol. 2, 440–1.

⁷¹ T. Hall (1992: Vol. 1, 288) emphasises the importance of slaves to the early Caboverdean economy.

⁷² MMAII: Vol. 2, 139 – “marfym, cera, ferro e outras mercadorias defesas”.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, 143 – “onde nam resgataram senam escravos pera seu serviço e trabalho”.

ivory. Slaving was heartily encouraged.⁷⁴ This was emphasised six years later, when the factors of the Casa de Mina in Lisbon complained to the council of Santiago that they were sending too much ivory and that they should concentrate on procuring slaves instead, as many as possible.⁷⁵ Thus there is no question that the economic motor which accompanied the rise of the first signs of Caboverdean creolisation examined in the previous section was the slave economy, and that this was widely accepted. This was, moreover, a widespread Portuguese royal policy in Africa. When in 1526 João III of Portugal insisted that all slaves sent from Kongo to São Tomé (and thence Elmina or Portugal) were to be carried in official boats, these boats refused to carry any exports other than slaves from Kongo in spite of the protests of the *Manikongo* Afonso I.⁷⁶

In Cabo Verde, the result of the profitability derived from slaving and the transfer of these labour and productive surpluses from Africa was that the local economy expanded, and in the first decade of the sixteenth century all the Caboverdean islands were colonised. By the end of the fifteenth century, Fogo was well settled by residents of Santiago and their slaves in order to cultivate cotton.⁷⁷ By 1499 the population was sufficient for Spanish ships to restock there en route to the Indies.⁷⁸ In the first decade of the sixteenth century, colonists irradiated out from Santiago to most of the other islands. By 1504 there were cattle herds on the island of Maio, and by 1505, also on Boavista.⁷⁹ In 1509 even remote Brava was colonised, with the New Christian Francisco de Afonseca given a licence to cultivate cotton there.⁸⁰ Just how new this process of colonisation was is revealed by the fact that just twelve years before, when Columbus visited in 1497, it was clear that Brava had not even been fully explored; he was told that it was thought there might well be islands beyond it to the west, whereas in fact there is just an empty and desolate sea all the way from Brava to America.⁸¹

Thus expanding economic requirements allowed Caboverdean society to grow and consolidate the new social structures which underpinned it. An economy which could produce cotton and breed horses,

⁷⁴ Z. Cohen (1994: 350).

⁷⁵ MMAII: Vol. 2, 185; “fareis por tyrardes dos Ryos este ano todas as peças que poderdes”.

⁷⁶ Hilton (1985: 57); MMAI: Vol. 1, 484.

⁷⁷ Ribeiro (1954: 94).

⁷⁸ Las Casas (1966b: Vol. 63, 453) – this was the voyage of Diego de Lepe.

⁷⁹ MMAII: Vol. 2, 11, 15.

⁸⁰ HGCV: CD, Vol. 1, 183–5.

⁸¹ Las Casas (1966b: Vol. 63, 225).

to be exchanged for slaves, ivory and food in Western Africa, was one which required cheap labour and a hierarchical system of production. This development of an economy based on slave labour in Cabo Verde required new systems of social organisation which, like the shift to a new pattern of economic organisation, were predicated on violence. As we have seen in this chapter, this violence was codified and legitimated by a rapidly expanding administrative structure, which developed further in the early sixteenth century with the establishment of new *almoxarife* posts in Alcatrazes in 1501 and on the island of Fogo in 1506.⁸²

Yet in spite of the crown's intentions, royal authority on the islands was partial at best. Papers were stolen from the council [*câmara*] of Ribeira Grande, and as early as 1512 escapees from justice had only to flee to the hills of Santiago to find sanctuary.⁸³ The failure of the crown to control the hills of Santiago was symptomatic of wider trends. Metropolitan Portugal could not control social developments in the African Atlantic, and this was a world which Caboverdeans and Africans would build themselves.⁸⁴ Although the new social order had been founded on violence, alliances had to be formed. In Cabo Verde incentives had to be offered such as the freeing of slaves – *alforria* – in the wills of their owners, which encouraged good behaviour and thereby increased productivity.⁸⁵ Indeed, by the 1520s residents of Cabo Verde saw the *alforria* as an important aspect of their society, and they objected to those who did not respect it. When a freed slave called Rodrigo Lopez was smuggled onto a ship and sailed to Hispaniola in 1526 to be sold, it provoked outrage in Ribeira Grande.⁸⁶ The importance of such practices were testament to the sort of accommodation which always formed a subtext to relations between masters and slaves in the Atlantic world, an accommodation which went with the flexibility also associated with creolisation. Thus had the institutional violence of slavery and the flexibility associated with creolisation developed together in Cabo Verde by the early sixteenth century.

⁸² On the jail, see HGCV: CD, Vol. I, 123–4, 131–2, 139. On the *almoxarifes* in Alcatrazes (which moved to Praia in 1515) and Fogo, see Z. Cohen (2007: 77–8).

⁸³ On stolen papers, see MMAII: Vol. 2, 38. On escapees to the hills of Santiago, see HGCV: CD, Vol. I, 215.

⁸⁴ T. Hall (1992: Vol. 2, 424–32).

⁸⁵ On how the freeing of slaves underpinned master-slave relationships on Cabo Verde, see the will of Catarina Fernandes of 1632 at IAN/TT, Jesuitas, Cartório, Maço 37, doc. 18, fols. 2v, 4r.

⁸⁶ AGI, Justicia 11, no. 4, fol. 10r. Lopez was freed by his master Ruy Lopez, the royal accountant in Cabo Verde, but then sold by Ruy Lopez's nephew.

The testimony in this case of Rodrigo Lopez shows that the freed Black population was important in Cabo Verde by the 1520s. Not only did the case cause murmurings on Santiago, but numerous witnesses described how Lopez was recognised as free in Cabo Verde and indeed had moved between the islands of Fogo and Santiago.⁸⁷ Lopez was part of a community of growing importance, members of which were used as crews on ships plying to and from the West African coast. By 1546 their size and strength was such that a group of them wrote to the crown to ask for permission to apply for official posts.⁸⁸ Interestingly, this process also occurred on the island of São Tomé, farther south in the African Atlantic, where the religious brotherhood of the Irmandade da Nossa Senhora do Rosário de Homens Pretos was established in 1526 by former slaves.⁸⁹ Yet although the presence of an active free Black population developed through the institution of the *alforria* was testament to the negotiations inherent in the emergence of creolisation within the system of Atlantic slavery, there was also a way in which it gave moral legitimacy to the entire structure; it rewarded pliant and co-operative slaves with the eventual possibility of freedom and thereby ensured the success of the institutions which oppressed them.

This emerges in the way in which the procurement of slaves became an activity in which everyone on Cabo Verde, *senhores* and even their slaves, had a stake. Ships from Cabo Verde carried slaves themselves as agents of masters who had been sent to procure more slaves.⁹⁰ This indicates that the slave class on Santiago was itself stratified, with some slaves entering into the confidence of the *senhores* and being trusted with commercial expeditions in Upper Guinea. This practice imitated the use of African slaves in contemporary Portugal, where urban slaves were frequently sent on commercial errands by their masters, and also the way in which Portuguese resident in Kongo and Angola later used their own slaves – the *pombeiros* – as agents for them in the markets of the hinterland. Instead of a generalised *senhores/escravos* opposition, there were gradations in both classes, which are testament to a more complex process of social formation than traditional narratives of Atlantic slave societies have usually allowed.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Saunders (1982a: 11); IAN/TT, Corpo Cronológico, Maço I, Vol. 78, No. 17

⁸⁹ Personal communication from Gerhard Seibert, Centro de Estudos Africanos, ISCTE, Lisbon.

⁹⁰ Torrão (1991: 268).

⁹¹ This consideration also challenges Torrão's hypothesis here (*ibid.*) that the presence of these slaves is indicative of a commercial interest in the process of slaving, as otherwise

It is worth hypothesising as to what qualities allowed these slaves to be trusted. Almost certainly, these must have been the individuals who were the most willing to adapt to the Portuguese culture of the slave-masters and accept their place within the hierarchy. Otherwise, the *senhores* would not have trusted them with important missions. Therefore these slaves had probably adopted the Catholic religion, at least outwardly, and learnt enough Portuguese – or the Criolu which, as we have seen, was already being developed by this time – to communicate freely with their *senhores*. The corollary was that there were strong incentives to accept the system of slavery for new arrivals and to adapt to the emergent Creole society. The fact that new arrivals saw trusted slaves being granted a degree of freedom meant that there was every incentive for them to adapt.⁹² The institution of slavery – both through how slaves were procured in Upper Guinea and how they were socialised on Cabo Verde – therefore encouraged the acceleration of the creolising process. The new language was used as a means of communication, and adoption of mixed cultural and ritual forms became a means of social advancement.

LANÇADOS AND THE FORGING OF MIXED COMMUNITIES ON THE UPPER GUINEA COAST

In order for the growing coincidence of slavery and a very early form of creolisation to move beyond the islands of Cabo Verde, agents of transference were required. Although as we have seen there had been exchanges between the islands and West Africa since at least the 1470s, exchanges which had grown ever more intensive as the need for slaves expanded in Cabo Verde, it was not until Caboverdeans settled permanently among the peoples of Upper Guinea that the emerging mixed society and language on the archipelago began to find a home on the African mainland. These settlers were known as *lançados* by the Portuguese, from *lançar*, meaning to throw: here were people who had literally “thrown themselves into” African society and “out” of the European orbit.

By the early 1500s the Portuguese crown had no control over the large number of Caboverdeans settling on the African coast. In the 1510s

there was nothing to stop them escaping. Equally as likely is that their privileged status within the slave corps was more attractive than returning to a society in which they had been deprived of the opportunities and reciprocities of kin relations as a result of being sold as a slave, and in which it would have been much harder for them to achieve a comparable position of privilege.

⁹² I am grateful for this point to António Leão Correia e Silva, *Vice-Reitor* of the Universidade de Cabo Verde.

Manoel I attempted to demonstrate control by issuing a spate of royal decrees. Following up his decree of 1512 ordering that all slaves be taken directly from Upper Guinea to Lisbon, in 1514 he ordered that no one should go and live among the Africans in Guinea and that no iron should be taken from Cabo Verde for trade in Africa.⁹³ Yet this prevented neither these prohibited trades nor the settlement of *lançados* on the African coast. In December 1517 he ordered that the property of all *lançados* should be confiscated, and the following month issued a law prohibiting any ships sailing direct from Santiago, Cabo Verde, to Upper Guinea because of the damage to the royal treasury.⁹⁴ In March 1518 he wrote to the inhabitants of Ribeira Grande, accusing them of ruining royal trade to Africa.⁹⁵

This legislative activity occurred in the wider context of the Portuguese crown's desire to regulate West African trade in these years. In 1509 a new rubric, or *Regimento*, for the running of the Casa de India and Casa de Mina was published, whereas 1512–13 saw new ordinances and laws published concerning the whole Guinea trade, including lists of prohibited trade goods and the prohibition of all private commercial transactions.⁹⁶ Like his predecessor João II, Manoel I clearly recognised the importance of the African trade and wished to regulate it as much as possible. In this light the prohibitions on *lançado* activity gain a richer complexion. Yet prohibition cannot occur if there is nothing to prohibit, and the slew of royal legislation from the 1510s reveals both how widespread *lançado* activity was and that the crown could not control it.

This royal legislation on *lançados* was not proactive but rather reactive. By the first decade of the sixteenth century there were active communities of *lançados* dating from at least the 1490s, as we have seen. The attempted prohibition of these *lançado* settlements was therefore fifteen or twenty years behind the times. The same goes for another prohibition attempted by Manoel I in the 1510s, on the Caboverdean trade in iron, which was also at least fifteen or twenty years old by the time that the Portuguese crown tried to stop it. The very first recorded instance of a *lançado*, concerning one Gonçallo de Paiva, dates from 1499 and accuses him of using iron to buy slaves in the “rivers of Guinea”. Paiva not only used iron to trade, he also brought some escaped murderers from the hills

⁹³ MMAII: Vol. 2, 89, 72.

⁹⁴ Ibid., Vol. 2, 143, 144.

⁹⁵ Ibid., Vol. 2, 149. On this legislation against the *lançados*, see J. Barreto (1938: 75), Boxer (1963: 9), and M. Silva (1970).

⁹⁶ Ballong-wen-Menuda (1993: Vol. 1, 175).

of Santiago Island so that they could live in the “land of the Mandinkas”; these fugitive *lançados* also brought iron with them to buy slaves.⁹⁷

This document is very informative about African-European relationships and the first mixed communities which were beginning to emerge by 1500. The implication would be that this expedition had been to the Casamance region, because this was the part of the “rivers of Guinea” with the strongest Mandinka influence. We know that other *lançados* in this period settled with the Kassanké, as Mendes has located evidence that a *grumete* did so in 1503 in Bugendo, the main Kassanké port for Atlantic trade.⁹⁸ Pacheco Pereira describes an intensive trade in these years, and this would be consistent with sufficient acculturation of Africans and Europeans to one another to permit small numbers of Europeans to live among the Kassanké.⁹⁹

The trading culture which had developed in Casamance after two centuries of acculturation to the diaspora trading merchants of the Mandinka must have influenced the areas in which the *lançados* sought to settle. As we have seen, this culture was very influential in the region. In his collation of eyewitness accounts, Valentim Fernandes noted how the Mandinka “trade a lot of merchandise ... they trade their goods a long way into the hinterland and much more so than any other group of that land”.¹⁰⁰ Later he observed that the people in the São Domingos region were “very disposed and given to trading in markets and they go to many different places where markets are held and in the same way others come to this place to their markets from other places”; the markets were held every eight days, and people came from as far as twenty leagues (one hundred kilometres) away, seven to eight thousand at a time.¹⁰¹

Fernandes’s account, as we have seen, refers to customs and events from at least the 1490s, and so very likely this trading disposition described here far predates the arrival of the European mariners. The effect of this

⁹⁷ MMAII: Vol. 2, 3 – “A nós diseram ora que hūu Gomçallo de Paiva, cavaleiro, armara o anno passado de 1Rix, da Ilha de Cabo Verde pero [bir] aos Rios de Guiné húa sua caravella, em a quall elle passara certa soma de ferros que lá resgatou aos negros... e que bem assy pasara na dita caravella certos christãos omiziados que andavam na Serra pera terra de Mandinka, os quaaes outrosy consiguio levaram muyta soma de ferro e a resgataram aos negros”.

⁹⁸ Albuquerque/Santos (1993: Vol. 2, 314).

⁹⁹ MMAII: Vol. 1, 645.

¹⁰⁰ MMAII: Vol. 1, 705 – “tractā muyta mercadaria...tractā suas mercadorias muy lōge pello sertão e mais que nenhūa outra geraçā daquela terra”.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., Vol. 1, 718 – “muy disposta e muyta dada pera tractar em feyras e vam pera muitos lugares onde se fazē feyras e assi mesmo vem pera esta terra e suas feyras de outros lugares”.

long-standing Mandinka influence in the Upper Guinea region prior to the mid-fifteenth century had been to create a sort of “multi-culturalism” in which the arrival of one new caste – in this case the *lançados* – could be accommodated. Thus this pattern in turn shaped the locales in which communities connected to Cabo Verde, sharing rituals and practices and speaking the emergent (and still pidginised) Kriolu, emerged over the course of the sixteenth century.

The African role in the trade with Cabo Verde went much deeper than simply in helping to shape *lançado* settlement patterns. The importance of iron in trade by the end of the fifteenth century also shows how the existing requirements of African societies helped to shape the early Atlantic trade. Iron was probably being traded to Upper Guinea by 1490 if not earlier, because a royal provision barring the trade of iron was passed in 1497.¹⁰² The prohibition from trading iron was routinely ignored. Recorded cases of people flouting the rule can be found for both 1499 and 1514, and these were certainly very numerous from 1510 onwards.¹⁰³

The African desire to acquire iron in Atlantic exchanges has often been ascribed to the use of iron in making weaponry.¹⁰⁴ It has indeed long been recognised that in the rivers of Guinea this was the key commodity which African peoples wanted to buy in the sixteenth century in exchange for slaves.¹⁰⁵ Iron was used for the making of weaponry for the conflicts which produced slaves for export and to defend lineages from predatory attacks motivated by the Atlantic trade. Yet it also enabled the creation of new and more efficient agricultural implements which could enhance production. Research by Hawthorne has shown that the advent of iron-edged tools among smaller decentralised groups in Upper Guinea only came with the Portuguese, and that this coincided among some groups in the region with a boom in high-yielding crops such as rice.¹⁰⁶ Although as we have seen in Chapter 1 some small quantities of iron were procured before from Mandinka smiths, the Atlantic trade offered a decisive new opportunity. High-yielding crops could help create a stronger and larger population to face down the new threats brought on by Atlantic trade.

By accepting Caboverdean *lançados*, peoples of Upper Guinea were thus extending both their possible trading networks to procure iron as

¹⁰² Torrão (1991: 244).

¹⁰³ MMAII: Vol. 2, 3, 72; Torrão (1991: 247).

¹⁰⁴ See for example Torrão (1991: 244).

¹⁰⁵ Carreira (1983: 83); Rodney (1965: 311).

¹⁰⁶ See Hawthorne (2003: 43–8). Fields-Black (2009) argues that rice production was already long-standing but that iron increased production.

well as the traditions regarding diaspora traders which had grown up under Mandinka hegemony. This influenced not only the success of these trading networks, but also the way in which the mixed culture which had developed in Cabo Verde with the advent of a slave economy could extend itself into Africa. Although this process was still young, by the second decade of the sixteenth century it had already laid down roots which became very important.

Thus although the combination of institutionalised violence and accommodation shaped the first stages of creolisation in Cabo Verde, an analogous preceding history in Upper Guinea shaped the areas in which the emergent Creole culture of Cabo Verde was able to develop in West Africa. These historical processes led to the development of a shared cultural zone across the region and also to influences far beyond. For, as we will see in the next chapter, from the Atlantic side a key group shaping the development of these communities were the Iberian New Christians, who had wide-ranging connections to America and Europe. Meanwhile, Alida Metcalf has argued that *lançado* status as insiders and outsiders in West Africa, as well as the strategies they adopted in order to integrate, were soon borrowed by other “go-betweens” in Brazil, paving the way for the colonisation process there.¹⁰⁷ Thus in this way, the plural identities which had such a long history in West Africa became important not only to the development of creolised communities there, but in the use of such strategies elsewhere in the new Atlantic world.

¹⁰⁷ Metcalf (2005: 58–9).

The New Christian Diaspora in Cabo Verde and the Rise of a Creole Culture in Western Africa

The last forty years have seen a significant body of work done on the New Christian diaspora in the Iberian Atlantic world. It has become clear that the New Christians were perhaps the key mercantile community linking the trading economies of Africa, America and Europe in the early Atlantic era to circa 1640. Their networks in the Low Countries helped to integrate the trade of Atlantic sugar for Northern European textiles and Baltic wheat exchanged between Iberia and Flanders. The early establishment of a community in Antwerp and the opening of a Sephardic Jewish community in Amsterdam in 1596 opened the way for Dutch trade and influence in the Caribbean and Brazil.¹ The links with New Christian families in Portugal and Spain encouraged the spread of New Christian communities throughout the New World.² Scholars still dispute the place of this diaspora in the overall emergence of Atlantic trade, but there is no question that it was significant.³ In this work, the picture of the New Christian diaspora in West Africa has only recently come to the fore.⁴ Yet as we shall see in this chapter and the next, this

¹ Key works on the New Christians in Brazil include Mello (1996); Novinsky (1972), Salvador (1969; 1978), Wiznitzer (1955; 1960) and Wolff and Wolff (1986; 1989).

² For Colombia, see MesaBernal (1996) and Splendiani (1997); for Mexico, Liebman (1970), and Toro (1932; 1944); for Chile, Böhm (1948; 1963); for Peru, Guibovich Pérez (1998) and Millar Carvacho (1997).

³ Ebert (2008) disputes that the New Christian monopoly in the sugar trade from Brazil to the Netherlands was as strong as some scholars suggest. Whatever the nuances in the argument, though, the overall significance of the question has placed the subject within mainstream historiography, following works by Kagan/Morgan (2009), Schorsch (2008), Israel (2002) and Wachtel (2001).

⁴ Green (2007b); F. Silva (2002; 2004).

diaspora was extremely important in the early period in Western Africa, at the very same time as the first signs of an Atlantic Creole community were emerging there.

Caboverdeans themselves are well aware of this strand of their early history. A second wave of Sephardic migration from Morocco in the nineteenth century has contributed to a sense of the significance of this first wave for the islands' cultural identity.⁵ A researcher looking for residues of this often finds gratifying results. During a chance discussion in 2003 at a bar in Praia, the national capital, all three of my interlocutors claimed Jewish ancestry, and one of them had the surname Ben-Simon; at another bar, the landlady said her surname was Levi; and as I was shown by Januário Nascimento, then president of the Caboverdean-Israel Friendship Society, headstones with Hebrew inscriptions can be found in the main cemetery at Praia and in the highlands of Santiago island in the back yards of small farmsteads.

Such connections run deep. This chapter collates previously unused archival and published sources to offer the first detailed overview of the formation of the New Christian diaspora in Western Africa in the 1520s and 1530s. The arrival of New Christians in increasing numbers in the years after 1500 accelerated the processes which we have seen emerging in the previous chapters. As the pre-eminent Atlantic traders of the region, New Christians facilitated not only the Atlantic opening of Upper Guinea, but an atmosphere in which exchanges developed: diaspora traders have often been intermediaries in the cultural exchanges which accompany creolisation.⁶ This chapter's main goal is both to discuss this new evidence and to show how the New Christian diaspora contributed to the emergence of a Creole society in Western Africa. Yet although the evidence shows that the New Christian presence was important in this process, it does not show that this presence was alone sufficient. As Chapters 1 and 2 have shown, early Atlantic Creole society in Western Africa was shaped by the region's pre-existing commercial and cultural patterns and the plural identities which these patterns encouraged. Thus the plural identities which New Christians developed in the sixteenth century, and which, I argue here, were important in nascent patterns of modernisation, did not represent a new departure in Western Africa, but rather a continuity.

⁵ On the second wave, see Correia (1998).

⁶ Trajano Filho (2003: 15). We saw this also in Chapter 1 relating to the diasporas of Mandinka and North African traders in West Africa.

To talk of modernity in this early period is to raise some important issues. Here, following the well-known work of Arjun Appadurai, Serge Gruzinski, Ulf Hannerz and many others, I see issues of mobility and flows – of people, resources and ideas – as central to how what we might call “modernity” began to be constituted.⁷ Clearly, as has also been widely recognised, it is the increasing speed of these flows and exchanges which distinguishes the current manifestation of such global interconnectedness from that of the period examined here.⁸ My argument in this chapter and the one that follows, however, is that the beginnings of this process of global flows, and associated changes in identity and cultural forms, can be seen in the emergence of an Atlantic Creole culture in Western Africa in the sixteenth century; this was of course not the only location where this process occurred in this period, but the evidence presented here shows that it was, undeniably, an important one.

I also argue in this chapter that, where this early proto-modernity is concerned, other aspects are very important beyond those of increasing flows and global interconnectedness. The chapter provides evidence for changes in conceptualisation that accompanied experiences in Western Africa and promoted a new mathematised and spatialised worldview; I further argue that these were all related to the processes of ideological, linguistic and psychological abstraction which accompanied modernisation in Iberia and the early Atlantic world. Also significant to these first stirrings of modernity, as we saw in Chapter 3, was the refinement of administrative systems of control relating to slavery and the development of proto-“national” identities in the sixteenth century; these developments, I argue in this chapter, make self-consciously modern categories such as the “transnational” relevant even to this distant time and place. Moreover, the presence of large numbers of New Christian refugees from the violence of the Inquisition and anti-Semitic riots in Iberia raises the connection which violence had to the emergence of modernity. I argue here that the New Christian experience of the violence of proto-modernity in Iberia helped to shape their responses to both creolisation and slavery in the African Atlantic.⁹

This chapter shows how the circulation of these experiences of proto-modern violence was related to the birth of a Creole society in Western

⁷ Appadurai (1990); Gruzinski (2005: 13–4); Hannerz (1996: 17).

⁸ Appadurai (1990: 16); Smith/Guarnizo (1998a: 17); Vertovec (2009: 3).

⁹ Or, as Mendes (2007: 15) puts it, “was not this massive slavery but the mirror of the inherent violence of modern society?” – “*cet esclavage massif ne fut-il que le miroir des violences inhérentes à la société moderne?*”

Africa. By the 1520s and 1530s the pidginised version of Kriolu which had developed on Cabo Verde by the end of the fifteenth century was consolidating into a vernacular language for communication between slaves and their masters and among the slaves themselves. Slaves speaking Kriolu are cited in a document of 1558, and linguistic evidence suggests that the vernacularisation of the language was completed on the islands before the 1560s.¹⁰ Yet as the linguistic changes circulated, the mixed societies which emerged with them varied. “Creolisation” was a distinct experience in Upper Guinea to that on the islands of Santiago and Fogo. All three differed and produced Creole societies whose discrete characters can still be discerned.¹¹ This is exemplified by one saying on Fogo today: “If you annoy someone on Santiago, they kill you; if you annoy someone here, we kill ourselves”.¹² The cultural character of each locale varied, and although this may sound axiomatic as every culture depends on its formation for different characteristics, what turned the Western African region into one where this mattered was that certain similarities ultimately did create a shared Creole culture that spanned the region and co-existed alongside existing Upper Guinean societies.

It was exactly the Creole society of Western Africa which had the largest role in engaging with the new commercial demands of the Atlantic world; thus this picture of creolisation cannot fit the classical nineteenth century model in which hybrids were seen as degenerate.¹³ Their own pre-existing tendencies towards adaptability were crucial for the New Christians when they arrived at a cultural situation where such adaptability had long been practised by peoples neighbouring the Mandinka. This chapter shows for the first time the fusion of these pre-existing trends and how they worked together to form Creole society in Western Africa in the shadow of the rise of the slave trade at the dawn of the modern age.

MODERNITY, AFRICAN EXCHANGES AND THE CREATION OF THE NEW CHRISTIAN IDEOLOGY

In order to understand interactions between Upper Guineans and the Portuguese New Christians in the early sixteenth century, we must

¹⁰ Ladhams (2003: 145); Seibert (forthcoming, 2012).

¹¹ Thus in Creole studies it is generally accepted that “no single historical mise-en-scène will fully account for the genesis of all creoles” (Grant 2001: 81). See also ibid., 107–8.

¹² Personal communication from E. Akintola Hubbard, São Filipe, Fogo, May 22, 2008.

¹³ See Bernal (1991: 29–32) for an outline of Victorian historiography as seeing creative civilizations as “racially pure”. See also Holm (1988: Vol. 1, 1) on how until the 1950s traditional Creole studies saw Creole societies through this prism as “deficient”.

understand the New Christians' complex and violent history. The Portuguese New Christians were descended from Portugal's long-standing Jewish community, from the New Christians who fled the Spanish Inquisition for Portugal in the 1480s until this migration was made illegal by João II in 1488, and from the Sephardic Jews who were expelled from Spain by the *Reyes Católicos* in 1492.¹⁴

The influx of Spanish New Christians in the 1480s had created unrest in Portugal. This was compounded by the 1492 arrivals. Estimates of the numbers of Jews who arrived in Portugal in 1492 range from 10,000 to 250,000.¹⁵ With their arrival the Jews constituted, according to some estimates, 10 percent of Portugal's population.¹⁶ The refugees from Spain had a mixed fate: six hundred families were given leave to remain on payment of a large tax, many moved on to Italy and North Africa, many died in unsanitary conditions in camps near the Spanish border, and yet others were enslaved.¹⁷ Taken together, Spanish New Christians and Jews were widely blamed for the plagues which afflicted Portugal every year between 1477 and 1496.¹⁸ Demonisation gathered pace, and in 1497 the vast majority of Jews in Portugal were forcibly converted to Christianity by Manoel I.¹⁹

Though initially protected from inquisitorial investigations, these Portuguese New Christians were eventually persecuted by inquisitors just as their forebears had been in Spain. Many fled to the Ottoman Empire, Italian principalities, the Low Countries and North Africa, where they reverted to "open" Judaism. Others, however, remained in Iberian possessions, both in Europe and in the New World, and in these areas some of them secretly practised elements of their Jewish faith. It was these so-called crypto-Jews who were at the forefront of many later inquisitorial investigations in both Western Africa and Latin America.²⁰ Indeed,

¹⁴ On the relationship of João II and the Spanish New Christians (or *conversos*), see Soyer (2007: 98–101).

¹⁵ The estimate of Loeb was 10,000 (1887: 181–2), and that of Herculano was 250,000 (1854: Vol. 1, 197); Andres Bernaldez estimated around 93,000, Damião de Gois 100,000. For a summary of the various estimates, see Tavares (1982: Vol. 1, 253).

¹⁶ Révah (1971: 483).

¹⁷ Soyer (2007: Chapter 2).

¹⁸ Tavares (1982 : Vol. 1, 425); Herculano (1854 : Vol. 1, 108).

¹⁹ Almost all the Jews converted – see Soyer (2007: 229–31) – though some did escape according to Tavim (1997: 83–4). For a summary of the Jewish and New Christian experience under Manoel I, see Yovel (2009: 191–206).

²⁰ For a more detailed account of the Inquisition of Spain, see Netanyahu (1995) and N. Roth (2002). For the Portuguese experience, a superb general account is Bethencourt (1994; idem. 2009). See also Green (2007a).

although many influential studies still see the Sepahrdic networks in the Mediterranean basin as key to the formation of Sephardic communities in the early modern period, it has become clear that the sixteenth-century Atlantic diaspora was also very significant, particularly in Amsterdam.²¹

When the New Christians began to arrive in Western Africa early in the sixteenth century, therefore, they brought with them the legacy of important recent experiences which helped to shape their interactions with Africans. First and foremost was the experience of violence. In Spain, the Jews had been expelled and lost much of their property, and the New Christians had been persecuted by the Spanish Inquisition at its most ruthless and violent.²² In 1497 those who had left for Portugal with the expulsion had all their offspring aged fourteen or more seized and taken to be educated by Christian families. Some mothers had killed their children rather than have them taken away, others had committed suicide, and the 20,000 Jews who had reached Lisbon hoping to depart and save their faith had been refused permission to leave, whereupon many more had killed themselves.²³

However, supplementing this experience of violence was the adaptability that force and fear of force can create. Prior to the traumas of the 1480s and 1490s, many Spanish Jews had converted to Christianity in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, and subsequently incorporated Roman Catholic images into their religious practice, although Jews saw this reverence of images as idolatry.²⁴ Eventually, even those Jews who had tried to preserve their faith in Spain, and who had then migrated to Portugal, had been forced to convert to Christianity. Having thus adapted their outward practices and faith, these Portuguese New Christians were peculiarly well-versed in their recent experience in how adaptability could become a strategic benefit. Their long experience of adaptability both in Portugal and elsewhere in the Jewish diaspora had shown them how accommodating themselves to the cultures of their hosts brought advantages.

To this can be added a third and more complex strand of their recent experience. The violence directed at the New Christian class in Spain and

²¹ Trivellato (2009: 112) offers a recent example of the claim that the Atlantic only became important to Sephardim after 1650. This view is seriously challenged, though, by evidence on the importance to the early Amsterdam community of the Brazilian New Christians and trading centres in Senegambia (Green 2005; 2008a; Mark/Horta 2011).

²² For a general account, see Green (2007a: 17–44).

²³ Góis (1949: Vol. 1, 42); Osorio (1944: 81); Soyer (2007: 226–7).

²⁴ Pereda (2007).

Portugal in the late fifteenth century was a product of the growing modernisation of existence and of the abstraction of thought that went with it, and thus the New Christians who came to Western Africa brought with them acute understanding of these trends. This connection of New Christians to modernisation emerges most clearly in the economic factors frequently used as an explanation for the anti-Semitism of Iberia in the fifteenth century.²⁵ For most Jews in Portugal in 1497 were not large-scale financiers in Lisbon, but rather petty merchants and craftspeople.²⁶ There were strong divisions between the oligarchy of Portuguese Jewish society and the rest of the community.²⁷ Furthermore, the arrival of the Jews from Spain was not, as François Soyer has shown, totally disruptive.²⁸ In fact, it brought great wealth into Portugal, and the receptor of the entry taxes from the Spanish Jews collected 8,951,312 *reais* in Évora alone.²⁹

Thus in Portugal, popular anger at economic injustices fastened on a scapegoat for frustration rather than on the root cause of it. The protests about the Jews' wealth really reveal something else: the growing importance of material concerns to Portuguese society. This pecuniary turn reflected social changes, in particular urbanisation and the change in perspectives of value which foreshadowed the modernity discussed in the introduction to this chapter; capital became mobile and in turn increased human mobility, which contributed to urban drift. The notion that Old Christians worked in the fields while New Christians luxuriated in the towns was frequently cited as a cause of hatred, something which really reveals resentment of urban life.³⁰ The development of wage labour that resulted from urbanisation led to changes in lifestyle that caused widespread discontent.³¹ Migration to cities was usually reluctant and the source of unhappiness, thus new forms of proto-racism were themselves urban phenomena.³² Such feelings were at bottom the product of anger and fear: a visceral anger at being separated from the land and fear of the new way of life in the towns, which in migrants' minds was most ostentatiously expressed by the Jews.³³ Above all, it was the fear of change, for humans cope badly with sudden change.

²⁵ See, e.g., Herculano (1854: Vol. 1, 101, 109–10); Azevedo (1922: 17–20).

²⁶ Tavares (1982: Vol. 1, 330).

²⁷ Ibid., Vol. 1, 125–6; Azevedo (1922: 22).

²⁸ Soyer (2007).

²⁹ AHP, Vol. 3, 472.

³⁰ See, e.g., AG, Vol. 1, 105–6.

³¹ Baechler (1975: 14–5).

³² On the urban nature of racism, see Carneiro (1983: 53); on the role of separation from the land in the rise of anti-Semitism in Spain, see Green (2007b: Appendix A).

³³ On conflicts between town and country in Iberia, see Gilman (1972: 410–11).

As these changes occurred in the fifteenth century, there was a growing abstraction of thought: a distancing process such as is often produced by fear.³⁴ This can be observed through changes in both linguistic and mathematical conceptualisation. Changes in language are very important here. The term *descobrir* was first used to signify the discovery of new lands in 1472, whereas the more abstract term for “discovery”, *descobrimento*, surfaced in 1486 – the abstraction residing in the fact that the latter was not predicated on an agent to undertake the discovering.³⁵ The African Atlantic had thus itself become a “space to discover”; a geography dominated by *places* (occupied by humans) was superseded with one occupied by abstract *spaces*.³⁶ Indeed, there was no word in medieval European languages to signify the modern term “space”; this developed specifically along with the Atlantic voyages.³⁷

Crucially to the ideas of this book, experiences in Western Africa were necessary conditions for these changes, for the voyages along the African coast were essential in changing the conceptual lexicon of late medieval Portugal towards this more abstract, spatially aware and mathematised worldview. In an important work, Joaquim Barradas de Carvalho illustrated these changes by showing how the advances in numeracy and mathematisation were made possible by the experience of new worlds catalysed by the Portuguese voyages of “discovery”; he argued that confrontation with the new precipitated growing interest in quantification.³⁸ Although the use of Arabic numerals and ordinary mathematical symbols such as “+” and “x” remained unheard of in the fifteenth century – and indeed, in the case of the latter, were still unusual until the end of the sixteenth century – by the early sixteenth century, when three Portuguese mathematicians published new works, all of them used Arabic numerals.³⁹ These mathematical changes were accompanied by important scientific breakthroughs also related to spatial and mathematical concepts. In the first place, there was a new dependence on astronomical observation for navigation in the second half of the fifteenth century, where previously European sailors had never travelled out of sight of land.⁴⁰ Such spatial awareness led to the growth of cartography in Portugal and the

³⁴ See Green (2006).

³⁵ On the contrast of places and spaces, see L. Fonseca (1995: 15).

³⁶ Ibid., 15–16. See also Tzvetan Todorov’s analysis of Columbus’s journal from 1492, which shows more interest in lands than in people “[une] préférence pour les terres plutôt que les hommes”: Todorov (1982: 39).

³⁷ Richter (2009: 55–6).

³⁸ J. Carvalho (1981).

³⁹ Ibid., 51–69.

⁴⁰ Albuquerque (1983: 31–41).

introduction of a latitude scale on maps in the early sixteenth century.⁴¹ One may reasonably say, therefore, that the experiences of navigation in the waters of Atlantic Africa were fundamental in shifting the perception of experience onto a more scientific footing.

There were many consequences of this shift for which, again, events in Africa were relevant. Key to the new conceptualisation of quantification, for instance, was the growth of the importance of coinage in Portugal following the exploitation of Elmina's gold. Such was the flood of gold from Elmina that by 1495 it provided a public revenue of 120,000 *cruzados*, in comparison to 126,688 *cruzados* from other sources, and it dramatically increased the amount of coinage available in the Portuguese economy.⁴² The gathering importance of gold in the years leading up to the forced conversions of the Jews in 1497 then allowed for the abstraction of value and perception.⁴³ Such abstraction was a central element of emergent modernity, often represented in monetarised economies by the equivalence objects of production are granted by their exchangeability through a system of universal value constituted by money.⁴⁴ Thus the urbanisation and monetarisation of the Portuguese economy that expanded along with the explorations of the West African coast were accompanied by a sense of abstraction and alienation, and it was precisely the new economic horizons that had opened up in West Africa which consolidated these changes. The voyages along the West African coast had therefore not only brought the economic liquidity to catalyse growing abstractions in monetary terms; they had also helped to create new concepts which were vital to this new, more theoretical and scientific worldview.

In Iberia this process of abstraction was replicated ideologically in the awareness and articulation of regional identities. Medieval Iberia had represented an Islamic (and thus North African and Middle Eastern) model of place, with different communities co-existing.⁴⁵ The new Iberia of the 1490s, however, was a culturally purified space purged of its non-Christian communities, tied spatially to the rest of Europe through its geography, and conceptually by this new mode of abstract thought

⁴¹ Ibid., 62–70.

⁴² Godinho (1969: 829). In this seminal work Godinho also showed how the hyper-inflation of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, produced by a chronic shortage of gold, had been one of the spurs to the voyages to Africa.

⁴³ The connection between monetarisation and alienation is discussed by Marx in the *Grundrisse* – see McLellan (1971: 60–1).

⁴⁴ Simmel (1990: 120, 128–9).

⁴⁵ On this Islamic model of place, see Perceval (1997: 88–9); N. Roth (2002: 41); Marques (1972: Vol. 1, 82–3).

developing along with the voyages of discovery. The end of the previous model of place perhaps came when the forced conversions of 1497 tied Portugal culturally to this new vision of reality.⁴⁶ Thus in the urban spaces of Iberia in the fifteenth century, several levels of abstraction were at work: physical (from the land to the towns), economic (with the growing value of money, which can be seen in the emphasis placed on materialism in the envy of the Jews), and psychological (with the new conceptual armoury and the shift in Iberia's conception of itself). Many of these changes were symbolised by the new importance of urban centres, and thus it was the anger at the death throes of the previous worldview which was directed at the New Christians.

This analysis shows why the New Christians who came to Western Africa did so with acute experience of the forces which soon engulfed the Atlantic world. These New Christians had been the very first targets of this process, in which modernisation required scapegoats in order to legitimate and drive forward the changes which growth through the forcible appropriation of economic surpluses required. It was an inevitable condition of Jewish life in Iberia that they should be part of this bourgeois vision, barred as they largely were from significant landholdings and the status this provided in feudal societies.⁴⁷ They could therefore easily be identified with the new system: they were the perfect scapegoats. Yet as well as being scapegoats for resentments felt at the new system, as urban dwellers and traders they were active participants in it. Those New Christians who went to Western Africa would bring these experiences with them, and the new ways which the forces of modernisation and alienation found to present subjectivity would make Western Africa a key testing ground in the formation of new types of belonging.⁴⁸

THE EARLY NEW CHRISTIAN DIASPORA IN WESTERN AFRICA

The New Christian diaspora in Western Africa emerged from the role of the New Christians' Jewish forebears in the Portuguese economy. In the fifteenth century Jews had been used by the Portuguese kings to collect the royal tax revenues, not only in Portugal but also, in the late fifteenth

⁴⁶ See Castro (1954), especially 85–135, on how different Iberia was from the rest of Europe.

⁴⁷ Tinhorão (1988: 20 n.9); see also Simmel's (1990: 224) analysis of the importance of money to strangers in societies, as it can easily be exported outside the group.

⁴⁸ On the role of Upper Guinea in finding new ways to present subjectivity, see Nafafé (2007: 2).

century, in the nascent overseas trade.⁴⁹ The Portuguese crown may have felt it wise to use an unpopular class to carry out an unpopular task. However, as the overseas trade grew, there was also a growing structural segue between the way in which international trade transcended boundaries and the ways in which the Jewish diaspora did likewise in the Mediterranean world.⁵⁰

Diasporic peoples were well suited to the strategies needed for successful trade as transnational trading worlds opened up in the early Atlantic. Some readers may feel uncomfortable with the use of a term such as “transnational,” which has been comprehensively reworked in recent decades and applied to the era of industrial globalisation.⁵¹ Christopher Bayly has argued that the idea of the transnational is of limited relevance to the era before the formation of nation-states.⁵² Yet scholars recognise that many of the key features of contemporary transnationalism existed in previous eras, such as mobility, diasporas, long-distance networks, and maintenance of connections with the place of origin.⁵³ These features all apply to the early New Christian Atlantic traders, and indeed Patricia Seed has suggested that this New Christian diaspora offers an example of transnationalism preceding what we think of as modernity.⁵⁴ Clearly, there were major differences between these New Christian groups and contemporary transnational networks, but the transnational category is nonetheless useful in forming an understanding of them.⁵⁵

This usefulness becomes clearer when we consider how scholars have started to explore the possibilities of some form of transnational identity among other diasporas of the early modern Atlantic; indeed one of the benefits of using this term here is to see how the events analysed in this book show many of the characteristics of an incipient form of modernity.⁵⁶ Portugal and Spain in the sixteenth century were proto-modern states characterised by their global reach and new institutions such as the Inquisition which were notable for their use of extensive

⁴⁹ Salvador (1981: 2); by around 1472 they were involved in the sugar trade with Madeira together with Genoese merchants – see also Soyer (2007: 75), and Lobo (1979: 519).

⁵⁰ Correia e Silva (1995: 2).

⁵¹ See for instance Hannerz (1996); Smith/Guarnizo (1998b); Vertovec (2009).

⁵² Bayly et al. (2006).

⁵³ Vertovec (2009: Chapter 2). As Vertovec says, “transnationalism (as long-distance networks) certainly preceded the nation” (2009: 3).

⁵⁴ Bayly et al. (2006).

⁵⁵ On these differences, see Yovel (2009: 289–90).

⁵⁶ For an example of early modern transnational identity, see O’Toole (2007: 21) on the Brame diaspora of Peru.

bureaucracies and state-sanctioned punishment. When this point is foregrounded together with the fact that the New Christians themselves began to be known as – and to call themselves – “Men of the Nation” (*hombres de la nación/homens da nação*) in the sixteenth century, and that this “Nation” was precisely defined by its dispersed nature, the relevance of the transnational category to the early New Christian diaspora becomes clear.⁵⁷

The dispersed nature of New Christian trading communities was vital to their early success. In the African Atlantic, as among the Jewish Mediterranean communities, this quickly became essential, and, combined with pre-existing knowledge, helped to cement the New Christian status there. As we have seen, Sephardic Jews were already involved in the trans-Saharan trade, and these Moroccan communities probably had commercial and family contacts with traders in Iberia (cf. [Chapter 2](#)). The Portuguese New Christians were thus ideally placed to become involved in the Atlantic trading diaspora plying to and from the West African coast. A further continuity lay in the fact that the early *rendeiros*, or tax farmers, of Cabo Verde were New Christians, just as the Jews had been tax collectors in Portugal.⁵⁸ Continuity was key to the organisation of this new trade as it had been in Senegambia.

The role of the New Christians in early Caboverdean history is underlined by the mechanism used by the Portuguese crown for putting the Caboverdean contracts out to tender. When bidding for the new contract was announced in Lisbon in 1507, the factor of the Portuguese islands and *almoxarife* of the slave house sent someone down the Rua Nova shouting for bids from “whoever wants to take up the contract of the islands of Santiago and Fogo and the rights of the island of Maio”.⁵⁹ After the events of 1497, the old *judiarias* or Jewish quarters of Portugal were called “*vilas novas*” or “*ruas novas*” and re-occupied by their former inhabitants.⁶⁰ By asking for bids for the Cabo Verde

⁵⁷ On the global and modern nature of the Inquisition, see Green (2007a) and Bethencourt (2009); on the use of the term “nation” for the New Christian diaspora, see Bodian (1997) and Arbell (2002).

⁵⁸ Z. Cohen (2002: 89, n.89) notes this; see also idem., (1994: 346).

⁵⁹ HGCV: CD, Vol. 1, 171 – a document of 6 February 1507: the whole passage reads: “E o dito feitor [Gonçalo Lopes] e eu, escrivão [Álvaro Anes], ... mandamos [a Diogo Fernandes, porteiro do concelho] que se fosse per a Rua Nova e per as ruas acustumadas e que afrontasse que se havia logo d’arrematar. E o dito porteiro começou de dizer altas vozes quem quizer lançar nas ilhas de Santiago e do Fogo e nos direitos da ilha de Maio”.

⁶⁰ Tavares (1987: 43); Amador de los Ríos (1960: 747); Soyer (2007: 198). In Lisbon, the Rua Nova had formerly housed the largest synagogues, and after 1497 it remained inhabited largely by New Christians – see Lipiner (1977: 122–3).

contract in this way, the crown was guaranteeing that it would be taken up by New Christians.

That the Caboverdean contracts were typically parcelled out in this way is indicated by the identities of the *rendeiros* prior to this contract. In 1504 the contracts had been assigned to Duarte Rodrigues, Pero Francisco and Gil Álvares, whose guarantor had been Fernam de Loronha.⁶¹ Loronha was Rodrigues's uncle⁶²; he was also the head of a consortium of New Christians who had been given the first contract for Brazil after the voyage of Pedro Alvares Cabral in 1500.⁶³ Loronha was a well-known New Christian.⁶⁴ This has led some historians to assume that Loronha had converted in 1497⁶⁵; in fact he was a member of the royal household by 1494 and had converted by this time.⁶⁶

Nevertheless, Loronha's New Christian status is important in understanding the orientation of the traders who took up the Cabo Verde contract in the years after 1500. Although Loronha was not forcibly converted in 1497, he had active dealings with members of the Jewish community just before the forced conversions. Prior to 1497 he acted as receptor for rents due on cottages belonging to the royal household, and the sums involved included 495,495 *reais* that Salamam [Salomon] Negro owed to Afonso Fernandes dating back to the reign of João II, and which were charged to Loronha and his partners as they were also partners of Negro at that time; the Negro family was one of the Jewish families involved in high finance in Lisbon.⁶⁷

Loronha's nephew Duarte Rodrigues had had a similar trajectory. A quittance from the receptor João Alvares Rangel of 1496 included monies received from Duarte Rodrigues as part of the dues from the factor of Guiné⁶⁸; associated with Rodrigues was Yoçé Cabanas, Yoçé being a

⁶¹ HGCV: CD, Vol. 1, 141–7.

⁶² Z. Cohen (1994: 344).

⁶³ RD, Vol. II, Part III, 120–1. See also Lipiner (1969: 15); Carneiro (1983: 197).

⁶⁴ On Loronha's connection to the Caboverdean contracts and the assignment of these contracts in the *Rua Nova*, see Correia e Silva (1991: 365–7).

⁶⁵ See for example Thomas (1997: 111).

⁶⁶ Wolff/Wolff (1986: 141).

⁶⁷ AHP, Vol. 2, 351: “495: 495 rs que Salamam Negro devia a Afonso Fernandes, thesoureiro que foi de el rei que Deus tem, e foram aqui carregados ao ditto Fernam de Noronha e seus parceiros, por serem parceiros em o ditto Salamam Negro ao trauto das moradias de el Rei que Deus tem”: tr. “495,495 *reis* that Salomon Negro owed to Afonso Fernandes, treasurer to the late king, who were charged to Fernam de Noronha and his partners, having been partners with the said Salomon Negro in the business of the late king [João II]'s cottages”. Noronha and Loronha are variants of the same name.

⁶⁸ HGCV: CD, Vol. 1, 105.

typical transliteration of the Jewish name Yosef in Iberian documents of the time.⁶⁹ Thus, like his uncle Loronha, Rodrigues had also converted prior to 1497 – as evidenced by his Christian name – and also remained associated with members of the Jewish community at that time.

These factors are important when considering the Loronha-Rodrigues consortium of New Christians in Cabo Verde in the early sixteenth century. These figures clearly had strong connections with the New Christian communities of Lisbon. Furthermore, the activities of this consortium were widespread across West Africa. In 1502 and 1503 Loronha held the contract for the Rios dos Escravos (present-day Benin and Nigeria) and for the pepper from Guiné and Elmina, and therefore his dealings in Cabo Verde merely extended this interest.⁷⁰ This evidence suggests a need to reconsider the career of this well-known Atlantic consortium; Loronha is often presented in a Brazilian context, although his activities spanned the Atlantic, and he was equally as active in West Africa.⁷¹

This evidence of major New Christian traders taking a wide interest in Western Africa in the early sixteenth century is supported by other data. Loronha and Rodrigues were followed as contractors in Cabo Verde by Antonio Rodrigues Mascarenhas in 1510.⁷² Mascarenhas was the son of João Rodrigues Mascarenhas, one of the leading New Christian merchants of Lisbon, killed by a mob during the riots of 1506.⁷³ João Rodrigues Mascarenhas had been involved in bartering in Upper Guinea, and he had been leased the *vintena* of the region from the years 1505 to 1507, prior to his untimely death.⁷⁴ His son Antonio's involvement in Cabo Verde continued until at least 1516, and thus New Christians and their agents on the Caboverdean islands were pivotal to the collecting of taxes throughout this period.⁷⁵

The involvement of these influential New Christians is certain to have had an impact on the type of person to be found in Cabo Verde.

⁶⁹ Ibid.: “500 [cruzados] que recebeo de Lopo Mendes e 1.580 rs. de Duarte Rodrigues e os 150 de Yoçé Cabanas...”.

⁷⁰ AHP, Vol. 2, 239: a document of 15 June 1509, detailing the dues owed by Loronha to the crown. See also Salvador (1981: 19); Thomas (1997: 112); Vogt (1979: 73).

⁷¹ Though Salvador (1981: 19) recognises Loronha's equally important role in the African context. This evidence supports the argument of Metcalf (2005) regarding the importance of African experience in the colonization of Brazil.

⁷² Barcellos (1899: 66).

⁷³ On the filial relation, see Salvador (1981: 19); on the murder of João Rodrigues Mascarenhas, see C. Roth (1959: 65).

⁷⁴ AHP, Vol. 4, 73; he had also previously held the licence to trade on the Gambia at Cantor/ Kantora (*ibid.*, Vol. 4, 72).

⁷⁵ Z. Cohen (1994: 343).

Following the riots of 1506 against Lisbon's New Christians, Manoel I had passed a law permitting their departure from Portugal without his permission in March 1507.⁷⁶ This facility, combined with the dangers of staying in Portugal, made their presence in Cabo Verde almost inevitable, particularly as the contracts were controlled by other New Christians. Already in 1501 New Christians were being exiled to Cabo Verde.⁷⁷ Then, in a well-known letter of 25 October 1512, the *câmara* of Ribeira Grande complained that the "New Christians who act as *rendeiros* [tax farmers] here" were damaging the interests of the court secretary, Antonio Carneiro.⁷⁸ In a letter dated the previous day, they had complained that the New Christians had misinformed the crown with damaging results.⁷⁹ Manoel I soon took account, and a decree of 8 May 1515, barred New Christians from living or passing through Santiago once the contract of Francisco Martíz had ended.⁸⁰

As we saw in the previous chapter, the tax receipts handled by these New Christian tax collectors derived from the labour of slaves in Cabo Verde and the trade in slaves from West Africa. That is, the commercial exploitation of the region that had seen the development of such an early Atlantic slave economy and the first stirrings of a creolised society in the Atlantic was placed in the hands of the New Christian merchant class that was still coming to terms with the violence that they and their relatives had been the victims of in Spain and Portugal. Although from a metropolitan perspective continuities in the tax-collection process were clearly important, the New Christian experience of violence in Iberia may also have counted. We might ask: Can the *rendeiro* Antonio Rodrigues Mascarenhas's actions as a tax farmer in Cabo Verde really be separated from his experience of his father's lynching in Lisbon? Gaining income through tax receipts derived from a trade in human beings may have constituted some form of psychological transference for a group whose estimation of humanity cannot have been very high following recent events in Portugal.

This is not to play the old game of demonisation of the Jews. For one thing, New Christians had a complex attitude to religious matters, and

⁷⁶ Révah (1971: 488).

⁷⁷ Mendes (2007: 299–300).

⁷⁸ MMAII: Vol. 2, 57: "se algū mall se faz, os crystãos novos que quá sam rendeyros fazem todo esto".

⁷⁹ Ibid., Vol. 2, 53: "Ora, a requerimento de allgūs christão novos que a V.A. mal ynformarão".

⁸⁰ Ibid., Vol. 2, 97: "Acabado o arrendamēto da dita ylha que ora teem Francisco Martíz, ally por diante nā posam nella viver de morada, nem estar nhūs christãos novos."

whereas some stuck fast to the old Jewish beliefs, as many were devout Catholics and even atheists. The majority of New Christians did not become Atlantic traders at all, and many merely tried as best they could to assimilate into Portuguese society. Nevertheless, a minority did become Atlantic diaspora traders involved in the slave trade, and invoking previous experience as a partial explanation for this is simply to recognise facts about human nature and the responses which human beings may have to their experiences of violence. Naturally, not everyone responds in the same way, but certainly some people do respond to experiences of persecution by transferring it. Why should these *rendeiros* have shown any greater estimation for the value of human life than had been shown in their general experience?

On this interpretation, and as suggested in the introduction to this chapter and the subsequent analysis of anti-Semitism and proto-modernity in fifteenth-century Iberia, their participation in this trade was an expression of the violence which was one of the many aspects of the emergence of modernity. Yet the participation of New Christian *rendeiros* in the trade had its own nuances. The emergence of an Atlantic slave economy in Western Africa may have depended on violence, but, as in pre-Atlantic West Africa, this violence would bring with it a flipside of cultural accommodation in which the New Christians, although initially somewhat reluctant, came to play a pivotal role.

THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE NEW CHRISTIAN DIASPORA IN CABO VERDE

The New Christian presence grew swiftly in Cabo Verde throughout the first third of the sixteenth century. As New Christian families sought to escape the Inquisition in Portugal – instituted by papal bull in 1536, though not accorded comparable powers to its Spanish counterpart until 1548 – Cabo Verde became an attractive point of escape apparently beyond inquisitorial power.⁸¹ Moreover, it was not only Western Africa that was attractive; by the 1550s, there were also many New Christians said to be living in Kongo and São Tomé.⁸² Having shown adaptability in

⁸¹ Mark/Horta (2011: 9) concur in seeing this region as a place of escape from the Inquisition for Jews and New Christians.

⁸² See the letter of Belchior de Sousa from July 1553, MMAI: Vol. 2, 286; and the letter of Christovão d'Orta de Sousa from November 1561 claiming that five out of every six people in São Tomé are New Christian (“*as synquo partes da jête desta ylha sam cristãos novos...*”) – ibid., Vol. 2, 475.

adopting some outward signs of Roman Catholicism, it may have been that the adjustments required in the African Atlantic did not seem too difficult to these new refugees.

In Western Africa, however, the importance of New Christian adaptability was not immediately apparent. Indeed, many of the earliest New Christians appear to have chosen Cabo Verde as a place where they would be free to maintain their ancestral Jewish rites unmolested. They were there not to adapt to new cultural rites but to maintain old ones. It was only by the end of the 1530s that patterns of adaptation began to emerge. Case studies help us to trace this pattern, and the inquisitorial archives allow us to trace individual cases back very early in time. The New Christian presence can be mapped through specific cases back to the 1510s.

The first recorded case comes from the remote island of Brava. Brava's first *rendeiro* had been the New Christian Francisco da Fonseca, who was nominated in 1509, with profits coming from cleaning cotton and preparing it for export.⁸³ There were also some cattle on the island, and the rights to the island were passed on to his sons Diogo and João in 1518.⁸⁴ Things continued thus until 1542, when both Diogo and João were accused of Judaic practices on a caravel.⁸⁵ Action was swiftly taken, and by 1545 the rights to Brava had passed on to João Pereira, a member of the royal council.⁸⁶

Evidence from the Canariote Inquisition supplements the suggestion here of a Judaising tendency among Caboverdean New Christians from at least 1518. The first burnings by the Canariote tribunal were in 1526, and one of the main cases was that of Álvaro Gonçales and his wife Mencia Baez from Palma Island, who were burnt together with their son Sílvio.⁸⁷ Another son, Duarte, escaped with a *sanbenito* [penitential garment], which he was sentenced to wear for five years on Palma. However, his mother-in-law, Catalina Diaz, denounced him again to the Inquisition on 8 April 1527.⁸⁸ Duarte soon plotted to flee. He went to a certain Juan Diaz on the island to ask for help to leave, and Diaz also came to the Inquisition, saying that Gonçales had asked to be taken to Cabo Verde,

⁸³ HGCV: CD, Vol. 1, 183–5.

⁸⁴ Ibid., Vol. 1, 183.

⁸⁵ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Livro 52, 169v, 173r-v; abstract published by Baião (1921: 130).

⁸⁶ A good discussion of this case is Z. Cohen (2002: 131–2).

⁸⁷ Wolf (1926: 18–79); Millares Torres (1982: Vol. I., 88–9).

⁸⁸ Wolf (1926: 78–9).

where he had rich relatives.⁸⁹ Then on 29 July 1529, Catalina Diaz came to the Inquisition to say that she had heard that Duarte had been living with his uncle in Cabo Verde, but that he had died there.⁹⁰

The cases of the Fonsecas and Duarte Gonçales corroborate the accusations of the 1512 letter from the council of Ribeira Grande concerning the strong New Christian presence in Cabo Verde. Other cases support this hypothesis, in particular that of Graviel [Gabriel] Rodrigues. Rodrigues was accused of crypto-Judaism in February 1559 to the Bishop of Cabo Verde, Francisco da Cruz.⁹¹ He had not attended church for a whole year.⁹² An old man by 1559, he appears to have been one of the Spanish Jews who fled to Portugal after the expulsion of 1492.⁹³ He could not recite the Ave Maria, the Pater Noster, or the Credo and did not even know if he had been baptised.⁹⁴ Moreover, his sole statement of religious belief was that he believed in “God the All-Powerful Father and Creator of the Heavens and Earth [*criador dos céus e da terra*]”, where the formulation “*Deus dos céos*” was a standard one for crypto-Jews in the early modern era.⁹⁵

Rodrigues was transferred to Lisbon for trial.⁹⁶ There he said that he was a widower and that his wife had fled from Lisbon with her relatives many years previously when King João III of Portugal had given the New Christians licence to leave the kingdom. Rodrigues had been in Cabo Verde at the time, and on his return he had found them gone, which shows that this New Christian had a long history of trade in Cabo Verde. In his trial Rodrigues stated that he could not remember how long ago this had occurred. New Christians suffered bans from leaving Portugal in the periods 1532–5 and 1547–50, and given the long period of time which must have elapsed for Rodrigues to forget when exactly his wife had fled Lisbon, the likelihood is that this could have been around 1535, and that this was when he had previously been present in Cabo Verde.⁹⁷

⁸⁹ Ibid., 79.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 16034, fol. 2r – the first 5 fols. of this trial are numbered but the remainder are not. I would like to express my utmost thanks to Filipa Ribeiro da Silva who drew my attention to this file.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., fol. 2v.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid; on the formulation “*deos dos céos*”, see Bodian (2007: 44).

⁹⁶ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 16034; for the remainder of the detail of this case there are no fol. numbers.

⁹⁷ On the dates of prohibitions of New Christians leaving Portugal, see Révah (1971: 495–521).

Rodrigues evidently had a history of repeated trips to Cabo Verde over a long period; it is also quite possible that this had not been his first trip to Western Africa and that he had been there previously in the 1520s.

A final case from this early period confirms both the Judaic practice of many of these first New Christian migrants and the way in which Cabo Verde was seen as a place of escape. In June 1539 evidence began to be received in Lisbon against Branca Dias, a New Christian accused of fleeing Lisbon for Santiago, Cabo Verde, out of fear of the Inquisition.⁹⁸ Four years later, on March 12, 1543, Dias was arrested in Praia on Santiago and taken to Ribeira Grande.⁹⁹ Witnesses claimed that she had come to Cabo Verde smuggled in a water barrel on a ship captained by her son and had then gone to Fogo before settling in Praia, where she baked bread.¹⁰⁰

Branca Dias's case shows how the New Christian diaspora had spread in Cabo Verde beyond Ribeira Grande to Praia (also on Santiago) and Fogo. Moreover, as Dias's son Nuno Fernandes was a trader in Upper Guinea, one can also see here evidence of its spreading to the African coast.¹⁰¹ Taken with the other three cases examined here, it reveals the longevity of the New Christian presence in Cabo Verde; individuals can be traced back through the records to the 1510s, 1520s and 1530s. Many of these New Christians appear to have identified strongly with the Judaic faith. The Fonsecas kept Jewish prayers aboard ship. Branca Dias was said to go to Jewish houses in Lisbon and, like Graviel Rodrigues, used a Jewish ritual formulation when she declared her belief in the "all-powerful God who created the stars and the earth" [*deus todo poderoso q criou as estrelas e a terra*].¹⁰² Rodrigues himself, meanwhile, used these Jewish formulations of prayer and did not even know whether he had been baptised. Duarte Gonçales asked his wife to work on a Sunday – and so clearly did not keep the Christian sabbath – and his parents and brother were heavily involved in crypto-Judaism.¹⁰³ For these individuals, Cabo Verde was a place for personal and cultural preservation. People like them cannot have had much desire to engage in the cultural give and take which characterised the development of a Creole culture and language on the islands.

⁹⁸ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 5729, fols. 2r, 15r.

⁹⁹ Ibid., fol. 17r.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., fols. 17v–18r, 19r, 20r, 26v, 27v.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., fol. 4r.

¹⁰² Ibid., 15r, 4r.

¹⁰³ Wolf (1926: 78–9, 18–52).

However, we cannot understand the early New Christian diaspora in Cabo Verde solely through the desire to maintain Judaic practices. Crucial to the place of this emergent community was the role which Western Africa was beginning to take in the wider Atlantic world, as well as the interrelationship of regional and global factors which was developing. Cabo Verde was an attractive option for New Christians not only as a place of escape from the Inquisition, but also because of wider geopolitical dynamics and its place in the development of pan-Atlantic connections, at which we will look more closely in Chapter 6. Moreover it was relatively safe, as the Atlantic was not a key economic space for Portugal in the first half of the sixteenth century, a time when much of the Portuguese nobility was glory-hunting in India.¹⁰⁴

As a space passed over by the nobility in the first half of the sixteenth century, the Atlantic was attractive for New Christians.¹⁰⁵ This may explain why they were able to use their long-standing experience of diaspora trading to forge such advantageous networks. In Cabo Verde, they rapidly developed connections not only to the Canaries (the Gonçalves case) and the trading houses of Portugal (the Fonsecas, Rodrigues), but also to Brazil. According to a letter of 30 October 1544, written by the captain of Cabo Verde, António Correia de Sousa, all ships going to Brazil called there.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, as we have already seen from the Loronha trade consortium's twin interests in West Africa and Brazil, there had been commercial and maritime connections between the two sides of the Atlantic from the very start. In fact, the evidence for the early New Christian presence in Brazil is rich. By 1543 there were people in Brazil with children in the jails of the Inquisition for Judaising.¹⁰⁷ By 1553 people who had been accused by the Inquisition had fled to Brazil.¹⁰⁸

As the mobile trading class of the pre-Atlantic Portuguese commercial system, it was inevitable that the New Christians would come to predominate commercially in the part of the overseas explorations largely passed over by the Portuguese nobility in the first half of the sixteenth century; they rapidly took over from the Genoese merchants who predominated in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.¹⁰⁹ As with the *rendeiros*,

¹⁰⁴ Azevedo (1929: 100–101).

¹⁰⁵ Schorsch (2008: Vol. 1, 49–51); Schwartz (2008: 99).

¹⁰⁶ MMAII: Vol. 2, 370: all ships going to Brazil (and São Tomé) “per força ham de tocar ho dyto porto [de Santiago]”.

¹⁰⁷ Baião (1921: 141).

¹⁰⁸ AG, Vol. 9, 204–5.

¹⁰⁹ Using shipping contracts of the *Casa de la Contratación* in Seville, Mendes (2007: 471) sees the period from 1535 onwards as one increasingly dominated by New Christians.

pre-existing practices were translated into the nascent pan-Atlantic world. But whereas initially the religious beliefs which went with those practices had tended towards a maintenance of old Jewish rites, as the first half of the sixteenth century developed, a more mixed form of identity began to emerge, and the old diasporic forms adopted new clothes as creolisation intensified. It was then that the tendency towards maintaining the old and secret Jewish rites became fused with the influences from West Africa.

The first evidence of this New Christian role in accelerating creolisation comes from 1546, when the council of Ribeira Grande wrote a letter to the inquisitorial officers of Évora denouncing many officials of the island as New Christians. This letter was first cited by Avelino Teixeira da Mota, and its purport was that about two hundred New Christians lived among the Africans of Upper Guinea, many having done so for ten, fifteen and even twenty years, and that they performed Mosaic and animist rites together with the Africans and had become polygamous.¹¹⁰ The customs house of Ribeira Grande was singled out, with officials there accused of having despatched a known fugitive from the Inquisition in Lisbon to the Upper Guinea coast for his protection – this fugitive's father and brother were said to have been burnt in Lisbon.¹¹¹ The authors of the letter wrote that “so many of those who live here and who most rule the land are New Christians, especially in the customs' house, where the accountant, *almoxarifes*, scribes of the customs' accounts, scribes of the state and of the justices, and many others, [are all New Christians], very rich and powerful”.¹¹² The council urged the king to establish the Inquisition in the islands.¹¹³

Some have seen this as a generic complaint grounded in economic competition rather than religious affiliation.¹¹⁴ However, the evidence of

The evidence on the *rendeiros* considered here may even require this date to be pushed back, certainly as far as the Portuguese side of the trade goes.

¹¹⁰ Mota (1978: 8). Mota gave the following citation for this evidence: *Inquisição de Évora, Livro de Denúncias de 1544–1550*, fols. 7–12v. However the indices for the Inquisition of Évora contains no book of *denúncias* corresponding to this period, and I was unable to locate the relevant document. T. Hall (1992: Vol. 1, 163 n.52) experienced the same difficulty in the 1980s.

¹¹¹ Baleno (1991: 169); also cited by Correia e Silva (1995: 4); Havik (2004a: 102) and Brooks (1993b: 158).

¹¹² Cit Z. Cohen (2007: 144): “quatro partes dos que aqui moramos e dos que mais mandam [n]a terra especialmente na alfândega são cristãos-novos, como o contador, *almoxarifes*, *escrivães* dos contos *almoxarifados*, do público e do judicial e outros, muitos ricos e poderosos”.

¹¹³ Ibid., and Brooks (1993b: 158).

¹¹⁴ Baleno (1991: 168, 168 n.137).

this chapter suggests that this is not a sufficient explanation. We have seen how there was indeed a large New Christian contingent in the region. Moreover, shortly before the accusations of 1546, the *corregedor* of Ribeira Grande, Pero Moniz, had been accused by the captain of the colony, António Correia de Sousa, of targeting Old Christians with a disproportionate number of complaints.¹¹⁵ Moniz, a graduate of Coimbra, had been appointed in 1533¹¹⁶; by 1543 his enemies had closed in on him and he had been forced to flee to the African coast.¹¹⁷ Correia de Sousa clearly felt himself embattled on many fronts; he had known some of the details of the case of Branca Dias and of her flight from Lisbon hidden in a barrel and had been disgusted at this.¹¹⁸

All this evidence would suggest that far from masking a commercial bias, the denunciations of the council of Santiago were serious. For one thing, the fact that Moniz felt there was an established community on the African coast to which he could escape in the 1540s says something of that community's size and strength. For another, commercial ties within diasporas are often predicated on religious ties.¹¹⁹ The fact that the accusations of the Old Christians of Cabo Verde were couched in religious terms does not mean that they were not also commercial. Just as the Islamic quality of trading diasporas had been an important vector in the growth of the trans-Saharan trade in the Sahelian region, the shared ethno-religious bonds of the New Christian networks in Western Africa may also have assisted their trading activities. To suggest that accusations of religious deviance must reveal economic competition may be a projection of present concerns; it certainly reveals a lack of understanding of how religious ties often bound trading diasporas together and, moreover, how fundamental this connection was to societies of the Sahel and Upper Guinea.

The 1546 accusation to Évora suggests that many New Christians had migrated from Cabo Verde to Upper Guinea and that, once there, their Jewish rites had hybridised with African ones, with the New Christians adopting polygamy and other African ritual practices. The increasing

¹¹⁵ MMAII: Vol. 2, 370–3; a letter of 1544.

¹¹⁶ IAN/TT, Chancelaria D. João III, Livro 38, fol. 3v.

¹¹⁷ Domingues (1991: 112).

¹¹⁸ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 5729, fol. 19r.

¹¹⁹ A. Cohen (1971). See also Green (2007b: Part 3) and Mendes (2007: 17) for the role of a shared religious identity in the success of the New Christian trading diaspora. Clearly, the importance of this in this case shows that arguments such as Trivellato (2009)'s view that boundaries between communities could be important to the success of long-distance trade in the early modern era are not universally applicable.

engagement with African peoples, which trading and living in Africa required, encouraged them to adopt plural identities and some African practices. New Christians had recent experience of such stratagems, for in Iberia they had adopted Christianity, and many among them had adopted the devotional styles of Catholicism in opposition to their recent Judaism.¹²⁰

This 1546 accusation to the inquisitors of Évora is thus not anomalous. It is in fact key evidence to support the ideas put forward here: that by the end of the first generation of New Christian migration, the desire to preserve the Jewish religion was shifting in some quarters to the willingness to adapt. The accusation demonstrates, moreover, that the trading communities with which they were connected on the coast of Upper Guinea were developing the mixed practices seen as being constitutive culturally – if not linguistically – of creolisation. The dispersed nature of Caboverdean New Christian communities had opened them to the wider processes at work in sub-Saharan Africa, and their success in the region's trade allowed them to become themselves key agents in the development of these mixed communities.

FLEXIBILITY, MODERNITY AND “CREOLISATIONS” IN EARLY ATLANTIC TRADE

Why was it that New Christians excelled in these early pan-regional connections linking Cabo Verde and the West African coast? We have seen that they were the Portuguese commercial class *par excellence*, and this must have been a factor in their success. Yet elsewhere in the Portuguese empire, the Old Christian nobility offered very able rivals, as Goa attested. Understanding the reasons for the New Christian success in Western Africa will allow us to grasp something of the nature of the mixed communities that had emerged by around the 1540s, and how the New Christian role worked alongside the Upper Guinean one in the development of creolisation in Western Africa. Moreover, it will then connect these processes to the developing proto-modernity which was analysed in the first half of this chapter.

This New Christian success was influenced by the ideological changes which had overtaken the Iberian trading communities of the Atlantic, and which were related to the conceptual changes which, as we have seen, were revolutionising the Portuguese worldview at this time. The

¹²⁰ Pereda (2007).

accusation by the inquisitors of Évora cited by Mota suggests that the interactions of large numbers of New Christians with peoples in Upper Guinea dated back to the mid-1520s. It suggests that these interactions depended on the willingness of New Christians to adapt their own cultural practices to Upper Guinean realities. Bonds of trust and respect on which successful trade relies depended on this willingness to engage in cultural borrowing and the formation of lineage alliances throughout the African Atlantic. Beyond Western Africa, in Kongo, by the 1550s it was said that the Portuguese who had lived there for fifteen or twenty years were “worse than the Kongolese” for observing the rites and customs of Kongo.¹²¹ However, this willingness to adapt may have been one which Old Christians, with an increasingly inflexible ideological outlook in which “intermarriage” was a positive slur on one’s *limpeza*, were less able to countenance than New Christians.

This relates to how Africans in general were perceived by those outsiders who traded with them. As we saw in Chapter 2, ideas of race were not generalised in the early Atlantic, but they may have played a role in shaping the way in which some Iberians related to their African trading partners. This process continued in the early sixteenth century in West Africa, with Africans increasingly coming to share a similar status in the minds of Old Christians with that of the New Christians, something which confirms Jonathan Schorsch’s suggestion that in the Ibero-Atlantic world as a whole, Jews and people of Jewish descent were often “confused in the Iberian imagination with other Others”.¹²² It may have been this association which made Old Christians less willing and indeed less able to make the cultural accommodations required for successful trade in Upper Guinea. By contrast, such conceptual confusions cannot have troubled New Christians and must have made it easier for them to make the required alliances and engagements which facilitated the development of these shared practices.

The classic example of the Old Christian conceptual confusion in Western Africa is the perception that the griots – the praise-singers of the area – were Jews. The earliest description is from Valentim Fernandes,

¹²¹ MMAI : Vol. 2, 329 – “*Tam emtregues aa devasydão e gentilidades dela, que são jaa piores que os naturaes*”.

¹²² Schorsch (2005: 111). In the Americas, scribes frequently made orthographic errors, inserting “*judío*” in place of “*indio*” – ibid., 112; Lewin (1960: 60–2). Such elisions between Jews and the demonized also prevailed in Iberia; in the 1570s Alonso de la Fuente, scourge of the *alumbrados* – or illuminists – of Extremadura declaimed how of the 70 priests in the *alumbrado* hotbed of Zafra, 60 were “*judíos*” [i.e., *conversos*] (Huerga 1978: 363).

circa 1506: “In this land [of the Jolof] and among the Mandinka there are Jews called *Gaul* [gawol] and they are black like the people of the land although they do not have synagogues nor practice the rites of the other Jews. And they do not live with the other blacks but apart in their own villages”.¹²³ Almada, who knew the region intimately, wrote how “throughout this land of the Jolof, Serer and Mandinka there is a nation held among them all to be Jews”.¹²⁴ Even as late as 1684 Francisco de Lemos Coelho would refer to the griots as Jews.¹²⁵

Thomas Hale has suggested that this misconception arose from Portuguese confusion with the term *Juddy*, a rendering of *jeli* that appears in some seventeenth century writings.¹²⁶ Yet far more likely is that the structural similarities of the separation of griots from the rest of the societies in Senegambia and Upper Guinea to the condition of Jews in Portugal created the misconception that they “had” to be Jews.¹²⁷ These were people, as Fernandes said, who lived apart in their own villages, just as the Jews of Portugal had lived in *judiarias* until 1497 and continued to live in separate quarters as New Christians. It is significant, moreover, that Fernandes’s account is collated from the accounts of Portuguese sailors, for his summary does not indicate his isolated perception, but rather how the griots were generally perceived. There was in this confusion of griots with Jews a structural similarity in the perception of the condition of Africans and that of the Jews. From the outsider Atlantic perspective, therefore, there were key ideological reasons why New Christians were more likely to form successful trading communities in West Africa, and this situation was made all the more likely by their long-standing facility for long-distance trade.

At the same time, there were vital internal African factors which facilitated the emergence of these communities. Just as in the Gold Coast, in Upper Guinea the area chosen for the site of settlement and exchange was one that was densely populated and had a long history of commerce.¹²⁸

¹²³ Mauny/Monod/Mota (1951: 8): “Em esta terra e em Mādinga ha judeus e chamā os Gaul e sō negros como a gēte da terra porem nō tem synagogas nē usā de ceremonias dos outros indeus. E nō vivē cō os outros negros se nō apartados sobre sy em suas aldeas”.

¹²⁴ MMAII: Vol. 3, 263: “Há em toda esta terra dos Jalofo, Berbecins, e Mandinkas, uma nação havida entre eles por Judeus”.

¹²⁵ Peres (1953: 101).

¹²⁶ Hale (1998: 83).

¹²⁷ Or, as Francisco Bethencourt (1998: 104) puts it, “Racial preconceptions are the constant object of self-reference”: “os preconceitos raciais são constantemente objecto de um processo de auto-referência”.

¹²⁸ Ballong-wen-Menuda (1993: Vol. 1, 151–2).

Similarly, just as on the Gold Coast, in Upper Guinea the incoming Europeans were unable to outdo the Mandinka diasporic trade networks except with the advance of the slave trade.¹²⁹ As we have seen in previous chapters, the areas in which Atlantic traders concentrated their activities were those in which there had been a long history of interaction with members of long-distance trading diasporas distinguished by their religious affiliation. Moreover, these interactions had also involved accommodation to the Mandinka, which had promoted cultural exchanges and yet also violence. These circumstances meant that this would prove the ideal locale for generating trans-Atlantic trade; through the co-operation of members of mercantile diasporas, both Mandinka and New Christian, their work smoothed the running of the proto-imperial forces of the Sahel and the Atlantic.

The New Christian presence was thus an extremely complex factor in the changes which the Atlantic world brought to Western Africa and in the emergence of creolisation. As Stuart Schwartz has recently shown, although there was a vein of pluralism in Iberian religious life of the sixteenth-century Atlantic world inherited from the *convivencia*, this was increasingly in tension with the essentialist tendencies of Old Christian ideology, which were reinforced by the Iberian Inquisitions and the Council of Trent.¹³⁰ Thus although it helped further the internationalisation of Western Africa, New Christian willingness to live among African peoples and adopt some of their practices distinguished them from many of their peers.

As Schwartz implies, a willingness to adopt plural identities is very important to understanding this picture. Scholars such as Yirmiyahu Yovel have recently seen “a confused, ambivalent identity” as emblematic of the New Christian experience, which, Yovel argues, was characterised by the collapse of “compact identities”.¹³¹ Plurality of identity, although a new part of the New Christian ideological lexicon, was a strategy which Sahelian and Upper Guinean societies had long used in their relationships with Islam and local religious and ritual practices; it was a result of the importance of long-distance trading diasporas and the traditional role of plural identities in allowing members of these diasporas to act as cultural go-betweens.¹³² Thus a fundamental aspect of New Christian success in

¹²⁹ Ibid., Vol. 1, 391–4.

¹³⁰ Schwartz (2008: 48–61).

¹³¹ Yovel (2009: 78–80, 387).

¹³² Curtin (1984).

Western Africa was their ability to adopt these plural identities at a time when the hegemonic institutions of the wider Iberian Atlantic increasingly militated against this strategy, coupled with the fact that this ability coincided with a West African cultural world in which such pluralism was already established.

This picture therefore also illustrates the importance of a nuanced understanding of how the development of a Creole society in Western Africa was related to the emergence of modernity, and of how this related to the development of cross-cultural trade. The changes brought about in the sixteenth century provoked multiple responses. Although some of these militated towards an increasing homogenisation of culture and identity, as in the Iberia of the Inquisition, elsewhere there was a growing pluralism of identity. Whereas in the New World this pluralism could often be circumscribed and, to a certain extent, controlled by the Iberian colonial institutions, there were other regions such as Western Africa where its emergence was in keeping with the existing “mestizo logics” referred to by Amselle.¹³³ Here, the pluralism of many New Christians was an advantage, and their capacity for this pluralism itself grew out of the forced changes to their identities which the violence of proto-modernity in Iberia had brought. In Western Africa, this increasing pluralism was matched to the growing mobility catalysed by their role as Atlantic traders – to flows of people, goods and ideas – and thus the new mixed communities of the African Atlantic grew out of some of the changes associated with this proto-modernity, even when at the same time, elsewhere, more hardened identities were emerging.

We should, then, conclude this discussion by looking for evidence of how this flexibility and pluralism of identity was emerging in the Creole society of Western Africa at this early period. Such flexibility can be discerned through the fact that, as mentioned at the start of this chapter, creolisation already was not a uniform process in Western Africa. On the coast of Upper Guinea and on the islands of Santiago and Fogo, three distinct types of creolisation were developing, a testament to the flexibility which is a hallmark of this cultural form. To begin with, we can examine these differences by comparing the New Christian role on the islands of Fogo and Santiago.

The willingness of New Christians to borrow from other cultures will be examined in more detail in the following chapter, although it is clear from the 1546 accusation cited by Mota that this was particularly intense

¹³³ Amselle (1998).

on the African coast. On Santiago and Fogo, meanwhile, different realities pertained. Although the alleged defender of New Christian interests in the early 1540s, Pero Moniz, was unpopular on Santiago, he was supported by the people of Fogo.¹³⁴ Some historians have seen this as indicative of an early New Christian concentration on that island.¹³⁵ As we saw earlier, New Christians such as Branca Dias had contacts on Fogo, and this factor combined with the Moniz evidence would support this view. One of the attractions of Fogo may have been that its lands had not been passed over by the crown to royal donataries as on Santiago, thus colonists outside the nobility (among whom the New Christians must have represented a significant proportion) could own land; they could not on Santiago.¹³⁶

Even today various cultural vestiges specific to Fogo may hint at an early New Christian influence. There is for instance the remarkable absence of pigs on the island, which I observed during a visit in May 2008. During several long excursions on foot across Fogo I did not observe a single pig in spite of the widespread raising of other domestic livestock such as chickens, goats, and the like, although I was informed that there was one person who did breed them; on Santiago, by contrast, pigs abound and roadside stalls selling barbecued meat are usually selling pork. Furthermore, the custom in some areas of Fogo of stooping down and touching the floor before going into a house may relate to the Jewish practice of keeping a *mezuzah*, a small box holding the sacred *Shema* prayer, on the doorposts of a house; this practice continues and was something I observed.

This evidence combines with the documentary material examined here to suggest a New Christian presence on Fogo in the early colony. It is not unreasonable to suppose that this presence affected the culture which emerged there. Certainly, the balance of racial composition on Fogo was substantially different to that of Santiago, which must have led to different types of relationships among peoples and different cultural forms. Fogo had a significant European population for much longer than Santiago, and even today there are vestiges of this past in the form of the so-called white cemetery of São Filipe, the main settlement of Fogo.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ MMAII: Vol. 2, 368–9 – a document which reveals his popularity in Fogo.

¹³⁵ Barcellos (1899: 120); Ribeiro (1954: 98).

¹³⁶ Brito (1966: 81).

¹³⁷ Andrade (1996: 52). In a visit of November 2003, I found differing opinions on the source of the cemetery's name. Some see it as owing to the white marble used and point out that many Blacks were buried there; others see it as a legacy of the racism developed by Fogo's large white population.

The dispute over Pero Moniz and the other material alluded to here suggests that such cultural differences had emerged as early as the 1540s. By this point, processes of creolisation may already have been divergent, ranging from hyper-flexibility in Upper Guinea to maintaining Jewish rites on Fogo. Key in shaping the different processes were the dominant atmospheres of each locale – ranging from African on the Guinea Coast to predominantly African on Santiago and to a more mixed environment on Fogo – as well as the comparative predispositions of both Africans and Europeans towards adaptability. Importantly for the purposes of the argument of this book, all three locales saw interactions occurring with growing intensity in the 1520s and 1530s, precisely because of the growing demand for slaves from the New World (cf. [Chapter 6](#)). Thus from the beginning, the mobility associated with the slave trade and the processes of creolisation were intimately related. Herein the physical violence of modernity was constituted, as were the associated psychological abstractions and distancing mechanisms which allowed people to dehumanise those they treated as animals as they shipped them across the increasingly mathematised space of the Atlantic ocean.

The New Christian/Kassanké Alliance and the Consolidation of Creolisation

By the middle of the sixteenth century, many of the themes that have emerged over the first half of this book had coalesced. The Criolu language developed on Cabo Verde at the turn of the sixteenth century had been taken to the African mainland by landowners and slaves of landowners on the islands, and, increasingly, New Christian merchants. There, the Creole society emerging in Cabo Verde interacted with a far older set of communities in which plural identities were the norm, and it was from this interaction that an Atlantic Creole culture in Western Africa was consolidated.

The aim of this chapter is to bring together the two main strands which have characterised the first part of this book. Chapters 1 and 2 looked at the influence of trans-Saharan trade and diasporas of merchants in shaping cultural accommodations and political environments in Upper Guinea; they showed how a culture of receptivity towards outsider traders emerged among groups such as the Kassanké, and how this cultural accommodation was influential in the very first African-European connections in the Atlantic in the late fifteenth century. Chapters 3 and 4 then looked at how Atlantic trade based around Cabo Verde became integrated into this picture through the activities of New Christian diaspora traders, and how these developments accompanied the rise of an early form of Creole society on the islands; these chapters further showed how the economic infrastructure underpinning this process depended on slavery and was associated with ideological changes connected to an early form of modernity. In this chapter, we now see the way in which these New Christian diaspora traders built alliances with the Kassanké by the mid-sixteenth century, and how this consolidated a mixed cultural

identity and a shared Kriolu language spreading across the Western African region.

What emerges is nothing less than an analysis of how existing African commercial and cultural links were fused with early Atlantic processes, thereby enabling the expansion of the Atlantic slave trade which is considered in the second part of this book; as we see towards the end of the chapter, just as the processes involved in the consolidation of Caboverdean society were predicated on slavery, so the expansion of pan-regional links in Western Africa depended on the expansion of trans-Atlantic slaving by 1550. The chapter builds this picture by assembling a wide array of sources to illustrate the trading alliance forged between Kassanké and New Christians in these years. Many of these sources are new to historical study of this subject and furnish important perspectives on the formation of what became a consolidated Creole culture by the middle of the sixteenth century.

The chapter begins by examining the evidence for the importance of Casamance to the Atlantic trade of Western Africa in the 1530s and the 1540s. Here we see the importance of the *lançados*, and the evidence shows how the expansion of Atlantic trade depended on the ways in which these *lançados* were accommodated within existing frameworks. Subsequent case studies provide an important weight of evidence that shows how intertwined Kassanké and New Christian interests were. When this evidence is considered, this reveals that early Atlantic trade in Western Africa depended in large part on such groups and the diaspora trading networks which they had learnt to operate. Empires could not operate alone in the sixteenth century Atlantic; they depended on trading intermediaries who had their own independent networks and often shared a facility for developing plural identities, which stood in contrast to the more monolithic and rigid senses of affiliation promoted in the Iberian world.

I conclude the argument of this first part of the book by showing in detail just how the pre-existing characteristics of both African and Atlantic actors enabled the expansion of Atlantic trade in the sixteenth century. Like other trading diasporas in Western Africa, the New Christians were adept at forming new ties whilst using old bonds to maintain collective identity and the control of certain trades.¹ This facilitated the plural nature of emergent Creole society, opposed to the ideals of cultural

¹ For an example of this among the Hausa of twentieth-century Nigeria, see A. Cohen (1969: 14–5).

and religious purity which went with Portuguese expansion. This mixed world was a challenge to the dominant imperial culture, as is evident in the vituperative denunciations of it.² Yet there was also a way in which, through the alliance of Kassanké and New Christian groups who were at least nominally subordinate to the more dominant political powers of the Mandinka and the Portuguese, the imperial discourse expanded as the alliance provided slaves for the New World. The Kassanké/New Christian alliance, whilst a partnership of subalterns who represented an ideological threat on one hand, extended Iberian empires on the other. Indeed, the interconnections which were the foundations of this alliance would not have been so strong without the labour demands of those empires. If modernity pointed in the direction of flexible and plural identities in the African Atlantic, elsewhere the bonds forged as a result contributed to a system of forced labour and production which was administered by people with a very different outlook. Not for nothing did Antonio Gramsci assert that “subaltern groups are always subject to the activity of ruling groups, even when they rebel and rise up”.³

THE RISE OF LANÇADOS AND OF RECIPROCAL CULTURAL INFLUENCES IN ATLANTIC CASAMANCE

Nothing excites so much as prohibition, the old adage goes, and where the settlement of the *lançados* in Upper Guinea is concerned it seems to be true. Around 1540, just before the deposition to the inquisitors of Évora which claimed that hundreds of New Christians were *lançados* in Upper Guinea (cf. [Chapter 4](#)), João III of Portugal again tried to tackle the *lançado* problem. In 1539, he issued a decree aimed at confiscating all the property belonging to *lançados* in Sierra Leone and the rivers of Guinea, with a subsequent elucidation from the crown that this applied to residents of the island of Santiago.⁴ Three years later, João III reiterated the decree, urging his officials to seize “all the property of those Christian people who are *lançados* in Guinea”.⁵

Clearly, the *lançado* “problem” was growing. More and more people were settling among the peoples of Upper Guinea. It was this accelerated process of exchange which would lead, by the middle of the sixteenth

² See Bhabha (1994).

³ Hoare/Nowell Smith (1971: 55).

⁴ MMAII: Vol. 2, 324–5.

⁵ Ibid., Vol. 2, 352 – “todas as fazendas das pessoas cristãos que andão *lançados* em Guiné”.

century, to the establishment of a genuinely pan-regional Atlantic Creole culture linking the Atlantic trading settlements of Upper Guinea with Cabo Verde. Most of these documents refer to the *lançado* presence only in Sierra Leone and “Guinea”, and it was here, to the south of the Gambia River, that Kriolu would develop as a vernacular among the Luso-African and Caboverdean trading classes.⁶

In this region, the commercial opportunities offered by the Casamance, São Domingos, Grande and Sierra Leone regions were all important. In Sierra Leone, large numbers of slaves were drawn into the Atlantic trade from the 1540s onwards, following the wars between the Manes and the Sapes (cf. Chapter 8). However the primary zone for African-European relations was farther north, in the Casamance and São Domingos regions. A wide variety of evidence shows that *lançados* were concentrated here in the Mandinguised kingdom of the Kassanké. The evidence of *lançado* presence here is such that, as Philip Havik has put it, the land stretching from the Bintang creek south of the Gambia through to Ziguinchor “hosted all of the early Atlantic trade settlements in the region”.⁷ The three major *lançado* settlements in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were at Bugendo, Cacheu and Guinguim, all associated with the Bainunk-Kassanké (especially Bugendo and Guinguim); the alliance between the Portuguese and Masatamba, king of the Kassanké from around the 1550s to the 1580s, was described in detail by the Caboverdean trader André Donelha.⁸ There are some recorded cases of *lançados* jumping ship in Senegambia among the Sereer – in 1542, one Francisco de Costa did so at Porto de Ale – but the majority of *lançados* lived in Casamance.⁹ The roots of the economic motor of Western Africa’s trade and its interconnections to the wider Atlantic therefore lay in the alliances which they were able to form with the Bainunk-Kassanké.

Some of the best evidence for this comes from the inquisitorial trial dating from 1548 of Antonio Fernandes, who was appointed as factor at Bugendo on the São Domingos River in 1547. The trial related to a power struggle between Fernandes and his predecessor, Manoel Garcia.¹⁰ In the course of the trial, several pieces of information were disclosed which can tell us much about the strength of the *lançado* presence in Casamance and of the nature of African-European exchanges. What emerges is how

⁶ Jacobs (2009: 352).

⁷ Havik (2004b: 101).

⁸ MMAII: Vol. 5, 139–40.

⁹ Torrão (1991: 254).

¹⁰ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 801.

reciprocal cultural influences had developed in Upper Guinea by this time, a reciprocity related to the expanding Atlantic trading economy.

In his defence against charges of falsely claiming to represent the Inquisition, Fernandes claimed that on his arrival in Bugendo in 1547 the “black elders [*fidalgos*] of the land had made a written petition to him” regarding Garcia, whom they accused of having attacked some of the principal people of the area a few days before.¹¹ The letter was appended to the inquisitorial case as evidence and leaves tantalising questions: who had written it, and what does the use of Portuguese as a language of petition in Upper Guinea tell us about African-European relationships by the 1540s?

Bugendo was on the São Domingos River, on the borders of what today is southern Casamance and northern Guinea-Bissau. It was controlled by the Mandinguised lineage of the Kassanké. However, the petition was written not from Bugendo but from Cacheu, at the southern limit of Kassanké control. The idea that the elders [*fidalgos*] might have petitioned the incoming Caboverdean factor regarding the behaviour of the outgoing one is certainly suggestive of the importance of Atlantic trade in Casamance. It implies that the factors were extremely influential in Casamance. Such power may partly have derived from better weaponry – the petition refers to Garcia’s use of “bombardments” [*bombardadas*] – but Portuguese firearms were fairly useless during the prolonged rainy season when powder could not be kept dry, and thus the influence of the factors in Casamance cannot have been kept by force alone.¹² Moreover, because one of Fernandes’s accusations was that Garcia had given “artillery” to the “infidels”, it is clear that by this time firearms were no longer the exclusive preserve of the Portuguese.¹³

Most likely, this influence of the Caboverdean factors derived from commercial realities of the new Atlantic world. Slowly but surely, Upper Guinea was being drawn into a more international range of influences from the Atlantic side. Why else would the petition have been written in Portuguese? The use of this language by lineage heads implies that they had rapidly acculturated to the language of the Atlantic world and its trade, just as previously they had done with the Mandinka connected to the trans-Saharan trade, and just as the *manikongos* of West-Central Africa, who also composed letters in Portuguese at this time, were doing.

¹¹ Ibid., fol. 4r: “os *fidalgos da terra negros lhe fizerā por escripto hū requerimento”.*

¹² On “*bombardadas*”, see *ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, fol. 14v.

Most likely, the letter was written by a scribe and not by the elders of Cacheu themselves; scribes commonly composed official petitions in this era. Nonetheless, the ability of elders from Cacheu to communicate with the scribe using both a language and type of discourse which they hoped would find favour with the Portuguese crown is indicative of an understanding of Portuguese power and of how to frame petitions to it, which is symptomatic of a heavy degree of acculturation.

Thus in Casamance in the 1540s, not only were *lançados* adopting African cultural traits, as we saw in the 1546 denunciation of the New Christians in the last chapter, but the opposite was also occurring. Members of local elites had acculturated sufficiently to the new outsider traders from the Atlantic to frame arguments in discourse which might find favour in Lisbon. The cultural influences were thus reciprocal. Here is evidence of the mixed cultural environment for which “creolisation”, as we saw in the Introduction, is taken by many theorists today as a “master metaphor”. Moreover, we see here how, far from preserving their cultural traits as an advantage, each of the groups involved in this cross-cultural trade borrowed from one another’s practices in order to find a mutual territory of shared understanding and communication.¹⁴

Such reciprocity was no accident. *Lançado* settlement among the Mandinguised Kassanké lineage of Casamance was part of a wider pattern which saw the Portuguese settle in locales of Mandinka influence not only in Casamance, but also, when the subsequent alliance with the Kassanké had begun to fade, along the Gambia and in the Biafada territories along the Rio Grande.¹⁵ This is a key point which expands the argument of previous chapters, connecting early areas of *lançado* settlement among the Kassanké to the previous pattern of diaspora traders in Upper Guinea. For it turns out that this pattern was not confined to Bugendo but was widespread; as we saw in Chapter 1, peoples in these areas had become used to cultural accommodation predicated on initially violent incursions and a subsequent establishment of commercial systems based on long-distance mercantile diasporas connected to the trans-Saharan trade.

Such existing patterns mattered deeply in how the new Atlantic trade was constructed and how it affected societies in Western Africa.

¹⁴ This warns us to be cautious of the argument of Trivellato (2009: esp. 275–6), which suggests that preservation of distinctiveness was automatically an advantage in cross-cultural trade in the early modern era. This evidence shows that this was certainly not always the case.

¹⁵ Rodney (1970: 81).

Commercial exchanges were essential in the establishment of a mixed cultural environment, and agents of commercial exchange were often agents of acculturation.¹⁶ In the Atlantic world, however, as elsewhere, the agents of trade (and creolisation) could only begin their work once a certain disposition towards plural identities existed. They could only advance once the violent work of bringing people to some sort of wider accommodation to hegemonic societies had been achieved. This was a long-standing pattern in Western Africa, and thus trade was not “imposed” on Africa, but rather fitted into a pattern which Africans themselves had shaped, a pattern which suited the role of diasporas of commerce and the fundamental role of religion and ritual in Upper Guinean societies. If such a pattern facilitated violence through the expansion of the slave trade, then this did not illustrate anything particular to Upper Guinean societies, but rather indicated how quickly modernity had come there and how fundamental violence was to the construction of modernity. Indeed, it was by integrating this violence into a new pattern of enslavement and cultural pluralism that creolisation took shape in Western Africa, in a foretaste of events elsewhere in the Atlantic world.

CASE STUDIES OF KASSANKÉ/NEW CHRISTIAN INTERACTIONS

In order for a Creole culture to emerge across Western Africa, intense links between Cabo Verde and the African coast were necessary. In the previous chapters, we have seen how these had developed already by the end of the fifteenth century and had involved the exchange of people, livestock, textiles and foodstuffs. The increasing settlement of *lançados*, as evidenced in the 1530s and 1540s, accentuated this process. It was because of the connections that *lançados* had with Cabo Verde and the frequent trade linking the islands with the Atlantic trading settlements of Africa that a shared and composite culture emerged.

Antonio Fernandes’s trial contains other details which confirm this picture of the links between Upper Guinea and Cabo Verde. Fernandes himself had come to Bugendo from the islands. In his trial he claimed that one of his accusers, Domingos Rodrigues, was the nephew of a certain Francisco Dias who had been Manoel Garcia’s agent on the island of Santiago, and that Dias had prepared a ship on Santiago and sent it to Bugendo to rescue Garcia from his forced imprisonment by Fernandes.¹⁷

¹⁶ Gonçalves (1996: 39); Trajano Filho (2003: 15).

¹⁷ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 801, fols. 14r, 15v.

There were regular connections between Bugendo and Santiago: one of the witnesses, João Lopes, noted how he had heard about the case from many people on the island of Santiago who had come from the “rivers of Guinea”.¹⁸ Thus by the late 1540s – and probably considerably earlier – Cabo Verde and the trading settlements of Upper Guinea constituted a linked space, and this explains how the development of a Kriolu language on Santiago could very rapidly have been communicated to the trading settlements of the African coast.

As these connections increased, so did the role of the New Christians. It was through the expansion of the *lançado* class in this era and the increase in New Christian influence that the Atlantic dimension of creolisation in Western Africa, and the role of preceding events in Cabo Verde, began to have an influence on the communities of the mainland. Case studies are the most useful tool we have for examining the interactions between Kassanké and New Christians, for they illustrate both how deep-seated the alliances were and how influential they came to be in the construction of a Creole culture and language which spanned the whole Western African region.

Evidence for the Kassanké–New Christian alliance emerges earliest from the António Fernandes case.¹⁹ On a superficial level the case appeared to be about trading disputes, but a close examination reveals that concern about New Christian activity and the extent of New Christian alliances with the Kassanké was fundamental. In his written defence to the inquisitors, Fernandes stated that Garcia was a “New Christian and of the caste of the New Christians and is recognized as such by the people who know him”.²⁰ Fernandes added that Garcia and those conspiring with him were “very familiar with and very close and helpful friends of Garcia and also all of them like the said Manoel Garcia are New Christians”.²¹ Thus whether Garcia and his friends were New Christians or not, Fernandes perceived a New Christian conspiracy against him; indeed, one witness reported that Fernandes had told him that he would “seize the said Manoel Garcia on the authority of the Holy Inquisition and that he was a Jewish *tangomão*”.²² Fernandes also denounced many

¹⁸ Ibid., fols. 37r-v.

¹⁹ See Schorsch (2008: Vol. 1, 12) on the value of inquisitorial cases for assessing relations between subalterns in the early Atlantic world.

²⁰ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 801, fol. 4v: “*he cristā novo e de casta de cristāos novos e por tal he tido das pessoas q o conhecem*”.

²¹ Ibid., fol. 13v: “*do ditto mel Garcia seus muy mtos familiares e amigos de muy estreita amizade e mta prestação e tābem por serem todos como o dito mel Garcia xpāos novos*”.

²² Ibid., fol. 36v: “*prendera ao dito Manoel Garcia polla Santa Inquisiçāo e q era tangomão Judeu*”. ▀

of Garcia's witnesses as New Christians, including Vicente Nunes and Francisco Lopes.²³ Then, when Fernandes arrested Garcia by claiming to represent the Inquisition, he accused him of refusing to relinquish the "property of Pero Rodrigues ... which belonged to the King since the wife of the said Pero Rodrigues had been arrested by the Holy Inquisition and might already have been burnt".²⁴

One of the most interesting aspects of Fernandes's denunciation of these New Christians is the close alliances which he suggests they had forged with the Kassanké. Garcia was accused by him of giving weapons to the "blacks and infidels inimical to our Holy Faith", of having widespread dealings with the "infidels", and of taking refuge with the [Kassanké] King of Casamance when Fernandes sought to arrest him.²⁵ In the time when Garcia had been factor at Bugendo, Vicente Nunes was said to have "lived as a *lançado* among the blacks adopting African customs [*feito tango mao*]".²⁶ Another man, Francisco Lopes, had also been "living cast in among the blacks in Guinea".²⁷ The fact that this evidence derives from the Kassanké trading port at Bugendo and the denunciation of Garcia as living with the Kassanké King offer strong support for the idea that the Kassanké lineage heads had welcomed these traders to Casamance and that the influence and exchange was reciprocal.

From the New Christian side, there is objective evidence that Manoel Garcia himself was a New Christian, and that therefore many of those accused by Fernandes probably also were. Garcia's nephew and associate, Bartolomeu, was married to Branca Dias. Dias was the daughter of Manoel and Miçia Dias, residents of Fogo, who acknowledged that they were New Christians.²⁸ Thus Manoel Garcia at least was a New Christian, and Fernandes's attribution of a New Christian identity to his colleagues living among the Kassanké seems plausible.

²³ Ibid., fols. 14r, 14v.

²⁴ Ibid., fol. 58v: "fazenda de pero rodrigues q elle tinha em seu poder a qual pertença al Rey e q a molher do dito pero rodrigues estava presa pola samta Inquisição e q não sabya se sabia queimada..." .

²⁵ Ibid., fol. 4v ("dava aos negros e infieis inimigo de na sta fee cruzes douro e armas"); fol. 10r, "infieis"; fol. 15v.

²⁶ Ibid., 14r: "e do tpo em q o dto mel ga estava por feitor nos ditos Rios andava cõ os negros lancado feito tango mao".

²⁷ Ibid., fol. 14v: "deytado com os negros em guiné".

²⁸ On Bartolomeu as Manoel's nephew and friend, see ibid., fols. 14r and 15v. On Bartolomeu as the husband of Branca Dias, see IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 6580, case summary; ibid., for Branca's relation to Manoel Dias. On Manoel Dias's acknowledgement of his New Christian status, see IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 7312 (there are no fol. numbers to this trial). Again, I must thank Filipa Ribeiro da Silva for bringing my attention to these trials.

This being the case, the importance of New Christian networks in Casamance becomes central to the narrative of African-European relations in the 1540s and the development of Atlantic Creole identities across Western Africa. For although Garcia had over ten witnesses in his favour in the trial, Fernandes had only two. This strongly suggests that New Christians outnumbered Old Christians among the *lançados* of Casamance. Moreover, these New Christians were accused by Fernandes of living among the Africans, supplying them with weapons, adopting their cultural practices, and damaging the royal trade there. These accusations were very similar to those made to the inquisitors of Évora from Cabo Verde in 1546 (cf. [Chapter 4](#)).

The Garcia case is just one of many which show how the Kassanké and New Christians formed a mutually beneficial trading alliance. We can return for instance to the case of the Dias family mentioned previously in connection to Bartolomeu Garcia. Documents relating to the Dias family reveal that the New Christian networks of Cabo Verde and Upper Guinea were thoroughly interconnected. Moreover, these documents tell us much about the belief systems of these New Christians; they illuminate the attitudes which they brought to their interactions in Upper Guinea and how these beliefs were transferred from Cabo Verde to the Atlantic trading settlements of the West African coast as a result of their trading activities.

Inquisitorial records are extant for both Manoel and Miçia Dias and their daughter Branca. The picture which emerges is of a family caught halfway between Christianity and Judaism, with the women the most resolute crypto-Jews. Manoel Dias made a fairly orthodox declaration of his belief in Christian ideals, stating that he believed that God had sent his son Jesus Christ to redeem humanity and making no use of crypto-Jewish formulations relating to “God creating the heavens and earth”.²⁹ He appears to have been something of an early empiricist in the mould of New Christians like Francisco Sanches, the philosopher of Toulouse; one accusation professed outrage that he had declared that ill people got better because of the work of nature and not through commanding themselves to the Virgin Mary.³⁰ There were no accusations against Dias for keeping Jewish rituals however, and the only piece of real evidence was that he was alleged to have said, whilst standing outside Fogo’s jail, that it

²⁹ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 7312 (there are no fol. numbers to this trial). All subsequent references in this paragraph come from this trial.

³⁰ The classic work of Sanches is *Quod Nihil Scitur*, “That Nothing is Known”, written in 1580 – see Sanches (1998).

was “better to be a Jew than a Mulatto”, something which Dias denied.³¹ However the intolerable position in which someone like Dias found himself is revealed by his comment that “people all hold me to be a Jew as they do with all New Christians”.³² A New Christian who was a sceptic or who even tried to be an orthodox Christian was seen as a Jew and was thus cast into a double interior life, emblematic of the plural identities of New Christians emphasised by scholars such as Yovel.³³

In contrast to Manoel, both his wife Miçia and their daughter Branca Dias were accused of Judaising. Miçia Dias was said to keep the Jewish Sabbath on Saturdays, wearing clean shirts, using clean sheets and resting in a room, and then working on Sundays and forcing her slaves to do likewise.³⁴ People said that she would not give alms to Old Christians, that she concealed crucifixes in cushions on which visitors sat, and that she secretly whipped another crucifix and made sacrifices to a cow.³⁵ One witness said that she sent for bread to be baked on Fridays so that she did not have to do so on a Saturday.³⁶ Both Miçia and her daughters were infrequent churchgoers, and witnesses described how Miçia did not lift her face to the sacrament when it was raised by the priest and that she filled her daughters’ mouths with salt after they had gone to receive it.³⁷ Perhaps the crowning insult was when she had emerged one Sunday from her house with her backside pointing at the street.³⁸

Similar accusations were levelled at Branca, together with some new ones. Branca Dias lit candles on Friday nights. She kept the Jewish festivals and fasted on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. She worked on Sundays. When attending a Mass at the church in Alcatrazes, on Santiago, she had turned her face away and refused to look at the Host when the priest had raised it. She had a very poor knowledge of basic Christian prayers, and could not even recite the *Salve Regina*.³⁹

³¹ Something which, if true, confirms Schorsch’s (2008: Vol. 1, 7) assertion that “many ordinary people seem to have been quite aware of racialist thinking, if not participants in it themselves”.

³² IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 7312: “eu sou xpão novo e me temdão por Judeu como temdos a todos os xpãos novos”.

³³ Yovel (2009).

³⁴ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 3199, fol. 10r. Indeed, her slaves protested at having to work on a Sunday (IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 13107, fol. 3r).

³⁵ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 3199, fols. 8r, 10r-v.

³⁶ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 13107, fol. 3r.

³⁷ Ibid., fols. 3v, 4r.

³⁸ Ibid., fol. 9r.

³⁹ All these accusations are contained in the unnumbered trial at IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 7312.

Here then is a New Christian family with connections to three of the main nodes of Western Africa in the middle years of the sixteenth century. Manoel and Miçia lived on Fogo and had also lived on Santiago, whereas Branca resided in Santiago.⁴⁰ Branca's husband, Bartolomeu Garcia, had strong trading connections to the Kassanké of Bugendo, and had even sailed to try to rescue Manoel Garcia when Antonio Fernandes arrested him there.⁴¹ The networks which had developed along with the trade between the islands and the coast, propelled by the slave economy of the islands, meant that New Christian groups became dispersed, and thus the cultural forms developing among them did so also. It was this that made them key agents in the accelerating process of Atlantic creolisation which had spread across the region, and which also makes understanding the cultural outlook of these actors vital in understanding how this process had developed by this time.

As we saw in the previous chapter, many of the first New Christian migrants to Cabo Verde sought to maintain elements of Judaism in their practices. The Dias case confirms this picture, as does the suggestion that it was contact with African societies which opened some of these New Christians towards mixing their practices and attenuating their adherence to Judaism. It is significant that the women in the Dias household were more steadfast in their Judaism than the men. The role of women is emphasised in Judaism because of the matrilineal religious inheritance. Yet this religious explanation for the women's adherence to Judaism needs to be supplemented by the experiential reality of the constant travels of the New Christian men such as Bartolomeu Garcia and Manoel Dias to and from the African coast and the long periods that some of them spent living there.

There is some strong evidence of how these New Christians traders adapted to life in Upper Guinea in the world of ritual. Valentim Fernandes described how the very word *tangomao*, which was used synonymously with *lançado* in the sixteenth century, derived from a priestly lineage in Sierra Leone that guarded and officiated at a spirit shrine there.⁴² The use of this word interchangeably with the Portuguese *lançado* shows that adaptation to the rituals of West Africa was a key strategy of those who settled there. Corroboration for this emerges from the inquisitorial trials of the Dias family. It was well known, Maria da Cunha of Fogo said, that

⁴⁰ Ibid; IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 6580.

⁴¹ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 801, fol. 15v.

⁴² MMAII: Vol. 1, 737; Nafafé (2007: 160–72).

Miça Dias kept a “calf with many chains of gold and that each day she sacrificed chicken’s blood to it through its mouth”.⁴³ Certainly, if Miça Dias did this it had nothing to do with Judaism and was probably a rite imported from West Africa, which is a testament to both the composite cultural framework that was emerging there and how practices were becoming mixed in the Atlantic trading communities of both Cabo Verde and mainland Africa.⁴⁴

The existence of a case study like this Garcia-Dias nexus cannot alone stand as evidence of the importance of the Kassanké–New Christian alliance. However, when it is supplemented by additional examples, a pattern emerges. Other networks existed at the same time, and one of equal if not greater importance was that developed by the Leão and Carvajal families from the late 1540s onwards. The evidence on this network first emerges through the Carvajal family of New Spain (Mexico). Publication regarding the messianic crypto-Jew Luis de Carvajal *el mozo* (hereafter Carvajal *mozo*) has been widespread, but the case of his uncle, Luis de Carvajal *el viejo* (hereafter Carvajal *viejo*), has been bypassed.⁴⁵ Yet Carvajal *viejo*’s relevance to Cabo Verde is key. When his father died at the age of eight, his maternal uncle, Duarte de Leão, came to collect him from Benavente and took him to Lisbon. He spent three years there – he told the inquisitors during his trial in Mexico City in 1589 – before being sent to “Cabo Verde, in which island he spent thirteen years, and there he was Treasurer and Comptroller of the King of Portugal”.⁴⁶ Leão was holder of the contract for Guiné, and it was this which meant that soon Carvajal was being despatched to Cabo Verde in the service of his uncle.⁴⁷

Carvajal *viejo* declared that he was approximately fifty years old in 1589, which would put his birth date at circa 1539.⁴⁸ He added that his father had died when he was eight.⁴⁹ A time lag of three months followed, as he was collected from Benavente and waited in Lisbon, meaning that he

⁴³ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 13107, fol. 5r: “tinha hu bezerro com muitas cadeas douro e cada dia lhe llançava sanguine da gallinha pella Boca”.

⁴⁴ For the role of the sacrifice of chicken’s blood in Western Africa, see Hawthorne (2010b: Chapter 6).

⁴⁵ See Toro (1944) and M. Cohen (2001). The will of Carvajal *mozo* is published by M. Cohen (1971b).

⁴⁶ Toro (1932: 280–1): “y luego murió su padre en Benavente y el dicho Duarte de León, que vino allí, lo llevó a Lisboa de donde lo envió luego de allí a tres meses a Cabo Verde, en cuya isla estuvo trece años, y allí fue tesorero y contador del rey de Portugal...”.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 279 – “Contratador de los pueblos de Guinea, Por el rey de Portugal...”

⁴⁸ Toro (1944: Vol. 1, 36, n.1).

⁴⁹ Toro (1932: 280).

would probably have sailed for Cabo Verde in the spring of 1548. Thus in the same year that the inquisitorial trial of António Fernandes was held, another New Christian network began to develop in Western Africa.

Once in Cabo Verde, Carvajal *viejo* was not alone. Whilst there, he interacted with many relations. Another uncle was Francisco Jorge, factor of Duarte de Leão at Bugendo, the very same port on the São Domingos that was controlled by the Kassanké and where António Fernandes and Manoel Garcia had clashed in 1548. Jorge lived in Bugendo, and thus the presence of Carvajal *viejo* in Western Africa and of his wider circle of family and trading partners was connected to the relationship which, as we have seen, had already developed between Kassanké and New Christians.

In the early 1560s, an inquisitorial trial developed in which Francisco Jorge and several of his (and Carvajal *viejo*'s) relatives were implicated. The trial centred around accusations of mockery of the virgin birth on Christmas Eve in 1562.⁵⁰ A group of New Christians was said to have gathered in Bugendo with “masks of paper and dressed in disguise”.⁵¹ Then Mestre Dioguo had appeared “dressed in women’s clothes and with towels on his head … calling himself Maria and saying that he was giving birth”, and a send-up of the birth of Christ began.⁵²

These events have been referred to by various historians.⁵³ The reliability of the testimonies has been questioned, because the numbers of New Christians present ranged in depositions between one and four dozen.⁵⁴ The account of transvestism is held to follow a pattern of demonisation of the other which places the testimony in doubt, given that transvestism was severely frowned upon by the Inquisition.⁵⁵ Yet when Mestre Dioguo was brought from Bugendo to the jail on Cabo Verde, he did not deny that the “farce” had taken place and in fact described it in great detail, claiming that he had merely danced at the house of Jorge in honour of

⁵⁰ Jorge’s relationship to Leão is stated in IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Maço 25, no. 233, fol. 42v and confirmed in Carvajal *viejo*’s genealogy, where Jorge is, like Leão, given as a maternal uncle: “Franciso Jorge de Andrade, que fué en Guinea fator y capitán general por el rey de Portugal…” (Toro 1932: 279).

⁵¹ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Maço 25, no. 233, 4r: “mascaras de papel e cō vestidos cōtrafeitos”.

⁵² Ibid., fol. 4r, “en trajes de mujer cō toalhas postas na cabeça … chamando maria q estava parida…”.

⁵³ Torrão (1995: 64); Havik (2004a: 104); Mark/Horta (2010).

⁵⁴ Torrão (1995: 64, n.3).

⁵⁵ Havik (2004a: 104). Such moral censure was related to the fact that transvestites were often seen to be engaged in sodomy: see for example IAN/TT, Inquisição de Évora, Livro 91, fol. 41r.

it being Christmas Eve.⁵⁶ It is clear that this whole network was related to New Christian identity, because Dioguo described Jorge as the “New Christian factor”.⁵⁷ Moreover, the cross-dressing element is also given a greater hint of plausibility by the fact that today, at the annual carnival in Bissau and elsewhere in Guinea-Bissau, people from each gender frequently adopt the clothes and roles of the other; of course, this does not mean that this more flexible approach to gender was current in the sixteenth century, but certainly it may have been, and this piece of evidence could in fact indicate the mixed cultural framework of *lançado* communities in Upper Guinea.⁵⁸

In this way, the Carvajal case is a continuity from the Dias/Garcia trials of the 1540s, showing that throughout this period there remained strong Kassanké–New Christian ties in Bugendo and that these were fundamentally connected to the adoption of shared practices by both groups. In both cases, New Christian families adopted some African cultural practices both in Africa itself and on Cabo Verde; in this Mestre Dioguo case, for instance, in addition to the issue of presentations of gender, the use of masks [*mascaras de papel*] may well have borrowed from the ubiquity of masquerades in the rituals of Upper Guinea. Both of the networks we have looked at had strong connections in Bugendo and the Caboverdean islands – where we should recall that Carvajal *viejo* served as royal accountant – which emphasises how the islands and coast did constitute a linked space. Furthermore, the two networks were almost certainly connected because Mestre Dioguo may well have been the brother of Miçia Dias; on October 17, 1559, Dias told inquisitors that she had one brother, “Mestre Dioguo”, and Dioguo himself, like Dias, had strong connections to Fogo.⁵⁹

A defining feature of both these networks was that they each had come to Western Africa because they saw it as a place of escape. On October 9, 1559, Manoel Dias claimed that “24 years ago he went to the Island of Cabo Verde [Santiago] where he has lived ever since, there and in

⁵⁶ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Maço 25, no. 233, fols. 24r-v: the folios in this trial are confused, and so although these folios represent those marked on the trial documents, they are not always sequential.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 42v: “Francisco Jorge feitor xpão Novo...”.

⁵⁸ Transvestism was current in other West African societies of the time; see Sweet (2003: 53–4). The observation on cross-dressing in Guinea-Bissau is derived from my participation in the carnivals of Bissau and Gabú in February 2000.

⁵⁹ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 3199, on the sibling relationship; IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Maço 25, no. 233, fol. 46r, on Mestre Dioguo’s previous residence in Fogo.

the island of Fogo.”⁶⁰ That would place the arrival of the Dias family in 1535, just a year before the bull was issued establishing the Inquisition in Portugal.⁶¹ Throughout the 1530s it had been increasingly apparent that a Portuguese tribunal of the Inquisition was inevitable. A papal inquisitor had been appointed to Portugal in December 1531, only to be rescinded in October 1532. This had been followed by pressure from Charles V of Spain, someone whom the New Christian emissaries in Rome were not able to best.⁶² Given the violence which the onset of the Inquisition had unleashed in Spain in the 1480s, Portuguese New Christians in the 1530s must have feared that something similar would soon be directed at them, and therefore the arrival of the Dias family in Cabo Verde in 1535 may well be linked to these events.⁶³

A similar pattern held for the Leão and Carvajal families. The year of the eight-year-old Luis de Carvajal’s arrival in Cabo Verde, 1548, was the very year in which the inquisitorial trials of two of Carvajal *viejo*’s uncles, Alvaro and Jorge de Leão, came to a head, both of whom had been arrested by the Inquisition of Évora in 1544.⁶⁴ Both were released under the terms of the General Pardon of the New Christians, and this history and the inauguration of the new Portuguese tribunal of the Inquisition with full powers must have encouraged Duarte de Leão to seek alternatives for his young nephew.⁶⁵

Indeed, Western Africa was not just a place of escape for young Carvajal *viejo*. Carvajal *viejo* had a large family network during his time in Western Africa. According to Mestre Dioguo, one witness of the farce was “Antonio Duarte, a relative of the factor [Jorge]”.⁶⁶ Another cited by Dioguo, Antonio Fernandes, was “nephew of the said factor [Jorge]”, and Fernandes was implicated by other witnesses too.⁶⁷ The presence of so many members of this family, taken with evidence of inquisitorial persecution of members of that family in the 1540s, suggests that these New

⁶⁰ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 7312: “avera vynte e quatro annos q se foy pera a Ilha de Cabo Verde onde sempre morou ē na Ilha do Fogo”.

⁶¹ Green (2007a: 59).

⁶² Ibid., 59–60, for a more detailed account.

⁶³ The 1480s and the 1490s were the most violent in the history of the Spanish Inquisition. See *ibid.*: 8.

⁶⁴ The two brothers’ trials are recorded at IAN/TT, Inquisição de Évora, Procesos 8779 (Alvaro) and 11267 (Jorge). For more details on the trial of Alvaro, see Green (2007a: Chapter 2).

⁶⁵ On the inauguration of the Portuguese Inquisition, see Remedios (1895–1928 : Vol. 2, 50).

⁶⁶ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Maço 25, no. 233, fol. 38v: “Antonio Duarte, parente do feitor”.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, fols. 43r, 5r.

Christians were there in large part for fear of inquisitorial persecution: Western Africa was seen as a place of escape and therefore also outside the vectors of Portuguese military and cultural domination.⁶⁸

Taken as a whole, this evidence makes a strong case that these were general patterns governing the settlement of New Christians in Western Africa. The interconnections between the islands and the coast were ever present. Just as numerous witnesses in the António Fernandes case knew both the islands and the coast, the same held for the 1562 trial of Mestre Dioguo following the farce in Bugendo. According to Dioguo's evidence, one of the leaders in putting on the farce, Antonio Henriques, was a New Christian from the islands.⁶⁹ One witness declared that also present was the son of Bras Fernandes of Fogo.⁷⁰ Moreover, numerous witnesses were residents of Ribeira Grande, such as Gaspar Rodrigues and Tristam de Mascarenhas, the *juiz dos orfãos*.⁷¹ Thus as these New Christians plied back and forth between the islands and the coast, they took both mixed Caboverdean forms to Africa and African cultural forms to Cabo Verde, and the shared culture of the region emerged.

THE “RACIAL” DIMENSIONS OF NEW CHRISTIAN LIFE ON CABO VERDE AND THE ACCELERATION OF CREOLISATION IN WESTERN AFRICA

One of the most important things to emerge from this analysis of the New Christian community of *lançados* in Upper Guinea has been the role of African societies in influencing New Christian receptivity to different cultural influences. As we have seen, those Caboverdean New Christian men who had most contact with mainland Africa were the most likely to develop plural identities and practices, whereas those who remained confined to the islands were more likely to hold to crypto-Jewish practices.

⁶⁸ This evidence requires a revision of Rodney's view that the Portuguese in Upper Guinea all came as free men (Rodney 1965: 307). The New Christians may have been “free” in the context of slave societies, but they were not in the same psychological position as Old Christians, who did not live in fear of the Inquisition. As the sixteenth century developed, this attitude was increasingly extended to other parts of the Atlantic. There were also many New Christians in São Tomé by the late 1560s, with a decree of 1569 barring them from settling there (MMAI: Vol. 2, 570).

⁶⁹ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Maço 25, no. 233, fol. 42v: “Antonio Henriques xpão novo morador no Cabo Verde”.

⁷⁰ Ibid., fol. 9r.

⁷¹ Ibid., fols. 5r, 10r, 43r-v.

This is important not only to the understanding of how mixed cultural practices emerged in Western Africa, but also to grasping what may seem an unlikely phenomenon: the contribution of African peoples such as the Kassanké to the wider reconstitution of Jewish and New Christian identities in the sixteenth century and their increasing hybridity and incorporation of non-Jewish influences.⁷² The identities of New Christians and Jews were porous and mutually receptive: New Christian communities in France and the New World were in touch with Jewish communities in Italy, and Jewish communities in Amsterdam were in touch with New Christians in Brazil and Iberia.⁷³ The growing flexibility of Jewish practices in New Christian culture, spreading as it did to the New World and then back to Europe, was an influential factor in the formation of trading communities in the Atlantic world of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. This flexibility had been influenced by experiences of New Christian traders among the Kassanké of Upper Guinea in the first half of the sixteenth century, many of whom, as we shall see in Chapter 7, had important American connections. Thus the increasing links between Cabo Verde and Upper Guinea affected not only the local region, but also began to have wider effects as international connections intensified over the course of the sixteenth century.⁷⁴

This sort of plural identity was also relevant to the initial trading networks of Western Africa, with many New Christians active in both Cabo Verde and Upper Guinea. Gradually, however, the identities and practices of New Christians in Cabo Verde and Upper Guinea began to diverge. Those who were most connected to the exchanges on which Atlantic trade and Atlantic fortunes depended were prepared to hybridise their practices. On Cabo Verde, however, a more rigid caste identity connected to the wider Iberian ideas of race and purity developing in these decades began to emerge. Both communities existed in places where Criolu was spoken and mixed cultural forms had developed, but the types of interaction were very different in both.

⁷² Evidence of this hybridity is found in the way in which crypto-Jews of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries adopted key aspects of emerging Christian theologies. See Bodian (2007).

⁷³ On the connections of New Christians in the New World to Italy, see Israel (2002: 146); on the connections of Jews in Amsterdam to Iberia see Graizbord (2004), and on connections to Brazil, see Wolff and Freida (1989).

⁷⁴ This relationship between the Atlantic New Christians and subsequent Sephardic communities in Northern Europe thus again clearly warns against the under-representation of Atlantic influences in the formation of Sephardic communities before 1650 – see Trivellato (2009: 112).

One of the main differences may have lain in the political influence of the New Christian community. In Upper Guinea, this was limited. Although their connection to Atlantic trade gave them a certain power, for the rulers of Casamance the New Christians were a dependent client caste who were useful because of their international connections and their outsider status. Diaspora merchants in Sahelian societies were, like the New Christians in Upper Guinea, usually aliens who, though able to have a place in the royal courts, could never challenge royal power precisely because of their outsider status.⁷⁵ Moreover, as with the Mandinka *dyula* diaspora who created an identity through their shared religion of Islam, the New Christian trading caste possessed a shared religious experience through their old Jewish heritage and their more recent experience of the Inquisition.⁷⁶ Thus Kassanké monarchs could exploit their trading connections, but there was never any danger of New Christians usurping power in Africa; this aspect of power relations must have been very important in dictating how flexible New Christian *lançados* became in Upper Guinea.

In Cabo Verde, however, things were very different. As we saw in the previous chapter, there were strong and repeated complaints by the 1540s that the New Christians constituted the dominant mercantile class of the islands. The Portuguese crown took a particular interest in Cabo Verde, where the prominence of New Christians was well known. Between the 1540s and the 1560s, the newly established Portuguese tribunal of the Inquisition showed its greatest interest in West Africa. A provision of August 4, 1551, placed Cabo Verde within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal of Lisbon.⁷⁷ Straightaway the inquisitorial authorities sent a visitor to the islands.⁷⁸ In 1558 Antonio Varela was appointed prosecutor [*procurador*] of the New Christians living illegally there.⁷⁹ Further official inquiries were sent concerning the Caboverdean New Christians in 1563 and 1567.⁸⁰

Official attempts to constrain New Christian activities on the islands went beyond the Inquisition. An example is the attack by Francisco Pereira on Diogo Barassa, the *escrivão dos órfãos e dos defuntos* [notary of orphans and the deceased] in Santiago in 1559, where Pereira claimed that Barassa was a “New Christian from Fronteira [in the Alentejo]”.⁸¹

⁷⁵ Meillassoux (1991: 241).

⁷⁶ See Curtin (1975: 66) on the role of Islam in the itinerant *dyula* trading diaspora of Senegambia. See also Fage (1980: 295).

⁷⁷ Published in Baião (ed.) (1921: 70; Appendix of documents).

⁷⁸ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Livro 840, fol. 8r.

⁷⁹ Barcellos (1899: 139).

⁸⁰ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Livro 840, fol. 41r; ibid., fol. 53r.

⁸¹ IAN/TT, Chancelaria de D. Sebastião e D. Henrique, Livro 1, fol. 278v; cit. Z. Cohen (2002: 88).

Barassa was accused of selling the goods of orphans for less than their true worth and stealing large sums by making false inventories of the goods of the deceased.⁸² Barassa had previously lived on Fogo before settling in Praia on Santiago.⁸³ Whatever the truth of the accusations levelled against him by Pereira, the relevance of his New Christian origins was revealed in the context of an attempt to obtain his position and thereby to secure an economic advantage.

The Barassa family from Fogo were important New Christian members of the Caboverdean community. After the uniting of the monarchies of Spain and Portugal under Philip II (of Spain)/I (of Portugal) in 1580, Fogo refused to accept Philip's authority. During Fogo's rebellion against the coronation of Philip as Portuguese king in 1582, one of the ringleaders was Garcia Alvares Baraça, probably a relative of Diogo Barassa.⁸⁴ Another leading rebel in 1582 was Baraça's brother, Alvaro Gonçalves. Two of the five ringleaders may positively be identified as New Christians, and therefore the rebellion led by this group may have been related to Philip II/I's known patronage of the Inquisition.⁸⁵

Thus there was no question but that New Christians constituted a political power on the islands with the potential of rivalling that of the bulwarks of Portuguese power, the crown and the nobility. In this situation, and in parallel to developments elsewhere in the Lusophone world in the sixteenth century, the caste identity of New Christians became entrenched. Whereas Old Christians discriminated against New Christians according to their ancestry, New Christians created a closed identity which acted as a barrier to the integration of others.⁸⁶ This helped to create a situation on Cabo Verde in which, in parallel to analogous developments elsewhere in the Atlantic world in this period, some kind of shared "blood" or caste bond – a sort of proto-racial identity – came to play an important role in ideas of inclusion and exclusion. Although the modern idea of race had not yet developed fully, such ideas were certainly important in the minds of those in places such as Cabo Verde that were fully connected to other parts of the new colonial world.

The caste identity of New Christians on Cabo Verde was widely apparent. In 1581 Pope Gregory VIII wrote to the Archbishop of Lisbon

⁸² Ibid., fols. 278v-279r.

⁸³ IAN/TT, Chancelaria de D. João III, Livro 68, fols. 201v-202r.

⁸⁴ Barcellos (1899: 157).

⁸⁵ On Alvaro Gonçalves, see *ibid.*

⁸⁶ For a detailed analysis of how this pattern played out in the seventeenth century, see Green (2009).

complaining of the behaviour of Bishop Bartholomeu Leitão of Cabo Verde, who “lives in sin and worldly prostitution not only with women of ill repute and those who are married, but even with Jewesses”.⁸⁷ When one considers the lack of European women in Cabo Verde, these “Jewesses” must have been women with Jewish fathers, which shows not only that anyone with Jewish ancestry was perceived as a Jew, but also that those with Jewish ancestry were known and identified as such in Ribeira Grande. This is confirmed by the deposition of Francisco de Sequeira, the governor of Cabo Verde, to the Inquisition in 1614: Sequeira related the story of a young woman, Joana Coelha, whose great-grandmother had told her granddaughter not to marry Joana’s father because he was an Old Christian, and instead had told Joana to marry “her own kind”.⁸⁸ As Joana Coelha was old enough in 1614 to marry, this story regarding her mother can be dated to the end of the sixteenth century.⁸⁹

This awareness of New Christian identity, so firmly embedded in the mind of Joana Coelha’s great-grandmother, was thus a feature of Ribeira Grande throughout the middle part of the sixteenth century. This can be seen in the case of Miçia Dias, who was accused of not giving alms to people who were not New Christians (cf. Chapter 4). Both these pieces of evidence would confirm the reality of a Jewish ghetto in Ribeira Grande at this time. In the 1780s, an account of Ribeira Grande noted that the “first whites were so proud of their honour that they only allowed new arrivals from Portugal to live in one street – still [in 1784] called the Calhau – unless they were able to prove the *limpeza* of their lineage”.⁹⁰ Such a street did indeed exist in Ribeira Grande in 1614, where two witnesses to a trial were recorded as living in the “Rua do Calhau”.⁹¹ Such evidence, when combined with the strong Old Christian/New Christian identity opposition made clear from the cases of Miçia Dias and the great-grandmother of Joana Coelha, suggests both that a ghetto mentality existed among

⁸⁷ Barcellos (1899: 154): “vive deshonestamente na immundicieda prostituição não só com mulheres de perdida reputação e casadas mas até com judias”.

⁸⁸ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Livro 205, fol. 229v.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Anonymous (1985: 27): “Estes primeiros brancos eram tão zelosos da honra que, aos que de novo vinham do Reino, não deixavam habitar senão em uma rua a que ainda hoje chamam Calhau, enquanto não mostrassem a limpeza do seu sangue”. Mendes (2007: 26) suggests that the Rua do Calhau was on the seafront of Ribeira Grande and that New Christians could only move farther back from the sea into the heart of the city once the community had accepted them.

⁹¹ AHU, Cabo Verde, Caixa 1, doc. 77: “Manoel Ribeiro botticairo morador nesta cidade na Rua do Calhau...” (fol. 7v); “Simão Roiz Correa mercador e morador nesta dita cidade na Rua do Calhau...” (fol. 8r).

New Christians on Santiago in the sixteenth century and that attempts to attenuate the influence here of New Christians were utter failures.

This increasingly rigid boundary is interesting when we consider how the wider space of Western Africa had evolved by 1550. Whereas New Christians in Upper Guinea were free to adopt plural identities and practices, in Cabo Verde they were confined to a rigid caste identity which, in general, mirrored developments elsewhere in the Iberian Atlantic. For some New Christians, this may have encouraged them to fall back on ancestral Judaic practices and keep to the crypto-Jewish identity which characterised many New Christians in the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Atlantic. For others, however, it must have been stifling. Indeed, this may have been what encouraged many to stay on in Upper Guinea as *lançados*, thereby increasing the exchanges on the coast and contributing to the acceleration of the process of creolisation which characterised the region as a whole.

This leads to the suggestion that the rigidity of the emerging system of *limpeza* in the Iberian world contributed to the development of plural forms in Atlantic communities in West Africa and to the spread thither of Creole culture from its Atlantic origins in Cabo Verde. Increasingly rigid laws and worldviews encourage transgression in those who are braver or less willing to be constrained. Thus although there was a way in which the expansion of the Iberian world in West Africa depended on subaltern groups, the actions of these groups themselves were in turn influenced by resistance to and rejection of the very hegemonic forces which they found oppressive in the first place.

ELITES, SLAVERY AND THE BOUNDARIES OF CREOLISATION IN WESTERN AFRICA

If renegade New Christians were increasingly inclined to settle in Upper Guinea in an attempt to seek a certain amount of freedom and enhance their trading activities, their increased settlement must also have meant there was a growing willingness among some Upper Guineans to accept them. Yet although the case studies have indeed shown that there was an alliance between Kassanké and New Christians in the mid-sixteenth century, they have told us little about how this alliance was formed in the first place. Moreover, given the inevitable Eurocentric nature of these written sources, and although we have learnt much about New Christian patterns of settlement among the Kassanké, we have learnt much less as to why they were accommodated by Kassanké lineage heads.

Understanding how Kassanké elites and New Christian *lançados* came to forge this alliance is, however, vital if we are to grasp how Atlantic Creole cultures became consolidated in Upper Guinea as well as in Cabo Verde. In order for this to occur, it was not just sufficient for traders to ply back and forth between Cabo Verde and Bugendo. There had to be reasons for them to be accepted among the Kassanké, and cultural practices in West Africa themselves had to change. Thus in order to understand how this occurred we need to grasp how the alliance was formed in the first place, for this will show how deep-seated the changes were and which elements of Upper Guinean societies were affected.

Useful comparisons can be made here to other known events. It may help, for instance, to draw an analogy with the most famous *lançado* of the sixteenth century, known as Ganagoga, meaning “the man who speaks all the languages” in the Biafada language.⁹² Ganagoga’s Portuguese name was João Ferreira, and according to Almada he was a New Christian.⁹³ Almada describes how the lineage head (*Duque*) of the Gambia River port of Casão had asked Ganagoga/Ferreira to go to the court of the Pullo king of Fuuta Tooro on the banks of the Senegal River, and that once he was there he married the king’s daughter and had a child with her.⁹⁴ Ganagoga was apparently an influential figure among the Pullo aristocracy. The English sailor Reynolds stated of the area of the River Senegal that there “no *Spaniard* or *Portuguese* use to trade; and only one *Portuguese*, called *Ganigoga*, dwelleth far within the River, who was married to a king’s daughter”.⁹⁵

The way in which Ganagoga/Ferreira forged an alliance through marriage into the Pullo aristocracy is instructive as to how the Kassanké–New Christian alliance may have developed. This *lançado* was on good terms with the lineage head of Casão and spoke many languages, so clearly he was well versed in the customs of Upper Guinea. Most likely, his behaviour in Fuuta Tooro replicated a strategy that had already found success in Casamance and on the Gambia. Moreover, association by New Christians with ruling circles followed the pattern their ancestors had known from Portugal, whereby the status of Jews prior to 1497 had seen them as “the King’s Jews”, and what security they had depended on a good relationship with the monarch.⁹⁶

⁹² MMAII: Vol. 3, 253.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid. See also Carreira (1972: 67–8).

⁹⁵ NGC, Vol. 1, Book 2, 245.

⁹⁶ On this status of the Portuguese Jews, see Soyer (2007: 240).

From the Kassanké perspective, the welcoming of this trading group related to the securing of position in a political situation, where, as we saw in Chapter 2, there was a great deal of complexity and change. There we saw how the need to secure alliances during the Pullo migrations pushed the Kassanké towards alliances with Caboverdean traders. Surely, it did not take long for the advantages of this strategy to become clearer. The alliances offered both prestige goods and access to the iron that could increase production and, consequently, the consumption of elites. Moreover, goods doubtless came not only from trade itself, but also from the ritual of gift-giving. Here, a further line of comparative interpretation emerges from the Gold Coast, where in the 1520s, the Portuguese at Elmina sent presents several times annually to the king of Eguafó.⁹⁷ Initial contacts between *lançados* and Kassanké were very likely constructed through similar means. By the use of gifts, sovereignty was recognised and interests of Kassanké lineage heads secured. Then, once this had led to a certain status for the new outsiders, marriage alliances were formed which solidified the new caste in Kassanké society. Very soon, the New Christian *lançados* could therefore have become an accepted mercantile class, much as the Mandinka *dyula* had been before them. This process may indeed be what their Caboverdean and Portuguese detractors decried when they referred to *lançados* adopting African practices.

What emerges most clearly from this analysis is the importance of continuity with previous systems of trade and the incorporation of outsiders in Upper Guinea. The creation of alliances with elites was something that Portuguese Jews were long accustomed to achieving, whereas in Upper Guinea marriage alliances with powerful outsider traders in the form of the Kaabunké had also been common for centuries. The continuity offered by the cloth trade in *barafulas* from Cabo Verde with the preceding trans-Saharan one was key to both the peoples of Upper Guinea and the New Christians. In the long run, it was the ability to use familiar strategies in a new commercial environment which shaped the solidity of these alliances and helped in the construction of something new.

Continuities were even evident in the effects which creolisation had on the peoples of Upper Guinea. People were by no means equally affected. As with the previous trans-Saharan trade, where it had been most particularly the elites who had adopted North African traits of language and religion, so it was the Kassanké elite who opened most readily to Atlantic influences. As mentioned at the start of this chapter, the most

⁹⁷ Ballong-wen-Menuda (1993: Vol. 1, 90).

famous Kassanké monarch of this era was called Masatamba. In a famous account, Donelha described how Masatamba was a perfect friend to the Europeans and that the Portuguese were safer with him than in Portugal.⁹⁸ The people of Masatamba's kingdom were so scared of the consequences of mistreating Europeans that they would bring something dropped on a road to the royal palace the following day.⁹⁹ Masatamba dined on table-cloths in the European style, and was clearly somewhat acculturated to European fashions.¹⁰⁰ However Masatamba's willingness to adopt elements of European culture was not universal among the Kassanké. In the same period, rebellions sprang up in the Casamance. Relations in Bugendo became increasingly fraught, with the residents robbing the Portuguese and attacking them in the 1570s. Eventually, Masatamba was forced to attack Bugendo himself, killing and enslaving many of those who had attacked the Portuguese.¹⁰¹

None of this suggests that all Kassanké would have adopted elements of Portuguese culture as enthusiastically as Masatamba. As noted in Chapter 1, the Kassanké and Bainunk probably represented competing lineages.¹⁰² The attack of Masatamba on Bugendo suggests that there were conflicts as to the best way to interact with the *lançados*, probably relating to the benefits which different lineages accrued from the interactions. Masatamba and his lineage clearly derived considerable wealth, whereas other lineages among the Kassanké and their Bainunk associates and competitors did not. Such cost-benefit analyses may well have been linked to the degree to which lineages were prepared to acculturate and to the extent and influence which the Creole culture and language of the region was able to have beyond the narrow confines of the Atlantic trading settlements. Naturally the influence of creolisation spread beyond elites, as local traders willing to take advantage of the new commercial opportunities of the Atlantic trading settlements started to reside there.¹⁰³ Fundamentally, however, the influence of the Atlantic Creole culture that linked Cabo Verde and Upper Guinea was connected to those who thought they had most to gain from direct exchanges with the Atlantic traders.

Why, then, were some lineages so keen to build alliances with Atlantic traders and thereby consolidate Creole culture, and others so hostile? As

⁹⁸ MMAII: Vol. 5, 139.

⁹⁹ Ibid., Vol. 5, 140.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., Vol. 5, 140–1.

¹⁰¹ SG, *Etiopia Menor*, fols. 18r–v.

¹⁰² On the way in which Bainunk and Kassanké constituted competing lineages, see Bocandé (1849: 316), and also Mark (1985: 15).

¹⁰³ Such residents were typically female – see Havik (2004b).

with events in Senegambia in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, this was connected to the cycles of violent disorder which had been precipitated by Atlantic trading activities. Just as lineages of the Bainunk-Kassanké were hostile to trade with the Caboverdeans and Portuguese, so were many of the Kassanké's neighbours. Most important were the Jabundo lineage, who lived around the estuary of the Casamance River and spoke Bainunk.¹⁰⁴ Almada described a pronounced hostility to the Portuguese and Kassanké in the Lower Casamance¹⁰⁵; at the time when he was writing, Portuguese ships had not been able to travel up the river for twenty-five years because of the Jabundo and the Floup, both of whom seized their ships and killed the sailors if they could, and who were also fighting a war against the Kassanké king.¹⁰⁶

This hostility of the surrounding lineages to the Kassanké kings stemmed from the fact that the Kassanké were the principal group trading slaves in these years. Many of these slaves were secured through violence, in an echo of the processes of proto-modernity that we saw in the previous chapter in Iberia. However, whereas in the late fifteenth century the cycles of violent disorder were connected to demand for slaves from Europe, this predatory trade in slaves was now linked to a new source: America. One of the witnesses in the 1548 trial of Antonio Fernandes, Julián Valderrama, had been in the "Indies of Castile" at the time of the row between Fernandes and Manoel Garcia, and as we shall see in Chapter 7 the Leão and Carvajal families had extensive connections to the Americas.¹⁰⁷

Thus it was that by 1550, when the Creole society of Western Africa had been consolidated, its activities were impossible to dissociate from wider connection to trans-Atlantic trade. The development of a local Creole society connected to processes of enslavement in Western Africa became inseparable from the forces connected to the modernisation of global economies and the birth of the Atlantic world; by now, the forces which had shaped the emergence of Creole language and identity had developed a powerful trans-Atlantic dimension which also could not be separated from the institution of slavery.

¹⁰⁴ Hawthorne (2003: 95–6).

¹⁰⁵ MMAII: Vol. 3, 288–90.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. See also Boulègue (1980: 485–6).

¹⁰⁷ For the evidence of Valderrama, see IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 801, fol. 44r.

PART TWO

CREOLISATION AND SLAVERY

*Western Africa and the Pan-Atlantic,
Circa 1492–1589*

The Early Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade from Western Africa

One of the principal tasks of humanists and intellectuals is supposed to be to come up with new perspectives on the nature of human existence. Yet anyone who gives the matter a moment's thought is well aware that it is very difficult to come up with anything new at all to say on such matters. For instance, the process of globalisation, touted so widely by economists and political scientists since the end of the 1990s, is hardly anything new. As scholars such as Janet Abu-Lughod and Serge Gruzinski have shown, globalisation really dates back to the sixteenth century, if not before.¹

Most scholarship on this early period tends to deal with interchanges between Europe and the New World in the era of the Spanish conquest of America. Yet the omission of Africa from this picture is a grave mistake. As the locus of the birth of the first Atlantic Creole culture, Western Africa was vital in the earliest globalisation of economies and ideas influencing the wider Atlantic world.² Yet the channels of influence cut in both directions. As the epicentre of the first trans-Atlantic slave trade from circa 1520 to the 1580s, events here prefigured and influenced those which happened later on elsewhere, but were themselves determined in part by the cycle of demand from America and Europe.

This chapter traces these early global interactions and the connection which they had to the first trans-Atlantic slave trade. For by the time that

¹ Abu-Lughod (1989); Gruzinski (2002; 2005).

² An exception to this general rule is Antunes/Silva (2011), who note (49) that Western Africa was “a major contributor to the development of European Atlantic economies and a key player in the newly born Atlantic societies”.

the alliance of Kassanké and New Christians was fully developed in the 1540s, truly global pressures were already influential in Western Africa. The most important impacts thus far had been those emanating from Europe via the Caboverdean and Portuguese traders. However, from the 1520s onwards, the conquest of the Americas and the new demand for labour for the American colonies provoked a new range of forces. As the need for slaves became increasingly trans-Atlantic, it became impossible to separate the development of Creole society in Western Africa from the increased trade in slaves which trans-Atlantic trade demanded. It may indeed be no coincidence that the 1546 denunciation from Cabo Verde to the inquisitors of Évora said that for up to twenty years New Christians had been mixing with Africans in Upper Guinea (cf. [Chapter 4](#)); for it had been precisely in the 1520s that the direct trans-Atlantic slave trade from West Africa to America had really taken off.

This chapter traces the development of this early trans-Atlantic slave trade and the influences it had on interactions in Western Africa. In order to place subsequent events in context, it begins by offering a new perspective on the early Spanish voyages to the New World, showing for the first time the importance of African perspectives in these voyages and arguing thereby that the development of what I call a “pan-Atlantic space” occurred far earlier than historians generally allow. This earlier history demonstrates how easy it was for direct trans-Atlantic slaving to influence the regional orientation of Western Africa from the 1520s onwards.

This picture is constructed with substantial help from the early chronicles of Spanish exploits in America written by Columbus, Las Casas and Vespucci. These chronicles are surprisingly informative on the development of African-European relationships prior to 1492 and offer a decisive new picture of the emergence of pan-Atlanticism at this early moment in Atlantic history. One of the elements to emerge from these sources is the pivotal role of slavery in both early Western African and New World economic aims. By connecting this to the preceding analysis of creolisation, this chapter reveals the fundamental interconnection of creolisation and slavery in the trans-Atlantic paradigm right from the beginning, before the direct shipment of slaves from Western Africa to the Americas had even begun.

The importance of the regional history of creolisation we looked at in the first part of this book emerges because of the centrality of the Western African region to early trans-Atlantic trade. Slaves from Kongo and Angola populated the plantations of São Tomé and were important in the direct trade to Portugal; later, though only from around 1570 onwards,

they dominated the trade across the South Atlantic to Brazil.³ Meanwhile, slaves from Benin were exchanged for gold at Elmina.⁴ Thus it was from Western Africa that moves towards a pan-Atlantic creolisation began, and so it was that the regional interactions which characterised events in Western Africa up until the 1540s were gradually superseded by a more global paradigm in which this part of Africa affected, and was affected by, forces all over the Western hemisphere. Although Heywood and Thornton have argued that the birth of “Atlantic Creole culture” can be traced to West-Central Africa in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, this chapter argues for a more nuanced view⁵; not only was creolisation in the Atlantic world variegated and not homogenous, as indeed previous chapters have already argued, but the role of Western Africa in this early era of Atlantic trade was important in shaping its boundaries.

From a wider Atlantic and imperial point of view, economic factors shaped this role of Western Africa in early trans-Atlantic slaving. The other island outposts of the Atlantic world had their agro-commercial functions. The Azores and Madeira grew wheat and wine for the metropole.⁶ São Tomé grew sugar. However, Cabo Verde, because of its precarious ecology, was ill-equipped for a productive, cash-crop economy. Moreover, it was by far the nearest archipelago in the African Atlantic to the early centres of the Spanish colonial economy in the New World, the Caribbean islands of Cuba and Hispaniola, and the mines and plantations of New Spain [present-day Mexico]. Geographical proximity and lack of profitable alternatives meant that Cabo Verde’s role as a slaving entrepôt for the growing labour demands of the Americas made good economic sense.⁷

This economic situation was a necessary condition for the rise of the trans-Atlantic slave trade from Western Africa in the second quarter of the sixteenth century. However, it was not a sufficient condition, for economic impetus could not alone guarantee the supply of slaves. This was demonstrated in Benin, where the Obas refused to sell any male slaves to the Portuguese from around 1530 onwards, and the slave trade was confined to female slaves taken to Elmina.⁸ The intensification of this cycle

³ Couto (1995: 305). Godinho (1981: Vol. 4, 172) suggests that Angolan slaves arrived in Brazil from around 1570.

⁴ Elbl (1997); Vogt (1979: 57–8, 70); Ryder (1969: 35–9, 59–63).

⁵ Heywood/Thornton (2007).

⁶ Godinho (1981: Vol. 3, 233–43).

⁷ Mendes (2007: 271–2) emphasises the economic side in the importance of Western Africa in the early slave trade.

⁸ Ryder (1969: 59–68); Miller (1988: 108).

of slave exports from Western Africa therefore responded to local conditions as well as to Atlantic pressures. This chapter analyses the interplay of these factors and their effects on societies in Western Africa, marshalling a wide array of archival sources never before used to analyse the rise of the trans-Atlantic trade. These sources show why different groups were targeted by the trade in Upper Guinea and how these experiences shaped their responses, analysing in detail and for the first time the effect of early trans-Atlantic slavery on individual societies in Western Africa and its connection to creolisation.

THE BIRTH OF A PAN-ATLANTIC SPACE DEPENDENT ON SLAVING IN THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

In May 1510 João Jorge, the procurator of Santiago, Cabo Verde, underlined the importance of Santiago in a letter to the king of Portugal. It was vital that the island should not be abandoned, because it was “one of the main helps of India and Guinea ... and the islanders serve Your Highness with great love and diligence, because if they had not given 70 blacks to the fleet of Afonso d’Albuquerque to help him man his pumps with the strength of their arms and take him back to Lisbon the fleet would have been lost [Albuquerque arrived in Lisbon from Calicut in January 1504] ... and in the same way they aid all the ailing ships of Your Majesty which arrive there”.⁹

As Jorge’s letter shows, Cabo Verde was pivotal to the Portuguese voyages to the East Indies and Brazil. Most voyagers to distant lands had called in there, and Columbus too had spent long periods in Western Africa prior to the 1492 voyage. It is false to pretend that historians have been unaware of this prior African experience of Columbus, but certainly the way in which it may have shaped his decisions in the New World has not been analysed in any depth.¹⁰ Yet just as Fernão de Loronha had been active in West Africa before his commercial interests developed in Brazil (cf. [Chapter 4](#)), the same was true of the most famous mariner in history.

⁹ MMAII: Vol. 2, 38–9 – “*hūa das principaes escapullas da India e Guinee, hé a dicta Ilha. E serven a vosalteza cō muito amor, e diligēcia, porque se nom deram á armada de Afonso d’Albuquerque obra de setenta negros, que a poder de força de braços, dando aa bomba, a trouxerão a Lisboa, a armada se perdera ... e pello mesmo modo forneçam todos [os] navios de vossalteza que hi chegão desvaratados*”.

¹⁰ Abulafia (2008: 30), Cortesão (1935: Vol. 1, 196), and Thomas (1997: 88) mention Columbus’s sojourns on the African coast before 1492. Wilson (1990: 49) notes that “the idea that the [Lucayos] islands could be a source of slaves, as the Portuguese viewed their lands in West Africa, was present from the beginning”, but goes no further.

Knowledge of trading practices in Africa and America were connected from the start.

Both Columbus and some of those on his first voyage to the New World had spent time on the West African coast in the 1470s and 1480s. Columbus wrote, “I was in the Castle of the King of Portugal at Mina, which lies below the equinoctial line, and so I am a good witness that it is not inhabitable as some people say”.¹¹ According to Bartolomé de las Casas, “elsewhere in his writings [Columbus] affirms that he had sailed many times from Lisbon to Guinea”.¹² That this experience was not just confined to Columbus was shown in his log of the 1492 voyage; on arriving in Cuba, he sent a present to a nearby king “with a sailor who had been on the same sort of mission in Guinea”.¹³

Thus there was a significant African component in the experience of Columbus and his crew. The evidence implies that this pre-existing experience shaped how Columbus engaged with his “discoveries”. In the first place, his emphasis of this prior experience in West Africa implies that he thought this relevant to his project. Moreover, his selection of people with African experience to carry presents to local rulers shows that he valued such African experience and thought it mattered.

The extent of Columbus’s African experience emerges through the use of language.¹⁴ Whilst in Caribbean waters late in 1492, Columbus named a cape “el Cabo Verde” [Cape Verde].¹⁵ Coming from someone who had sailed the African coast, this act of naming was almost certainly related by association to the Cape Verde peninsula. The island of Jamaica was first called by him St. Jago, perhaps bringing to mind something of Santiago, Cabo Verde.¹⁶ Later on in Cuba, on December 6, 1492, he named another headland “Cabo del Elefante” [Cape of the Elephant].¹⁷ Possibly the promontory reminded Columbus of the shape

¹¹ Las Casas (1966b: Vol. 62, 49) – “yo estuve en el castillo de la Mina del Rey de Portugal que está debajo de la equinocial, y ansi soy buen testigo que no es inhabitable como dicen”.

¹² Ibid. – “En otras partes de sus escritos afirma haber muchas veces navegado de Lisboa á Guinea”. A strong argument for Las Casas’s value as a historical source is in Wilson (1990: 8–10). Penny (1990) discusses Las Casas’s use of language in his annotating of Columbus’s log to adduce support for its accuracy. Though there are unquestionably elements of rhetoric and exaggeration, the value of Las Casas as a historical source is immense.

¹³ Lardicci (1999: 336–7) – “un marinero que avía andado en Guinea en lo mismo”.

¹⁴ See Penny (1990) for a strong argument that Las Casas was quoting Columbus’s language verbatim in his abridgement of his log.

¹⁵ Lardicci (1999: 333).

¹⁶ Atkins (1970: 233).

¹⁷ Lardicci (1999: 362).

of an elephant, or alternatively, it may have been called after a similarly shaped piece of land that Portuguese mariners had named in Africa. The importance of African categories in Columbus's mind emerges nowhere more clearly than in his repeated use of the word "almadía"; this was the word which the Portuguese had adopted in Africa to describe the canoes which African peoples used on the rivers.¹⁸

Elsewhere in his log and letters, Columbus showed a detailed knowledge of Senegambia and Upper Guinea. In describing the languages of the Caribbean islands, Columbus wrote that language "is all one in these islands of India, and everyone understands each other and travels about in their canoes, which is not the case in Guinea, where there are a thousand different types of language and those who speak one don't understand those who speak another". Thus he clearly had at least some knowledge of the different languages of Western Africa.¹⁹ Meanwhile, arriving on the South American mainland in 1498, Columbus compared the trade in textiles there to that of the cloths "that are brought from Guinea, from the rivers to Sierra Leone".²⁰

Although he still thought of the Caribbean as "India", therefore, Columbus was on stronger ground when it came to patterns of trade and culture in Senegambia and Upper Guinea. This becomes clear both from the naming of "Cabo Verde" – referring to Senegambia – and also in the detail on the cloth trade from the rivers of Guinea (present-day Casamance and Guinea-Bissau region) to Sierra Leone. In his journal he conceptualised both the useful and the numinous through his African knowledge, comparing edible roots on Hispaniola with others he had seen in Guinea, and later comparing mermaids in the Caribbean islands with others he had "seen" on the Malagueta coast (present-day Liberia).²¹

This material matters a great deal not only in verifying the importance of African experiences in the settlement and initial conceptualisation of the New World, but also in telling us about trade in Africa at this time. If, as shown here, Columbus's language and ideas in the New World were drawn in part from his African experience, it may also be that the way in which he and other early European adventurers engaged with peoples in the New World can tell us much about the pre-existing patterns in Africa.

¹⁸ For example, *ibid.*, 324.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 345 – "es toda una en todas estas islas de Yndia, y todos se entienden y todas las andan en sus almadías, lo que no han en Guinea, adonde es mill maneras de lenguas que la una no entiende la otra".

²⁰ Las Casas (1966b: Vol. 63, 240) – "como los llevan de Guinea, de los ríos á la Sierra Leona".

²¹ Lardicci (1999: 372, 400).

It matters, therefore, that Columbus thought a great deal about slaving. One of his first recorded thoughts was that the people of the first island he visited, in the Bahamas, “would be good servants”.²² Later, on Hispaniola, he suggested that “they are great cowards, and 1,000 [of them] would not resist three [of us], and so they are very good to be controlled and made to work, sew crops and do everything else which might be necessary”.²³ Capturing and enslaving the Taíno of the Caribbean islands would be easy, Columbus wrote to Ferdinand and Isabella of Aragón and Castile after his first voyage: “Your Highnesses, whenever you decide to order it, can take all [the Indians] to Castile or keep them enslaved on the island, because 50 men could control them all”.²⁴

Thus some of Columbus’s first thoughts on arriving in the New World related to how quickly the new lands could be turned into slaving colonies. After a vicious war waged with dogs against the Cacique Guatiguana of Hispaniola in late 1494, Columbus sent more than five hundred slaves back to Castile on February 24, 1495.²⁵ Very rapidly, he had “determined to load the ships which came from Castile with slaves, and send them to sell in the islands of the Canaries, the Azores and Cabo Verde”.²⁶ In 1498, he sent a further five ships back to Spain with eight hundred slaves.²⁷ He also borrowed from his experience in Africa by sending seven Taíno back to Spain after his first voyage to train as interpreters, which was exactly what the Portuguese had sought to do previously among peoples of the coasts of Senegambia and Upper Guinea.²⁸

This evidence is suggestive as to how the opening to Atlantic trade might have affected societies in Senegambia and Upper Guinea in the late fifteenth century. Here we have the account of someone who we know traded often in these regions in the 1470s and 1480s, and although clearly the enslavement of the doomed Guanche people of the Canary islands in these years may have affected his ideas, surely events in Western Africa were also important. His first thought in the Americas was how

²² Ibid., 321 – “*Ellos deven ser buenos servidores*”.

²³ Ibid., 373 – “*muy cobardes, que mill no aguardarían tres, y así son buenos para les mandar y les hacer trabajar, sembrar y hacer todo lo otro que fuere menester*”.

²⁴ Las Casas (1966b: Vol. 62, 303) – “*Vuestras Altezas, cuando mandaren, puédenlos todos llevar á Castilla ó tenerlos en la misma isla captivos, porque 50 hombres los ternan todos sojuzgados*”.

²⁵ Ibid., Vol. 63, 84–5.

²⁶ Ibid., Vol. 63, 177 – “*tenía determinado de cargar los navíos que viniesen de Castilla de esclavos, y enviarlos á vender á las islas de Canarias y de los Azores, y á las de Cabo Verde*”.

²⁷ Ibid., Vol. 63, 340.

²⁸ Metcalf (2005: 50). Later Vespucci and Francisco Pizarro did the same (*ibid.*, 5–6, 50).

to obtain slaves and turn a profit, which suggests that similar patterns also held in Western Africa. Moreover, this picture also emerges from the famous letters of Amérigo Vespucci. Although Vespucci's accounts have been heavily criticised for their stereotypes, one suspects that his portrait of the psychologies of his crew was accurate when he described how, on the first of his four voyages, they demanded to return to Castile after a year at sea and "for that reason we resolved to capture slaves, load the vessels with them, and head toward Spain".²⁹ Like Columbus, Vespucci had African as well as American experience, writing that "I ... have been in many parts of Africa and Ethiopia ... to Zanaga [Senegal], to Cape Verde [i.e., the Cape Verde peninsula], to Río Grande, to Sierra Leone".³⁰ Two of his four voyages to America called at the African coast, once at Cape Verde and once at Sierra Leone.

Similar patterns also emerge from Brazil, as Metcalf has shown. She suggests that during the first landfall in Brazil in April 1500, made by a fleet captained by Pedro Alvares Cabral, "everything Cabral did in Brazil was informed by what the Portuguese had learned from their experience in Africa".³¹ Subsequently, Metcalf suggests, the first contracts for the brazilwood trade, issued by the Portuguese crown in 1504, were modelled on similar commercial contracts for the West African coast, whereas the development of a trade in internal slavery on the Brazilian coast was also modelled on the Portuguese experience in West Africa.³²

In all these cases, therefore, we have evidence suggesting that the development of American slave economies were mediated through experiences first developed in Africa. Both Columbus and Vespucci reveal how the trade in slaves was the most immediate commercial possibility. This is indeed confirmed by Las Casas, who wrote that taking slaves was what the "Spanish, here in this island [of Hispaniola] and later in all of the Indies, sought to achieve, and this was what their thoughts, desires, efforts, words and good deeds were always directed at".³³ That this was the first thought of sailors in the Caribbean suggests strongly that this was also how African trade was perceived by Portuguese sailors in the late fifteenth century.

²⁹ Formisano (1992: 15).

³⁰ Ibid., 39.

³¹ Metcalf (2005: 17–8).

³² Ibid., 57–8, 159–60.

³³ Las Casas (1966b: Vol. 64, 47) – *"es lo que principalmente los españoles, aquí en esta isla, y después en todas las Indias, pretendieron, y á esto enderezaron siempre sus pensamientos, sus deseos, sus industrias, sus palabras y sus buenos hechos"*.

This analysis confirms the picture of Chapter 2, which showed how, whatever the Portuguese crown's macro-economic motivations may have been, slaving – not gold – was the principal commercial aim of those participating in the voyages on the African coast. Yet it also reveals how, from the very beginning, it was understood that the development of a pan-Atlantic space would depend on the use of slaves. This would be of immense economic and social importance to Western Africa, because the overwhelming majority of slaves taken to the Americas in this early period came from this region. As we have seen, because the development of the Creole culture in Cabo Verde had also been fundamentally linked to the needs of a new colonial economy based on slavery, as well as to the increasing exchanges between Africans and Europeans on the mainland which this required, the development of a pan-Atlantic space in which such features were also connected would soon bring wider global pressures to bear on the phenomenon of creolisation in Western Africa.

THE AMERICAN GENOCIDE AND THE NEED FOR DIRECT TRANS-ATLANTIC TRADE

As the work of Las Casas attests, slavery was fundamental to early Spanish undertakings in the New World. As Columbus described the situation to Ferdinand and Isabela, a shortage of Native American slaves there was not. Thus in order for events in Senegambia and Upper Guinea to develop a pan-Atlantic significance, one further condition was necessary: the genocide of the Taíno people who lived in the Caribbean.

The Taíno population of Hispaniola in 1492 is generally reckoned not to have been less than 300,000. According to Las Casas, who had original documents which no longer exist, the Dominican friar Bernardo de Santo Domingo wrote in 1515 that when the Spanish first arrived in the Caribbean they had found 1.1 million Taíno on Hispaniola, but that at the time that he was writing there were only 10,000 left.³⁴ Even though these estimates are unreliable, a 1508 census suggested an original population of around 400,000.³⁵ This is in line with current estimates of the population of Hispaniola in 1492, which range from 300,000 to 500,000, and certainly there is no question that all these people died during the process of Spanish colonisation.³⁶

³⁴ Ibid., Vol. 65, 338.

³⁵ Moya Pons (1998: 34).

³⁶ Davis (2006: 98). Indeed, there were only 500 Taíno left by 1519 (Moya Pons 1998: 37).

Such devastation spread around the Caribbean. When hardly any Taíno were left in Hispaniola, the neighbouring Lucayo islands (Bahamas) were raided, so that within a few years perhaps 40–50,000 slaves had been brought to Hispaniola.³⁷ In around 1512 a Spaniard sent a ship to find the last remaining peoples from the Lucayos, and after three years of searching only eleven souls were found.³⁸ By the time Las Casas wrote his *Brevíssima Relación de la Destruyacion de las Indias* in 1542, there were, according to him, no native peoples at all left in the Lucayos, Jamaica, Cuba and Puerto Rico.³⁹ Las Casas was not the only writer to describe this human desolation. El Inca Garcilaso also described how the people of Cuba had all hung themselves in order to escape the labour regime imposed by the Spanish and that “with this atrocious plague the inhabitants of this island were entirely consumed so that today [1605, when his book *La Florida* was published] there are hardly any left”.⁴⁰

In general, disease is seen as the cause of the demise of the Native American population; as Eltis puts it, “plague in the Americas ... helped ensure plantation slavery for Africans”.⁴¹ Certainly, some historians will cavil at the use of the word “genocide”. An illustrious historian of the Mediterranean recently disputed that the word genocide is appropriate here because this word requires murders to be planned.⁴² Yet genocide is appropriate. One need only look to a slaving voyage made to Florida in 1511 for evidence of this. These ships went first to the Bahamas, but such was the population collapse that no people were found there.⁴³ They continued to Florida, where they tricked people on board and sailed off with them as slaves. The Spanish sailors had already seen the effect of slave hunting on the Bahamas and that moreover these slaves had not lived long on Hispaniola. They must therefore have known that the death of most or all of these Floridians would result from their capture.⁴⁴

³⁷ Las Casas (1966b: Vol. 64, 222–6).

³⁸ Ibid., Vol. 64, 232.

³⁹ Las Casas (1966a: 10–11). Population decline was such that people in Puerto Rico were desperate to import African slave labour in the 1540s, and they frequently sent their own ships directly to Cabo Verde – see AGI, Justicia 996, No. 2, Ramo 2.

⁴⁰ El Inca Garcilaso (1988: 134). This quote can be seen to suggest that Las Casas exaggerated the desolation; and indeed there are documents which do suggest a Native American population in Cuba in the late sixteenth century (personal communication from David Wheat, San Francisco, November 19, 2010). Nevertheless, the general devastation of the populations is not in doubt.

⁴¹ Eltis (2000: 7).

⁴² Abulafia (2008: 4).

⁴³ For more on the Lucayos, see Wilson (1990: 47).

⁴⁴ El Inca Garcilaso (1988: 109–10); Las Casas (1966b: Vol. 64, 458–9).

The importance of the American genocide raises serious implications for African history. In general, moral issues surrounding the African presence in the Americas have been looked at through the lens of the slave trade. The fact that this trans-Atlantic trade itself began only after the genocide of the Taíno peoples of the Caribbean has been under-discussed.⁴⁵ Yet the American atrocity was fundamentally connected to the way in which people perceived and justified the importance of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. From the very start, therefore, such questions took on a pan-oceanic, international quality emblematic of this early Atlantic world, a world in which the institutionalised violence which facilitated creolisation in places such as Cabo Verde became the norm. A fundamental characteristic of this new pan-Atlantic space was thus that the violence which accompanied both the American genocide and the processes of creolisation and enslavement in Western Africa were connected, because conquest and the economic development of the European empires of the Atlantic world through the requisitioning of surplus labour and production could occur in neither place without it.

The connection between the genocide in the Caribbean and the trans-Atlantic slave trade from Western Africa was direct. It was Las Casas himself who, having travelled to Spain in 1517, managed to persuade Charles V to grant a licence in 1518 so that slaves could be taken directly to the Caribbean from Africa.⁴⁶ The licence was granted to Laurent de Gouvenot, the governor of Bresse, who sub-contracted it to Genoese merchants. Four thousand slaves were to be transported directly from Africa to Hispaniola to relieve the labour shortage there.⁴⁷ The contract had a direct effect. In December 1517, Alonso Suazo, the judge of the *Audiencia* of Santo Domingo, was asking for ships to travel from Hispaniola to Seville to buy trade goods with which to purchase slaves in Cabo Verde.⁴⁸ Then, in 1518, the three Jeronymite monks governing Hispaniola requested that ships from Hispaniola be allowed to go straight to Cabo Verde and bring slaves.⁴⁹ Las Casas later wrote that what moved him to make this petition was the desire to relieve the Native Americans of their appalling suffering. Thus had there been no genocide, Las Casas would never have made such a request.

⁴⁵ Although Newson (2006: 157) discusses the connection of the demographic collapse of the Native Americans to imports of African slaves.

⁴⁶ Las Casas (1966b: Vol. 65, 380–1).

⁴⁷ Ibid., Vol. 65, 381; E. Lopes (1944: 4).

⁴⁸ Toletino Dipp (1974: 155); cit Torrão (2006: 1).

⁴⁹ AGI, Patronato 174, Ramo 6.

Yet such moral considerations had already been foreshadowed by the spectre of economics. The financial catastrophe brought on by the genocide had concentrated minds. There was a need to provide a reliable labour supply in the New World. A system of licences to import Black slaves to the Caribbean via Iberia began in 1513.⁵⁰ This was another case of the state catching up with reality: African slaves had been imported to work on Hispaniola as early as 1502.⁵¹ King Fernando of Spain had even sent one hundred African slaves directly to Hispaniola in 1505 to work for him in the mines.⁵² In 1510, he had ordered fifty more slaves to be used in the royal mines.⁵³ Such was the quantity of African slaves in Hispaniola that in 1511 he wrote to a representative there: “I do not understand how so many blacks have died: look after them carefully”.⁵⁴ By 1520, the volume of African slaves on the island was such that there was widespread fear of their revolt.⁵⁵ There is a way, therefore, in which the royal licences issued in the 1510s did not precipitate a situation but rather codified it. Moreover, the royal permission of 1518 was also just catching up with reality, as slaves probably were being dispatched directly from Cabo Verde to the Caribbean since 1514.⁵⁶ The way in which the trade was taking off by 1520 is emphasised by the contract given on December sixteenth 1519 to Afonso Lopes de Ávila to found a *fetoria* on Cabo Verde, a depot for the organising of slave exports.⁵⁷

We can therefore pinpoint this era as the time when the trans-Atlantic slave trading era really began: the Atlantic was pan-Atlantic by the late 1510s at the latest.⁵⁸ Western Africa had more than sixty years of experience in the procurement of African slaves. Its economic space was fully integrated, with the provision of slaves for Caboverdean and Iberian markets the cornerstone of its Atlantic economy. It was much nearer

⁵⁰ Ventura (1999: 23).

⁵¹ Davis (2006: 80); Palmer (1976: 7–8). This followed official instructions given in 1501 by Ferdinand King of Aragón (Deive 1980: Vol. 1, 19).

⁵² Palmer (1976: 8); Moya Pons (1973: 70).

⁵³ AGI, Contratación 5089, Legajo 1, fol. 38r.

⁵⁴ Saco (1879: Vol. 1, 67).

⁵⁵ I. Wright (1916: 772). Most of these, of course, had come straight from Europe.

⁵⁶ T. Hall (1992: Vol. 2, 439–40). Mendes (2007: 29–33; 2008: 66) suggests that only in the 1530s did more ships go directly from West Africa to the Americas; however, this may underestimate both the 1518 decree permitting a direct trade from Africa to America and this evidence of trade by 1514, illustrating the need which the 1518 decree sought to meet.

⁵⁷ E. Lopes (1944: 22).

⁵⁸ Torrão (2006: 1; idem., 2010: 2) concurs that direct slaving between Cabo Verde and the New World had begun by the end of the 1510s.

to the Caribbean islands than Benin and Kongo. It turned out that the administration and institutionalisation of violence on the archipelago itself were not the only factors encouraging creolisation; this reality was supplemented by the violence of the New World, which accelerated the processes that had already begun to occur there.

THE EXPANSION OF THE PAN-ATLANTIC SLAVING ECONOMY AND THE GROWTH OF CABO VERDE

By the 1520s and 1530s, the Iberian empire of the pan-Atlantic was growing inexorably. Tenochtitlan fell in 1521; Cuzco, thirteen years later. As the Spanish advanced in America, African slaves became commonplace. Most were initially sent first to Iberia and then to the New World.⁵⁹ One of the four men to survive the 1528–36 journey from Florida to what today is northwestern Mexico made famous by Cabeza de Vaca's *Naufragios* was a Black slave born in Morocco.⁶⁰ Smallpox was said to have been brought to New Spain by a Black slave on Nárvaez's expedition in 1520⁶¹; as disease and violence triggered demographic collapse, the *parvenu* slavemasters of the New World sought scapegoats.

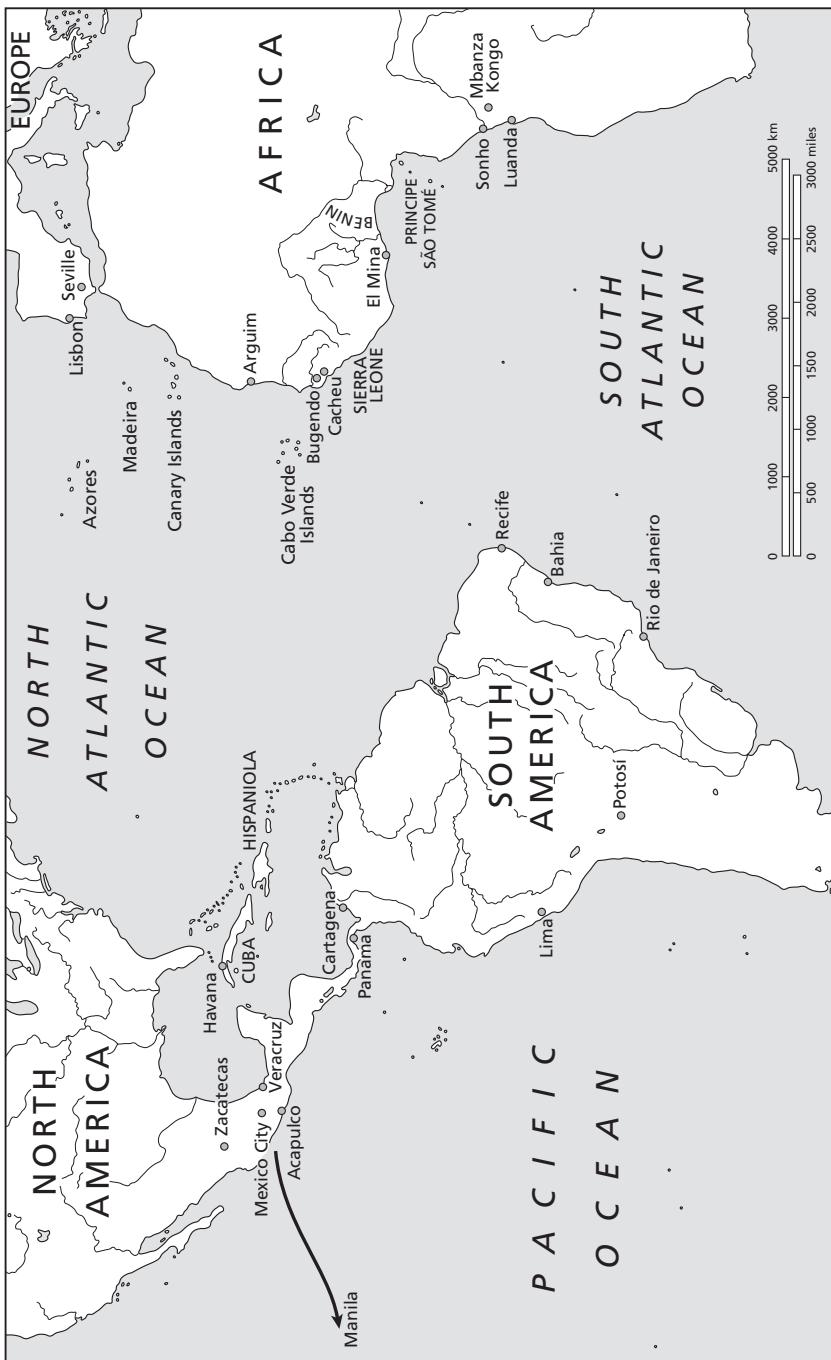
African slaves typically participated in Spanish military campaigns in America. They were in Pizarro's army during his conquest of the Incas in the early 1530s; one of them, Juan de Valiente, became a military commander.⁶² Following Cuzco's fall in 1534, 150 Blacks went with Almagro from Cuzco to Chile in 1535, and between 1529 and 1537 at least 363

⁵⁹ There was, however, a dislike of slaves who had become too acculturated to Iberia and had spent longer than a year there, and decrees barring these *ladino* slaves from entering the New World were passed in 1526, 1531 and 1543 – Encinas (1945–6: Vol. 4, 383–4). Early inventories regularly mention *ladino* slaves; for instance, Estevan de Baziniana's on Cuba in 1532 cited four slaves, all *ladinos* (AGI, Justicia 11, No. 3; although the same file details a charge against Baziniana for failing to provide accounts for some slaves that he received in Cabo Verde and took to Cuba, showing that by the early 1530s both direct trans-Atlantic trade and the trade via Iberia were in operation). Although the direct Cabo Verde to America trade gradually took precedence, the custom of sending slaves via Iberia continued throughout the sixteenth century, though these slaves rarely stayed long on the Iberian peninsula. In 1557 the slave importers of Mexico City wrote that “un-acculturated slaves [negros bocales] have been and are brought from the kingdom of Portugal after the blacks who are constantly being sent from the islands of Cabo Verde have been gathered together” (“los negros bocales se an traydo y trae del reyno de portugal despues de tener recogidos los negros que continuamente se trae de las yslas de cabo verde”) – AGI, Justicia 204, No. 3, Ramo 1.

⁶⁰ Cabeza de Vaca (1989: 222).

⁶¹ See, e.g., Aguirre Beltrán (1989: 19).

⁶² Thomas (1997: 102).



MAP 4. Atlantic World Circa 1550.

Black slaves were licensed to go to Peru alone simply to help with building the new colonial infrastructure.⁶³ By the 1540s, Black soldiers were used by both sides in the vicious civil conflicts which overran the Peruvian colony, and in the 1546 battle of Añaquito, Gonzalo Pizarro's army may have had as many as 600 Black auxiliaries.⁶⁴

That Western Africa was the epicentre of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in this era is not in doubt. The picture we have just seen for the 1510s was consolidated in the second quarter of the sixteenth century. The route from Cabo Verde to the Indies was fully established by the mid-1520s, with licences initially given to various residents of Hispaniola to bring slaves under the general licence granted to Gouvenot in 1518.⁶⁵ Several documents have been discovered by María Manuel Ferraz Torrão which confirm merchants in Seville sending ships to Santo Domingo via Cabo Verde from 1525 at the latest.⁶⁶ From 1528 to 1532 the Germans Heinrich Ehinger and Hieronymus Seiler were given a general licence to purvey four thousand slaves to the Indies, and thereafter individual merchants bought licences at the Casa de la Contratación in Seville until 1595 and the reinstitution of larger contracts (*asientos*).

However, widespread illegal trade meant that the actual numbers of slaves imported to America in these early years was higher than the number of licences granted. An official wrote to Charles V from Hispaniola in 1526 suggesting that six hundred contraband slaves had been introduced to that island in that year alone.⁶⁷ Indeed, contraband had been recognised as a problem in the slave trade in Western Africa since 1514 at least, when one of the royal decrees issued by Manoel noted a problem with the traders and ship crew at Cantor/Kantora on the River Gambia, who did not "tell the truth about the trade for the merchandise that they take there".⁶⁸ The possibilities for this contraband are also demonstrated by the fact that by 1535, the numbers of slaves loaded on individual ships in Kongo for transport to São Tomé and between São Tomé and Elmina

⁶³ Bowser (1974: 5–6).

⁶⁴ Ibid., 9, and ff. for a general picture of Africans in the early Peruvian colony. See O'Toole (2007) for a more recent transnational perspective.

⁶⁵ Torrão (1991: 308, 332).

⁶⁶ Torrão (2010: 6).

⁶⁷ Deive (1980: Vol. I, 159).

⁶⁸ MMAI : Vol. 4, 74: "*por quanto muchas vezes mandamos fazer armações pera Cantor: & pera outras partes : onde os capitães levam poder por si resgatar as ditas armações: declaramos que os ditos nossos capitães : & bem assi os de nossos tratadores: ou piloto : ou mestre: como outra qualquer pessoa que poder levar pera fazer os ditos resgates : nom fazer verdade no resgate das mercadorias que levam*".

regularly reached anywhere between 375 and 662.⁶⁹ Although these were much shorter journeys than the trans-Atlantic voyages, this certainly suggests that the carrying capacity of early sixteenth-century ships was large and that the numbers loaded for the crossing to the New World were routinely higher than the numbers of licences to ship slaves sold to captains by the *Casa de la Contratación* in Seville, which was generally between 100 and 200 per voyage.

From Hispaniola, many of the slaves were taken with the Spanish to their conquests on the American mainland.⁷⁰ However, from the mid-1520s residents in New Spain contracted directly to obtain slaves in Cabo Verde.⁷¹ Slaves were being imported directly from Cabo Verde to Nombre de Dios in Panamá by 1534 at the latest.⁷² Escaped slaves, known as *cimarrones*, were widespread in Panamá by 1535, and in Cuba by 1536. They roamed the roads with weapons, assaulting people on the roads and attacking the farms of Spanish colonists.⁷³ Indeed, there were so many African slaves in Mexico City by 1537 that when a feared slave uprising was put down, several dozen Africans were hung, drawn and quartered.⁷⁴

Key to this trade were Sevillano merchants, most of whom were New Christians.⁷⁵ In the early 1530s they operated as agents of Ehinger and Seiler, but after the lapsing of this contract in 1532 they contracted directly to ship slaves at the *Casa de la Contratación*.⁷⁶ These traders used contraband techniques to expand their commercial potential in Western Africa, loading goods illegally in Seville to be taken to Cabo Verde under the pretence that they were destined for the Indies.⁷⁷ One well-known trader was Juan de la Barrera – himself an Old Christian – who was

⁶⁹ Ibid., Vol. 15, 101–2 (375 slaves on the ship *Santo Espírito*); ibid., Vol. 15, 115–6 (662 slaves on the ship *Urbano*); ibid., Vol. 15, 125 (512 slaves on the ship *Conceição*).

⁷⁰ Aguirre Beltrán (1989: 20).

⁷¹ Thomas (1997: 101). See also Aguirre Beltrán (1989: 20) on the contract with Ehringer and Seiler. The earliest such case of direct traffic from Cabo Verde I have found is from 1526, detailed in AGI, Justicia 9 No. 7; but cf. also above on the request from the Jeronymite monks governing Hispaniola in 1518 for a direct traffic, and the evidence of illegal contraband trade in 1514, which suggests it may have taken place much earlier.

⁷² AGI, Panamá 234, Libro 5, fols. 182v–183r (a case from 1534) and 197v (a case from 1535).

⁷³ AGI, Panamá 235, Libro 6, fols. 24v–25r; Santo Domingo 1121, Libro 1, fols. 173v–174r.

⁷⁴ Aguirre Beltrán (1989: 22–3).

⁷⁵ Gil (2001: Vol. 3, 149–51).

⁷⁶ AGI, Indiferente 1092, no. 42 – January 13th 1533; AGI, Indiferente 1092, no. 104 – July 7, 1535.

⁷⁷ AGI, Indiferente 1092, no. 45 – June 10th 1533.

regularly making the Seville–Cabo Verde–Veracruz run by the 1530s.⁷⁸ Between 1532 and 1534 the number of Africans in Cuba doubled, and by 1536 the Audiencia of Hispaniola had written to the crown stating that the price of slaves had more than doubled in Cabo Verde, which almost certainly represents a corresponding spike in demand.⁷⁹ Indeed, during the 1530s, letters permitting the transfer of slaves from Africa to the New World tended to refer exclusively to the Western African region (known then as Cabo Verde and Guiné), and in Mexico Cortés himself contracted in 1542 to bring five hundred slaves from Cabo Verde.⁸⁰ By the 1540s, the price of African slaves was shooting up in the Indies as the demand for labour increased.⁸¹ In 1543, a contract was signed to bring three hundred African slaves to Guatemala.⁸² By the end of the 1540s *cimarrones* were widespread around Cartagena de las Indias (hereafter, Cartagena) and Panamá.⁸³ It was clear that the importation of Africans to the new colonies was a process which would not be reversed.

The proportion of American slaves derived from Western Africa was certainly significant. Curtin suggests that between 1526 and 1550 they constituted 80 percent of the slaves making for the New World, and Hugh Thomas claims that in the period to 1550 three-fourths of the slaves in Lima and Arequipa came from the “Guinea of Cape Verde”.⁸⁴ The picture may have been even more pronounced than these figures suggest, because 247 of the 252 ships legally plying for slaves to Africa from Portugal between 1544 and 1550 went to Cabo Verde.⁸⁵ A royal decree of 1549 concerning taxes derived from slaves transported to the Indies only mentioned Cabo Verde as a source.⁸⁶ In 1557 a petition from

⁷⁸ Pike (1972: 119). Barrera’s daughter, Maria, married an English sailor, Robert Tomson – see Conway (1927: 14).

⁷⁹ Scelle (1906: Vol. 1, 202 and 202 n.2).

⁸⁰ See the instructions to Don Pedro de Mendoza for his voyage to the Río de la Plata in 1534: “*vos daremos licencia ... para que destos Nuestros Regnos o del reyno de Portugal o Islas de Cabo Verde y Guinea, vos o quien nuestro poder hubieres podais llevar y lleveis a las tierras.... 200 esclavos negros ...*” – H. and P. Chaunu (1955: Vol. 2, 245); Aguirre Beltrán (1989: 22).

⁸¹ AGI, Indiferente 737, no. 49 – December 12, 1540.

⁸² AGI, Guatemala 49, no. 26 – March 12, 1543.

⁸³ Navarrete (2003: 27).

⁸⁴ Curtin (1975: 13); Thomas (1997: 117). Both these figures derive from Lockhart (1968: 173).

⁸⁵ For the statistics of these ships, including their names and destinations, see Ventura (1999: 121–33).

⁸⁶ AGI, Indiferente 1964, fol. 366v: “*sobre lo que toca al pago de los derechos de almoxari-fazgo de los esclavos que se cargaren pa’ las yndias en cavo verde*”.

Mexico City noted that all the factories of Lisbon slave merchants were in Cabo Verde; it would be impossible to differentiate slaves brought from Cabo Verde from those from São Tomé and [Upper] Guinea, it said, because slaves did not come directly from either São Tomé or [Upper] Guinea to New Spain.⁸⁷ Indeed, as Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, the path-finding historian of African slavery in Mexico wrote, up to the 1560s “the islands of Cabo Verde and the rivers of Guinea were the only noted [places from which slaves were registered as arriving in Mexico]”.⁸⁸ This conclusive data warns us to beware of the arguments of Heywood and Thornton as to the predominant role of West-Central Africans in shaping “Atlantic Creole” identity in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.⁸⁹

Quantification is not a prime purpose of this book, but certainly the volume of slaves exported from Western Africa in these years was large. Writing circa 1560, Las Casas estimated that in the years since the direct export of slaves began in 1518, 30,000 had been brought direct to Hispaniola and over 100,000 to the Indies as a whole.⁹⁰ Bowser suggests that this figure was exaggerated, and it must be noted that Las Casas exhibited a tendency to inflate numbers.⁹¹ Yet Las Casas felt ashamed at having promoted the export of African slaves and may not have been as inclined to exaggerate with this statistic as he was with others.⁹²

Las Casas’s figures may have been broadly accurate. By the middle of the sixteenth century, two thousand African slaves per year were entering Hispaniola, before being transported to other parts of the Americas.⁹³ Each sugar plantation, or *ingenio*, on that island alone often employed between 150 and 200 slaves.⁹⁴ A judge from the Audiencia of the island who resided there between 1557 and 1564 wrote that there was one *ingenio* with 900 slaves and that there were 20,000 Black slaves on the

⁸⁷ AGI, Justicia 204, No. 3, Ramo 1 – Question 9 of the *interrogatorio* of merchants from Mexico City relating to the slave trade; also, fol. 7v: “*de guinea y santo tome no vienen negros derechamente a esta nueva españa*”. That is, slaves from Upper Guinea were taken first to Cabo Verde and transported thence to the Indies.

⁸⁸ Aguirre Beltrán (1989: 29).

⁸⁹ Heywood/Thornton (2007). For a further critique of the “Angolan wave” hypothesis founded on new data from Cartagena, see Wheat (2009: 103).

⁹⁰ Las Casas (1966b: Vol. 66, 30).

⁹¹ Bowser (1974: 11).

⁹² On Las Casas’s remorse over this issue, see Mellafe (1975: 15).

⁹³ Deive (1989: 55). Torrão (2010: 8) also sees an annual average of approximately 2000 slaves as a reasonable estimate for exports of slaves from Cabo Verde during this period.

⁹⁴ Ratekin (1954: 14).

island in total – a figure which makes Las Casas' estimate of 30,000 slaves imported to the island between 1518 and 1560 look reasonable.⁹⁵

It was easy for the actual number of slaves in the Indies to surpass those for whom licences had been granted in Spain. Because no register of slaves was kept on ships departing Cabo Verde and such registers were taken only on arrival in Hispaniola, contraband was easy, and slaves could be offloaded in secret before arrival for their official registry at the port of Santo Domingo.⁹⁶ As we saw previously, contraband to Hispaniola was widespread by 1526 at the latest, and by 1541 there was contraband to Puerto Rico, with 241 slaves alleged to have been sailed there without licence; in his letter describing this, Licenciado Villalobos noted the danger of a general fraud in the slave trade through “the fraud which ... it would be possible to carry out, using the said licence to bring many more slaves than those permitted in the actual licence”.⁹⁷ Contraband is impossible to estimate for these years; although it is known to have been widespread by the early seventeenth century, this evidence suggests it began considerably earlier.⁹⁸ This meant that the actual number of slaves imported was probably much greater than official figures would allow, and using these figures for the sixteenth century is likely to lead to serious errors.⁹⁹

Taken in the round, this data suggests that an estimate of a total annual average of roughly 2,500 slaves exported from Western Africa to the Spanish Indies in the second quarter of the sixteenth century is not unreasonable. This figure is probably rather conservative if we recall the estimates we saw in Chapter 2 of Duarte Pacheco Pereira of roughly 3,500 exported annually from Upper Guinea circa 1505, especially if we remember than an additional annual quantity of slaves would have been

⁹⁵ Echagoian (1941: 446).

⁹⁶ AGI, Justicia 883, no. 3: the ship captain Gregorio de Espinosa asked of his witness whether it is not true that “quando se an de cargar esclavos para yndias en las yslas de cabo verde no se asse ni faze ninguna Registro de los dichos esclavos que se cargan mas de el que se haze en esta ciudad [de Santo Domingo]” – “when slaves are loaded for the Indies in the islands of Cabo Verde no register is made of the said slaves except for that which is made in this city [of Santo Domingo].”

⁹⁷ AGI, Justicia 991, No. 1, Ramo 4, fol. iv: “los fraude q ... se podria hazer q con color de la dha licencia se podría llevar mucho mas numero de esclavos de los tenidos en la dha licencia”.

⁹⁸ On the importance of contraband in this period, see Mellafe (1975: 72). On contraband in the seventeenth-century trade to Cartagena, see Newson/Minchin (2007: 65–6) and Green (2007b: Part 3).

⁹⁹ For a new perspective on the volume of the slave trade between 1570 and 1640, see Wheat (2009: 77–120).

destined for Portugal and for Cabo Verde. These need to be added to the figure quoted by Las Casas to give an idea of the total trade here. Moreover, we should bear in mind that Las Casas's figure does not take into account slaves bound for Brazil, though there was a trickle of these by the 1540s.¹⁰⁰ Certainly, this sort of volume is credible for the export trade from Western Africa when we consider that the slave trade from Kongo to São Tomé and Elmina was regularly estimated at between four and five thousand annually in the 1530s and 1540s.¹⁰¹

This figure is, however, far higher than most historians will allow. Even Bühnen, whose work acts as a corrective to previous extremely low estimates, only suggests the possibility of a minimum annual export figure of one thousand slaves in the years 1500–1550.¹⁰² The problem is that the historiography of slave export figures in these years has been petrified ever since the mid-1950s by the work of the Chaunus.¹⁰³ However, as Bühnen noted, reliance on Spanish shipping licences in the period 1551–1595 (their preferred method) would lead to an annual average of slaves exported of only 421.¹⁰⁴ Although the new Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database suggests higher figures, these are still insufficient to take into account the contraband and voyages for which we have no record (cf. Introduction).

For these lower figures are incompatible with both contemporary slave export figures as noted in first-hand accounts and also with the need for labour in the Americas following the genocide there. When we consider the collapse of the Taíno population, the idea of an import of roughly 1,000 African slaves per annum to supply labour needs to Hispaniola alone seems reasonable, and certainly much more plausible than the far lower figure which relying on the export licences produces. As we saw earlier, Puerto Rico was another locale where the Native American population had vanished, and thus again there is evidence of contraband from 1541 and of unlicensed ships sent directly to Cabo Verde to procure slaves in 1553.¹⁰⁵ By 1560 petitions in Lima were describing the purchase of a "very large number of slaves" and stating that "there is such a large number of slaves" in the viceroyalty.¹⁰⁶ The chronicler of the Spanish conquest

¹⁰⁰ By the 1540s the volume of general trade with Brazil was quite considerable, much more than allowed by previous historians according to Coelho Filho (2000: 65–6).

¹⁰¹ MMAI: Vol. 2, 58; ibid., Vol. 2, 200.

¹⁰² Bühnen (1993: 84–6).

¹⁰³ H. and P. Chaunu (1955).

¹⁰⁴ Bühnen (1993: 83).

¹⁰⁵ AGI, Justicia 996, No. 2, Ramo 2.

¹⁰⁶ AGI, Justicia 432, No. 1, Ramo 2, fols. 1r ("muy gran suma de negros") and 8r ("como ay tanta copia de esclavos").

of Mexico, Bernal Díaz, described the Mexica who ruled Tenochtitlán under Cuáhtemoc and Moctezuma as bringing “as many slaves to be sold in the market [of Tlatelolco] as the Portuguese bring blacks from Guinea”.¹⁰⁷ These phrases would have had little resonance if only a few hundred slaves were annually entering New Spain and Peru.

Thus we would certainly do well, as Büchnen suggests, to take the reports of eyewitnesses as giving an “impression of the order of magnitude”; though perhaps exaggerated at times, they are corroborated and broadly borne out by different eyewitness accounts and also by pan-Atlantic factors.¹⁰⁸ An egregious problem with the quantitative approach to the early trans-Atlantic trade therefore is that it has made many historians obsessed with numbers and encouraged them to forget the social, cultural and political implications in Africa of the trans-Atlantic slave trade – it is also that, having encouraged them to focus on numbers, it has encouraged them to focus on the wrong ones.

In Cabo Verde, the trade had important effects. As the most important slaving factory at this time, the development of new markets in the Americas stimulated commercial activity.¹⁰⁹ By 1550 an anonymous pilot would recount how ships were “continually arriving with goods from many countries, and provinces, principally the Spanish Indies”.¹¹⁰ The arrival of these goods allowed both trade and the urban apparatus to grow. Ribeira Grande, said the pilot, was a city of 500 hearths.¹¹¹ The extent of the growth in the preceding generation is emphasised by the census of 1513, which gave the city a population of seventy-four residents [*vizinhos*], fifty-six temporary residents [*estantes*], sixteen Blacks [*negros*], twelve clerics and three friars.¹¹² Although these figures exclude slaves and the consonance between residents and hearths is inexact, considerable growth is clearly represented. Indeed, in a 1572 census the average number of residents per registered hearth was 9.8.¹¹³ This would indicate a population of circa 4,900 in 1550, as opposed to the 159 residents recorded in 1513; even assuming a ratio of slaves to free men of 10:1, this would not give a population much more than 1,600, or less than one-third of that thirty-five years later.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁷ Díaz (1963: 222).

¹⁰⁸ Büchnen (1993: 86).

¹⁰⁹ Vila Vilar (1977: 145); Torrão (1991: 309).

¹¹⁰ Anonymous (1551/2: 89).

¹¹¹ Ibid., 85.

¹¹² HGCV: CD, Vol. 1, 221.

¹¹³ MMAII: Vol. 3, 28–53.

¹¹⁴ This was the ratio in a 1582 census of Francisco de Andrade – see *ibid.*, Vol. 3, 99, 102.

The accelerating commercial interest in Cabo Verde was revealed also by the sheer numbers of traders coming to the islands. In the inquisitorial trial of Branca Dias examined in Chapter 4, large numbers of witnesses were consulted in Lisbon in 1543, all of whom gave evidence gleaned from trading visits to Santiago and Fogo. Some of these witnesses were Caboverdeans trading in Lisbon, others were Portuguese who had been in Cabo Verde recently.¹¹⁵ One of the witness statements taken in Ribeira Grande for this trial came from a Madeiran trader who had most likely come to buy slaves.¹¹⁶ Similarly, in an earlier case examined on Hispaniola in 1528 concerning a slave who claimed he had been freed by his master in Cabo Verde and illegally sold, many witnesses had recently arrived from Cabo Verde.¹¹⁷

Thus international trading patterns confirm the commercial importance of Cabo Verde in the emergent Atlantic world of the sixteenth century. Moreover, this evidence shows also that the early trans-Atlantic slave trade coincided with the rapid growth of the urban economy and apparatus of Cabo Verde. Ribeira Grande's city status was confirmed by the creation of the see there in 1533, indicating its importance.¹¹⁸ The consolidation of urban space is also revealed by the growing attraction of the islands to other European powers, notably France. By 1536 there were reports of French ships in Cabo Verde.¹¹⁹ By 1540 the attacks of pirate French ships in the African Atlantic were sufficient to make the brother of the king of Kongo fearful of the voyage to Lisbon.¹²⁰ Further reports of French attacks in Cabo Verde came in 1542 and 1544.¹²¹ Yet none of this was enough to deter the Portuguese traders, and by 1544 the city was important enough that commercial families in Lisbon sent relatives there to act as their agents.¹²²

¹¹⁵ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 5729, fols. 26v, 27v.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., fol. 20v.

¹¹⁷ AGI, Justicia 11, No. 4.

¹¹⁸ MMAII: Vol. 2, 235–6; this came with the bull *Pro Excellenti*.

¹¹⁹ Ford (1931: 274): a letter of João III which states that “encomendovos muito que trabalhais pera aver verdadeira enformaçam dos navios de França, que dizeis que foram achados na Ilha de Cabo Verde”.

¹²⁰ AG, Vol. 5, 160.

¹²¹ MMAII: Vol. 2, 345, 370; Barcellos (1899: 120).

¹²² AGI, Indiferente 416, Libro 2, 54v–55r: a document dated September 4, 1544, on the Armada of Francisco de Orellana going to Nueva Andalucía: “en lo que dis que un hombre rrico portugués q vive en Portugal prometió al adelantado quando allí estubo de darle cincuenta vacas en la ysla de Santiago de Cabo Verde y que un hijo suyo questa en esa ciudad...”

French attacks were a product of Ribeira Grande's perceived success and illustrated how the urban growth of Ribeira Grande was directly connected to the boom in Atlantic slaving, which was a concrete reality, on this evidence, by the end of the 1530s. It was Cabo Verde's position at the heart of the web of connections linking Europe with Africa and America that saw its rapid expansion in this period. Without the appropriation of surplus labour from Africa and the insertion of the people who provided it in America, there could be no growth either in Ribeira Grande or in the Atlantic as a whole. The Atlantic boom at its heart required the appropriation of a new labour supply; further, it needed the requisitioning of the products of that supply for the boosting of the economic markets of Europe, not the African locales from which the people who provided that labour had come. Thus the creation of an urban economy in Ribeira Grande was the product of the violence that went with the growth of the slave trade and of the American genocide. It was no accident that, as we saw in the last chapter, as this pattern of trans-Atlantic violence and slaving accelerated, so did the pattern of creolisation across the Western African region; for thus was the institutional violence of Atlantic slavery connected to the accommodations and mixtures inherent in creolisation of language and cultures from the beginning.

THE IMPACT OF TRANS-ATLANTIC SLAVING ON CYCLES OF VIOLENT DISORDER AND CREOLISATION, TO CIRCA 1550

As we have seen in this chapter, the pivotal role of Cabo Verde as a slaving hub in the early trans-Atlantic trade had many implications for the Western African region. It reinforced the institutionalisation of violence and thus of creolisation on Cabo Verde. It did so, moreover, within an economic paradigm which encouraged the growth of the Caboverdean economy as a whole, particularly of the metropolitan economy associated with Ribeira Grande. It also encouraged the increasing frequency of the exchanges between the islands and the coast, because slaves for the Atlantic market had to go through Cabo Verde; thus the growing demand necessitated an increase in links between the islands and the coast. As Caboverdeans traded for slaves, the labour demands from the wider Atlantic region beyond Cabo Verde became connected to the growth of creolisation across Western Africa.

This connection of the trans-Atlantic demand for labour to African-European exchanges on the mainland was extremely important. We saw

in the last chapter how the pattern of creolisation among Kassanké elites was connected to benefits which different lineages accrued from connection to *lançados*. Here, through the connection to trans-Atlantic slaving, we see in more detail than ever before how and why this pattern developed. For the connections of *lançados* to African lineage heads was impossible to separate from the *lançado* trade in slaves. Connections to *lançados* meant connection to the violence of the pan-Atlantic economy, and this was something that inevitably brought about changes in the fortunes of both individual lineages and of the relationships between one lineage and another. Very soon, trans-Atlantic slaving became impossible to separate from the political and social changes that had begun to transform the region. It had become clear that the role of the demand side of the Atlantic economy was having a strong influence in intra-lineage struggles and the growing cycle of violent disorder affecting Western Africa.

We can begin to look at the evidence for this through the inquisitorial case we looked at in the last chapter involving António Fernandes and Manoel Garcia. In the petition of the elders of Cacheu to Fernandes, it was claimed that Garcia had seized “*negros*” from the region, tied them up and sold them as slaves, and that he “took slaves tied up which he seized by force in the said River”.¹²³ This suggests that the Brames who lived in the Cacheu region were suffering from raids linked to the expansion in the slave trade. This supposition is supported by the evidence on slave identities from America. Here, the Brame are one of the most represented groups for this period (see Table I.1).

It is useful here to recall that, elsewhere in the trial, Fernandes accused Garcia of being “*lançado*” with the “King of Cassamassa” and had supplied him with firearms. This evidence, when put together with the petition from Cacheu, therefore suggests that Garcia may have been acting as something like an agent for the Kassanké lineage head, seizing slaves from the southern Cacheu region which was the extremity of his zone of control and taking them to Bugendo for sale into the Atlantic market. This would suggest not only that the Kassanké remained the most powerful force in the region, but also that the demands for labour in America were aggravating the tensions between groups in Upper Guinea and leading to predatory attacks by powerful groups on others. Indeed, the large number of Brame slaves in the Americas at this time is evidence for this pattern and implies that they were seized through a combination of

¹²³ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Proceso 801, fols. 62v, 63r: “levava negros amarrados q tomava por força no dito Rio”.

Kassanké and *lançado* rapacity (see Table I.1). It may have been precisely this pattern which precipitated both the violent resistance to *lançado* and Caboverdean traders in Casamance in the 1550s (cf. Chapter 5) and the willingness of smaller decentralised groups such as the Balanta and Floup to enter into the slave trade by securing captives through village raids, as is suggested by the data of slave origins (see Table I.2 for the 1560s). As Hawthorne has shown, such strategies were vital for these groups to secure the quantities of iron and other goods which were necessary for self-defence.¹²⁴ Taken in the round, this material would suggest that it was from the mid- to late 1540s that such strategies began to be developed in Upper Guinea.

Thus the alliance between *lançados* and Kassanké and its connection to trans-Atlantic trade led both to violent raids of more powerful groups on others in Upper Guinea and to new strategies among decentralised groups. This hypothesis tallies with other material. Almada documented attacks by the Mandinka of the Gambia on the Arriata people who lived along the coast between the Gambia and Casamance estuaries, describing how “[the Mandinka] prepared very beautiful battle canoes, and travelled along the River Gambia out to sea, following the coast south of the Cabo de Santa Maria, until they met with Arriatas and Floups who live there. And when this conquest and war began, they captured many people”.¹²⁵ These attacks clearly dated from some time before Almada was writing in the late sixteenth century, probably from around the period of this dispute between Fernandes and Garcia: Almada noted that the Arriatas, though initially not knowing how to defend themselves, had improved and had learnt to “fight and defend themselves and kill and capture their enemies”.¹²⁶

This heavy depredation of Mandinka slavers is suggestive of the growing power of the Kaabu federation in these years. A noteworthy aspect of the evidence from the Americas on slave identities in the 1540s and 1550s is that the Biafada were the most represented group (see Table I.1). The Biafada were, as we saw in Chapter 2, located at the southern boundary of Mandinka-influenced Upper Guinea. The large numbers of Biafada traded to the Americas in these years suggests that their independent

¹²⁴ Hawthorne (2003).

¹²⁵ MMAII: Vol. 3, 288: “armando almadias de guerra mui formosas, e botando pelo Rio de Gâmbia fora, correndo a costa do Cabo de Santa Maria para baixo, e dão nos Arriatas e Falupos, que vivem ao longo dessa costa. E quando começaram esta conquista e guerra, cativavam muita gente”.

¹²⁶ Ibid.: “pelejam e se defendem e matam e cativam aos inimigos”.

status was being eroded by their proximity to the Kaabu Mandinka. Thus as in Casamance, weaker groups such as the Biafada were squeezed by the alliance of powerful local polities and the emissaries of the new Atlantic trade.¹²⁷ As the trans-Atlantic trade expanded, so did existing tensions between lineages, as alliances and strategies for dealing with long-distance maritime trade were developed to try to overcome the new patterns of violence.

However, as well as preying on the weaker groups of Upper Guinea, these new Atlantic traders also supplied the wherewithal for self-defence. Indeed, both the violence of the slave trade and the opportunity for defence were connected. Societies sought to procure iron to defend themselves from slavers and enhance their agricultural potential and therefore their populations, in what Hawthorne has called the “iron-slave cycle”.¹²⁸ At least some of this iron was smelted in Sierra Leone and then exchanged in Casamance ports for slaves, as evidenced by the 1526 expedition of the ship Santiago.¹²⁹ The role of *lançados* as middlemen in this trade and conduits for new sources of iron from the Atlantic meant that new avenues opened up which these societies would not be slow to explore in shoring up their positions in this Atlantic world. Crucially from the Upper Guinean perspective, these new avenues were connected to a realignment of ritual as well as political power, because the opportunity for finding new sources of iron eroded the influence of the smiths and left the door open for alternative spirit shrines believed to mediate with the supernatural to emerge.¹³⁰ Thus the new patterns of violence and war related to Atlantic slaving helped to bring about changes in ritual and belief systems which had enduring effects on the peoples of the region.¹³¹

However, these new and transformative patterns of belief and exchange were overlaid with patterns of intra-lineage violence, as illustrated by these charges against Garcia and by Almada’s account of Mandinka raids on the Arriatas, so that many of the slaves sold in Casamance had been seized rather than bartered. The “iron-slave” cycle could not be separated from the “slave-gold” and “slave-sugar” cycles which had sprung up in

¹²⁷ The Biafada were subject to vicious slaving attacks from the Bijagó in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (cf. Chapter 8), but these were not the cause of their presence in the slave registers of the 1540s and 1550s; following an attack by Caboverdeans on the island of Canhabaque in 1538, Bijagó shunned the Atlantic trade for many years (Brooks 1993b: 263).

¹²⁸ Hawthorne (2003: 92–3).

¹²⁹ T. Hall (1992: Vol. 1, 122–32).

¹³⁰ Baum (1999).

¹³¹ Ibid.; Shaw (2002).

the Americas, whereby gold and sugar were returned to Europe in the very ships which had brought slaves from Western Africa, in a foretaste of Britain's well-known triangular trade of the eighteenth century.¹³² Thus the cultural exchanges which went with extensive *lançado* presence in Casamance and facilitated the evolution of a mixed culture, as well as the expansion of Atlantic creolisation from Cabo Verde, were the flip-side of the violence which went with the procurement of slaves in the first place.

This interconnection of trans-Atlantic slavery to intra-lineage relations is confirmed by events in Senegambia. As we have seen, the early focus for the procurement of slaves among the Jolof had needed to change as the Jolof became more hostile to Atlantic trade (cf. Chapter 2). From then on, although Jolof slaves did go to the Americas, their numbers were much lower than in the trade with the Iberian peninsula of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries (cf. Table I.1). For the Jolof, relationships of supply and demand shifted. In 1529, three years before the decree prohibiting the import of Jolof slaves to America, the Damel of Cajor wrote to the Portuguese crown asking for masons and carpenters to be sent to help build a fort. In an interesting aside, the Damel noted that he sent the same request with a gift of fifteen slaves eight years previously. Evidently nothing had happened. The hostility directed towards Portuguese traders by some Jolof in the early 1500s had affected how Atlantic traders saw their trade with the Jolof. The Jolof may have been major trading partners in the recent past, but the Portuguese were inclined to leave them alone to sort out internal struggles which they had in part precipitated.¹³³

Moreover, religious questions were coming to be of increasing importance in the relationships between Cajor and the Atlantic world. Almada noted the importance which Cajor had once held in the trade with the Caboverdean islands and also how that importance had declined:

In the past, the islanders of Santiago had their greatest trade with this land of [Cajor], when there was a king called Nhogor who was a great friend of our people. In that time there was a great famine on that coast, caused by locusts, and slaves were sold for half an *alqueire* of millet or beans [about six and a half litres]; and mothers cast out their children from them and sold them in exchange for provisions, saying that

¹³² On the existence of this slave-gold cycle, see AGI, Indiferente 1092, no. 242 – April 1537; and AGI, Indiferente 1962, Libro 5, fols. 1–2–1536. On the slave-sugar cycle, see AGI, Indiferente 1092, no. 118 – November 17, 1535; and AGI, Indiferente 1962, Libro 4, fols. 13r–v – also 1535.

¹³³ For this letter, see MMAII: Vol. 2, 215. As things transpired, the Damel emerged as the most powerful of the Jolof kings, according to Almada (*ibid.*, Vol. 3, 241).

it was better for them to live, even as captives, than to die because of the famine.... Ships sailed every year from Santiago laden with horses and other goods for this trade. Then a new king succeeded to the throne called Budumel, a *bixirim* [Moslem scholar], who did not drink wine or eat pork; he lived permanently at his court in Lambaia, a long way from the sea, and paid our people badly ... and this was why the people of Santiago left this trade.¹³⁴

This passage illuminates how regional patterns changed. The trade of Nhgor with the Caboverdeans, praised by Almada, was essentially that of a comparatively weak ruler who suffered difficulties because of the environmental stresses of famine and who also wanted to achieve independence from the centre of the Jolof empire. By contrast, the latter king's attitude is one of greater strength and is shaped substantially, at least on Almada's hostile account, by cultural patterns and a strong adherence to Islam. From the evidence we have seen, this strength was itself the product of earlier Atlantic trade by rulers of Cajor.

The upshot was that the Portuguese began to look elsewhere for a reliable slave supply to meet the growing American demand. In particular, they turned to the Jolof's immediate southern neighbours, the Sereer. We should recall here that the growing strength of the Sereer may date to around 1500 and that they themselves had been forged as a hybrid group from Kaabunké, Sereer-Cosaan and Jolof components (cf. [Chapters 1–2](#)). This was therefore a new lineage which needed allies to bolster its strength, and this made the ability of the Portuguese to forge an alliance with them much easier to understand.

This was an instance of a complete cycle within the African-Atlantic paradigm, for the strengthened Sereer polity was as we have seen itself triggered in part by the growing weakness of the Jolof empire that followed the Atlantic opening. Thus the ability of Atlantic traders to liaise with the Sereer in the first half of the sixteenth century was a direct

¹³⁴ Ibid., Vol. 3, 250–1: “Antigamente o maior trato que tinham os moradores da Ilha de Santiago era para esta terra do Budomel, no tempo que nela reinava um rei chamado Nhgor, muito amigo dos nossos, no tempo do qual houve tamanha fome naquela costa, causada dos gafanhotos, que se vendiam os escravos por meio alqueire de milho ou feijão; e tiravam as mães os filhos de si, e os vendiam a troco de mantimento, dizendo que mais valia viverem, ainda que cativo, que não morrerem à pura fome...da Ilha de Cabo Verde iam todos os annos carregados de cavallos e outras mercadorias a este resgate. Sucedeu neste Reino o Rei chamado Budomel, bixirim, o qual não bebia vinho nem comia carne de porco; este residia contínuo na sua corte de Lambaia, longe do mar, e fazia maus pagamentos aos nossos ... E por essa causa deixaram os moradores desta Ilha este resgate”.

consequence of the new Atlantic world. In this case Atlantic factors not only helped to precipitate Sereer autonomy, but also helped to consolidate it through the opportunities which they offered for alliances and the trade of horses for slaves, which strengthened the Sereer cavalry.

Fundamental to the new Sereer-Portuguese relationship was the pre-Atlantic history of the Sereer. They and their forerunners had long been preyed on for slaves by the Jolof for the trans-Saharan trade. The advent of the Atlantic trade meant that Sereer leaders saw an opportunity to increase their own relative power vis-à-vis the Jolof. Thus, over the middle third of the sixteenth century, the Sereer became one of the main partners of Atlantic traders in the region.¹³⁵ Shortly after describing the relationship of Caboverdeans with Cajor, Almada described how the islanders had had a long and fruitful trade with the Sereer, with “many shipments … with horses”; the Caboverdeans also clearly used their contacts farther south in Upper Guinea; they brought “wax and ivory” as well as cloths woven in their islands to trade among the Sereer.¹³⁶

It is clear from the documents that have survived that the Sereer’s entrance to the Atlantic world expanded their power. According to Almada, by the 1570s they often fought with the Jolof and defeated them, reversing previous patterns.¹³⁷ That this strength derived from an especially intense engagement in Atlantic trade is shown by an event in early 1542, when French ships seized a trading vessel from Cabo Verde, which had been sailing in the company of “six or seven other ships belonging to the residents [of Santiago] which were trading, and which were forced by gunfire to take shelter in the Barbacin river [kingdom of the Sereers]. And they stayed behind the bar for fifteen days before they could leave”.¹³⁸ Clearly, the Sereer were allies of the Caboverdeans or these ships could not have sheltered there; moreover, the large number of ships hints at a vital trade. Thus it can be surmised that the early Atlantic trade with the Jolof had been displaced to the lands of the Sereer.

The evidence becomes even clearer when we consider the proportions of Jolof and Sereer slaves in the Americas by the late 1540s and 1550s (see Table I.1). The Jolof were the third largest group in the Americas

¹³⁵ On the Sereer as major trading partners of Caboverdeans at this time, see T. Hall (1992: Vol. 1, 143–6).

¹³⁶ MMAII: Vol. 3, 257, 257 n.3 – the Porto manuscript of Almada’s treatise refers to the trade in horses; the Lisbon one to the trade in cloths, wax and ivory.

¹³⁷ Ibid., Vol. 3, 256.

¹³⁸ Ibid., Vol. 2, 344: “E correram [atrás de] seys ou sete navyos outros dos moradores que estavam em resgate, e com zabras de remos artilhados os foram meter no Rio das Barbaçys. E esteveram na boqua da barra xb dias aguardado que saysem”.

then, with perhaps twice the numerical strength of that of the Sereer. The likelihood is that many of these slaves were sold to the Caboverdean and Portuguese traders by the Sereer, and that this was a pattern which had developed by the late 1530s and 1540s, when most of the slaves whose origins are recorded for this period would have been procured.

From the evidence we saw earlier from Almada, the Sereer alliance with the Caboverdeans stood them in good stead, so that in the 1570s they were still frequently defeating their Jolof neighbours in battle. The requirements of labour supply from the Americas had thus not only helped to catalyse the shift in the locale of African-European relations in Senegambia from Jolof lands to the Sereer; it had also contributed to a shift in Senegambian power relations, as the evidence of slave populations in the Americas and this evidence from Almada confirm. Whereas pre-existing cultural factors in the region had shaped how African-European exchanges first began, by the middle third of the sixteenth century the way in which those exchanges evolved could no longer be separated from wider Atlantic factors.

Nevertheless, the internal structures of African societies and continuity with pre-existing patterns of trade continued to be of fundamental importance in shaping African-European exchanges. As we saw in the first half of this book, external trade demands were not simply imposed on African societies. The importance of continuities emerges, for instance, in the commercial networks which *lançados* helped to develop in the Casamance during this era around the procurement of slaves. For these were overlaid on existing trade patterns, such as the networks linking Bainunk in the north and Biafada and Sape in the south of the Upper Guinea region, and which hitherto had dealt largely with the exchange of kola nuts, salt, dried fish and other agricultural goods (cf. below, Chapter 8).¹³⁹

The importance of pre-existing structures for the patterns of African-European relations emerges most clearly in settlement patterns of Europeans living in Africa and connected to the trans-Atlantic trade. To the north of the Gambia River, societies were structured along patrilineal kinship lines, which meant that power was wielded and inherited through the male line; thus the children of incoming Europeans could not be accommodated by marrying local women.¹⁴⁰ Although the Caboverdeans therefore had some success among both the Jolof and the Sereer, by the

¹³⁹ Hawthorne (2003: 56–7, 92); Brooks (1980: 6) and Brooks (1993b).

¹⁴⁰ Barry (1998: 28).

time that Almada was writing he noted ruefully that the Caboverdean trade with the Sereer was increasingly weak and that the English and the French had taken over.¹⁴¹

The inability to have a settled population acting as brokers was probably decisive here, because Caboverdean trading success depended on having members of their mercantile diaspora settled in Africa. As cultural structures north of the Gambia made this difficult, Caboverdeans turned to the south of the Gambia. As we have seen, it was there in the matrilineal “rivers of Guinea” that the *lançados* achieved the most success. The societies there allowed them to integrate and form a new caste, because children inherited their (African) mother’s lineage ties. This area was, moreover, the growing focus of the slave trade, as is shown by Almada’s reference to the English and French trade among the Sereer; the English and French did not trade slaves to America at this time, and thus their trade with the Sereer must have been for other goods such as ivory, wax and hides.¹⁴²

The structure of African societies had thus not only affected the settlement patterns of Caboverdeans. It had also helped to determine which areas were most affected by the trans-Atlantic slave trade itself. For it was the Caboverdeans, hailing from one of the original slave societies of the Atlantic world and deeply involved with the shipment of slaves to America, who were key to the functioning of that trade. Thus as the sixteenth century developed, it was to Upper Guinea that the Caboverdeans increasingly turned in their quest to procure slaves. As the contraband trade exploded after 1550, Senegambia’s importance to the trans-Atlantic slave trade became increasingly marginal, and processes of cultural and political transformation related to slavery were concentrated south of the Gambia. With the structure of societies there helping *lançados* to integrate, they would also find other local factors which made this region the epicentre for the procurement of slaves for transport to America in the second half of the sixteenth century.

¹⁴¹ MMAII: Vol. 3, 259.

¹⁴² For instance, as a letter of the friar Diogo de Encarnação noted in September 1584, regarding events farther south along the African coast, the French on the Malagueta coast (modern Liberia) went specifically to trade pepper and ivory – MMAI: Vol. 3, 276 – “falavão algūas palavras em Francès, & hé porque todo seu trato tem com Francezes, que vāo resgatar com elles Malagueta & Marfim”.

Trading Ideas and Trading People

The Boom in Contraband Trade from Western Africa, circa 1550–1580

The period between 1550 and 1580 saw a rapid expansion in the trade in slaves from Africa to the Americas. The conquest of the two major imperial powers in the Americas, the Incas and the Mexica, had seen similar demographic realities to those which had already devastated the Caribbean islands. However, the vast territorial expanse and the riches offered by the silver and gold mines of Mexico and Peru meant that the expense of buying African slaves could be offset by the wealth of the colonies. As new mines were discovered in the Nuevo Reino de Granada in the 1580s, the demand for slaves continued to grow. The Spanish imperial economy became characterised by the mines of the mainland; the prosperous sugar plantations of Hispaniola and Puerto Rico fell into decline in the late sixteenth century as these islands were displaced from official trading routes and the *carrerra de Indias* took shape via Havana, Cuba.¹

Throughout this period, Western Africa remained the dominant source of American-bound slaves. There was a steady trickle of slaves from Angola and Kongo to the New World, but the clear majority still came from the region that traded via Cabo Verde to America, and only with the Portuguese conquest of Luanda in 1575 did this begin to change. The expanding cycle of demand in the Americas therefore initially had most impact among the peoples of Upper Guinea, as new strategies were developed both to procure slaves in this region and for defence against predatory attacks by slave raiders.

These realities, however, took time to filter through to the Iberian crowns. As we have seen at previous points in this book, Iberian

¹ Fuente (2008: 138).

institutions of state often passed decrees which merely caught up with reality. For all the professions of divine and imperial grandeur, the Iberian monarchies of the early sixteenth century did not have the institutional power to shape the reality of trade in the new Atlantic world as much as they would have liked. This trade was shaped just as much by the actors on the ground: in Africa, by Upper Guinean elites and members of the New Christian trading diasporas; and in the Americas, by the colonists whose needs changed much more quickly than the Spanish crown's bureaucracy could accommodate. Such institutional frailties meant that throughout the sixteenth century, the numbers of licenses sold by the Spanish crown to import African slaves to the Americas were far less than what was required.

Thus a vast contraband trade grew up to secure the labour supply of the New World, a trade which tapped the new systems of slave procurement of Western Africa. This chapter's major focus is to analyse in great detail and for the first time these contraband networks and the likely numbers involved. A variety of sources originating in Iberia and Latin America are consulted to show that the official figures for slave exports in these years are gross underestimates, and thus that constructing estimates based on these figures is a flawed enterprise. This quantitative conclusion has far-reaching consequences when it comes to considering the impact of the sixteenth-century trans-Atlantic slave trade on the societies of Western Africa; this aspect of the question is touched on here, but is analysed in far greater depth in the chapter which follows.

The second major theme of this chapter is to expand our understanding of the contours of what I have called pan-Atlantic space in the sixteenth century. A consequence of the Atlantic contraband trade was the growth in direct interconnections between Africa and the Americas, meaning that the commercial and social changes on both continents were linked. Fundamental to these links were the New Christians we followed in [Chapters 4](#) and [5](#), whose trading connections in the Americas facilitated both the contraband trade and the connections between one continent and the other. By seeing how these New Christian networks operated on both sides of the Atlantic, we learn about both their role in contraband and the importance of diasporic links that worked alongside the imperial infrastructure in building the trade of the Atlantic. This picture supports new perspectives which have emphasised the role of diasporas in building the early Atlantic system.² The expansion of the trans-Atlantic slave

² Israel (2002); Studnicki-Gizbert (2007); Ebert (2008).

trade in the second half of the sixteenth century therefore depended on the successful role of this diaspora and, in continuity with previous commercial relationships, its interactions with host communities in Western Africa, a process which was examined in the first half of the book.

I concentrate here on the trans-Atlantic dimension of the trade from Western Africa to continue the argument of the previous chapter as to the global pressures that were increasingly coming to bear on societies there. Understanding how and why Creole society expanded in Western Africa in this era, and how and why the lineages there adapted to the pressures of Atlantic trade, requires a grasp of the broader global forces shaping the intensification of creolisation and slavery in the second half of the sixteenth century. For this was the era in which the contours of the Iberian Atlantic began to be defined, with the establishment of the *carreira de Índias* in the 1560s.³ As the demands and opportunities of the new American economies developed, the direction of political and social changes became irreversible. Some concrete examples emerge in this chapter through examination of new patterns of production and supply that affected Western Africa in these decades.

The Atlantic perspective also allows us to see a further corollary of New Christian involvement in these processes. For this was the era in which the discrimination against New Christians based on *limpeza*, and the growing strength of the discourse of race on both sides of the Atlantic, began to produce increasingly transnational ideas of identity predicated on categories of caste; these ideas acted as a sort of shared ideology which helped to bind the trading networks of the Atlantic together.⁴ As the lynchpin joining the regional trades within Western Africa to the global trades of the Atlantic, Cabo Verde was a place in which these new ideas intersected and were thus shaped by both local African and broader global influences.

Thus the chapter concludes by examining changes in Creole identity in Cabo Verde in detail, and by showing how these were connected to the global forces which helped to shape events in the islands with the expansion of trans-Atlantic trade. New Christian involvement in Western Africa and the growing importance of ideas of race influenced aspects of Creole identity in Cabo Verde, especially among the elite Creole traders whose connections opened them to ideas elsewhere in the Atlantic world.

³ H. and P. Chaunu (1955: Vol. 3, 144).

⁴ Thus here I follow Bayly's view that a "transnational history of ideas" is a key element in understanding histories of transnationalism – Bayly et al. (2006).

This was an important factor in the construction of a shared ideological bond for the networks which expanded slavery in the second half of the sixteenth century, in continuity of the shared ideologies which for centuries had bound long-distance trading networks in West Africa since the days of the trans-Saharan trade.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC COLLAPSE IN THE AMERICAS AND
THE ROLE OF CONTRABAND IN THE TRANS-ATLANTIC
SLAVE TRADE FROM UPPER GUINEA

In the Americas, the demographic impact of the Spanish conquest was almost as bad as it had been in the Caribbean islands. Though the Inca, Mapuche, Mexica, Purépecha and other Native American peoples did not share the fate of the Taíno in disappearing completely, their populations were decimated. Estimates as to the demographic impacts vary, but many scholars agree that a total population loss of 90 percent of the original is not an unreasonable estimate.⁵ Epidemics weakened the Native Americans and made them more prone to military defeat. Research suggests that key to the Spanish conquest of the Incas in the 1530s was the fact that smallpox had already devastated the Inca empire even before the Spanish arrived there, leading to weakness and internal divisions which the Spanish readily exploited.⁶

To take another example, the demographic impact in New Spain was no different. The first smallpox epidemic struck in 1520, and thereafter there were repeated catastrophes. The epidemic of 1545 was especially severe. In Tlaxcala, the city-state that had been a vital ally of Hernando Cortés's in the defeat of the Mexica, 150,000 people died; in nearby Cholula, 100,000.⁷ To the north of Mexico City, in Michoacán, an estimated nine-tenths of the population passed away.⁸ A further smallpox epidemic followed in Michoacán in 1563 and another epidemic in 1576. By 1580, in smaller towns of the sierra of Michoacán such as Xiquilpa, there was just one-twelfth of the original population.⁹ Down by the Pacific coast, the population of Epatlan had dropped from five hundred to ten, and in Cuxquaquautla, from four hundred to five.¹⁰

⁵ A good discussion of these debates is in Mann (2005: Part 1).

⁶ Ibid., 87–90.

⁷ Mendieta (1870: 515).

⁸ López Sarrelangue (1965: 72).

⁹ Ochoa/Sánchez (1985: 73).

¹⁰ Ibid., 89.

Such were the demographic realities that characterised the Americas in the sixteenth century. Already by 1550, as these examples show, the situation was severe. The Native American population was simply too broken by the conquest and too weakened by a lack of epidemiological resistance to Old World diseases to offer the labour which the Spanish required. But with the Spanish crown slow to assimilate this reality and the prices of slave licenses still high in the *Casa de la Contratación* in Seville, legally importing the requisite number of slaves was costly. Although licenses for the import of 23,000 slaves were sold in Seville in 1557, this was still not enough to meet the demand.¹¹ Thus it was that the contraband trade in slaves from Western Africa, which had already begun in the 1520s, exploded in the years after 1550. This trade was soon key in the transport of peoples from Upper Guinea to America, and indeed, in the consolidation of the new American and European economies.

The new contraband trade operated through the Canary Islands. The register of goods on ships involved in the slave trade from Western Africa was taken on Gran Canaria.¹² Ships heading from Seville to Cabo Verde and Upper Guinea usually therefore called in at the Canaries to have the registers taken and to load wine, which was in high demand on Santiago, Cabo Verde.¹³ This gave Canariote islanders a privileged position in developing links with Western Africa, and from at least the 1550s onwards, a heavy contraband trade developed, with the Canary Islands as a focal point. By January 1559 Portuguese men living in the Canaries were accused of preparing ships to go and trade slaves or seize them from the coast of West Africa, and this accusation was described as highly likely to be accurate “because of the custom of the Canariotes of going to Guiné ... to trade and seize [slaves]”.¹⁴ Indeed, the writer of the letter in which these accusations were made, Martim Correia e Silva, said that he had received witness statements “that were taken in the Canaries in which the guilt of all these who go to Guiné and trade regularly there are very clear”.¹⁵

¹¹ On the sale of these licenses, see AGI, Panamá 236, Libro 9, fol. 213v.

¹² AGI, Mexico, Legajo 22, no. 82, Ramo 1: “en Gran Canaria, donde se suelen tomar registro.”

¹³ For examples of ships stopping at the Canaries see AGI, Escribanía 36A; AGI, Escribanía 165A, No. 1; AGI, Escribanía 947A, no. 2; AGN, NE, Cundinamarca, SC43, Legajo 8, fol. 69ov.

¹⁴ MMAI: Vol. 4, 219 – “pelo custume em que estavão os das Canareasbirê a Guiné e ás outras terras de sua demarcação a resgatar e fazer saltos...”.

¹⁵ Ibid., Vol. 4, 220: “que se tirarão nas Canarias per que se constava muito claras as culpas destes todos que vão a Guiné e tratão ordinariamente lá”.

The Portuguese authorities were well aware of this, and by 1564 their ambassador at the Spanish court, Francisco Pereira, had obtained precise details of this trade. He described how one Pedro Rodriguez of Tenerife had traded illegally for slaves in Guinea, buying one hundred fifty slaves and despatching them to Puerto Rico. This had been going on for ten years, said Pereira, and involved not only Rodriguez, but twenty-two other Canariotes, who had each sent ships on several occasions to get slaves from Western Africa and send them on to America. In a letter of March 1563, Philip II cited twenty-six Canariotes all involved in this trade. Rodriguez did not deny this but argued that it was not illegal; he admitted that the residents of Gran Canaria were heavily involved in the trade on the “coast of Guinea”.¹⁶ Other documents exist from Portuguese archives showing a concern about contraband trade in slaves from the Canaries.¹⁷ This fits a wider pattern in which the Canaries were well-known as a focal point for Atlantic contraband in the sixteenth century.¹⁸ The contraband slave trade affecting peoples of West Africa was thus heavily interconnected to that plying to Iberian settlements of the New World.

In America, too, officials lamented the growth of contraband. Havana was one favoured site, with ships accused of illegal slaving there from the 1560s onwards.¹⁹ However, the main site for the illegal trade was Hispaniola. In August 1562 royal officials described how unlicensed slaves came to the Americas through ships docking at the port of Ocoa on Hispaniola, seventeen leagues from the city of Santo Domingo (approximately fifty miles/eighty-five kilometres). There was no colonial authority in Ocoa, and slaves were taken to a sugar mill a league from the port and smuggled elsewhere from there, both within Hispaniola and also on to New Spain.²⁰ Ships arrived directly from Upper Guinea with slaves who vanished out of sight of colonial officials. On April 21, 1562, for instance, a ship arrived at Ocoa filled with contraband slaves directly from the Magarabomba River in Sierra Leone, captained by a man named Garrucho.²¹ It was well known that this was the usual stratagem, and just two years later a royal official in Veracruz urged the king to prohibit ships from stopping at Ocoa because this was where unregistered slaves

¹⁶ AGI, Justicia 1167, no. 4 for this whole complaint.

¹⁷ BA, Códice 49-X-2, fol. 289r.

¹⁸ Fuente (2008: 24–5).

¹⁹ Ibid., 40.

²⁰ AGI, Santo Domingo 899, Libro 1, fol. 265v.

²¹ AGI, Patronato 173, No. 1, Ramo 5.

were unloaded.²² But Ocoa retained its role in the smuggling trade, and cases emerged again in the 1570s where it was claimed that hundreds of slaves coming from Western Africa had been smuggled into Hispaniola through Ocoa.²³ So rife was this trade that it prompted disputes among royal officials as to who should take the register of newly arrived ships – the implication being that the disputes arose because of the potential to receive bribes in return for covering up the contraband trade.²⁴

The connection between the trans-Atlantic slave trade and contraband ran deep in the sixteenth century. Alejandro de la Fuente has argued that the high price of slaves made them the perfect merchandise for illegal trade, and certainly this may have been a factor.²⁵ Yet also important was that the high price of slaves made it difficult legally to import the requisite labour force to build the new colonies of America: perceived practical necessity as well as a desire for short-term profits may have underwritten the way in which the contraband trade from Western Africa developed in these decades.

Who was bringing these unlicensed slaves to the Americas? Often this was done by traders who had initially bought some slave licenses and smuggled many more aboard their ships than that permitted by their licenses, as emerges from countless denunciations made to the *Casa de la Contratación* in Seville. However, in addition to these individuals, many of these contraband traders were people who had bought no slave licenses at all and whose entire cargo was contraband and unregistered by the Spanish authorities, as with the case of Garrucho mentioned previously. This was also the case of the Canariote traders and some traders from Lisbon; three ships were accused of having gone unlicensed from that port to the coast of Upper Guinea and thence with slaves to America in 1565 alone.²⁶

It is worth pausing to think through the implications of this contraband trade both for its effects in Africa and for its role in supplying labourers to the New World in the sixteenth century. In his denunciation of the Canariote trade in the 1560s, the Portuguese ambassador cited one trader as taking 150 slaves to Puerto Rico and named twenty-six traders as regularly involved in this trade. Even supposing both these figures to be

²² AGI, Mexico, Legajo 19, No. 39, Ramo 1.

²³ AGI, Escribanía, 36A: a case from 1574. See also AGI, Santo Domingo 868, Libro 3, fol. 47v: the crown refers to the smuggling of slaves through Hispaniola in 1575.

²⁴ AGI, Santo Domingo 868, Libro 3, fol. 47v, March 30, 1575 – “y que quando llegan los navios a los dhos puertos ay diferencia entre vosotros sobre qual ha de yr a visitarlos”.

²⁵ Fuente (2008: 40).

²⁶ AGI, Indiferente 427, Libro 30, fol. 173v.

exaggerated by a factor of 50 per cent, that would still leave an additional eighteen traders taking perhaps one hundred slaves per year outside the official licenses to the Americas. To this would need to be added the three Lisbon ships cited earlier, which would add roughly 2,000 individuals per year to the official slave export figures recorded in Spanish archives.

These figures need to be combined with the current Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, which suggests that 93,104 African slaves were embarked from Senegambia and Upper Guinea between 1550 and 1600, or roughly 1,862 per year.²⁷ Combining both figures would produce an annual export from this region of at least 3,850 a year. Moreover, this figure does not take account of the contraband of those traders who had themselves purchased licenses in Seville but imported more slaves than permitted by their license. The numerous cases taken against official contractors for smuggling suggests that this was very frequent, and thus an average of 5,000 slaves exported annually to the Americas from the Upper Guinea region does not seem unreasonable for the second half of the sixteenth century.²⁸ It is worth recalling that this was the same average proposed by Rodney in his *History of the Upper Guinea Coast*.²⁹

The evidence considered in this book as to the realignments of societies in Upper Guinea following the opportunities and constraints offered by Atlantic trade supports this figure. If less than two thousand slaves were exported annually from the entire Upper Guinea coast, why had the political and social changes that have been observed in Casamance and the rivers of Guinea begun as early as the 1540s? And why, as mentioned previously, did authors refer to the large number of African slaves in the American colonies? A touching faith in the reliability of surviving official documentation in forging quantitative data and the data themselves have blinded historians to the considerable evidence which show this data to be extremely incomplete.³⁰

²⁷ www.slavevoyages.org, data accessed May 11, 2011.

²⁸ For such cases see AGI, Patronato 259, Ramo 52; AGI, Justicia 878, No. 2; AGI, Escribanía 36A; AGI, Justicia 1002, No. 1, Ramo 1; AGI, Escribanía 1A, No. 2; and many other places. The estimate mooted here is similar to that of Manoel Alvares in the early seventeenth century, who said that at the trade's zenith 1,800 slaves per year went from Bugendo to America and a further 1,800 from Bugendo to Cabo Verde (many of whom would have been sold on to ships going to the Indies). Because this figure does not include those who sailed from Guinala, my total estimate here is if anything probably on the conservative side. See SG, *Étiopia Menor*, fols. 18r-v.

²⁹ For the Rodney estimate, see Rodney (1970: 98). His estimate is of an average of five thousand slaves per year between 1562 and 1640.

³⁰ This confirms G. Hall's (2010) view on the substantial problems regarding the use of quantitative data in analysing the histories of Africans in the Atlantic world.

An example from Western Africa itself can help to make this point. As we shall see in the next chapter, the Sierra Leone region was disrupted by violent wars in the 1550s and the 1560s. Records of slave “ethnicities” from the Americas reveal many Sape slaves as a result of these conflicts (cf. Tables I.1 and I.2). Yet official figures as collated by the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database suggest that only 700 slaves were landed from Sierra Leone in the Americas between 1561 and 1565, and only 468 between 1566 and 1570.³¹ Thus it is only by recognising the role and the importance of the contraband trade that a more accurate quantification can be assessed. Time and again traders caught attempting to slip the net claimed that they had been blown off course and ended up in America “by accident” with their cargo of slaves from Upper Guinea.³² America was a vast continent with many ports and a tiny number of royal officials; for all those caught, many more must have gone unseen.

The records which these slavers have left are remarkable for one thing: their extremely narrow economic focus. Those documents reveal a mindset uninterested in the world beyond the narrow perimeters of profit and survival. The legal cases brought by the Spanish crown, records of sale, inventories of ship contents and slave “ethnicities” all point to the same conclusion. Violence may, as William Vollmann suggests, be an inescapable quality of human societies, but a particular mindset marks out more violent outlooks from less violent ones.³³ In this case, it is as José Faur has put it: that “blindness, willful or natural, is the key for success in a persecuting society”.³⁴ There may well have been reasons to seek profit through slaving even when such profit, as this book has shown, contributed to the weakening of African economic and political structures; yet it is still no wonder that slave traders found it ever harder to look beyond the abstractions of their books of paper accounting.

TRADE NETWORKS AND THE RECIPROCAL INFLUENCES OF ATLANTIC SLAVING IN AFRICA AND THE AMERICAS

The arrival of large numbers of slaves from Upper Guinea in America was facilitated by this contraband trade. However, it also required commercial networks which could operate within the parameters of the new Iberian Atlantic. These networks were provided by New Christians who, as we

³¹ www.slavevoyages.org, data accessed May 11, 2011.

³² AGI, Justicia 996, No. 2, Ramo 3, fols. 1r-3v; AGI, Escribana 2A, fol. 462r.

³³ Vollmann (2005).

³⁴ Faur (1992: 69).

have seen earlier in this book, were by the 1550s the key diaspora traders linking the commercial spaces of the African mainland to Cabo Verde.

Although the evidence for the Canaries is not clear on this point, the evidence on the ground in Africa suggests that many of these contraband traders were New Christians. Although we should not forget that this contraband had undoubtedly commercial and practical impulses deriving from the New World and may also have been designed to make the slave trade commercially viable, there were other motivations behind this New Christian involvement.³⁵ For the repressive legislation directed at the New Christians in Portugal in the sixteenth century often made it very hard for them to export their wealth from a country in which the Inquisition could confiscate it all. This being the case, it was hardly surprising that New Christians sought other means to safeguard their goods. The combination of this circumstance and the New Christian networks in Africa and America, where the Inquisition in these decades was not nearly as strong as it was in Europe, meant that the contraband slave trade was an ideal opportunity to move their property out of reach of the Inquisition.

Important evidence for this comes from the activities of Duarte de Leão, whose networks we examined in Chapter 5. Even after the Mestre Dioguo affair of 1562, Leão retained active commercial interests in Western Africa throughout the 1560s and into the 1570s. A judicial case relating to events of Christmas 1574 in Upper Guinea, taken in Hispaniola against Cristobal Cayado, derived from a ship which had belonged to Duarte de Leão.³⁶ Because many *lançados* sailed on this ship and it sailed directly from Bugendo in 1574, this confirms the deep connections of New Christians such as Leão to *lançado* communities up to the 1570s.³⁷ Moreover, the fact that the ship left Bugendo on Christmas Eve, one of the holiest days in the Catholic calendar, certainly does not suggest that these *lançados* had any great attachment to the Catholic faith.

Another of Duarte de Leão's associates was Blas Ferreira [Blas Herrera in Spanish documents]. In 1565 Ferreira was tried by the Spanish authorities for trading slaves to Cartagena without a license. The sites for introducing slaves to America were changing. In the period up to the 1550s, many slaves had been sent directly to Hispaniola and trans-shipped thence to America.³⁸ However, as Hispaniola's decline began in the 1560s,

³⁵ On the issue of the profitability of the slave trade, see Newson/Minchin (2007: 69–70).

³⁶ AGI, Escribanía 2A, fol. 27r. Indeed, the case taken by the new *contratadores* was taken against the widow of Leão, Gracia Correa, and their daughter Isavel (*ibid.*).

³⁷ On the Bugendo aspect and the date of departure, see *ibid.*, fol. 25r.

³⁸ In 1556 people from Santafé de Bogotá in present-day Colombia were still being sent to Hispaniola to get slaves, and not to Cartagena (AGN, NPB, Vols. 1–3, fol. 71r).

Cartagena was becoming increasingly important, as was Veracruz in New Spain.³⁹ In this case, Ferreira described how he had been sent by Leão and his fellow contractor Antonio Gonçalves de Gusmão to the River São Domingos in 1563 to procure slaves. There they spent the rainy season and procured provisions before proceeding to the Sierra Leone region, where they obtained 180 slaves. This was all according to the “mode, use and custom of the contractors [Leão and Gonçalves]”.⁴⁰

Ferreira’s evidence is important. It implies that Leão operated a contraband trade and that Cartagena was already a site of contraband trading in slaves.⁴¹ The importance of Cartagena in the trade grew throughout the 1560s and 1570s, coming into its full flowering in the 1580s with the opening of new mines of Zaragoza, in the Antioquia region of the Nuevo Reino de Granada [present-day Colombia].⁴² On this evidence, Leão and his associates were among the first to use a port which grew to be the most important in the whole of South America – a port where contraband trade in slaves was vast by the early seventeenth century.⁴³

The connection of Leão’s New Christian network to the contraband slave trade is confirmed by evidence surrounding the unravelling of Leão’s finances in the 1570s. Then, the Portuguese crown complained that not only did Leão and his fellow contractor Gusmão owe the crown large sums after the end of their contract in 1570, but that “they were not left with enough property in this Kingdom to pay what was owing”.⁴⁴ In fact, the Portuguese crown only began to investigate Leão’s overseas holdings as the money was needed “for payment of what [Leão and Gusmão] owe for the said trade [in Cabo Verde] … for which up till now they have not given any account nor paid that which they were obliged to”.⁴⁵ Moreover,

³⁹ For examples of direct shipping from Cabo Verde to Hispaniola in the 1560s, see AGI, Patronato 173, No. 1, Ramo 15 (1562) and AGN, Negocios Exteriores, Legajo 4, fols. 350–384 (1568). For other cases from Cabo Verde to Cartagena, see AGN, Contrabandos, Vol. 3, fols. 546–970 (1562), AGI, Patronato 259, Ramo 52 (1574), and AGN, NE, Bolívar SC43/Legajo 13, fols. 1019–1061 (1576). See also Torrão (2010).

⁴⁰ AGI, Justicia 878, no. 2.

⁴¹ On this role of Cartagena in the seventeenth century, see Newson/Minchin (2007: 144–7).

⁴² For another case involving the trade in slaves to Cartagena, see AGI, Patronato 259, Ramo 52 (1574). Governors’ letters from Santa Fe in the 1570s make it clear that there were more slaves in the city than previously (AGI, Santa Fé 37, Ramo 5, no. 23). On the mining boom and associated demand for slaves in the 1580s, see Mathieu (1982: 39–40). On Cartagena and the slave trade between 1570 and 1640, see Wheat (2009: 79–120).

⁴³ Cf., e.g., Green (2007b: Part 3).

⁴⁴ BA, Códice 49-X-4, 223r: “lhes não ficou fazenda neste Reyno q baste para pagamento do q devem...”

⁴⁵ BA, Códice 49-X-2, fol. 243r: “he pa pagamento do que eles devem do ditto trato...de que ate guora não tem dado conta nem paguo tudo o que vão obrigados”.

this money proceeded from “slaves which were taken without registers or licenses”.⁴⁶ Numerous cases were taken out against Leão and Gusmão in the years that followed for taking slaves without registers, and a letter circa 1580 emphasised the large debts which Leão still owed to the crown from the Caboverdean contract.⁴⁷ Smuggling this wealth out of Iberia through the contraband slave trade helped New Christians such as Leão to launch their Atlantic diaspora which became so important to trade in the late sixteenth century and the first third of the seventeenth century.⁴⁸

The evidence on this network does not only show how New Christian networks in Western Africa were connected to the contraband trade analysed in the preceding section. It also reveals just how much pan-Atlantic forces were beginning to influence the pressures leading to increased slave supply in Upper Guinea in these decades. For Leão’s entire commercial operation ran in a pan-Atlantic dimension, with his trade in Western Africa just a part of a highly complex network of operations. During the 1570s, the Portuguese crown investigated Leão’s holdings in Cartagena, Hispaniola and Flanders.⁴⁹ As we have seen, Bras Ferreira, Leão’s factor in Upper Guinea, was prosecuted by the bailiff of Cartagena for illegal trading there.⁵⁰ Leão himself was well travelled in America: his great-nephew had been told an anecdote by his father where Leão had been near Mexico City.⁵¹ That Leão’s network in Cabo Verde was constructed in an Atlantic dimension is emphasised by the fact that his nephew, Carvajal *viejo*, married Guiomar de Ribera, daughter of Miguel Núñez, factor of slaves in Hispaniola, shortly after his return to Spain from Cabo Verde. This followed contacts developed through the slave trade between Cabo Verde and Hispaniola: Carvajal *viejo* also had connections with Manuel Caldeira, one of the most powerful New Christian slave traders of this period, who had sent slaves to Cartagena through Cabo Verde since at least 1557, when Carvajal *viejo*, according to his own evidence, was still operating as the royal treasurer there (cf. Chapter 5).⁵²

⁴⁶ Ibid.: “escravos q se levarão sem registros, nem licenças”.

⁴⁷ In addition to the aforementioned case from Cartagena, see also AGI, Patronato 291, 145r: a case about slaves taken to Cartagena without being registered; BA, Códice 49-X-4, fol. 223r.

⁴⁸ On the Atlantic diaspora of New Christians, see Israel (2002), Green (2007b) and Wachtel (2001).

⁴⁹ BA, Códice 49-X-2, fols. 243r-245r.

⁵⁰ AGI, Justicia 518, no.1 – “Bras Ferreira feitor dos dittos Contratadores...”.

⁵¹ González Obregón (1935: 364).

⁵² On the 1557 date, see AGI, Justicia 853, No. 3 (this case has no fol. numbers). On a 1562 case, see AGN, Contrabandos, Vol. 3, fols. 31r-v. For more information on Caldeira, see Ventura (1999).

This required a connection between Carvajal and Núñez, because the latter was Caldeira's factor on Hispaniola.⁵³

This evidence on the complex pan-Atlantic nature of trading networks such as Leão's is important. These networks were key in the supply of labour to the New World in the 1560s and 1570s and thus oiled the wheels of the expanding Spanish empire. As we have seen, they channelled the labour demands of the New World into the procurement of slaves in West Africa. Yet as we also saw in Chapter 5, members of this network were heavily involved in the processes of cultural exchange which characterised the Atlantic trading settlements of Upper Guinea in these years. The growing slave trade indeed required intensification of these exchanges, and thus there was a need for more *lançados* to inhabit Africa and procure the slaves on which the new Atlantic economy depended. Thus networks such as Leão's acted as bridges between the different requirements of the Atlantic, matching the labour demands of America to the supply side in Africa. Making this happen required settlement by New Christians in Africa, and thus trans-Atlantic influences shaped the intensification of creolisation which we have already observed in these decades. This was how global patterns and Atlantic slavery helped to shape new modes of cultural exchange in Western Africa.

Moreover, this pattern went beyond processes of cultural exchange in Africa. These macro-Atlantic factors were also important in influencing patterns of agricultural production among Upper Guinean societies. A key aspect of Blas Ferreira's evidence from Cartagena, cited earlier, is his account of the provisioning of his slaving expedition in Bugendo in 1565. We saw in Chapter 3 how agricultural products from Upper Guinea supplied communities in Cabo Verde and slave ships from São Tomé, and that this may already have affected the social organisation of agricultural labour in Upper Guinea by 1500. Ferreira's evidence demonstrates that by the 1560s at the latest – and almost certainly considerably before – slaves were also supplied with food for the Atlantic crossing from the Bugendo region. His information is corroborated by other sources. A year later, in 1566, the ship captain Baltasar Barbosa was instructed to buy food for the slaves in Upper Guinea “so that they are well treated”.⁵⁴ Twenty-two years later, in 1588, Juan de Narria loaded a ship in Upper Guinea with provisions including eight barrels of rice.⁵⁵ Thus the rapid growth of the

⁵³ AGI, Justicia 35, Pieza 3, fols. 1r, 48r-v.

⁵⁴ AGI, Justicia 996, No. 2, Ramo 3, fols. 12v-13r.

⁵⁵ AGI, Escribanía 2B, no. 3 – this case has no fol. numbers.

Atlantic trade meant that the surplus produce initially extracted to feed the small colony of Cabo Verde had to grow. This surplus had to be hived off for the provisioning of slave ships, in addition to that which was already supplying the trans-Saharan caravans.⁵⁶ This required an increase in agricultural productivity, something which was a characteristic of the birth of the Atlantic era in Upper Guinea, as the work of Judith Carney, Fields-Black and Hawthorne on rice production has shown.⁵⁷ Yet it also meant, as we have seen, that this enhanced productivity could not go back into assisting the growth of the local economy.

The fact that this produce came from Bugendo in these years suggests that it was in Casamance that increased productivity began to be most marked. Some of this would have been possible through increased availability of iron-edged tools. However, some of it may only have been possible through developing new means of social production, by solidifying the use of age grades in agricultural labour for instance, as occurred with the Balanta.⁵⁸ This may explain some of the political tensions which had developed in Casamance by this time (cf. [Chapter 5](#)). That agricultural production in Upper Guinea was much more intensive than, for instance, in Angola, has been shown recently by Linda Newson and Susie Minchin, who have used data on hernias for slaves arriving in Cartagena in the early seventeenth century to argue that this derived from the greater intensity of agricultural labour in Upper Guinea.⁵⁹

Yet the pattern of influence in the pan-Atlantic was by no means one way. The investment of New Christian networks such as Duarte de Leão's in both Africa and America meant that just as American demands influenced Africa, so experiences in Africa influenced events elsewhere in the Atlantic. For the practices connected to slaving and the development of mixed cultural practices which were developed by the *lançados* were in turn connected to the wider Atlantic through the activities of these networks.

This becomes apparent, for instance, in the trajectory of Carvajal *viejo* (cf. [Chapter 5](#)). When one considers how very young he was when he

⁵⁶ On the volume of provisions required by slave ships, see Newson/Minchin (2007: [chapters 3 and 4](#)).

⁵⁷ Hawthorne (2003); Fields-Black (2009). This documentary evidence confirms Carney's (2001: 69) link of Atlantic slavery with surplus agricultural production in Upper Guinea.

⁵⁸ Hawthorne (2003: 161–3).

⁵⁹ Newson/Minchin (2007: 130–1). Twenty-three percent of slaves arriving from Upper Guinea had hernias, as opposed to only 7 percent from Angola.

reached Western Africa – just eight years old – it becomes obvious that his experiences there must have decisively helped to shape his outlook. The evidence on Leão is that he was heavily involved in the contraband trade in slaves. Surely this was also Carvajal *viejo*'s business as a young man in Western Africa. Later, when he became the first governor of Nuevo León in New Spain, he was said to have hunted Native Americans “like hares”, to have enslaved them and sent them on in chains to Mexico City.⁶⁰ As with the early Spanish narratives of the New World, it may be that this evidence offers a hint of previous activities in Africa.

This conclusion about the role of African experiences in the early Atlantic world tallies with other evidence that we have on Duarte de Leão. In his evidence to the inquisitors of Évora, in 1544, Alvaro Leão referred to his brother Duarte as a “single man and that he has gone travelling with goods, although [Alvaro Leão] does not know if to Guiné or elsewhere”.⁶¹ Surely, this journey of Duarte de Leão's was to the region to which he subsequently despatched his brother Francisco and nephew Luis. Thus the presence of Francisco Jorge and his network depended on Duarte's prior experience there.⁶² Moreover, experience also was important in economic activity; this evidence might suggest that the Portuguese crown often received bids for contracts in the *ultramar* from people with personal experience of a region.

This second conclusion tallies with Duarte de Leão's predecessors. The holder of the first (1469) contract for Guiné, Fernão Gomes, had in 1456 previously been made receiver of all slaves and other goods to come from the Guiné trade.⁶³ Subsequently, Fernam de Loronha had taken part in the first expedition after his consortium was awarded the Brazilian contract in 1503, one year before Loronha bid for the contract for Cabo Verde.⁶⁴ Moreover, this expedition would almost certainly have stopped in Cabo Verde, given the early administrative and commercial ties between the two regions which we examined in Chapter 4. Thus during the first half of the sixteenth century, it was personal experience of African trade which helped people to become successful contractors there; moreover, this often led to subsequent activities

⁶⁰ Huerga (1984: 955); Toro (1944: Vol. 1, 128–30).

⁶¹ IAN/TT, Inquisição de Évora, Proceso 8779, fol. 66v: “e ome solteiro e que ha ido com mercadaria não sabe se pa guine ou as partes dalem”.

⁶² Francisco himself had merely studied in Salamanca: *ibid.*: “e que a outro irmão q se chanā Francisco e estuda ē Salamanca”.

⁶³ Vogt (1973: 2).

⁶⁴ Wiznitzer (1960: 6–7).

in America, creating a pan-Atlantic sphere of activity. The process of mental abstraction required for the modernisation of thought and the viewing of reality in terms of space and number was ongoing.⁶⁵ The development of the abstract scientific mentality which led to new technological innovations had yet to bring with it, perhaps, complete trust in abstract concepts such as “Western African” or “Atlantic” space.⁶⁶ That space still had to be made real, and in this process of “making real,” personal, empirical experience was fundamental – and often, as these case studies show, experience in Africa came first.

Thus as men such as Carvajal and Leão learnt first hand to assimilate the strategies of violence and accommodation which had long characterised the mixed cultural framework of Upper Guinea and which now characterised the trading environment in which the *lançados* operated, they could bring this experience to bear in their activities in the wider Atlantic world. As the trans-Atlantic slave trade expanded after 1550, the reciprocal influences which Africa and the Americas had on one another could grow through networks like the one which they operated. The complex relationship between trading diasporas and host communities which had long been fundamental to the cultural, economic and political environment of Upper Guinea began to spread, along with the people of Upper Guinea, who themselves were transported, chained and bound in the ships in which both new diasporas travelled across the Atlantic Ocean.

CREOLE SOCIETY IN TRANS-ATLANTIC PERSPECTIVE: THE CREATION OF SHARED IDENTITIES AND NEW IDEOLOGIES IN CABO VERDE

Mercantile diasporas in West Africa had traditionally been united by shared religious or lineage bonds. As we saw in Chapter 1, there was a way in which Islam had long been a religion of trade in the region. Bonds of trust were easier to create in an environment where people belonged to the same religion, practised the same rituals and believed in the same divine powers. The difficulties inherent in long-distance trade before the industrial age meant that some such unifying feature was often an important aspect of the success of diaspora traders.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Jeannin (1972: 108–12) shows how this process had drawn some dividends by 1506.

⁶⁶ On new technological innovations, see Albuquerque (1983).

⁶⁷ Greif (1993).

Research has shown that similar considerations affected the New Christian diaspora of the Atlantic world in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. So important was the creation of shared ritual bonds among members of the New Christian diaspora that some Old Christians even adopted aspects of crypto-Judaism in order to be accepted into the trading networks.⁶⁸ New Christian identity was a “faith in memory” – the memory of ancestral practices that were in reality ever more remote – and also a way of securing confidence in highly precarious trading systems.⁶⁹

As we have seen in this book, the structural similarity of the New Christian condition in Western Africa to that of the North African and *dyula* traders who had preceded them facilitated their success there. This is not to say, of course, that there were not important differences between the two, especially in the religious sphere; as we have already seen, New Christians had a very variegated attitude to their religion (cf. Chapters 4–5), and even for those who were real crypto-Jews, their religion acted as a sort of secret grouping, not an officially codified religion, and thus we should recognise these differences. Yet nevertheless, whatever its official structures, for Upper Guineans the faith of New Christians was an outsider one, and the combination of this and their status as a trading caste was very familiar. In this way, outsiders helped to broker the incursion of the new economic and political realities of the Atlantic onto Upper Guinean societies, just as they had previously with the trans-Saharan trade through the *dyula*.

The *lançado* ability to do this related partly to their connections to Cabo Verde, where, as we have seen, an Atlantic Creole society had first emerged before being transplanted to the African coast. The flexibility which such a society required made it easier for *lançados* to adapt as necessary in West Africa. Thus central to the development of shared bonds of identity for the diaspora in these years was Cabo Verde. Most licensed ships taking slaves to the Americas in the years 1571–5 still went to Cabo Verde.⁷⁰ When Francisco Nuñez de Padilla came from the Canaries to load slaves in May 1574, for instance, he obtained sixty-six slaves that had just arrived from the River São Domingos on the ship Santa Cruz.⁷¹ There

⁶⁸ Green (2007b: 195–201).

⁶⁹ Wachtel (2001).

⁷⁰ Thomas (1997: 138).

⁷¹ AGI, Escribanía 119A, 15r–17v. There was very little organizational structure to this supply, and occasionally the system broke down: See for instance, AGI, Justicia 864, No. 7, July 10, 1563–April 11, 1564 – where Luis de Mercado from Seville claimed he

was a constant trade in these years of wine, cloth, cotton and horses from Cabo Verde for slaves from the coast, according to André Donelha.⁷² As in the foundational period of the colony, slavery was the lynchpin of the entire economy (cf. Chapter 3). For instance, the *barafulas* woven in Cabo Verde and used as a form of currency on the Upper Guinea coast were called “*panos de resgate*” [“trading cloths”] in the archipelago and were perceived as being woven solely to trade for slaves: “*resgate*” itself was perceived as the trade of goods from Portugal or Cabo Verde on the Upper Guinea coast in return specifically for slaves.⁷³

Cabo Verde’s importance to the development of shared identities lay partly in this commercial importance in the Atlantic slave trade and its consequent importance for *lançados*. However, it also derived from the fact that it offered an intersection of two diaspora trades, one linking the islands to the rest of the Atlantic world and another linking the various parts of Western Africa. Thus the Creole society which emerged there was strongly influenced by both African and Atlantic factors which had been brought together by the expansion of trans-Atlantic trade in these years. Understanding the expansion of Atlantic slaving from this region at this time, therefore, requires some understanding of changing boundaries of Creole identity at this time, as it solidified at precisely the same moment as the trans-Atlantic influences became most intense.

As we have seen in previous chapters, the vernacularisation of the Kriolu language had probably been completed by the 1560s in Cabo Verde, and thus to talk of a Creole identity by this time is not unfounded. This identity was of course bound deeply to both the institution of slavery and the trade in slaves, but of growing importance to it were also changes in ideology which developments in the Atlantic world had precipitated – changes which related to a proto-racial awareness which had grown out of the increasing connection of slavery to skin colour.

was unable to take thirty slaves to the Indies as they weren’t to be had in Cabo Verde. In the case dealt with here, Padilla obtained a further 119 from elsewhere on the island of Santiago, some of whom may have been Caboverdean Creoles rather than recent arrivals, as Caboverdean Creoles were found as slaves in the Americas – see for instance AGN, NE, Cundinamarca, SC 43, Legajo 8, fol. 708r ; AGN, ANS/NP, Rollo 1507294, fols. 129r-v ; AGN, NT, Rollo 4, Legajo 11, fol. 235v ; AGN, NT, Rollo 7, Legajo 23, fols. 161r and 271r.

⁷² MMAII: Vol. 5, 139.

⁷³ AGI, Escribanía 2A, fol. 461r: “*Si saben que los paños de algodon que llaman paños de resgate que llevan a los Ríos de guinea para Resgatar esclavos...*”; ibid., fol. 368r-v, the *contratadores’* definition of *resgate* was “*todas y qlesquieras m[ane]ras que ordinariamente se suelen llebar del reyno de Portugal o de cabo verde a los rrios de guinea para con ellos comprar e resgatar esclavos en los dhos rios*”.

Cabo Verde's multiple connections to all parts of the Western hemisphere through the Atlantic slave trade ensured that ideas developing elsewhere came to matter on the islands too, and so as the Atlantic slave trade expanded in the late sixteenth century, so also did the influence of broader Atlantic trends on Creole society there. Though Western Africa had offered one of the first locales for an Atlantic Creole society, creolisation there came to depend also on influences brought from elsewhere by the trans-Atlantic trade.

In the sixteenth century Atlantic world, the evolving discourse on race was extremely complex and depended greatly on local factors. Ideas were by no means universal, though there certainly were some general tendencies towards negative connotations associated with a darker skin colour. In fifteenth-century Valencia, where slaves were not only from sub-Saharan Africa but also came from Circassia, Iberia itself, and North Africa, this association of darker skin colour with slavery did exist, but it was not a universal rule of thumb.⁷⁴ However, in late sixteenth-century Havana, Cuba, Black and mixed-race residents were barred from the “better” quarters of the city and confined to more squalid areas such as Campede.⁷⁵ By this time, Iberians were familiar with African slavery as a social practice, and as Fuente argues, there was a particular need to delineate contours of social inclusion and exclusion in new colonial centres such as Havana because of the bewildering speed of changes which threatened to loosen the structures of what was seen as an ordered society.⁷⁶ Where the changes were the most acute, ideas and boundaries hardened. Such factors were of course also at work in the minds of the new Caboverdean Creoles, for in Cabo Verde there were many of the same insecurities as there were in Havana. As in Havana, there was the threat of foreign invasions by the English or French, and as in Havana the entire social edifice was only maintained through the institutional violence of the system of slavery. In this situation, it is not surprising that colour distinctions and judgements about them were prominent in the minds of some Caboverdeans in the late sixteenth century.

This is illustrated by the accounts of Almada. Almada used colour as a descriptor, noting how the Pullo (or Fulos, as he called them) were of “a mixed colour” and “not black”, whereas the Gambia River

⁷⁴ Blumenthal (2009).

⁷⁵ Fuente (2008: 116).

⁷⁶ Ibid., 178.

was peopled by “Mandinka blacks on both sides”.⁷⁷ This distinction between the colour of the Pullo and the Mandinka in Almada’s mind is noteworthy, for he himself was a Caboverdean of mixed race, and his observation of the colour of African peoples reflect preoccupations which mixed-race Caboverdeans themselves had developed by the time that he was writing.

Why was it that colour was of such importance in the mind of a Caboverdean like Almada? As we saw in the early chapters of this book, Cabo Verde was the first Atlantic locale where slavery adopted an exclusively racial quality, with slaves being all from sub-Saharan Africa. On Cabo Verde, a Black skin colour was equated with slavery, and therefore, the lighter the skin colour, the further up the hierarchy of the islands’ society a person was. There was, in other words, a clear link between skin colour and slavery which events in Western Africa had been instrumental in developing. In subsequent centuries, of course, such analogies would become commonplace in the slave-based plantation economies of the Caribbean islands and the southern United States. For the wealthy mixed-race trading class, for people such as Almada in fact, such proto-racial gradations allowed the creation of a hierarchy which shored up their own social position and offered a modicum of protection in an insecure world.

The international trading connections of this mobile class of Caboverdeans meant that they could quickly assimilate these ideas as they developed elsewhere, for these ideas came to Western Africa from the outside. Such ideas do not appear to have characterised the early Creole colony in its infancy in the early sixteenth century, when, as we have seen, the rights of free Blacks were staunchly defended and free or slave status, not colour, defined social position (cf. [Chapter 3](#)). Black sailors worked as ship captains plying between Cabo Verde and the African coast until 1516.⁷⁸ Furthermore, in Cabo Verde the graves of the earliest church mixed the bodies of Africans and Europeans, whereas in Portugal dead African slaves were simply thrown outside the city walls until 1515.⁷⁹

Thus the negative association of skin colour and status was something that Caboverdeans learnt from their contact with the wider Iberian world. It was one which in all likelihood was assimilated particularly

⁷⁷ MMAII: Vol. 3, 244 (“*a cor amulatada*”); 246 (*não serem negros*”); 271 (*negros Mandinkas, de uma banda e outra*”).

⁷⁸ Saunders (1982a: 11); Barcellos (1899: 85).

⁷⁹ On the graves of the first church in Ribeira Grande, see Evans/Sorensen/Richter (forthcoming). On burial practices in Lisbon, Vogt (1973a: 12).

by elite traders such as Almada, who stood to benefit from it and who may have felt most at threat from the atmosphere of permanent threat to the social order which characterised Atlantic slave economies. Perhaps this need to import the proto-racism of the sixteenth century to Cabo Verde from outside should not surprise us, because, as suggested in the Introduction, the discourses of creolisation and race are in a deep tension with one another, with one pointing towards a blending of practices and the other towards essentialism.

If it was the insecurity and danger of the new economy and society founded on trans-Atlantic slavery which encouraged some Caboverdean Creoles to assimilate ideas of race, it should not be a surprise that race was not the sole prejudicial discourse at work in Almada. Other discourses could help to combat such insecurities. Writing about the griots of Senegambia, like Fernandes at the start of the sixteenth century (cf. Chapter 4), Almada described them as “Jews”. In a telling gloss on Fernandes, however, Almada added that the Jews/griots had “large noses” [*são abastados de narizes*].⁸⁰ This passage clearly shows how ideas about Jews continued to affect ideas about Africans, even among Caboverdeans like Almada, for though there is little evidence that the griots of Western Africa were renowned for the size of their noses, this was not the case in Portugal where the perception of the Jews was concerned.⁸¹

These passages from Almada illuminate the elite Creole Caboverdean worldview at the endpoint of the “boom” in the trans-Atlantic slave trade from Western Africa. They reveal that colour and slavery were interconnected in that mindset, and that ideas about Jews had influenced how Africans were perceived, both in terms of structural similarities as with the griots and in terms of the concept of race as developing from the idea of *limpeza*, which had evolved in late fifteenth-century Iberia. This intermingling of ideas about race and religion gave the discourse a powerful flexibility, and also of course connected Caboverdean “masters” to their peers in other parts of the Atlantic where similar ideas were at work. Here was a shared identity which could cross local borders and be a potential vehicle of discrimination which could be religious, racial or a

⁸⁰ MMAII: Vol. 3, 263.

⁸¹ See for instance IAN/TT, Inquisição de Évora, Livro 91, fols. 174 r-v: a case from 1594 where a student from Faro, Francisco Nunes, denounced an old man he had met the previous day as a crypto-Jew. Nunes described him in what were clearly preconceived ideas of what such a person might look like: “*hū home velho có barba quasi toda branca pequeno de corpo e tem o naamiz grande*” (tr.: “an old, short man with a beard almost entirely white and a large nose”).

combination of the two, depending on the particular local circumstances. This was a transnational ideology whose manifold nature would make it peculiarly useful in acting as a moral support for the otherwise unacceptable demands and consequences of the plantation system of agriculture in the New World.⁸²

In fact, as these passages from Almada indicate, the legacy of the Iberian anti-Semitism of the fifteenth century pervaded Caboverdean society in the sixteenth century. The cases of both Miçia Dias and Joana Coelha's great-grandmother, discussed in Chapter 5, suggest that by the 1550s and 1560s there was a distinct caste consciousness evolving in Caboverdean society not only along racial lines, but also along religious lines. New Christians were made to live apart from the Old Christians in the Calhau, just as the Jews had lived apart in fifteenth-century Iberia in their *judiarias*. The importance and success of the New Christian trading networks we have looked at in this chapter must have contributed to the divisions which grew up between the two groups in the colony. Thus the presence of the New Christians helped to cement the Old Christian caste consciousness and their perception of the importance of caste in Cabo Verde. The large New Christian community helped to reconstitute familiar categories in a new environment and became a prop in helping to maintain those old categories and transfer them to Africans in a new form of caste identity related to race.

It turns out, therefore, that there were extremely complex connections linking the expansion of the slave trade through contraband to both New Christian diaspora networks and changes in Creole identity in Western Africa. The widespread presence of New Christians in Western Africa at this time influenced how discourses hardened into a flexible religio-racial ideology in the late sixteenth century among those Caboverdean communities connected to the regional and international trades. Shared bonds of identity were formed among elite Creoles which borrowed from analogous ideologies elsewhere in the Atlantic world, assisting in the construction of a sort of mobile ideology to suit the new mobile Atlantic and showing how the growth of the slave trade brought wider global factors to bear on the emergent Creole identity which we analysed in Part 1. The massive contraband, meanwhile, facilitated the boom in the slave trade

⁸² Other instances from the New World illustrate the segue between ideas of race and ideas of religion. Bennett (2003: 38–41) has argued that in Mexico Iberian practices of stripping Jews and Moslems of a culturally sanctioned juridical status was applied to the treatment of African slaves in the New World.

which American economies required. All these factors had serious effects on the societies of Upper Guinea, as we shall see in the following chapter, and they all derived from the way in which global forces had come to influence events in Western Africa in the second half of the sixteenth century, and from the expansion of the slave trade which these forces had required.

Cycles of War and Trade in the African Atlantic, circa 1550–1580

A masquerade associated today with the circumcision ritual in the Casamance is called the *kankuran*. The night before the ceremony people gather in compounds and make percussive rhythms in fear of the morrow. In the morning, the *kankuran* prowls through the streets dressed in a fearsome mask and wielding a machete. People flee from him in terror. Whilst in Casamance, I was often told that the *kankuran* was a Mandinka phenomenon.¹

Some anthropologists with symbolist leanings have attempted to analyse various performative dances, masking traditions and magical rituals in West African contexts as memorialisations of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. In Sierra Leone, Rosalind Shaw argues that the magical discourse related to beliefs in invisibility and witchcraft stem from the very invisibility accorded to people who disappeared through that trade.² In the grassfields of Cameroon, Nicolas Argenti sees echoes of forced marches of captives and of slave raids in dances associated with masking traditions.³ For the *kankuran* in Casamance, one could attempt something similar and ask whether the flight from the Mandinka *kankuran* may not represent a memorialisation of the flight from Mandinka slave raiders of the Gambia River states and Kaabu in the Atlantic era.

Whilst the trajectory of the Kaabu federation between the sixteenth and the early nineteenth centuries remains sketchy, scholars generally agree with what we shall see in this chapter: Kaabunké power was a

¹ Green (2001: 264, 271). See also de Jong (2008: Chapter 6).

² Shaw (2002).

³ Argenti (2007).

major beneficiary of the Atlantic trading system, and Kaabu consolidated its role in Upper Guinea in part through participation in the slave trade.⁴ The settlement of *lançados* in Mandinguised areas which we observed in Chapter 6 may also be significant in this context given their connection to the Atlantic slave trading networks. Thus the importance of the Mandinka to the raiding culture of Upper Guinea is unquestionable, and it could be that this is related to fearful reactions to the *kankuran* in Casamance today. Of course, such speculative hypotheses – though intriguing – are hugely problematic. Elsewhere, they have been widely lauded.⁵ Often, however, they fail to acknowledge the real controversy which surrounds the projection of an externalised meaning to West African cultural practices.⁶ This is an overly reductionist interpretation, and probably the meaning of the *kankuran* masquerade incorporates both past and present histories, where perhaps aspects of Kaabu's power in pre-colonial times are meshed with the current political and cultural situation in the Casamance, as Ferdinand De Jong suggests, or with more recent memories of nineteenth-century raids among the Diola of the Casamance.⁷

Nevertheless, taking a symbolist view of the *kankuran* may not be entirely fanciful. This view is supported by the fact that supernatural discourses and memories of historical oppression most certainly are connected in some areas of West Africa. In Ziguinchor, Casamance, I was told by an individual of the escape of his Sarahollé grandfather from French colonial forces in Mauritania; according to my informant, his grandfather had been on the point of being shot by the French army before flying mystically to the Casamance and escaping.⁸ Thus we should not dismiss such symbolist interpretations, but rather we must recognise their limitations. Perhaps their real value does lie not in seeing them as ends in themselves, but in helping to show the multi-dimensional nature of memories and identities relating to the trans-Atlantic slave trade today. These interpretations demonstrate the constant need to reach beyond usual sources and ideas in trying to understand that trade. Most particularly, they show the importance of grasping cultural contexts. Ethnographic approaches

⁴ See for example Havik (2004b: 21).

⁵ Thus Shaw's book bears an encomium from Ralph Austen; Argenti's from Jean Comaroff, Peter Geschiere and Filip de Boeck.

⁶ I am grateful for this point to discussions with Karin Barber, Reg Cline-Cole and Keith Shear. See also Pratten (2007: 12).

⁷ De Jong (2008); on the hypothesis of the nineteenth-century raids, I am grateful to a personal communication by Peter Mark, and see also aspects of Baum (1999).

⁸ Interview with El Hadji Mamadou Kabir Ndiaye, Ziguinchor, January 2000.

to this subject may require a solid historical component, but the historical approach cannot do without the ethnographic.

These considerations matter greatly when it comes to the discussion of this chapter, the aim of which is to show how the pan-Atlantic cycles revealed in the foregoing two chapters affected the peoples of Senegambia and Upper Guinea by 1580. They highlight the importance of African responses to Atlantic trade and of understanding how African responses can tell us much about the nature of that trade: its extent, the fears it produced, and its perceived meaning. By looking at cycles of war and trade on mainland Africa and their connections to the cycles of Atlantic trade, we see in detail and for the first time how the expansion of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in Western Africa in the sixteenth century influenced cultural, productive and social trends in the region. The extensive evidence of the changes which developed and of their connection to the Atlantic trade in effect bolsters the evidence of Chapter 7 as to the volume of the trade in this era, for only a substantial trade could have helped to precipitate the effects analysed here. Thus one of the important contributions of this chapter is to supply socio-historical evidence from the African perspective to support the evidence in this book as to the extent of the trans-Atlantic slave trade from Western Africa in the sixteenth century.

The analysis of these changes is built using extensive archival sources originating in Latin America. The data put forward supporting these historiographical conclusions comes initially from the Sierra Leone region and clarifies the importance of wars between groups known to contemporary Atlantic chroniclers as the Manes and the Sapes in reshaping patterns of trade in Upper Guinea as a whole. However, the wars there affected not only the peoples of Sierra Leone and present-day Guinea-Conakry, but also their trading partners to the north. The decline of the Biafada, the rise of the Mandinka of Kaabu and the consolidation of the Luso-African trading castes of the region were all connected as the Atlantic world took off, and the histories of the peoples of Western Africa were reshaped by forces which even today can induce terror. When we recall the figure of the *kankuran*, the Mandinka masquerade from whom everyone flees prior to the symbolic act of sexual violence implicit in circumcision, the sudden expansion of cycles of violent disorder in the sixteenth century takes on a more tangible and frightening form; in that distant time, it was Mandinguisé power that expanded in Upper Guinea through the Kassanké king Masatamba, the Manes of Sierra Leone, and the federation of Kaabu.

This connects to the political analysis offered here for changes in West African societies in the late sixteenth century. We see how Mande power grew throughout the region, consolidated in part through the trading alliances which Mandinka and Mandinguised groups were able to make with Atlantic traders in continuity with their previous histories. The fundamental historiographical aim of this chapter, therefore, is to integrate the two major themes of this book in showing how the expansion of the Atlantic slave trade in the late sixteenth century expanded the influence and cultural mixing of creolised communities in mainland West Africa. By 1580 these creolised communities had developed a significance which went beyond trade to their role as go-betweens for important aspects of ritual practice in Africa. Thus trade and cultural practice became fundamentally connected, just as they had been for centuries in the trans-Saharan trade, and the *lançado* caste connected to both Atlantic and African trades was able to cement its social position and expand the influence of its Atlantic Creole culture on the African mainland. Their ability to do this depended on the influences of Atlantic trade in Western Africa, and thus the expansion of Atlantic Creole society from Cabo Verde to the African mainland was fundamentally an Atlantic phenomenon connected to the growth of trans-Atlantic slavery.

ATTACK, DEFENCE AND PRODUCTION: THE EFFECTS OF THE MANE INVASIONS IN SIERRA LEONE

As with the region to the north of the River Grande, the peoples inhabiting the coastlines of present-day Guinea-Conakry and Sierra Leone had a long history of cultural sharing prior to the arrival of Atlantic traders.⁹ This was apparent to early Atlantic mariners. Fernandes's informants in the early 1500s described to him how the people known collectively by them as Sapes were "mixed in with many other peoples".¹⁰ The alliances of different lineages had promoted a general mixture of customs; Fernandes noted how the peoples of the Nunes River and Cape Verga "border on Sierra Leone and for this reason have the same customs and provisions and rituals".¹¹ This was also a zone of much linguistic sharing, with the languages of the Sape lineages of Sierra Leone and the Bagas

⁹ Fields-Black (2009) expands on this in great detail.

¹⁰ MMAII: Vol. 1, 722: "*mesturados de muitas outras gerações*".

¹¹ Ibid., Vol. 1, 723: "*comarcã cõ Serra de Lyoa, por ysso tê seus custumes e mātimentos e assy adorā*".

and Cocolís of the Nunes River area said by Almada to be as alike as Portuguese was to Spanish.¹² Bagas, Cocolís and Nalus, the peoples whose lands were closest to those of the Biafada on the Grande River, all understood one another.¹³ The area of Sape trade networks operated along similar cultural-historical lines to that of the Mandinka-influenced zone to the north. Both Almada and Donelha described how the Sape kingdom south of Cape Verga to Sierra Leone incorporated many different groups, including Tagunchos, Bagas, Sapes, Volons, Temnes, Limbas and Jalonkés, and that all these groups understood one another.¹⁴ Moreover, as with the history of Kaabu and the region of present-day Guinea-Bissau, some of these groups were probably migrants who had been pushed out of the Fouta Djalon highlands to the east following the formation of Kaabu in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and more recently following the Pullo migrations under Koli Tenguella in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries (cf. *Chapter 2*).¹⁵

There were two important trades in the region of present-day Guinea-Conakry. One was of salt from the coast to the interior.¹⁶ The other was operated by the Sape lineages and supplied kola from the forests of the whole coast to Biafada middlemen who traded this on to Mandinka and Mandinka-influenced groups farther north. The area itself was fertile and rich in provisions; its peoples were said to be less warlike than those farther north.¹⁷ Probably, it had not been affected so badly by the dry period from 1100 to 1500, which had encouraged the migration of Mandinka and exacerbated inter-group tensions north of the Grande River. The area was productive, and in return for its goods the Sape trade networks brought back desired goods from the north. The importance of salt allowed Caboverdean traders to integrate quickly into this trading picture, because salt was easily found in their arid Atlantic islands.¹⁸

¹² Ibid., Vol. 3, 341. Fields-Black (2009) shows that there were two major groups in coastal regions here, some descended from highland speakers who had migrated to the coast and others established for longer periods by the Atlantic.

¹³ MMAII: Vol. 3, 341.

¹⁴ Ibid., Vol. 3, 353 (Almada); Vol. 5, 104 (Donelha).

¹⁵ For oral histories of the driving out of Jalonke lineages from Kaabu, see NCAC/OHAD, Transcribed Cassette 539A, pages 1 and 52–3. Also embedded in this source appears to be a memory of the role of the Pullo migrations in this process, with the informant also describing how “Futa also came from Maasina/They found the Jalunkas there/and drove them away” (*ibid.*, 53); a clearer recollection of the Futa’s forcing the Jalonke into migration is found at NCAC/OHAD, Transcribed Cassette 490A, pages 5–6.

¹⁶ Fields-Black (2009: 65–6).

¹⁷ MMAII: Vol. 3, 356.

¹⁸ On the importance of salt, *ibid.*, and Fields-Black (2009).

Caboverdean traders soon demanded slaves, and thus networks of slave supply began to operate in a region which probably had been little affected by the trans-Saharan trade in slaves before the fifteenth century.¹⁹

This picture changed abruptly in the mid-sixteenth century. In the period between the 1540s and the 1560s, the invasion of a group of Mande warriors known as the Manes represented an important political shift. From the 1550s through to the 1570s, the major group attacked by the Manes, the Sapes who hitherto had operated the riverine trade system between Sierra Leone and Biafada territory on the Rio Grande, came to constitute one of the largest groups despatched by slavers to the Americas (see Tables I.1 and I.2).²⁰ However, by the 1620s the Manes had settled in relative peace and indeed adopted many Sape customs, just as the Imbangala raiders eventually adopted many Mbundu customs following decades of war and pillage in West-Central Africa in the first half of the seventeenth century.²¹

The Mane appear to have begun arriving in the 1540s. Donelha stated that the wars began in around 1545 and that the Manes had subjugated Sape territories by 1560.²² However, Donelha was writing eighty years after the events he described, and data on the arrival of Sape slaves in the Americas suggests that these dates require revision. Ships arrived to obtain slaves on this coast throughout the 1560s, and the numbers of Sapes arriving in the Americas were much greater in the 1560s and early 1570s than they were in the 1550s (see Tables I.1 and I.2). Donelha elsewhere states that the wars were still continuing in 1560, so perhaps it was not until the mid-1560s that the Manes held sway.²³ That is, it was in precisely the period when the contraband trade to the Americas was exploding that these wars were concluded.

Almada described the Manes as a cannibal army. Their soldiers, the so-called Sumbas, were taken by the Manes from among the groups

¹⁹ Almada noted that the Caboverdean trade here was for slaves, wax and ivory – MMAII: Vol. 3, 356. The lack of trans-Saharan slave trading can be deduced from the lack of diaspora Mandinka merchants here. This supports Rodney's (1965) view that prior to the fifteenth century slavery as such did not exist in this region.

²⁰ On the Sape-Biafada links before the onset of Atlantic trade, see Brooks (1993b). On the way in which “Sape” was an external ethnonym simplifying a more complex reality of lineage, see Fields-Black (2009: 81).

²¹ Thus by 1627, the Manes were known to the Spanish in the New World as “Manes Sapes” – Sandoval (1627: 62); on this aspect of the Imbangala in West-Central Africa, see especially Miller (1976a: 224–64).

²² MMAII: Vol. 5, 109.

²³ Ibid., Vol. 5, 110; Donelha's father visited Sierra Leone in 1560 and bought three Manes captured in the wars.

whom they vanquished as they progressed northwards from the Gold Coast region. According to Rodney, by the time they reached Sierra Leone many were Bulloms and Temnes from that very region.²⁴ The Sumbas were trained as soldiers and forced, said Almada, to eat human flesh. The Sapes begged the Caboverdean and *lançado* traders to take them as slaves rather than leave them with the Manes.²⁵

These tales of cannibalism are wild exaggerations. We should recall that other peoples in West Africa were tarred with the brush of cannibals by European authors in these years, such as the Imbangala of Angola (cf. Chapter 2).²⁶ It should be recognised that in the case of the Imbangala the truth-value of these accusations may have had more substance than is the case with the Manes, but even then these accusations were clearly exaggerated and their prime function within travel accounts composed for a European audience was to satisfy preconceptions regarding others.²⁷ These tales primarily reflect the oral cultures of Western and West-Central Africa, in which the metaphor of cannibalism was often vested in groups such as witches and others perceived as wielding destructive powers; indeed, this legacy is evident today in Western Africa, where people of Gambia and Senegal frequently use the term “eat/manger” from their respective languages of colonization to describe the destructive corruption of ruling elites in their countries.²⁸ In the sixteenth century, such ritual power was likely associated with the success of the Manes by the Sapes, particularly as the Manes brought with them important new secret societies. This was probably the origin of the story of cannibalism purveyed by Almada and also by Fenton.²⁹

Who, then, were the Manes? Certainly, they were a Mande group. Donelha stated that the Manes left the court of Mandimansa under a princess, Macarico. They reached the sea and then passed the Portuguese fortress at Elmina on the Gold Coast. As they went, the Manes picked up more followers, but Macarico died of grief when her son was killed more than forty years after leaving the court.³⁰ Almada also thought that the

²⁴ Rodney (1970: 56).

²⁵ MMAII: Vol. 3, 364: “rogando e pedindo, por amor de Deus, os comprassem”.

²⁶ Rodney (1970: 43–44) thought the stories of the Imbangala and Sumba related.

²⁷ The key interpretation of the evidence on the role of these accounts for satisfying European preconceptions is Miller (1973); see idem. (1982: 26–7) for a brilliant interpretation of the cannibalism of the Imbangala deriving from drought and famine in late-sixteenth-century West-Central Africa.

²⁸ On cannibalism and witchcraft, see for example Hawthorne (2010b: Ch. 6); Argenti (2007).

²⁹ Taylor (1959: 105).

³⁰ MMAII: Vol. 5, 110.

Manes came from Mali, “because they speak the same language ... and use the same clothes and weapons as the people of Mali, there being no difference whatever between them”.³¹

Such stories of imperial origins in Mali should not be taken at face value. It was of course to the advantage of the newcomers to claim this origin for themselves, in the assertion of royal legitimacy.³² Yet research by Brooks and Yves Person has shown that this is extremely unlikely, because both the Mande language introduced by the Manes and the secret societies that they developed came from the southwest and not from among the northern Mande associated with Mali.³³ On Person’s account, the Mane leaders came from a blacksmith clan in the Konyan highlands, the Camara.³⁴

Yet although the Manes probably never have left this court as they claimed, it may have been around forty years since their migration had begun, as Donelha suggested. Elsewhere he notes that of those who had originally departed, only eight old men accompanied the Manes when they reached Sierra Leone in 1545.³⁵ Thus if the Mane wars began around 1545, we can date the departure of the Manes to around 1500. And although the connection to Mali’s court is tenuous, this allows us to suggest that Mali’s decline and the Mane migrations may be linked, which is important when we come to assess how Atlantic exchanges were influencing reactions and realignments in African societies by the middle of the sixteenth century.

If the Mane departure came circa 1500, it occurred at precisely the same time that, as we saw in Chapter 2, the empire of Mali was losing its influence on the Upper Guinea coast following fifty years of Atlantic trade. This process had begun in the 1430s with the stirrings of Songhay’s independence, which culminated in 1489. This event precipitated disorder in the 1490s and political realignments followed, including the new independence of Kaabu. Brooks suggests that the Camara clan may have fled advancing Mande horse warriors who were themselves fleeing the break-up of the court at Mali, an event that on this timeline could well have occurred in the late 1490s – which fits with the date of the departure

³¹ Ibid., Vol. 3, 360: “porque falam a mesma língua ... trazem as mesmas armas e vestidos como estes trazem, sem haver diferença nenhuma”. On the probability of this hypothesis, see Rodney (1970: 40–5).

³² Brooks (1993b: 289).

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Person (1971: 675).

³⁵ MMAII: Vol. 5, 110.

of the Camara clan mooted here.³⁶ The arrival of the Manes was of course not a product alone of these Atlantic influences, but it may have been related to them through the loss of Mali's influence among the far-flung viceroyalties of the Jolof empire on the Atlantic coast and the contemporaneous transfer of power to the east. Here, then, could be a confirmation of the pattern which we saw in Chapters 2 and 3, which shows the relationship of the beginnings of Atlantic demand with new cycles of violent disorder in Western Africa.

Indeed, the Mane invasions led to violent social changes among the peoples of present-day Guinea-Conakry and Sierra Leone. There was a particularly severe effect on gender relations, because slave ships in the 1560s sailing from Sierra Leone routinely carried many more women and children than men. In 1564 a ship sailing with a large majority of Sape and Susu slaves to Cartagena carried thirty-four Sape women and children, nineteen Susu women and children, and just thirteen Sape men and nine Susu men, a ratio of approximately two women and children for each man.³⁷ In 1566, when the ship *Santiago* arrived in Puerto Rico from Sierra Leone, it carried seventy-seven women and children and just fifteen men, a 5:1 ratio.³⁸ This is noteworthy because the typical slave contractor in Seville in this period requested their ship captains to procure slaves in a ratio of two men for each woman.³⁹ These figures are thus in such stark contrast to the usual demands of American and Iberian slavers for male slaves that they must suggest a devastating effect of these wars on Sape men, a mortality relating both to death in war and the incorporation of captured males into the Sumba infantry. This fact supports the idea that Sape lineages faced sudden pressures in this era which saw their political structures largely collapse; for, as Herbert Klein has suggested, the importance of female agricultural labour in West African societies might suggest that "an indication of the viability of a given African region or state in the epoch of the Atlantic slave trade was its ability to retain women and keep them from the trans-Atlantic trade. The shipping of

³⁶ Brooks (1993b: 289).

³⁷ AGI, Justicia 518, No. 1, fols. 36v-44v.

³⁸ AGI, Justicia 996, No. 2, Ramo 3, fols. 74r-76r.

³⁹ This itself was a new departure because during the late-fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century trade from Senegambia and Arguim to Iberia, the highest demand had been for female and child slaves – see Mendes (2007: 87); and Mendes, presentation at the conference *Brokers of Change: Atlantic Commerce and Cultures in Pre-Colonial "Guinea of Cape Verde"*, June 11–13, 2009, at the University of Birmingham. Gender balances of African slaves in Seville between 1471 and 1525 exhibit relative equality between the sexes – see Franco Silva (1979: 177–8).

more women than normal might indicate a fundamental breakdown in the economic or social viability of the state".⁴⁰ Thus this data is supportive of the sixteenth-century sources describing the sudden and transformative effects of the Mane invasions.⁴¹

Large numbers of Sapes were exported to the Americas in these years (see Table I.2). In Panamá, members of Sape lineage and groups neighbouring the Sapes represented a significant proportion of the *cimarrón* communities by the 1570s.⁴² Slave ships carried members of neighbouring groups to the Sapes such as the Susu, Limba and Volon.⁴³ The entire coast between Cape Verga and Sierra Leone was changed by this violence, and groups who had escaped offshore to the Los islands (off the site of present-day Conakry) were well aware, as with the Jolof near the Cape Verde peninsula in the early sixteenth century, that Atlantic slave ships exacerbated violence even if they were not alone a sufficient cause of it. Crew members of the ship *Santiago* were attacked here when they tried to stock up with water in 1566, and one of them was killed.⁴⁴

Architectural styles in the region changed markedly also. In 1586 the Englishman John Saracoll reached Sierra Leone, and recounted the following scene:

wee went on shore to a towne of the Negros ... which were found to be but lately built: it was of about two hundred houses, and walled about with mightie great trees, and stakes so thicke, that a rat could hardly get in or out. But as it chanced, wee came directly upon a port which was not shut up, where wee entred with such fierenesse, that the people fled all out of the towne, which we found to bee built after their fashion, and the streetes of it so intricate, that it was difficult to finde the way out, that we came in at.⁴⁵

Here is a first-hand account of the sort of fortified settlement, or *tabanka*, which became common farther north among the Balanta and Floup in the seventeenth century.⁴⁶ Indeed, the very word *tabanka* derived from the Mane fortifications in the Sierra Leone region.⁴⁷ It is not clear that

⁴⁰ H. Klein (1997: 36).

⁴¹ It could also be seen to require a re-shaping of revisionist ideas of some important historians of West Africa suggesting that the Mane migration was more gradual – see, for example, Jones (1981: 175–6); Mark (2007: 197–8).

⁴² AGI, Patronato 231, Ramo 6, fol. 212v: "los demás negros de puerto velo y particularmente donde son los zapes y longas y otras naciones comarcanas a los dichos zapes".

⁴³ See AGI, Justicia 518, No. 1, fols. 36v–44v for evidence of this.

⁴⁴ AGI, Justicia 996, No. 2, Ramo 3, fols. 18v, 20r.

⁴⁵ Hakluyt (1904: Vol. 11, 206).

⁴⁶ Baum (1999: 121); Hawthorne (2003: 12, 121–3).

⁴⁷ According to Almada: MMAII: Vol. 3, 367 – see also Hawthorne (2003: 122).

Saracoll's account refers to a Mane village, and it may refer to a village built up by Sapes to deter predatory slaving raids. In this latter case, this evidence demonstrates how communities, the need for self-defence, and predatory militaristic raids linked to Atlantic slaving had all coalesced in Upper Guinea by the late 1580s.

What was it about the Sapes that made them comparatively soft targets for the Manes and their Sumba troops? If Almada is to be believed that there were fewer wars here than farther north, it may be that their previous lack of warfare experience did not help them. Yet a further clue may lie in the iron trade. As we have seen, the iron of most of the coast of present-day Guinea-Conakry was of an inferior quality, and such good iron as there was in Sierra Leone was made inland by the Susu, a Mande group (cf. [Chapter 1](#)).⁴⁸ It may be that the lack of a secure supply of good-quality iron in these years hindered the Sape ability to erect strong defences and their ability to expand their cycles of agricultural production in response to the new Atlantic trade. This would support the hypothesis of Hawthorne that it was access to iron which determined many societies' success in this new interconnected and violent world; moreover, it is supported by events among the Biafada.⁴⁹

For here, to the north, agricultural activity had fallen off rapidly by the end of the sixteenth century, even though in the fifteenth century Biafada had cultivated rice and millet.⁵⁰ The Biafada's iron had previously been traded from Sierra Leone (cf. [Chapter 1](#)), but the Mane wars had cut access to this supply. As we shall now see, just as among the Sapes, the impact of Atlantic trade was severe for the Biafada. Thus, like the Sapes, it would be the lack of this commodity of such ritual and actual power in Upper Guinea which helped to shape the problems they faced as the sixteenth century progressed, and more and more Biafada, like the Sapes, were exported in the dungeon holds of slave ships to America (see Tables I.1 and I.2).

LANÇADO TRADE AMONG THE BIAFADA AND THE GROWTH OF MANDE POWER IN UPPER GUINEA

Hitherto, historians of Mali have tended to see the transfer of the seat of empire to Songhay as part of a long process of imperial decline which

⁴⁸ Fields-Black (2009: 144–54).

⁴⁹ Cf. Hawthorne (2003).

⁵⁰ MMAII: Vol. 1, 648: Pacheco Pereira said that the Biafada cultivated rice and millet by the River Grande; but Almada stated that they “sew very little in the way of provisions ... even though the land is very fertile” (*ibid.*, Vol. 3, 324–5: “*semeiam muito pouco mantimento ... sendo a terra aparelhada para dar muito*”).

reached a critical point with the Moroccan invasion of 1591. However, although this process went with an attenuation of Mande power in the large, flat and dry spaces of the Sahel, in Upper Guinea things were different. Here, the period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries offered consolidation of Mande hegemony. The victory of the Manes in Sierra Leone was one manifestation of this, and another was the rise to power of the Kaabu federation. Among groups such as the Biafada, squeezed between these two groups, the effects were very serious. As Kaabu rose to power and their trading routes were disrupted by the Manes, Biafada were forced to turn to alliances with other groups such as *lançados* for some sort of protection. In this picture pre-existing social patterns were disrupted, and with this came the falloff in agricultural production we saw at the end of the previous section.

The rise of Mandinka power in the sixteenth century and the associated rise of Kaabu can be gleaned from various sources. We have already seen how by the 1550s Mandinka war canoes were raiding for slaves along the coast south of the Gambia estuary and the important evidence on Biafada slave numbers in early America (cf. [Chapter 6](#)). The high numbers of Biafada among slaves being sold to America continued in the 1560s and 1570s (see [Table I.2](#)). Writers such as Almada noted the way in which Biafada people sold each other into slavery:

In the [Rio Grande] there are large canoes operated by thieves known as gampisas in the local language. They are like bandits, and they always go about in the same way; they steal slaves, which they bring to sell to the ships, killing them if no one buys them so as not to be discovered. And these blacks, like all blacks who sell stolen slaves, have the custom of giving the slaves something to eat or drink when they sell them, paid for by the very black who is selling them. And they give them this food and drink, because they say it helps them to clear their consciences, because the person who has been sold has helped to use up their money. And they are so cunning that if they see some person newly arrived from the hinterland, they pretend that they want to welcome them, and invite them into their homes, and then after a few days mention that they have some friends in the sea and that they want to introduce them to [their new friend]; and going to the ships they sell them.⁵¹

⁵¹ MMAII: Vol. 3, 337–8: “Neste Rio andam almadias grandes, em que andam muitos negros ladrões, que pela língua da terra chamam gampisas. São como bandoleiros, continuadamente andam neste ofício; furtam escravos, que trazem a vender aos navios e se os não compram matam-nos, por não serem descobertos. E têm costume estes negros e todos os mais que vendem negros furtados, quando os vende [m] dão-lhe [s] a beber vinho ou comer alguma cousa, que lhes dão à conta do mesmo negro que vendem. E dão-lhe o comer ou beber, porque dizem que ficam descarregados da consciencia, porque o mesmo

Such accounts may be evidence of a society in the throes of social upheaval and collapse, under great pressure from both Kaabunké expansion and proximity to Atlantic traders. The growth of Kaabu's power may also be glimpsed in other phenomena, particularly relating to the Gambia River. Extremely telling is a curious passage in Almada, where he talks of a “squadron” of monkeys in the Upper Gambia whose leader rode on horseback and was able to speak intelligibly. Though Almada claimed to have seen this himself, this can only be hyperbole, and his willingness to believe this is indicative of the incipient racialized ideas discussed in the previous chapter. More likely is that he was repeating oral accounts of others, who were referring to the Kaabunké *nyanco* soldiers known as Sulas, who according to modern oral sources were given the nickname of “monkeys”.⁵² One informant recounts it thus: “These nyancoos. Why did they call them Nyanchos? The woman I mentioned to you, who settled at Durubali, the woman's name is Faama.... She begot these nyanchos. This nyanchoyaa, is like monkeys. There are certain types of monkeys. These are the ones called Sula nyancoos.”⁵³

That these troops were active by the late sixteenth century and called by the name which they were subsequently known by suggests strongly that Kaabu was already formed and powerful by this time, and had been for some time. Related to this expanding Kaabunké power is the fact that by the 1570s the major Atlantic trade of the Gambia River was in slaves, many of whom according to Almada had been stolen in raids by the Mandinka of the South bank, that is, in areas of the Casamance where Kaabunké power was growing.⁵⁴ So heavy was the trade in slaves on the Gambia in the 1580s that Donelha saw seven ships trading at the port of Casão on one visit, and nine on another occasion.⁵⁵ That these were probably *lançado* vessels brought from elsewhere is suggested by the fact that in a different passage Donelha described how he had sailed down the Gambia in 1585 with “four tangomão [*lançado*] ships, which had already carried out their trade and were making for the Rio Grande”.⁵⁶

vendido ajudou a comer o seu dinheiro. E são tão sagazes que se vêm algum bisonho do sertão, fingem que os querem agasalhar, e os recolhem em suas casas, e tendo-os nelas alguns dias lhe [s] metem em cabeça que tem no mar amigos e os querem levar lá para que sejam conhecidos deles e para folgarem; e indo aos navios os vendem”.

⁵² For the passage in Almada, see MMAII: Vol. 3, 282.

⁵³ NCAC/OHAD, Transcribed Cassette 491B, pages 12–3

⁵⁴ MMAII, Vol. 3, 273–5.

⁵⁵ Ibid., Vol. 5, 130.

⁵⁶ Ibid., Vol. 5, 135: “com quatro naviyos de tangomaos, que ya tinhão feito ho resgate, he hião pero ho riyo Grâde”.

The growth of power of Mandinka or Mandinguised groups emerges also from the Kassanké monarch Masatamba, whose activities were discussed in Chapter 5. Masatamba was heavily involved in supplying slaves. Donelha described how in the 1570s he had sold ten to fifteen slaves for one good horse, in an echo of the high prices in Senegambia a century previously.⁵⁷ Almada described how many Europeans and Caboverdeans lived in Bugendo “because of the high volume of trade”, adding that “in this river of São Domingos there is a higher slave trade than in all the other [rivers] of Guinea”.⁵⁸ The volume of Masatamba’s slave trade is illustrated by the English captain Edward Fenton, who described how in 1582 a Portuguese *lançado* had told him that Masatamba possessed five thousand horses.⁵⁹

Even if these horses were not all procured in exchange for slaves, they indicate a heavy trade.⁶⁰ The growing power of Masatamba was likely related to an increased slave supply, suggestive of changes in Kassanké society in these years. The increased slave supply went with an increasingly autocratic style of governance. Almada described how whole families were sent into slavery if found guilty of certain crimes, and Donelha described how Masatamba had sent a woman and her husband into slavery for a false accusation of rape.⁶¹ Such evidence of capricious enslavement coupled with that we have seen in the increasing agricultural productivity of the zone suggests a new and more coercive social environment accompanying the consolidation of Mandinka hegemony.

That Masatamba’s authority derived substantially from his participation in the Atlantic trade was revealed by the Jesuit Manoel Alvares, who, writing in the first decade of the seventeenth century, noted that Masatamba had been the king to “win” the title of emperor, and that “this Masatamba was the best friend that the Portuguese Nation has had here ... he prided himself greatly at being called ‘Brother in Arms of the King of Portugal’”.⁶² This shows that Masatamba had increased the power of Kassanké kingship and how that change accompanied close alliance with the Portuguese and their trade, which, as Almada and Donelha

⁵⁷ Ibid., Vol. 5, 141.

⁵⁸ Ibid., Vol. 3, 303–4, 307: “muitos dos nossos, por causa do muito trato”; “Neste Rio de São Domingos ha mais escravos que em todos os outros de Guiné”.

⁵⁹ Taylor (1959: 106). See also Nafafé (2007: 80).

⁶⁰ The reliability of this figure is questioned by Brooks (1993b: 233).

⁶¹ MMAII: Vol. 3, 293–4 and Vol. 5, 140–1.

⁶² SG, *Etiopia Menor*, fol. 13r: “Este Imperador ganhou hum Rey, que se chamava Masatamba ... foi este Masatamba o maior amigo, que cá teve a Nação Portugueza...se prezava muito de lhe chamarem Irmão em Armas dElRey de Portugal”.

showed, was heavily accented towards the procurement of slaves. Thus as Atlantic traders settled among Mandinka or Mandinguised groups, the new opportunities offered by this trade only expanded Mandinka power in Upper Guinea, which meant that whereas the sixteenth century was a time of crisis for Mande power in the Sahel, by the Atlantic coast things were rather different.

For groups such as the Biafada, the outlook was bleak. In Sierra Leone, wars were still widespread in 1582 according to Edward Fenton, with the Sapes still the main victims. But these wars did not produce slaves as they had done before; the Manes apparently preferred to incorporate the Sapes into the new communities which they were building.⁶³ Slave imports to the Americas in the 1570s and 1580s confirm this evidence (see Table I.2). Moreover, it was probably also in this period that the Bijagó began their slaving raids, launched in their war canoes, among the Biafada villages: Biafada numbers were severely depleted by these raids according to the Jesuit missionary Manoel Alvares, who described how the Bijagó had torched entire Biafada villages and forced people into the interior.⁶⁴ With the accent on slave supply swinging away from Sierra Leone and back to the north and the region of present-day Guinea-Bissau, the Biafada had an urgent need to protect themselves, and so they turned to the *lançados*.

As with the Kassanké before them, the Biafada willingness to do this followed from continuities with existing practices. By the time that Almada was writing, they were subject to the king, or *farim*, of Kaabu; large numbers of Mandinka were settled among them, especially the Islamic scholars known to Almada as *bixirins*.⁶⁵ Because these scholars were the diaspora traders *par excellence* in Upper Guinea, it is clear that diaspora Mandinka traders whose caste identity was defined in part through their outsider religion were an accepted part of Biafada society.⁶⁶ This conditioned the Biafada to be welcoming to other diaspora traders, the *lançados*, who began to settle in greater numbers at the Biafada port of Guinala.

Biafada lineage heads must have hoped that the *lançados* could act as a buffer against both the Kaabunké and any possibility that the

⁶³ Taylor (1959: 103, 105).

⁶⁴ SG, *Étiopia Menor*, fol. 43v: “*ponto Aldêas inteiras a fogo, e a sangue; e por esta causa vive o Gentio em suas cabanas pelo sertão*”.

⁶⁵ MMAII: Vol. 3, 327.

⁶⁶ On the *bixirins* as the pre-eminent Mandinka merchants in Upper Guinea, see Donelha – *ibid.*, Vol. 5, 137.

Manes might seek to expand the gains they had made in Sierra Leone. Meanwhile, the collapse of the Sapes and the consequent encroachment of the *lançados* on the kola trade had deprived the Biafada of their main trading advantage. The multiple pressures meant that they could not vie with the *lançados* for this trade. Rather than struggle against them, some lineage heads invited them into their communities, and a fortification was built in the Guinala area, probably in the 1580s.⁶⁷

A zone of heavy inter-cultural exchange between the Biafada and the Portuguese emerged in the Grande River area, which by the 1570s and 1580s had begun to rival that of the Kassanké zone farther north. Almada noted many Portuguese speakers on the Rio Grande at Guinala, evidence of the heavy Portuguese presence. These *ladinos* and *ladinas*, the *grumetes* and *tangomas*, accompanied the Portuguese from river to river and even to Cabo Verde, and became an important segment of the acculturated Kriston population of the Guinea-Bissau region in the seventeenth century. They wore Portuguese clothing and made these alliances with the Caboverdeans and Portuguese with the approval of their parents and elders.⁶⁸

However, as among the Kassanké, there were serious differences among the Biafada lineages concerning this approach to the *lançados*. Just as in Casamance, where Masatamba's strategy had produced rebellions from different lineages and attacks on the *lançados* in Bugendo (cf. Chapter 5), so with the Biafada many lineages were hostile. Almada described how in the 1580s *lançados* who ventured out of their villages were likely to be attacked, with Biafada saying that they had imposed themselves onto their territory by force.⁶⁹ It may have been that these discontented lineages were those who had suffered most attacks from slavers feeding the Atlantic trade. Either way, as with the Kassanké, the decision of some lineages to welcome the *lançados* in order to shore up their own position was a source of discord, which may further have undermined the strength of the Biafada as a whole.

Nevertheless, the way in which some Biafada lineages acculturated in these years reflects the growing forces of creolisation in this era on the coast of Upper Guinea. Biafada allies of the *lançados*, their wives (*tangomas*) and commercial agents (*grumetes*), spanned both the creeks and swamps of the coast and the islands and had formed new kinship

⁶⁷ Newson/Minchin (2007: 36).

⁶⁸ All the material from Almada in this paragraph is from MMAII: Vol. 3, 325–6.

⁶⁹ Ibid., Vol. 3, 330.

alliances with Caboverdean and Portuguese men. This was testament to how the emergent Atlantic Creole society of Western Africa spanned both the archipelago and the coast. The region lay on the threshold of a new type of identity which the exchanges that had occurred here had helped to form. It was to be a pan-regional Creole identity characterised by the fusion of violence and flexibility, and in which a common language – the Kriolu imported from Cabo Verde – would help to create a shared identity among groups such as the Kriston descendants of Biafada who had been squeezed by the pressures which Atlantic slaving had brought to bear in Upper Guinea.

For among the Biafada, as among other creolising groups of the Atlantic world, the role of slavery cannot be ignored. As we have seen, Almada described the Biafada as great thieves of people whom they sold as slaves.⁷⁰ Donelha said that in this period close to three thousand slaves a year had been exported from the Grande River at one time.⁷¹ The large numbers of Biafada who found their way to the Americas in the sixteenth century reflect this reality, as well as that of a people facing great and irreconcilable pressures from different quarters (cf. Table I.2). The forces of violence and flexibility which wrought the Creole world coalesced as slaves were sold to traders in Africa, America and Europe branded on the neck, some with the stomach or face red with smallpox, others with open sores, others without teeth and others with swollen limbs.⁷²

The willingness of some Biafada lineages to accept this violence and its Atlantic agents, in the shape of the *lançados*, resulted from the pressures they faced. Yet at the same time, the earlier heavy presence of *dyula* traders representing the Mandinka trading diaspora predisposed Biafada accommodation to this pattern. This was not true of some of their neighbours. Whereas the Biafada accepted *lançado* activity, the Nalu – the Biafada's immediate neighbours to the south – rejected it. The Nalu did, however, trade for Atlantic products via the Biafada, but not directly.⁷³ The Biafada position as intermediaries between two productive and cultural zones allowed them to act as go-betweens. They could open themselves to the *lançados* as groups such as the Nalu did not. Their strategy of accommodation as a means of self-defence was one which the Kassanké had

⁷⁰ Ibid., Vol. 3, 324.

⁷¹ Ibid., Vol. 5, 145.

⁷² Instances of this can be found in registers of slaves arriving in the Americas. See AGI, Escribanía 2A, fols. 495r-498v and AGI, Justicia 518, No. 1, fols. 36v-38r.

⁷³ MMAII: Vol. 3, 340-1 for this information and that contained in the preceding sentence.

already tried. However, in the long run, and as with the Kassanké, it was a strategy that failed, for by the end of the era of Atlantic slavery both these groups had declined significantly from their position of importance in the Upper Guinea of the sixteenth century.

LANÇADO PATTERNS OF SETTLEMENT AND THE KOLA TRADE IN THE ERA OF MANDE EXPANSION

The Biafada decision to accept *lançado* settlement among their communities was connected to multiple aspects of the growth of Mande power in Upper Guinea. Not only did it connect to the expansion of Kaabu in these decades and to the predatory power of the Mandinguised king Masatamba, but also to the way in which the Mane wars in Sierra Leone had disrupted their networks of trade linking the Rio Grande and Sierra Leone. For hitherto, the Sape lineages had been the major trading partner of the Biafadas in this area, purveying kola north.

Understanding the picture of Atlantic trade and its influences among the various peoples in Upper Guinea is thus very important, for it allows us to see how Atlantic pressures helped to reshape the trading routes which linked the entire region. With Sape links to the Biafada disrupted by the Mane wars, *lançado* middlemen stepped in, supplanting the Sapes in their kola trade between the rivers of present-day Guinea-Conakry and Sierra Leone and the trading posts of the Biafada on the Rio Grande. This was not a new trade for the *lançados*, for as the Luso-African ivories from Sierra Leone show, there had been long-standing links between *lançados* and this part of Upper Guinea since the late fifteenth century.⁷⁴ However, it was certainly in these years that *lançado* domination of this trade was cemented, which consolidated their commercial and social position in Upper Guinea.

As we have seen, during the Mane wars and their aftermath, the main focus of *lançado* settlement was around the Casamance and São Domingos rivers. Yet whilst they were settled principally here, *lançados* in these decades operated in small craft in the rivers south to Sierra Leone. In a famous passage, Almada described how the Sapes fled to *lançado* boats, begging to be taken by them. Almada described how “our people” (*os nossos*) lurked with small caravels and other craft beside the rivers

⁷⁴ See Mark (2007) and Mark/Horta (2011: Chapter 5) for analyses of these ivories, which have been dated back to 1490, and were traded into the Atlantic market through to the seventeenth century.

and estuaries, wherever the Mane army was nearby, waiting for people to come fleeing from the wars so that they could capture them and take them to the larger slave-trading vessels.⁷⁵ Almada's use of "os nossos" is ambiguous. As he was a Caboverdean, it implies Caboverdean involvement; but as he also had many connections to the *lançados*, it also implies heavy *lançado* involvement. These *lançados* had probably come from the larger rivers such as the Grande and the São Domingos because Almada describes the boats returning from Sierra Leone to "the mother of the Rivers" (*à madre dos Rios*) to offload their human cargoes.⁷⁶ Certainly there was a connection to *lançados* from the Cacheu area, because it was they who brought Sape lineage heads from Sierra Leone to the São Domingos region, where they built a village for themselves at Cacheu separated from those of the other peoples of the area, as were the villages of the *lançados*.⁷⁷

This incorporation of Sape elders within the framework of the Brame, Floup and Kassanké settlements of the Cacheu area is important for various reasons. In the first place, it emphasises a key argument of this book, which has been that this was an area whose pre-Atlantic history meant that outsider castes could be incorporated within existing structures. However, what this evidence also reveals is that these Sape elders had themselves developed a relationship of clientship with the *lançados*. Almada mentions that the lineage head of the Sape village at Cacheu was a Christian named Ventura de Sequeira who had been raised on Santiago Island in Cabo Verde, which confirms this relationship between *lançados*, Caboverdeans, and Sapes.⁷⁸ This was very important to the *lançados*, because it placed the previous operators of the kola trade from Sierra Leone in a subordinate position to them. This was therefore a key moment in the cementing of the *lançado* position in the commercial network that supplied kola to the peoples of the northern part of Upper Guinea and Senegambia, which indicates how *lançado* engagement moved to a new level in these decades.⁷⁹

Lançado interest in the kola trade was not new. Almada described how for many years the *lançados* had traded salt for kola and other

⁷⁵ MMAII: Vol. 3, 363

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., Vol. 5, 110–1. This is according to Donelha. Almada also mentions this settlement (ibid., Vol. 3, 302–3).

⁷⁸ Ibid., Vol. 3, 302.

⁷⁹ Francisco de Andrade described the importance of the kola trade in 1582. It was the main trade good used on the Gambia to buy slaves and other commodities, and all the kola was brought by ships from Sierra Leone. Ibid., Vol. 3, 106.

provisions there.⁸⁰ However, the Mane wars had led to serious interruptions in the kola trade and a possibility of the *lançados* decisively capturing the lion's share of it from Sape-Biafada networks. By 1573 at the latest, *lançados* were living in the Nunes River area, and were trading so far inland that they could not be reached by messengers sent by a Caboverdean official vessel.⁸¹ Indeed, to judge by a series of questions relating to 1574 asked by the experienced Upper Guinea trader Cristobal Cayado in a legal case heard on Hispaniola, the Nunes was one of the main areas of settlement for *lançados* then.⁸² The extent of settlement and communications implied here suggests that *lançado* settlement probably dated at least back to the 1560s, and thus can be connected temporally to the disruption of Sape trading networks following the Mane invasions.

The importance of the kola trade provides an important nuance in our understanding of how and why *lançado* communities were able to operate successfully in Upper Guinea in these years. Moreover, it also encourages us to differentiate between African and Atlantic perspectives on Atlantic trade, and to see how they differed and how they were connected. Documents from the Americas suggest that, in the context of the Iberian empires, the activities of *lançados* were assessed purely in relation to the slave trade. The taxes which the *lançados* paid if they ceased to live in Upper Guinea were known as "taxes of slaves" [*derechos desclavos*.⁸³ Elsewhere, witnesses referred to the "*tangos maos [lançados]* and everyone else who trades for slaves in Guinea".⁸⁴ There were many advantages for *lançado* slave traders over Caboverdeans and Iberians, for the cost of slaves on the Upper Guinea coast was half that of slaves on Cabo Verde.⁸⁵ Not surprisingly therefore, registries of slaves brought to the Americas show that the richest slavers were all *lançados*. Where many

⁸⁰ Ibid., Vol. 3, 356.

⁸¹ AGI, Escribanía 2A, fols. 145v–146r.

⁸² Ibid., fol. 283r: "si saben q a los dos ni tres ni cuatro dias del mes de diciembre del año de setenta y cuatro passado en los ríos de guinea nombrados de nuno y sant domingo no abia factores ni rrecebidores ni escribanos nuevos de los nuevos contratadores ...".

Cayado clearly had strong connections in the Nunes River area because on leaving Santiago in 1574 he had gone first to the Nunes before going north to Bugendo (*ibid.*, fols. 461v–462r).

⁸³ Ibid., fol. 135r.

⁸⁴ Ibid., fol. 134v: "los dhos tangos maos y los demás q traten en los Resgates de negros en guyna".

⁸⁵ Ibid., fol. 461r: the *contratadores* Bejar and Algarve asked their witnesses "si saben que los esclavos negros en la costa y rrios de guinea valen mucho mas barato y asi la mitad menos que en la ysla de cabo verde".

Caboverdeans just had one or two slaves laden on the ship, *lançados* often had nine, ten or twelve.⁸⁶

Certainly, as the trans-Atlantic slave trade from Western Africa expanded in the second half of the sixteenth century, *lançado* slaving activities increased. Yet whereas from the Caboverdean and European perspective *lançados* were purely slave traders, from the African perspective things seemed different. The expanding slave trade may have mediated *lançado* presence and allowed them to take over preceding trading patterns such as the kola trade once operated by the Sapes, but the role of the kola trade itself testified to the importance of the African perspective on this process. For across Upper Guinea, the exchange of kola had both a commercial and a ritual function. Kola nuts were offered by visitors and at important ceremonies such as weddings and betrothals. Kola nuts were grown in present-day Sierra Leone and Guinea-Conakry and traded north to present-day Guinea-Bissau, as indeed they still are.⁸⁷

This position in the ritual exchanges of a region where ritual and power associations linked to magical prowess were so important cemented the *lançado* position in Upper Guinea. From their facilitation of Atlantic trade, the *lançados* developed a position intimately connected to the wider beliefs and practices of the region and became a discrete caste in their own right. From the African perspective, it was their role in the kola trade which really helped to enhance their status, given the role of kola in ritual and exchange. *Lançado* dominance of the kola trade, emerging in these years along with their role in the contraband slave trade, created ritual as well as lineage bonds for them in Upper Guinea. It was thus their ability to articulate their activities within a framework that offered continuities from preceding patterns which cemented *lançados* as a new caste in the region.

This relationship was important not only in the Casamance region, as we saw in the preceding chapters, but also among the Biafada. By stepping into the shoes of Sape traders, *lançados* began to integrate more fully into the Biafada communities which hitherto had represented the main trading partners of the Sapes in this kola trade.⁸⁸ It was surely this which allowed them to expand their position and to develop large mixed communities on the Grande River in the 1570s and the 1580s as access through the Casamance River to the Kassanké monarch at Bugendo

⁸⁶ Ibid., fols. 295r–296v.

⁸⁷ Observation derived from interviews at Bula market, Guinea-Bissau, April 2011.

⁸⁸ Brooks (1993b).

became more difficult (cf. Chapter 5). By the late 1570s, when the Mane position in Sierra Leone was established and the number of Sape war captives lessened (cf. Table I.2), the *lançados* were in the right position to expand their trade in Biafada territory on the Rio Grande. Thus a complex combination of the expanding power of different Mande groups in Upper Guinea affected the Biafada willingness to accept *lançado* communities; as a consequence, the expansion of the Atlantic Creole society in Upper Guinea was facilitated as Biafada women intermarried with *lançados* and forged the Luso-African Kriston.

The importance of ritual in Western African societies and its long-standing relationship to patterns of trade through kola and the role of Mandinka smiths thus all helped to create a situation in which Kriston communities speaking the Kriolu language emerged in Upper Guinea in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Significantly, many of these Kriston were descended from Biafada women, the *tangomas*, who as we have seen, joined the Atlantic trading communities in this era and often married *lançados*.⁸⁹ Biafada inability to retain their women follows the same pattern we have observed here for the Sape lineages. As we have seen, Biafada society fragmented in this era, and Biafada agricultural production connected to female labour collapsed. As Atlantic trade accelerated and new patterns of trade developed across the region, the peoples of Upper Guinea could no longer ignore the effects of pressures from beyond Africa's shores in shaping new opportunities and potentially lethal challenges.

THE ROLE OF CONTINUITIES IN SHAPING PATTERNS OF CREOLISATION AND POLITICAL TRANSFORMATIONS DURING THE ERA OF THE BOOM IN TRANS-ATLANTIC SLAVING

When we consider the large expansion of the trans-Atlantic slave trade from Western Africa in the late sixteenth century, therefore, it emerges that, as with the early trans-Atlantic trade, continuities with preceding patterns of trade and settlement of outsider trading castes are extremely important. In the very early era of African-European relations, in the 1440s and 1450s, the Portuguese had tried to disrupt patterns and to seize slaves rather than trade for them; but this had failed, and thereafter the Atlantic trade expanded through the interconnection of global trans-Atlantic pressures with existing patterns in Senegambia and Upper

⁸⁹ This origin is well known by Biafada even today – see Seibert (forthcoming, 2012).

Guinea.⁹⁰ Through this interconnection African trading practices could influence Atlantic patterns and, increasingly, African societies could themselves be influenced by the demands of the Atlantic.

The settlement pattern of *lançados* is a key marker of these continuities. As we saw in earlier chapters of this book, their zones of contact in Casamance were made possible by the pre-existing relationship of Upper Guinean lineage heads with analogous outsider trading castes. Such patterns influenced political changes in Senegambia, and indeed continued in the era of the Mande expansion of power in the sixteenth century and the Mane wars. For in addition to their activities in Casamance, *lançados* were also settled in Sierra Leone in the 1560s, acting as intermediaries between the Manes and Atlantic traders.

Evidence for this comes from the ship *Santiago*, captained by Baltasar Barbosa and attacked on the Los islands in 1566: after the attack, it was then able to stock up with water in Sierra Leone, where it had bought slaves earlier.⁹¹ Barbosa noted that he had bought slaves from “Gaspar Lopez and Gaspar Ribero and Francisco Lopez and Gonçalo Nunez and Gaspar Alvarez and Luis de Espindola and from other resident Portuguese”.⁹² Barbosa procured 106 Sape slaves from these *lançados*.⁹³ This must have been in Sierra Leone, because it was here that Barbosa had taken on water before the first attempt to cross the Atlantic. Thus in Sierra Leone, as hitherto in Casamance and on the Grande River, Caboverdeans and *lançados* sought alliances with Mande or Mandinguised groups.

In return for the sale of these slaves to Barbosa, meanwhile, the *lançados* bought “wine and cloth and raisins and figs and jerkins and shirts and hats and socks and oil” from the sailors on the ship.⁹⁴ Thus they sought goods which maintained the appearance of the European side of their identity, both in terms of clothing and food, whilst residing in Sierra Leone and procuring slaves through strategies which required accommodation to their African locale (cf. Chapter 5). This evidence makes it clear that, as in Casamance, the ability to operate plural identities was a real and practical element of the daily interactions of *lançados*, and helped them to bridge the gap between Atlantic and African trades and

⁹⁰ On the initial attempts to seize slaves, see Thornton (1995).

⁹¹ AGI, Justicia 996, No. 2, Ramo 3, fol. 20v.

⁹² Ibid., fols. 55r-55v: “gaspar lopez e de gaspar rribero e de franc[is]o lopez e de gonçalo nunez e de gaspar alvarez e de luis de espindola e de otros hombres Portugueses residentes”.

⁹³ Ibid., fols. 20v, 29r, 38r-v, 55r-v.

⁹⁴ Ibid., fol. 38v: “bino e rruan e pasa e higo e jubones e camisas e sombreros e calzado e azeyte”.

worldviews. On the one hand they were able to integrate and accommodate to African practices (cf. Chapters 4–5), and yet on the other – as we shall see below – they retained a firm sense of European identity. This pluralism was itself a testament to the African locale in which they were situated, where such pluralism had long been a feature of the region (cf. Introduction, Chapter 1).

Moreover, this pluralism occurred in a situation where peoples of Sierra Leone were engaged in a similar process. According to Mark, the Luso-African ivories from Sierra Leone, though exhibiting clear West African sculptural styles, also show that “the artists were clearly responding to a hybrid Luso-African cultural presence”.⁹⁵ That is, as in Casamance, the development of a mixed African-Atlantic cultural outlook emblematic of creolisation was a requirement for both Africans and *lançados* in Sierra Leone. Indeed, this process was fundamental in the provision of slaves for the Atlantic trade as demand increased in this era. Once again, we see how the reciprocal incorporation of cultural practices and material aspects of one another’s culture by Africans and Europeans was essential to the success of genuinely cross-cultural trade in sixteenth-century Western Africa. The key to this was the ability to adopt plural identities discussed in the foregoing paragraph; the preservation of strong cultural differentiation may have been important to some cross-cultural networks studied by historians in the eighteenth century, but this evidence shows that here such strong cultural differentiation was balanced by, and co-existed with, cultural reciprocity, a mixture in keeping with the pluralism inherent in Western Africa.⁹⁶ What this may indicate is that the determining feature for the success of long-distance trade diasporas in the early modern period was the ability of their members to adapt strongly to the requirements of their host locale, and whether this required cultural differentiation, pluralism, or rather integration.

There were two cycles of Atlantic trade here: one of European goods traded by crews of European ships for the slaves that would help to expand the cycle of European consumption, through the mining of metals and the produce of goods such as sugar in the Americas, and another of produce from Western Africa, which saw salt and woven cloths from Cabo Verde exchanged for kola from Upper Guinea. In order to be successful in both these cycles, *lançados* had to understand the worldviews and operations of both systems. Thus did the *lançados* act as the bridge between both

⁹⁵ Mark (2007: 190).

⁹⁶ Trivellato (2009).

African and African-Atlantic trading patterns. This was how they became go-betweens inter-linking Western Africa and the Atlantic world.⁹⁷

Evidence on how they served as go-betweens is rich for the 1570s, principally because of a legal case taken by the contractors of the trade in Upper Guinea and Cabo Verde, Francisco Nuñez de Bejar and Antonio Nuñez de Algarve, against Cristobal Cayado and his associates, all of whom were said to be *lançados*. The case related to events in 1574 and 1575 and reveals much new material on the status of *lançados* in this crucial period.⁹⁸

One of the key things to emerge is the importance for *lançados* of maintaining the trappings of their European identity. We have just seen how *lançados* in Sierra Leone were keen to procure European clothing and foods. In the case between the *contratadores* of Cabo Verde and Guinea and Cayado, much of the evidence hinged on what constituted a *lançado* and on the taxes which *lançados* were obliged to pay. All witnesses agreed that a *lançado* – from the Iberian perspective, of course – was someone who had lived for over a year in Upper Guinea.⁹⁹ Yet even beyond this period they remained subject to Iberian laws if desiring to leave Africa, and there were taxes to be paid if they did so. *Lançados* returning to Cabo Verde or elsewhere in the Portuguese-controlled territories had to pay half of their property to the crown.¹⁰⁰ Numerous witnesses confirmed this, and the relevant excerpt of the royal decree from the main administrative centre in Lisbon dealing with the African trade, the Casa da Mina, was cited, suggesting that this was far from uncommon and that people who had spent long periods in Upper Guinea did return to the Iberian world. That is, many of them retained commercial links with this world, and, judging from the produce which the *lançados* in Sierra Leone bought from Barbosa in 1565, they also retained cultural links and sought to re-create aspects of that world.

We have seen that this maintenance of a sense of differentiation occurred within a framework of pluralism where *lançados* also adopted aspect of their host cultures. What is striking, however, is that from the African perspective the balancing of this *lançado* acculturation with the maintenance of cultural difference by the *lançados* was in fact encouraged

⁹⁷ For the idea of the go-between in this context, see Metcalf (2005).

⁹⁸ The one-thousand-plus folios of the case are a key new source for the history of sixteenth-century Western Africa. They are located at AGI, Escribanía 2A.

⁹⁹ Ibid., fols. 135v, 255v, 364r, and many other places. This was put as spending “*año y dia*” in Upper Guinea.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., fols. 265v, 364r.

by host communities, just as earlier it had been among Moslem diaspora traders from North Africa in the Sahel.¹⁰¹ While the ability to adapt and take on some aspects of the host culture was of course essential, the significance to West Africa of diasporas retaining elements of their distinctiveness to secure trading advantages has been well documented by Greif and Paul Lovejoy.¹⁰² Western Africa was no different, and in the São Domingos area, *lançado* settlements were built in quarters separated from those of the other peoples there.¹⁰³ And because the *lançados* met by Barbosa in 1565 had settled among a Mande group, the Manes, this desire to accentuate difference was also a recognised strategy for them, for surely they had long engaged with *dyula* traders before their migration. Thus whereas from the perspective of Atlantic traders the *lançado* maintenance of European traits made them acceptable business partners, from the African perspective this maintenance of distinctive traits followed a pre-existing pattern where distinctiveness of diaspora traders coexisted with their adoption of some local practices and rituals.¹⁰⁴ It was this accommodation which enabled the *lançados* to play a pivotal role in the expansion of Atlantic slavery in Western Africa in these decades; and this perspective therefore reinforces the importance of one of the key arguments of this book, that is, the necessity of understanding the cultural role of African trading diasporas in the emergence of the Atlantic world, and the importance of analysing the cultural forms taken by long-distance economic networks in the early modern era.

Yet although such patterns were key to the expansion of both Atlantic slavery and the Atlantic Creole culture in Africa, outside of the Mande and Mandinguised communities of Upper Guinea, this pattern of receptivity towards Atlantic traders was by no means universal. Indeed, decentralised societies and other groups exhibited different patterns of connections to the Atlantic world in which creolisation was not a factor. An extremely important correlation of this was that in this era, these communities were precisely those in which the trans-Atlantic slave trade became less significant as a factor.

To the north of the Gambia River, this is clear among the Sereer. We saw in Chapter 6 the importance of the Sereer as suppliers of slaves in

¹⁰¹ Farias (2003: Chapter 3, Section 3.1, Numbered paragraph 265).

¹⁰² Lovejoy (1973: 636, 651); Greif (1993: 537).

¹⁰³ MMAII: Vol. 5, 111 – Donelha's account.

¹⁰⁴ On *lançados* as acceptable business partners, see Barbosa's defence in the 1566 case that on reaching Upper Guinea he bought slaves only from *lançados* and not from any African lineage head or trader: AGI, Justicia 996, No. 2, Ramo 3, fol. 38v.

the mid-sixteenth century. However, by the later sixteenth century this pattern had changed, and Almada described how the Portuguese traders among the Sereer sold goods to the English and French, “acquiring the goods from river to river, and many leagues into the interior. And every year the English and French procure a large number of cowhides and hides of buffaloes and gazelles ... and also much ivory, wax, rubber, ambergris, skins, gold, and other things”.¹⁰⁵ This passage is notable for the absence of a mention of the trade in slaves. Following their initial desire to trade as much as possible for horses and to sell slaves in exchange, the Sereer had developed strategies to avoid the sale of slaves and yet to persist in Atlantic trade. Not only were slaves not sold by the Sereer, but the goods which they did exchange with the English and French were exchanged principally for iron.¹⁰⁶ Evidence from the Americas shows a notable falling off in the numbers of both Jolof and Sereer slaves from the 1560s onwards (see Table I.2), which suggests a much smaller trade in slaves here than before because the trade at Arguim had also declined by then.¹⁰⁷ In these circumstances the English and French, who did not trade for slaves at this time, were more willing to trade for other products than the Caboverdeans and the Portuguese. Thus patterns of *lançado* settlement were affected, and with them the concomitant patterns of creolisation.

Similar patterns of resistance to the slave trade existed elsewhere. We saw in Chapter 5 how resistance to the slaving raids of Masatamba created increasing insecurity in Casamance and placed Kassanké power in the balance. The resistance of Floup and Jabundo-Bainunk and their attacks on Atlantic traders forced the whole political configuration of the Casamance region into the balance by the 1570s. In these circumstances the Portuguese were forced to access the Kassanké court via the São Domingos River up to Cacheu and the creek at Guinguin.¹⁰⁸ The area around Cacheu was heavily populated by Brames, and whereas in the late 1540s New Christians like Manoel Garcia seized slaves there (cf. Chapter 6), thirty years later conditions were different. Alliances needed to be formed with the Brames to ensure that this passage up to the Casamance could be used without trouble, and lineage heads in Cacheu

¹⁰⁵ MMAII: Vol. 3, 251: “adquirindo-lhes os despachos de rio em rio, e muitas léguas pelo sertão. E todos os annos tiram os Ingleses e franceses muita soma de couros vacuns e de búfaros e gazelões ...e assim muito marfim, cera, goma, ambar, algália e ouro”.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.: “tratando com ferro e outras mercadorias que trazem de Inglaterra e França”.

¹⁰⁷ Mendes (2008: 65).

¹⁰⁸ Bocandé (1849: 284–5).

accompanied Portuguese officials on expeditions by the mid-1570s.¹⁰⁹ These changes, and the resistance by many Kassanké to the slaving policies of Masatamba, signalled the demise of Kassanké power, because by the early seventeenth century they had become increasingly subordinate to the Mandinka kingdom of Braço (or Bidassou), which itself was subordinate to Kaabu; Bidassou was located in the Upper Casamance around the present-day towns of Kolda and Sédiou.¹¹⁰

This evidence reveals the importance of the reaction of Upper Guinean peoples to the new slave trade in constraining its activities. The rebellion by Jabundo-Bainunk, Floup and some Kassanké in Bugendo limited Portuguese trade in Casamance and encouraged them to look elsewhere, to Cacheu and to Guinala. Cacheu, as we have seen, was a region which hitherto had been subject to the Kassanké ruler. The Brame of Cacheu were not as heavily Mandinguised as the Kassanké, but as we saw in Chapter 1 they possessed areas of cultural similarities with the Bainunk-Kassanké and they were touched by the Mandinka expansion through their connection to the Kassanké monarch. Probably, like the Sereer and the Jolof of Cajor before them, they saw trade with the Portuguese as a way to shore up their position against hitherto more powerful neighbouring groups. They seized the opportunities of Atlantic trade to forge greater independence from the Kassanké, drawing on the continuities with what had gone before.

Thus a similar pattern developed in Casamance in the mid-sixteenth century to that which we observed in Senegambia for the late fifteenth century, where the Atlantic trade destabilised existing power structures and ultimately undermined the more powerful groups nearest to the coast at the time of their arrival. The pressures of the Atlantic world re-oriented political balances throughout Senegambia and Upper Guinea and tended towards political fragmentation. It was only inland among the Kaabunké and farther south among the Mane that it encouraged consolidation. On the coast, smaller political units asserted independence and used the Atlantic as an opportunity, just as did the ruler of the Kongo province of Sonho in the seventeenth century. However, they were unable to operate along the lines of the “multi-cultural” Casamance kingdom of the pre-Atlantic era (cf. Chapter 1). Thus political fragmentation brought about by the Atlantic trade also, in time, would lead to what we can term,

¹⁰⁹ AGI, Escribanía 2A, fol. 145v.

¹¹⁰ Mota (1981: 155–8); a remnant of historical memory remains, as for instance in the name of the village Simbandi-Bidassou, located between Samin and Tanaf in Upper Casamance.

for want of a better word, “ethnic” fragmentation, or the fragmentation of kinship lines and alliances into smaller political groups. In the coastal regions of Upper Guinea, there was a way in which the Atlantic opening encouraged the consolidation of decentralised societies rather than of larger-scale states.¹¹¹ Thus the resistance of peoples to the physical and social violence of the slave trade, coupled with their skilful appropriation of the opportunities of Atlantic trade, had effects which went far beyond the immediate realignments of the sixteenth century.

Taken in the round, this evidence reinforces something which historians of Africa have long known: that exchanges related to the Atlantic trade were two way and that Atlantic traders had to respond to local patterns of culture, economics and politics in order to meet their commercial needs. As the pattern of the settlement of Atlantic diaspora traders shows, where they brought useful goods and trading opportunities, the pre-existing disposition to accept diaspora traders ensured their welcome – as linguistic evidence attests.¹¹² According to the practices of Upper Guinea, marriage alliances were made and new lineages such as the Kriston developed. Farther south, however, in Sierra Leone, where this history of trans-Saharan diasporic connections was less entrenched, *lançados* did settle, but more permanent creolised Atlantic communities did not develop. Where weaker lineages of groups such as the Biafada and the Kassanké or decentralised societies saw themselves as preyed upon by the trade, they responded by violent attacks on traders and by reshaping the institutions of their societies.

Thus the Atlantic Creole society which had originated in Cabo Verde and become solidified in a Kriolu language and mixed cultural framework did come to influence West Africa itself, but the nature of this influence depended on other factors. Where worlds of cultural exchange and creolisation opened up, they were predicated on the expansion of trans-Atlantic slavery and dependent on the cultural and social frameworks of African societies, the labour demands of America and the consumer demands of Europe. Over the next two centuries, it was to be this world which would come to characterise the Atlantic as a whole.

¹¹¹ On the importance of acephalous societies in the Atlantic slave trade, in contrast to the views of earlier historians, see Hawthorne (2001) and M. Klein (2001).

¹¹² See Bradshaw (1965) on the incorporation of Portuguese loan words into the languages of Sierra Leone and also into Mandinka. Most loan words were related to trade goods brought by the Portuguese, which is suggestive of how the utility of Portuguese diaspora traders was seen here (34–5).

Creole Societies and the Pan-Atlantic in Late-Sixteenth-Century Western Africa and America

The end of the sixteenth century saw important changes both within Western Africa and in the region's Atlantic trade. Starting in 1580, a series of devastating droughts afflicted Cabo Verde. The droughts precipitated famines. Many Caboverdeans relocated to the coast of Upper Guinea. This accentuated the cultural and economic ties binding islands and coast and brought changes in the relationships between Upper Guineans and their Caboverdean and Iberian guests. In 1589 the *lançados* built a fortification at Cacheu in Brâme territory. Here was an attempt to shift the landlord-stranger relationship onto a different footing.¹

This process produced major changes in the emerging creolised community in Western Africa. The arrival of many Caboverdeans swelled this community on the African mainland. Moreover, the fact that there had long been connections between Cabo Verde, the Caribbean islands and America meant that the pan-Atlantic nature of these communities on the African mainland was accentuated. As we have seen, the Kriolu language and mixed Atlantic cultural practices predated these events by some decades, and yet it was in these last years of the sixteenth century that the idea of a Creole community developed. The idea originated in the Americas, which itself stands as testament to the way in which global forces had come to influence local identities and responses in Western Africa by this time.

One of the main aims of this chapter is to show in detail and for the first time how this process unfolded. Key new documentary finds illustrate

¹ See Brooks (1993b) on landlords and strangers. Rodney (1970: 90) saw the fort as symbolising a new relationship between hosts and guests in Upper Guinea.

that the idea of the “Creole” that emerged in the sixteenth century was a proto-transnational ideology which emerged as an explanatory paradigm of this uncertain new and modernising world. This makes this idea analogous to the conceptual lexicon of caste-based, proto-racial identities discussed in Chapter 7. These analogies for ideas with such different contents are surprising, but the similarity lies in the context of the mass mobility which underpinned the transnational nature of both ideologies, and which, as we saw in Chapter 4, was a key aspect of the modernising processes of the sixteenth century.² Both the new class dependent on the security of colonial hierarchies and those who had been born of the violence and accommodations which those hierarchies required needed new ideas to make sense of relationships which were very new. Here were ideas applicable throughout the Atlantic world which informed the mixed social context in which the new Kriolu language and identities had already emerged.

At the same time, events thousands of miles to the south also became relevant to Western Africa. In West-Central Africa, the 1560s saw a shift from what Miller has described as the “relatively peaceful transfer of dependents which had characterised the early intra-African slave trade” to more outright slave raiding.³ This situation was exacerbated by the Portuguese wars in Angola from 1575 onwards and the founding of the settlement of São Paulo de Loanda. The result was a sharp rise in the number of slaves from West-Central Africa making for the Americas by the mid-1580s.⁴ Although Western Africa remained important as a source of slaves in the first third of the seventeenth century, West-Central Africa came to have a dominant role.⁵ However, although this was important from a macro-economic point of view, and of course also to the peoples of West-Central Africa, in Western Africa the consequences of this were slight, at least at first, as the volume of slave exports did not diminish.

Indeed, in the short term the changes of the 1580s heralded a period of intense slaving in Upper Guinea. As we shall see in this concluding chapter, large numbers of Upper Guinean slaves continued to be exported to America. A further goal of this chapter is to detail new evidence for this picture and argue for a connection of this process to the Kriolu-speaking

² Gruzinski (2005).

³ Miller (1976b: 83).

⁴ Heywood/Thornton (2007); Mendes (2008); Alencastro (2000).

⁵ Heywood/Thornton (2007); on the continued importance of Western Africa, see Green (2007b: Part III) and Newson/Minchin (2007: 66). Wheat (2009) shows how the region predominated in slave exports to Cartagena until circa 1620.

communities of Cacheu and its hinterland. Whereas new slaving ports such as Havana saw a sharp rise in slave imports from West-Central Africa in these years, all but two of the slave ships whose cargoes were registered in Cartagena between 1573 and 1592 came from Western Africa.⁶ Thus the emergence of Creole communities which spoke Kriolu as a vernacular on the African mainland and engaged in Atlantic trade coincided with the intensification of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, indicating again the links of creolisation and slavery in the Atlantic world.

The agency of Upper Guinean societies which we have observed in this book was thereby overlaid on a pattern of worsening violent disorder instigated by Atlantic pressures. We must recognise, therefore, the limits of this agency and the pressurising situations in which it had to be exercised. However, this did not mean that societies could not take the initiative in responding to the forces of creolisation and slavery; they were able to reshape their communities and build institutions and histories of which today's Upper Guineans are the proud inheritors. In its final section, this chapter shows how the attempts to reshape institutions following Atlantic slavery in Western Africa went with enslaved Upper Guineans to the Americas and helped to transfer to the Americas some of the processes and ideas which had developed with creolisation in the specific locale of Western Africa. Thus the expansion of slavery and creolisation at the end of the sixteenth century became genuinely pan-Atlantic phenomena, which emphasises the need to place the events we have analysed in this book in a broad global perspective.

THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS OF THE 1580S ON CABO VERDE AND ITS EFFECTS IN WESTERN AFRICA

In 1572 Martín de Centinera visited Cabo Verde en route to the Americas. He wrote a letter on December 22 describing how the mariners of his ship had purchased meat, wood and water there. Thirty cows had been bought together with maize and other provisions.⁷ Yet ten years later when Diego Flores de Valdés wrote from the islands on January 24, 1582, he described a sterile land and a complete lack of provisions.⁸ Both men wrote just after the end of the rainy season. The

⁶ On Cartagena, see Wheat (2009: 111). 40 per cent of the slaves reaching Havana came from Congo and Angola, and 57 per cent from Western Africa (Fuente 2008: 41).

⁷ AGI, Patronato 29, Ramo 26.

⁸ AGI, Patronato 33, No. 3, Ramo 19.

difference in what they found relates to the onset of the ecological crisis which shaped Cabo Verde's relationship with the Atlantic world in the seventeenth century.

In the 1570s, Cabo Verde was well settled and apparently thriving. There were many parishes on Santiago, with large settlements in Santa Catarina and São Domingos as well as at Ribeira Grande.⁹ There were two sizeable parishes in Fogo.¹⁰ Visiting Maio in 1578, the English pirate-hero Francis Drake found vineyards producing good quality grapes tended by people living in low cottages nearby; meanwhile, the Portuguese on Fogo lived "very commodiously ... as in the other islands thereabouts".¹¹ The dominant role which the Cabo Verde islands had in the trans-Atlantic slave trade created this situation. It was still normal for ships to collect slaves in Cabo Verde rather than to go directly to Upper Guinea.¹² This stimulated the economy both through the sale of slaves and the supply of provisions, as Centinera's letter attests. It also fostered cosmopolitanism, with many people in Ribeira Grande having commercial contacts in the Americas and experience of travelling to and fro on the slave ships.¹³ Some of these people returned from America to Seville before plying again to Santiago, which shows just how deeply involved many traders on Cabo Verde were with pan-Atlantic networks.¹⁴ People in the Americas, meanwhile, had frequently spent periods in Cabo Verde.¹⁵ This of course continued the pattern for the 1540s and 1550s, when witnesses for inquisitorial cases relating to Western Africa were frequently interrogated in Lisbon (cf. [Chapter 6](#)). Cabo Verde remained located in a pan-Atlantic economy and worldview, and it was of course this which had facilitated the development of Atlantic ideas of caste and proto-racial identity there, as we saw in [Chapter 7](#).

⁹ MMAII: Vol. 3, 28–53: a census of the parishes of Cabo Verde taken in 1572–3.

¹⁰ Ibid., Vol. 3, 44, 53.

¹¹ Upcott (1936: 124, 127).

¹² See e.g. AGI, Justicia 864, No. 7 (1564); AGI, Justicia 883, No. 3 (1566); AGI, Contaduría 1174, No. 6 (1572); AGI, Escribanía 119A, fol. 15r (1574); AGI, Escribanía 36A (1574); AGI, Santa Fe 37, Ramo 5, No. 42 (1580) – and many others.

¹³ Thus during the Cayado case of the 1570s, Cayado was imprisoned in Hispaniola and there asked many witnesses detailed questions about commercial operations and norms related to *lançados*, revealing very close connections between Cabo Verde and Hispaniola. See Escribanía 2A, fol. 270vff.

¹⁴ AGI, Escribanía 1069A, No. 5. A case from 1583 in which two residents of Cabo Verde, Gaspar Dias and Pedro de Bega, were arrested in a ship returning with the fleet from New Spain to Seville.

¹⁵ In addition to the Cayado case, see AGI, Justicia 204, No. 3, Ramo 1, fols. 8r and 9v for this.

The islands' commercial orientation naturally affected society. Like the New Christian diaspora, Caboverdean traders were themselves early exemplars of transnationals, which made the islands a centre for exchanging ideas and goods.¹⁶ Meanwhile, the concentration on slaving meant that there was a large population of escaped slaves in the interior of Santiago. They had taken the island's best and most fertile land, and the people in Ribeira Grande feared them.¹⁷ It was these *vadios*, or vagrants, who would shape Caboverdean society after the crises of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; they were the ancestors of the *Badius*, the name for people from Santiago in Cabo Verde today.

This picture changed radically after 1580, with the simultaneous onset of political and ecological crises. The political crisis followed the union of the crowns of Portugal and Spain in 1580.¹⁸ This resulted in the accession of Filipe I (Felipe II of Spain) to the Portuguese crown and a sixty-year dual monarchy. Some have seen the Caboverdean archipelago's decline in the period 1580–1640 as stemming, at least in part, from this union.¹⁹ The dominance of the Spanish crown in the Portuguese *ultramar* – even though the colonies of the two nations were administered separately – meant that Santiago was usually bypassed by ships from Seville.²⁰ Portuguese slaving vessels became fair game for English pirates, and by the late 1580s attacks on them were commonplace.²¹ However, the view that this decline stemmed from the Filippine period of Portuguese government takes an overly metropolitan view of history. Imperial power and wealth are significant players in the historical process, but as this book has shown, they cannot entirely override environmental and local forces.

In Cabo Verde, 1580 also saw the onset of a series of famines that caused widespread devastation. The three major episodes occurred in 1580–3, 1590–4, and 1609–11.²² The one that began in the 1580s was so bad that the news reached Europe and alms were sent in the form of flour and grain.²³ The principal cause of the environmental collapse of

¹⁶ On New Christians as “transnationals”, see Patricia Seed in Bayly et al. (2006). Yovel (2009) also sees New Christians as prototypes of modernity, to which transnationalism usually refers.

¹⁷ Upcott (1936: 125).

¹⁸ For a good account of this crisis, see Diffee/Winius (1977: 423–30).

¹⁹ See for example C. Ferreira (1964: 74).

²⁰ Scelle (1906: Vol. 1, 463); M. Silva (1970: Vol. 25, no. 98, 218).

²¹ Heywood/Thornton (2007: 15) make this point. See also Hakluyt (1904: Vol. 10, 184–91) for two examples of this.

²² Carreira (1972: 191).

²³ ASV, Secretaria di Stato di Portogallo, Vol. 1, fol. 408v. See also AHU, Cabo Verde, Caixa 1, Doc. 23, where the governor of Cabo Verde, Francisco Ruiz de Sequeira, mentions that millet was sent to the islands during the 1583 famine.

the islands was agricultural improvidence.²⁴ Widespread overgrazing is implied by the documentary evidence of feral cattle on Santiago as early as the 1480s.²⁵ Goats were wild on all the islands by the early sixteenth century.²⁶ The effects of overgrazing were aggravated by tree felling to provide wood for passing ships (mentioned in Centinera's letter), leading to soil erosion and the reduced reliability of springs.²⁷ As Jared Diamond has shown, in this process of failed environmental brinkmanship, Cabo Verde was merely one of many societies which have overreached without heeding signs of their own imminent collapse.²⁸

However, it was not immediately clear that the drought of 1580–3 heralded a decisive shift in the islands' ecology and geopolitical importance. When Francis Drake sacked Ribeira Grande in 1585, his men found that there was still running water in the stream, and up the valley there were "gardens and orchards well replenished with divers sorts of fruites, herbes and trees, as lymons, oranges, sugar canes, [coconuts], plantans, potato-rootes, cucumbers, small and round onions, garlicke".²⁹ Just as it may not have seemed that there had been a permanent shift in the Caboverdean ecology, the same went for the islands' role in the Atlantic trade. The fact that Drake still thought Ribeira Grande worth attacking demonstrates that the shift in Western Africa's Atlantic trading hub to the coast was not yet complete.³⁰ According to one witness in Cartagena, Drake's fleet had consisted of twenty ships.³¹ Ribeira Grande was still thought of as a prize, and two years before, in 1583, it had also been attacked, leading to the capture there of a ship from Elmina.³² Yet soon it became clear that a deeper process was under way, and by 1588 there was rampant inflation on the islands, confirming the extent of the crisis.³³

The combined effect of Iberian political rivalries, piracy and environmental collapse created a situation from which Cabo Verde's international trade never entirely recovered. The extractive cycle of the islands had reached its limits. A shift developed in Western Africa. Absence from

²⁴ This view is shared by T. Hall (1992: Vol. 1, 5).

²⁵ HGCV: CD, Vol. 1, 53.

²⁶ Costa (1939: 48–51).

²⁷ This point is made tellingly by Brooks (1993b: 148).

²⁸ Diamond (2005).

²⁹ Hakluyt (1904: Vol. 10, 105, 106). Admittedly this visit in November came just after the rains, but nevertheless it shows that Santiago had recovered somewhat since 1583.

³⁰ ASV, Secretaria di Stato di Portogallo, Vol. 1A, fol. 77r – provides a good account of the sacking of Ribeira Grande. See also Upcott (1936: 270).

³¹ AGI, Santa Fe 37, Ramo 6, No. 72, fol. 1v.

³² ASV, Secretaria di Stato di Portogallo, Vol. 1, fol. 388v.

³³ AHU, Cabo Verde, Caixa 1, Doc. 13, No. 12, fol. 2r.

Cabo Verde became endemic from the 1580s onwards, with people both settling in Upper Guinea and refusing to go to the region at all. The bishop of Cabo Verde between 1585 and 1607, Frei Pedro Brandão, was absent for more than ten years in the latter part of his episcopate.³⁴ From having been a lynchpin in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, Cabo Verde began its long decline.

REORIENTATIONS IN WESTERN AFRICA AND THE NEW SETTLEMENTS AT CACHEU AND GUINALA

The movement of people from Cabo Verde to settle in Upper Guinea of course followed pre-existing patterns. As we have seen in this book, by 1580 this was becoming a unified cultural and political space. When Martín de Centinera referred to the provisions he procured at the islands in 1572, he was probably referring to millet and rice brought from Africa rather than to crops grown on the islands. In Cristobal Cayado's 1574 journey, the ship captain Christoval Fernandez described how they had sailed from Santiago to the Nunes River and thence to the São Domingos before trying to return to Santiago.³⁵ The ship manifest of the free Blacks on this voyage included people identifying themselves as Jolof, Pepel and Sape, but also several people from the island of Santiago.³⁶ Caboverdeans and peoples of Senegambia and Upper Guinea frequently mixed, and thus it was logical that it was to the African coast that Caboverdeans turned when the droughts struck.

As we have seen, the *lançado* communities on the coast were already large. In 1582, Andrade described how there were about fifty *casas de brancos* [white households] at both the Grande and São Domingos Rivers. At the São Domingos the trade was for slaves, wax and ivory, and at the Grande it was for slaves, gold and ivory.³⁷ A sudden influx of Caboverdeans accentuated the numbers of traders and contributed to an expansion in the slave trade. It disrupted the equilibrium which had developed between *lançados* and Upper Guineans, and led to an attempt to shift the relationship between Africans and Europeans towards that which Caboverdeans had known on the archipelago. This tells us much about the effects of Atlantic slavery in Western Africa in the sixteenth

³⁴ Cerrone (1983: 25): in 1604, Filipe II wrote to Brandão, urging him to go to the see since he had not been there for 10 years.

³⁵ AGI, Escribanía 2A, fols. 461v–462r.

³⁶ Ibid., fols. 499v–501v.

³⁷ MMAII: Vol. 3, 105.

century, and, given the way in which Cabo Verde was interconnected to all corners of the Atlantic world, about how this process affected the emergence of new ideas in the sixteenth century Atlantic.

For some time, the accent of *lançado* contacts with Kassanké and Brame peoples had been shifting away from Bugendo and towards Cacheu. The construction of the fort at Cacheu in 1589 was the culmination both of this process and of the migration from Santiago. Indeed, it is noteworthy that according to Almada the fort was instigated by Manuel Lopes Cardoso, a resident of Santiago.³⁸ The Brames around Cacheu tried to rebel in 1590, but they could not destroy the new fortified settlement.³⁹ By 1591 Cacheu was a focal point for the exchange of slaves for iron brought from the Gambia and the Petite Côte between the Cape Verde peninsula and the Saluum delta.⁴⁰ Within a few years, the fort at Cacheu was increasingly accepted by the Brames, and relations became more amicable.⁴¹

The fort at Cacheu symbolised, as Rodney saw, a new era in the relationship between hosts and guests.⁴² For some time Caboverdeans and *lançados* had been forging alliances with the Brames of the Cacheu region. In 1573 the lineage head of Cacheu had accompanied Caboverdean officials on a punitive expedition against *lançados*.⁴³ At this time the number of *lançados* there was low, but the migration from Cabo Verde and the shift in *lançado* attention from Bugendo to Cacheu in the 1580s changed this situation and led to tensions. Almada describes how the *lançados* living there were increasingly afflicted by robberies and physical attacks, just as they were among the Biafada in the Grande River and among the Kassanké at Bugendo (see Chapters 5 and 8).⁴⁴ The *lançado* impact on the Cacheu region soon became ever greater, with the proportion of Brame slaves exported to the Americas growing in the 1580s and 1590s (see Table I.2). Moreover, the Brames were under pressure from the Floup in this period, whose numbers had expanded according to Almada, and who had moved into the area of the São Domingos River.⁴⁵

³⁸ Ibid., Vol. 3, 300.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ The account of Richard Rainolds, published in NGC, Vol. 1, Book 2, 245.

⁴¹ MMAII: Vol. 3, 300.

⁴² Rodney (1970: 90).

⁴³ AGI, Escribanía 2A, fol. 145v.

⁴⁴ MMAII: Vol. 3, 299.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Vol. 3, 290.

The physical assaults which the *lançados* suffered may reflect some of these tensions with the Floup and the raids led by Masatamba from Casamance; they also illustrate the discord among Brame lineages as to the wisdom of the trade with Caboverdeans and *lançados*. This confirms the picture we have seen for both the Biafada and Kassanké. The peoples of Upper Guinea had widely different views as to the best way of dealing with Atlantic pressures, and whereas some lineages thought they would benefit from alliances, other lineages resisted. This indeed emphasises how it is important to try to understand changes in Atlantic Africa through the concept of lineage rather than that of some “ethnicised” identity.

Thus the construction of the fortifications at Cacheu and at Guinala reflected this growing insecurity which *lançado* traders faced. Yet these developments may also have reflected Caboverdean priorities and indeed confirm just how much the spaces of Western Africa were connected by the end of the sixteenth century. The decision to build the Fortaleza de São Filipe at Ribeira Grande was taken after the attack by Drake in 1585, just four years before the construction of the fort at Cacheu. It is quite probable that the two projects were connected. Moreover, Caboverdeans were accustomed to being masters of their territory and of their Upper Guinean slaves. They were not accustomed to living among Upper Guineans in a complex host-guest relationship. It may therefore be that part of the reason for the assaults on *lançados* at Cacheu was that the Caboverdeans imported a different, arrogant way of behaving which previous *lançados* had learnt to attenuate. We know, for instance, that the arrogance of new arrivals in Cacheu caused problems in African-European relations in the seventeenth century, as the case of Gonçalo Gamboa de Ayala attested in the 1640s.⁴⁶ Certainly, Caboverdeans such as Manuel Lopes Cardoso were well accustomed to segregating themselves from others, as they did with the construction of this fortification. These Caboverdeans imported a ghetto mentality from Ribeira Grande, where, as we have seen, those of New Christian blood were confined to the *Rua do Calhau* (cf. Chapter 7).

Thus the construction of the forts at Cacheu and Guinala illuminates the difference between the worldviews of Caboverdeans who traded for slaves and did not live among Africans and the *lançados* who did. By the end of the sixteenth century, mobile Caboverdean traders had developed a system of racial hierarchy which encouraged them to separate

⁴⁶ Green (2007b: 317) describes the problems Ayala faced in Cacheu as governor, problems his rivals said were due to his *hauteur* when relating to the Pepels of the settlement.

themselves from those they perceived as impure, but *lançados* had a different approach. The birth of the trans-Atlantic slave trade accompanied the birth of racial hierarchies among those who depended on slaves for their economic livelihoods but did not live among the peoples from whom these slaves came. Such racism was at bottom a form of moral instrumentalism designed to make more palatable the new economic and social realities upon which the hierarchies which now ruled society depended.

It is worth remembering that the ratio of whites to slaves in Cabo Verde in the 1580s was similar to that on Caribbean islands such as Jamaica in the eighteenth century, by which time a system of racial differentiation had emerged which had derived from the *sistema de castas* developed in the Americas in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and which categorised people according to the proportion of African and Amerindian ancestry.⁴⁷ Thus similar racial demographics in the eighteenth-century English Caribbean to sixteenth-century Cabo Verde produced analogous ideological contours there to those which had developed in the Iberian Atlantic in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The interconnection of Cabo Verde to the Atlantic world at this early period, and Cabo Verde's focal place in the early trans-Atlantic slave trade, meant that the subsequent ideological condition of the Caribbean had been influenced by these ideologies which were to have such long-lasting effects on the Atlantic world.

Thus the fortification of Cacheu helps us to understand how ideas had changed during the sixteenth century. The droughts of the early 1580s and the migration of Caboverdeans to the coast meant that some of these changes came to exert new pressure in Upper Guinea. The increased *lançado* population of the 1580s meant that there were more traders actively seeking to procure slaves for the Atlantic trade.⁴⁸ It is therefore perhaps to this movement from Cabo Verde that we should look for an explanation as to the growth in Upper Guinea of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the 1580s and 1590s. This was linked to the additional demand for labour which emerged with new mines at Zaragoza in the Nuevo Reino

⁴⁷ In 1582 the ratio of white Europeans to slaves was roughly 1:10 on Santiago (MMAII: Vol. 3, 99). This was similar to the ratio on Jamaica in the eighteenth century (Jordan 1974: 72). See Fredrickson (2002: 40) on the *sistema de castas*. This unravelled by the eighteenth century, but its legacy in the English Caribbean was the same system, with quattros and mustees replacing the original Spanish labels.

⁴⁸ The increased *lançado* population is revealed by the crown's increased desire to deal with them. In 1591 the governor Brás Soares wrote to Filipe II on the urgency of dealing with the *lançados*, and in 1595 Filipe confirmed the legislation relating to them. See M. Silva (1970: Vol. 25, no. 98, 218).

de Granada and the consolidation of the mines at Potosí.⁴⁹ The direct trade linking Cabo Verde and Bugendo to Cartagena had begun to grow in the 1560s and 1570s (cf. Chapter 7), and by the 1580s it was well established.⁵⁰ Hitherto historians have emphasised the new system for the awarding of slave contracts following the union of Portuguese and Spanish crowns when explaining this expansion of the trade after the 1580s, but African and American factors were equally as important, if not more so.⁵¹

Certainly, the increased presence of Caboverdeans led to an increase in slave exports from Upper Guinea in the 1580s. A royal official based in Veracruz wrote in 1592 that there were at that time thirteen ships trading for slaves in Upper Guinea.⁵² As slave ships in these years regularly carried between 250 and 300 slaves, this would be equivalent to between 3,250 and 3,900 slaves exported at this moment alone.⁵³ To these need to be added an estimated 1,500 per year exported from Upper Guinea to Brazil in the 1570s and 1580s.⁵⁴ An indication of the order of magnitude was given by Andrade for 1582, when he wrote that the Grande River was of such importance that twenty to thirty ships could be found there at any one time trading for slaves.⁵⁵ Although Santiago retained a powerful position in the Atlantic networks which supplied these slaves, these events were harbingers of change in Western Africa, both in terms of the respective importance of the Cabo Verde islands and the African mainland and in terms of the peoples of Upper Guinea as a whole.⁵⁶

Indeed, these pieces of evidence provide important corroboration for the general argument of the book as to the importance of the trans-Atlantic slave trade from Western Africa in the sixteenth century. The fact

⁴⁹ Mathieu (1982: 39–40).

⁵⁰ For examples of this in the 1580s, see AGI, Santa Fe 37, Ramo 5, No. 56 (1584); AGI, Santa Fe 37, Ramo 6, No. 81 (1588); and also AGI, Santa Fe 37, Ramo 6, 103, a register of all the ships arriving with slaves in Cartagena between 1585 and 1589.

⁵¹ For this type of explanation, see Palmer (1976: 12).

⁵² AGI, Mexico, Legajo 22, No. 82, Ramo 1.

⁵³ Christopher Newport seized a Portuguese slave ship with a cargo of 300 Africans in 1591 (Hakluyt: Vol. 10, 184); in 1592 William King seized another such ship with 270 slaves (*ibid.*, Vol. 10, 191).

⁵⁴ Godinho (1981: Vol. 4, 172).

⁵⁵ MMAII: Vol. 3, 105. These boats included the small vessels plied by *lançados* and Caboverdeans as well as larger Atlantic sailing ships.

⁵⁶ Torrão, for instance, holds that Santiago did not lose its function as an important slaving post until circa 1610 (Torrão 1995: 35), citing the role of traders from Santiago such as Diogo Ximenes Vargas in acting as go-betweens for the governors of Cabo Verde in the coastal trade.

that officials in both Cabo Verde and Veracruz offer similar estimates of the volume of shipping offers confirmation that this was sizeable. And as we have seen, Atlantic trade resulted from a complex interplay of factors related to pre-existing histories, societies facing particular pressures, and economic demands from the Atlantic. It is surely unlikely that this volume of trade could have sprung from nowhere. Instead, this expanding trade built on what had gone before during the sixteenth century as a whole, which was a much larger trade than official estimates have previously countenanced.

THE PAN-ATLANTIC AND THE EMERGENCE OF CREOLE IDENTITIES IN WESTERN AFRICA AND THE NEW WORLD

The importance of detailed localised studies of West African societies in the early modern period was highlighted at the start of this book as a means of examining just how varied the response of African societies was to Atlantic forces. Although this book has only looked at one part of Atlantic Africa in detail, analogous studies could be made for other regions to enhance this picture. As we can now see, these local studies cannot be separated from the interaction of the local with the global. It is in this interaction that something like a “world” history can be identified, together with West Africa’s place in that history.

Over the past two decades, revisionist scholars have challenged previous ideas of world history, which were connected to a Eurocentric paradigm in which European actors joined up the world’s dots. The work of scholars such as Abu-Lughod led to the idea that prior to the sixteenth century the world consisted of several distinct “world-systems”, none of which sought to achieve hegemony across the whole globe as the European empires later did.⁵⁷ As Bayart has suggested, these world economic systems necessarily included Africa through the trans-Saharan and Indian Ocean trades.⁵⁸

We have seen in this book that the sixteenth century saw a continuity of this process of global connections through the very early involvement of Western Africa in Atlantic trade. Societies of Western Africa were heavily linked to societies elsewhere in the Atlantic world and influential in the ways in which those societies developed. Just as there were constant exchanges between here and points in the Americas and Europe,

⁵⁷ Abu-Lughod (1989).

⁵⁸ Bayart (2000: 218).

the same was also true within Africa. As we saw in the preceding section of this chapter, a ship from Elmina was attacked on Santiago in 1583. Such connections were continuities from patterns that had been apparent from much earlier in the sixteenth century. In 1514 ships plying the route between São Tomé and Lisbon were ordered to stop on the Senegambian coast to buy provisions for their slaves (cf. [Chapter 3](#)); and as early as the 1520s, there were *grumetes* in Kongo who probably came from the Bugendo area.⁵⁹ In the light of these long-standing connections, it should be no surprise that, on a Caboverdean mission in Upper Guinea in 1573, one of the crew, Andres Hernandez, was nicknamed “Angola”.⁶⁰ Perhaps this was testament to earlier experiences he had had there; perhaps he was always talking about them, a sixteenth-century “travel bore”. Influences also ran in the opposite direction; the so-called Jaga cannibals, or Imbangala, roamed throughout much of Kongo and Ndongo in West-Central Africa in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and were thought by many to be related to the “cannibal Sumba” troops who had devastated Sierra Leone under the Manes (cf. [Chapter 8](#)), which indicates that ideas and news travelled frequently from one to another part of the African Atlantic.⁶¹ Certainly, this suggests that Caboverdeans were well acquainted with events and ideas elsewhere in the African Atlantic, just as they were with what was happening in Hispaniola and New Spain.

It was such interconnectivity which facilitated the emergence of trans-national ideologies such as racial hierarchies and the idea of the Creole society. In a space of constant mobility, these supra-national ideas created a common sense of identification in an era of such enormous change. Just as common religion was a frequent source of shared identity for members of trading diasporas in West Africa, both among the *dyula* and among the New Christians, so the shared racism of the slaving classes of the Atlantic world and the shared sense of dislocation of the enslaved could

⁵⁹ MMAI: Vol. 4, 76 for the Sãotomense ships stopping in Senegambia [“Bezeguiche : & em outros partes dali derredor”]; Ibid., Vol. 1, 479 for the *grumetes* in Kongo.

⁶⁰ AGI, Escribanía 2A, fol. 145v: “el navio...de que era piloto Andres Hernandez, angola de sobrenombr m[orad]or en la ysla de Santiago”.

⁶¹ Jadin (1975: Vol. 1, 346) – the Dutch representative in Luanda, Pieter Moortamer, stated that “Les Yakas dont je viens de parler sont, dit-on, des brigands originaires de Sareel Joens [Sierra Leone]”; meanwhile, the Englishman Andrew Batell, who met the “Jaga” circa 1600, described how “they told us that they were Gagas, or Gindes, that come from Sierra de Lion” (Ravenstein (1901: 19–20) – of course the Imbangala did not come from as far away as Sierra Leone, but most likely were using the circulation of the story of the Manes and the Sumbas for their own ends. For a useful discussion of the linked perception of the Imbangala and the Manes, see Miller (1973: 123).

also create such an identification.⁶² This was why these ideas emerged along with the mobility, violence and forced displacement that accompanied the rise of modernity in the sixteenth century. Racism served as a legitimating ideology, whereas the idea of a Creole society allowed those who had been displaced through this process to articulate the new circumstances of their position. This elucidation explains why the category of the “transnational” is relevant, even for such a distant time. It helps to contextualise these new ideas and their conceptual origins, showing how it was precisely through the proto-modern mobility and the needs for badges of shared identities among the new dispersed communities that they emerged.

This can be seen with the trajectory of the idea of the “Creole”, which in fact was developed in the Americas and was then transferred to West Africa. Although not found in sixteenth-century documents produced in Western Africa, the term “criollo” was frequently used to denote slaves born in America and also those born in Iberia.⁶³ By the 1560s at the latest this is apparent in the notarial records of slave sales in the Americas, with slaves variously identified as “criollo de Santo Domingo”, “criollo de la isla de Madera”, and “criollo de la Ysla de San Juan de Puerto Rico”.⁶⁴ This represented a change, because in the early 1550s slaves born in Cuba had still sometimes been described without the epithet *criollo*.⁶⁵ By 1559, however, slaves were being described as *criollos*, and thus the emergence of this category can probably be placed at some point in the 1550s.⁶⁶

This change was not accidental. Similar processes were at work in the recording of the origins of slaves brought to the Americas. Although in the 1530s, 1540s and 1550s the “ethnic” origins of these slaves were at times recorded, scribes failed to do this rigorously.⁶⁷ From the 1550s onwards,

⁶² On Islam as a badge of shared identity of the *dyula* diaspora see Chapter 2, this volume, and A. Cohen (1971). On crypto-Judaism as a form of shared identity in the seventeenth-century New Christian Atlantic diaspora, see Green (2007b: Part III, Chapter 2).

⁶³ On Iberian *criollos*, see Schorsch (2008: Vol. 1, 35).

⁶⁴ AGN, NT, Rollo 4, Legajo 12, fols. 4v, 221v, 291r (all 1568). Other *criollos* were said to be from the Canaries (*ibid.*, Legajo 13, fol. 194v: 1568), Spain (*ibid.*, Legajo 11, fol. 232r: 1568), and Santa Fe de Antioquia (AGN, NT, Rollo 13, Legajo 44, fol. 212v).

⁶⁵ AGN, NT, Rollo 02, Legajo 3, fol. 149r (1552).

⁶⁶ AGI, Justicia 35, Pieza 3, fols. 222r-224r.

⁶⁷ Among the slaves sold by Estevan Justiniano to Pedro Sarmiento on Hispaniola in 1531, just four out of thirty-two African slaves had their ethnic origins recorded (AGI, Justicia 9, No. 7, fols. 25v-26r). AGN, NT, Rollo 2, Legajos 3-4 contains several examples of slave sales in which the slaves sold were simply recorded as “*un negro*”. Records from Mexico City indexed in Millares Carlo/Mantecón (1945) contain no ethnic origins for slaves in the 1520s or 1530s.

such ethnonyms were recorded with increasing frequency, and by the 1560s and 1570s it was very rare to have a document in which they were not recorded. The reason for this was almost certainly economic. In 1556 the Spanish crown had passed a law stipulating the sale price of slaves from various regions of West Africa in the Americas, and thus proof of a slave's origins affected the price for which they were sold. This law created an uproar, with complaints registered from Mexico City in 1557 and from Lima in 1560, testament to how the law changed the approaches of slave traders.⁶⁸ Thus the institutionalisation of "ethnicity" – which, as we saw earlier, was usually attributed following projections from both Mandinka and Portuguese in Western Africa (see Chapter 1) – was related to the profit motive. This was as true for the *criollos* of the Americas as it was for the slaves from Upper Guinea.

Given the importance of place of origin for slaves imported to the Americas, those brought directly from Cabo Verde began to be ascribed *criollo* status. This can be discerned from the late 1560s onwards.⁶⁹ Moreover, it was an identification which people from Cabo Verde themselves recognised. A Caboverdean from Santiago, arriving in Hispaniola in 1575, described himself as a free *criollo* to the scribe taking the ship register.⁷⁰ That this was a distinctive identity of a similar category to the new ethnicised identities ascribed to peoples of Western Africa is shown by the fact that other Africans on this ship described themselves according to one of these ethnonyms – as Jolof, Brame, and so on.⁷¹ Thus by the mid-1570s, at least some Caboverdeans recognised the term *criollo* and attributed it to themselves. The origins of this identification must have come through Cabo Verde's position in the trans-Atlantic trade and the frequent passage of Caboverdeans to Hispaniola, New Spain and other points in the Americas where the term "*criollo*" was in common usage. Thus in Western Africa, the idea of the Creole society emerged from the region's pan-Atlantic connections.

We must recognise however that this term was used here to relate to hostile bureaucrats making an economic judgement of a potential slave's

⁶⁸ See AGI, Justicia 204, No. 3, Ramo 1: a long protest from Mexico City in 1557. See also AGI, Justicia 432, No. 1, Ramo 2: this contains a long protest from Lima in 1560.

⁶⁹ AGN, NT, Rollo 4, Legajo 11, fol. 235v (1568); ibid., Rollo 7, Legajo 23, fol. 161r (1576) and Legajo 24, fol. 36r (1576). See also Wheat (2009: 72) for a case in Havana from 1579.

⁷⁰ AGI, Escribanía 2A, fol. 499v: "otro negro llamado amador lopez que dixo hera criado en la ysla de Santiago y era horro y otro llamado atanasio cardoso que dixo era criollo y horro."

⁷¹ Ibid.

worth. We cannot know whether Caboverdeans used this term among themselves even though this individual used it here. Certainly it would not have been a universal term, because slaves in Ribeira Grande were still referred to according to their Upper Guinean origins in the seventeenth century.⁷² Most likely *criollos* referred solely to those born in Cabo Verde who spoke the vernacularised Kriolu, which differentiated them from those who had come over to the islands from Upper Guinea. By the late sixteenth century, Caboverdean society had subtler categorisations than “masters” and “slaves”. In a world where attributions of caste and “ethnicity” were increasingly connected to hierarchies and the potentiality of slavery, the idea of the Creole made sense to those who were speaking the new vernacular form of Kriolu and needed a marker of identity and belonging with which to differentiate themselves from Upper Guineans.

In this situation, the migration of many Caboverdeans to Cacheu and Guinala in the 1580s becomes a significant factor in the spread of the idea of the Creole society. The fact that the caste of *criollos* was a recognised part of Caboverdean society by the 1570s is a strong reason for supposing that the idea was transferred from here to the African-European relations then being developed in Upper Guinea. As we have seen earlier in this book, Kriolu had vernacularised in Cabo Verde by the 1560s, and the strong connections between the islands and the coast and the coastward migration post-1580 are good arguments for supporting Jacobs's new evidence for the emergence of Kriolu on Santiago and its transference to Upper Guinea as a vernacular prior to the seventeenth century.⁷³

Importantly, evidence for the continued consolidation of the Kriolu vernacular in Cabo Verde, which would have facilitated this process, exists for this period. A Caboverdean scribe annotating the manifest of *lançados* in Bugendo in 1573 used the modern Kriolu word for man, “homí”, to describe the mixed-race Caboverdeans on the list; but when describing other individuals, he referred to them with the Portuguese “home”.⁷⁴ Thus when large numbers of Caboverdeans migrated to the Upper Guinea coast in the 1580s, this language and these ideas went also. We should recognise that this affected only those parts of Upper Guinea connected to Atlantic trading communities, but nonetheless, the

⁷² IAN/TT, Jesuitas, Cartório, Maço 37, doc. 18: the will of Catarina Fernandes of 1632 includes the freeing of Bijagó and Sape slaves (fol. 2v).

⁷³ Jacobs (2010); Quint (2000: 19).

⁷⁴ AGI, Escribanía 2A, fols. 142v–143r: “nuno G[onçal]vez homí bajo, morador na Ilha de Santiago ... Jeronimo de Souza home...”.

development of an Atlantic Creole identity among these communities would have far-reaching effects, helping to consolidate the Kriston community as it emerged in the seventeenth century as the new go-betweens linking Upper Guinea and the Atlantic world.

This exposition of the emergence of the idea of the “Creole” in Western Africa reveals several important things. The spread of this term and its widespread usage followed directly from economic factors, confirming the deep interconnections between the expansion of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the profit motive, and the emergence of “ethnic” or proto-national identities in the sixteenth century. As we have seen, this was in parallel to the development of racial hierarchies which also accompanied the birth of trans-Atlantic slavery. For the imperialism of the early Atlantic world required classificatory typologies, not mestizo logics, to create hierarchies of both labour and value which left a deep mark on subsequent histories.

What were the attitudes like of those participants in the slave trade whose commercial demands affected these interconnected processes? A clue emerges in the account of Juan de Narria, accused of smuggling contraband slaves into Hispaniola in 1588. Narria said that the ship which he had laden in Cabo Verde, called Santa Maria del Puerto, had had with it a small vessel [*patax*] “as is the custom to bring one, called Nuestra Señora del Rosario, so that slaves who get ill on the voyage can be put there so that their illness does not infect the other slaves”.⁷⁵ As far as Narria was concerned, the health of the ailing slaves was immaterial; what mattered was that the other healthy slaves did not fall ill too and so endanger the profits of the voyage. This was the mentality which had emerged along with the classificatory typologies of the sixteenth century. This psychology in later centuries would turn its attention to other typologies and would build the detailed classificatory systems of the natural world which remain so important to worldviews today.

Yet although cold economics and hierarchical systems of value and belonging were entrenched by the Atlantic system, there were other more nuanced consequences. As a variety of historians have shown, Upper Guineans who were sold into Atlantic slavery sought to connect to their memories of Africa. As Fuente has shown for Havana, many Upper Guineans tried to marry others from among their own lineages.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ AGI, Escribanía 2B, No. 3: “un patax como es costumbre llevarse nombrado n[uest]ra s[enor]a del Rosario para meter los esclavos q enfermasen por que no se pegue la enfermedad a los demas esclavos”.

⁷⁶ Fuente (2008: 167).

Bennett concurs with this picture, and has shown in great detail how both Angolans and Upper Guineans in New Spain used the Spanish legal system to their advantage in an attempt to assert their rights.⁷⁷ Marrying someone from one's own lineage was an important way of trying to reconstruct communities and identities that had been ruptured by the Middle Passage. And whereas some married people of their own group, others lived among them or forged religious confraternities according to these African identities.⁷⁸ Other ways of reconstituting Upper Guinean societies could be forged from the types of food consumed and the development of family structures, and these too were important strategies used by Upper Guineans in eighteenth-century Maranhão, Brazil, as Hawthorne has shown.⁷⁹

And as some enslaved Upper Guineans in the Americas sought to reconstitute familiar contours of society through the institutions of the Spanish colonial empire, others escaped, as had done the *vadios* in Cabo Verde and the *cimarrones* in Cuba, Hispaniola and Panama before them. Often, large groups of runaway slaves from the same Upper Guinea background congregated together.⁸⁰ These groups sometimes flourished in topographies of marshes and lagoons, which were similar to those that they had known in Upper Guinea.⁸¹ The struggle to maintain elements of the Old World when transplanted so brutally to the New became a key part of African identities in the New World, as the forge of creolisation was transplanted from Africa to America along with the institutional violence and cultural mixtures which Atlantic slavery had always brought with it.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 161, 167; Bennett (2003).

⁷⁸ This emerges from the description of *criollo* slaves in the Americas as belonging to a particular ethnic group – that is, as having been born in the Americas from two parents of the same group. See AGN, ANS/NP, Rollo 1507294, Legajo 2, 1596, fol. 81r: “*Dominga Criolla de Casta Biafra*” and “*Salvador negro criollo portuguese çape*”. Also, some groups of *cimarrones* banded together according to ethnic affiliation. There was a large community of Jolof *cimarrones* near Cartagena in the early 1580s (AGI, Santa Fe 37, Ramo 5, no. 42 (1581) and 43 (1580)). See also Fuente (2008: 167). On the confraternities, see Bowser (1974: 249).

⁷⁹ Hawthorne (2010b).

⁸⁰ See for example AGI, Patronato 234, Ramo 6, fols. 416v-419v.

⁸¹ Ibid., fol. 214v: the Sape *cimarrones* in Panamá are said to live in an area with great lagoons and marshes – “*de grandes ciénegas e lagunas*”.

Conclusion

Lineages, Societies and the Slave Trade in Western Africa to 1589

In a village near the modern town of Gabú, in Guinea-Bissau, a Mandinka descendant of the Kaabunké explained to me why everyone in his village was concerned at the aging of their *marabout*, or *mooro*, Talla Seydi. The reason, he explained, was that a good *marabout* helped a village to keep ahead. When Talla Seydi died, his village would no longer have the advantage that it then had over its neighbours and rivals. All the villagers feared the consequences.¹

In Guinea-Bissau *marabouts* are held to have strong supernatural powers. They are able to make charms which protect the wearer from knife attacks and gunfire, and other charms enable them to pass unseen through moments of danger.² The invocation of magical prowess by my informant seemed to relate a village's ability to be more powerful than its rivals to its access to these significant spiritual gifts. The Mandinka of Kaabu are still revered for the powers of their *marabouts*. Yet within and between different Mandinka villages of the region, the powers of the *marabouts* are also differentiated and are held responsible for a village's success.

The worries of this village in the Gabú region also revealed the rivalries between villages in the zone and the potential dangers that could result. What could these dangers be? Baum and Hawthorne have shown how young men from different villages of Upper Guinea raided one another for captives in the era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade as a rite of passage; this represented a means to secure cattle in the ransoms paid for the

¹ From a discussion in March 2000, near Gabú.

² See Green (2001).

return of these captives or the acquisition of Atlantic goods through the selling of these captives to middlemen in the slave trade if the ransom was not paid.³ Neighbouring villages were thus always a potential threat. The spiritual powers and success of intermediaries between this world and the supernatural were held to be decisive in ensuring a village's success in the face of these dangers (and opportunities). Thus as Kaabu became the most powerful political force in the region, Kaabu's *marabouts* became the most respected.

This interpretation may illuminate some of the debates concerning the role of ritual, witchcraft and representations of the supernatural in memorialising the trans-Atlantic slave trade (cf. the discussion in the introduction to Chapter 8). Baum has shown that spirit shrines relating to the Atlantic slave trade emerged among the Floup by the early nineteenth century.⁴ This discussion of Talla Seydi's powers may suggest how rituals and the supernatural became hard to separate from the Atlantic trade. Given what we saw in Chapter 1 as to the importance of power associations forged by Mandinka smiths in the pre-Atlantic era, as well as the association of ritual and power in West Africa, and indeed in all societies, the fact that a village or lineage's autonomy depended on successful defence from raiders motivated by the opportunities of Atlantic trade meant that the guardians of ritual power could not be separated from the forces triggered by the Atlantic encounters. This may indeed explain how, as we saw in Chapter 8, the supernatural continues to be connected to stories of external oppression. On this account, the work of symbolist anthropologists such as Argenti and Shaw may not offer a purely externalised form of explanatory paradigm. Although externalised, this type of explanation may also in some way resonate with the violent forces which ritual practices in Western Africa needed to adapt to as the trans-Atlantic slave trade expanded.

The evidence of Tables I.1 and I.2 suggest that some of the triggers of the deep-rooted historical memories which may be contained here had begun to occur by the 1580s and 1590s. Although the initial export of slaves to the Americas concentrated largely on a few major groups, by the end of the sixteenth century many other lineages were involved, including Balanta and Floup. The heavy numbers of Brame exported may also mask raiding between villages. Baum suggests that Floup began selling slaves into the Atlantic trade through Brame intermediaries by the late

³ Baum (1999); Hawthorne (2003).

⁴ Baum (1999: 112).

sixteenth century, and the fact that the Floup had moved near the São Domingos by the 1580s (cf. Chapter 9) suggests that such raids could have begun at around this time.⁵

Taken as a whole, the evidence in these tables tells us much about how different lineages responded to the Atlantic trade. As this book has shown, it was always the groups under most pressure who predominated in the export figures. The Sapes were prominent among the exports of the 1560s, ground into political extinction by the Manes. The Brames were otherwise consistently the most preyed-upon group, attacked from the north by the raids of Masatamba, challenged from the south by the migrations of the Floup, and so close to the Atlantic coast that *lançados* and Atlantic shipping were ever present. Nearly equal to the Brames in terms of export were the Biafada, who again were threatened by Kaabunké, Bijagó, and the loss of their dominance of the kola trade with Sierra Leone through the political disintegration of their main trading partners, the Sapes. Both Brames and Biafada lived on the fringes of Mandinka territories and were used to the activities of diaspora *dyula* traders distinguished by their outsider religion. Ruling lineages among both thus welcomed in the *lançados* in the 1580s, hoping that their presence might protect them and offer them new opportunities. Thus as this book has shown so clearly, peoples of Western Africa adapted to the new existential threats of the violent disorder triggered by Atlantic trade, as peoples throughout the world so often have, by falling back onto familiar patterns. In doing so, they did indeed exercise agency, but their actions were nevertheless circumscribed by powerful and often destructive forces.

However, as we have also seen, these strategies of the Biafada and Brame lineage heads were not universally supported. In both areas *lançados* were attacked frequently, testament to the disagreements which their presence provoked. Moreover, the same pattern had occurred previously among the Kassanké where there had been disagreements, and again the *lançados* had been subject to attacks. On this evidence, one of the major changes emerging in Senegambia and Upper Guinea as a result of the Atlantic trade was the realignment of lineage alliances. In Sierra Leone, the incorporation of groups such as Bulloms and Temnes into the Sumbas, and of those Sapes who were not killed in wars or sold into slavery, led to the formation of new lineages. In Senegambia, the Sereer asserted their independence as a group from the Jolof with the formation of the kingdom of Saluum. Meanwhile, the construction of *tabankas* for self-defence

⁵ Ibid., 109.

such as those in Sierra Leone and among the Balanta led to new lineages and disputes between existing ones. It may be that among the products of these disputes were the very raiding parties whose activities produced slaves for sale into the Atlantic market.

This construction of new lineages was accompanied by the fragmentation of the larger political entities which hitherto had governed zones in which multiple lineages had co-existed. The multi-cultural polity of the Kassanké would eventually disappear as the Floup, Bainunk and Kassanké struggled for pre-eminence in the Casamance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Mali collapsed with the assertion of Songhay's power to the east, following in part the diversion of some of its profits from the Western Saharan trade to the Atlantic. The Jolof empire fragmented as well, as coastal lineages asserted themselves through the access to military power offered by the trade in horses for slaves. This fragmentation was only reversed when Kaabu consolidated its power by harnessing the possibilities of Atlantic trade rather than being undermined by them. Coastal groups, however, remained fragmented. As was the case along the whole West African littoral, this fragmentation forced them to remain open to Atlantic trading in order to defend themselves from their rivals, which enhanced the influence of Atlantic traders in the region and exacerbated the dependency which coastal groups had on these traders for securing the goods and materials which would offer them self-defence. Here lay a foretaste of the African-European relationships of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁶

As throughout history, therefore, the construction of a new economic framework and of new political units was inevitably accompanied by violence. The cycle of violent disorder and the political re-orientations were connected. This violence turned out to be an inherent quality of the process of modernisation which began in the sixteenth century and in which, as this book has shown, Western Africa had a key role. The region was a pivot for the growth in forced and voluntary migration associated with the mobility of modernity. It was perhaps the key locale in the first half of the sixteenth century for the construction of a variant of the Atlantic Creole identity which subsequently became so central to the social systems of the plantation economies of the New World. Experiences here contributed to the growing abstraction of thought and ideology, which contributed to the conceptual revolutions in the worldviews of Iberians in the sixteenth century and to the rise of the scientific mentality. Moreover,

⁶ A similar pattern can be discerned on the Loango coast – see Martin (1982: 217–8).

as we saw in Chapter 3, it was here that the requisition of economic and productive surpluses for transfer to the economic systems built by Europeans in the Atlantic first took shape, a process which contributed fundamentally to the growing economic disjunction between West Africa and Europe as well as to the political fragmentation which were principal legacies of modernity for the region. These disturbing qualities of the modernising process were only made possible in Western Africa by the expansion of systems of administrative control – or putative control – associated with the power structures of nascent states in Europe, and expressed through new institutions in Cabo Verde and attempts by the Iberian monarchies to regularise the slave traffic to the Americas. One does not need to turn to the twentieth century and the punctiliousness of an Eichmann to trace the long-standing relationship between institutionalised cruelty and bureaucratisation.

Into this picture came a completely new group in Western Africa, that of the *lançados*. In the sixteenth century, when the many social and political changes of Upper Guinea led to multiple lineage changes and confrontations, it was relatively easy for the *lançados* to find a space. There was always one group or lineage which would offer them protection in the hope of enhancing their security. *Lançados* forged marriage alliances, meaning that their settlements had a heavy dominance of Western African women over men, something which led to an important role for women traders in Upper Guinea and to changes in gender relationships.⁷ In all cases the *lançados* operated among groups experienced in the incorporation of members of outsider trading diasporas. In a moment when society in Upper Guinea was changing rapidly, it is easy to understand how the *lançados* could also be welcomed as a new group whose status could be determined according to pre-existing customs of the acceptance of foreign traders and to the pre-existing importance of the role of diasporas in the commercial practices of the region.

The trading settlements which *lançados* formed were heavily dependent on the hinterland for supplies. Provisions were supplied to slave ships and sent to Cabo Verde. In this situation, enhanced agricultural production was required, which necessitated more concentrated labour.⁸ Given the rapid expansion of the slave trade in the sixteenth century and the demands it placed on Upper Guineans, these are processes which almost certainly developed at this time. As villages became fortified and

⁷ Cf. Havik (2004b).

⁸ Cf. Hawthorne (2003).

agricultural labour intensified, society changed markedly, and communities became more defensive and their labour more coercive. In these circumstances, the *lançado* settlements offered alternatives, and this helps to explain the willingness of Upper Guineans to go there to be *grumetes* and *tangomas*, particularly because many of them came from groups such as the Biafada who were experiencing severe and continuing problems.

As we have seen in this book, the *lançados* were only able to operate with such success because of their cultural predisposition towards flexibility, which was a result of their New Christian origins and the recent history of the New Christians in Portugal. The pre-existing history of violence and nascent modernity in Iberia and the violence and cultural flexibility instigated by Mandinka expansion in Africa met in the creeks and forests of Upper Guinea and helped to create the social accommodation by which slaves were procured and sold into the Atlantic in the sixteenth century. In order to be successful, *lançados* had to be able to be both African and European, just as successful Mande emperors of Mali had had to be able to manifest Islamic and African narratives and rituals. This plural identity was thus an existing facility of communities in Africa which *lançados* adapted to, testament to what Amselle has called the “mestizo logics” of the region. It was a facility which New Christians, forced into being both Christian and Jewish by their experiences in Portugal, were easily able to learn. In their subsequent commercial success, they helped to bring this quality of plural identities and affiliations into the modernisation of Atlantic trade in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Here, at least, successful cross-cultural trade required the assimilation to the predominant cultural attitudes of the region by diaspora traders, not only the maintenance of cultural distinctiveness. By the seventeenth century, such pluralism was a cornerstone of New Christian networks in the Iberian Atlantic world. In this sense, and in others explored in this book, African traits emerged into the formation of the Atlantic world.

Taken as a whole, these issues are all fundamental to rethinking the histories of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the pre-histories of the formation of the modern global industrial system. They remind us to be cautious of what can anachronistically be portrayed as an inevitable imperial teleology. As this book has shown, far away from the seats of power in Amsterdam, Lisbon, London, Madrid and Paris, activities of individuals were structured through the formation of local and transnational patterns of diaspora trade which did not necessarily fit with the stated philosophies of the new European empires. In the formation of these patterns, both the existing cultural and political worlds of African

societies and the effects which Atlantic trade had on them have been significantly underestimated. Understanding the consequences of this interplay in the formative Atlantic era has been the task of this book. However, grasping the full extent of these patterns requires us to look at the broader trajectories of both Western and West-Central Africa in the seventeenth century, during the run-up to what historians call “the long eighteenth century” that foreshadowed industrialisation; and this will be the subject of the projected second volume of this study.

Already, however, this book has shown how much may be derived from this type of analysis. This conclusion has recapitulated how in Western Africa changes in lineage patterns, political structures, labour organisation, gender relationships and the manifestation of ritual power all accompanied the birth of Atlantic slavery, and how these changes all emerged in response to the maritime vector of international trade which gradually overtook the role of the trans-Saharan trade in shaping the region’s place in the broader world system. Diasporas had been crucial in this earlier trade, and they were so again in shaping the Atlantic trade. New Christian traders extended the boundaries of their earlier Mediterranean and trans-Saharan diasporas into the Atlantic, and Caboverdeans did so too as their archipelago became one of the key zones in the Atlantic world, with direct and regular contacts with places as far apart as Hispaniola, New Spain, Cartagena and Iberia.

Thus began the long history of the Caboverdean diaspora which remains to this day; its current zones of influence reach to Boston, Lisbon and Rotterdam. Trading diasporas have never lost their importance in West Africa, as the Mauritanian and Chinese shopkeepers of today attest. This transnational sphere emerged following the role of the trans-Saharan diasporas and was another instance of the role of West Africa’s pre-Atlantic history shaping early exchanges and dynamics in the Atlantic. Moreover, the internationalisation which was made possible by these diasporas had effects far beyond Africa. The wealth which developed in the Atlantic empires assisted in the expansion of European power on a global level and led ultimately to European powers supplanting the empires of Asia.⁹

The early Atlantic trade in slaves was a segue between the preceding Mediterranean slave trade and the later industrial level of the trade in the long eighteenth century. Although on one level more similar to and

⁹ Cf. Frank (1998); Darwin (2007). On the role of Africans in England’s industrial revolution, see Inikori (2002).

a continuity from the earlier trade, it was the step which made both the later trade and the ideas which accompanied it possible. It was thus a prime example of a continuity from a previous pattern which in fact also represented the start of something new.¹⁰ Commerce and the operations of merchants were thus an essential part of both the cultural history of Western Africa in the Atlantic era and the way in which the region related to the Atlantic world. However, that is a very different thing from stating that the effects of Atlantic slavery can only be understood through that prism. To concentrate only on the economic effects of the trade is to re-enact the blindness of those traders who, as the case of Juan de Narria showed us in the previous chapter, thought only of money. As we have seen, the effects in Africa were every bit as much political, ritual and social as they were economic, while in the Atlantic the effects were deep-rooted in the psychology of Atlantic slavers and their descendants; as we have seen, the ideology of racism emerged as a justification of the profits derived from violence. Societies and allegiances changed as the consumer economies of early modern Europe emerged along with new concepts of politeness and wage labour.

Yet to cast judgement on those times – to proclaim incomprehension of the acts of slave traders and of consumers of the produce of slave labour in the new coffee shops of the metropole – would be a failure of imagination and a declaration of bad faith. We have to recognise that human beings are capable of ghastly acts. One of the cruel paradoxes of existence is that those very acts often accompany beautiful artistry and thought. The appropriation of surplus produce from Africa and the Americas lowered the cost of staples in Europe, freeing up people's time and capital for other endeavours and thus beginning the subsequent symbiotic relationship of Western capital and culture. At the very same time that the Iberian powers were engaged in the trans-Atlantic slave trade of the sixteenth century, Spain was experiencing its Golden Age of artistic and literary endeavour, the flowering of Cervantes and El Greco. As [Chapter 4](#) showed decisively, the scientific changes which followed in the early modern period were also catalysed by the new worldview opened up by the experiences of the Atlantic voyages of discovery. As Meillassoux noted, “the surge of philosophical or political thought in ancient Greece or Rome is partly attributed to the leisure time slavery made available to the ruling classes”.¹¹

¹⁰ Mendes (2007: 29) suggests that this early trade has more in common with previous European slave trades than it does with later Atlantic slavery.

¹¹ Meillassoux (1991: 332).

As Iberian societies flourished in this “Golden Age,” in Upper Guinea the institutions and badges of identity were created which are the very ones which the peoples of present-day Cabo Verde, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea-Conakry and Sierra Leone identify with. Violence was an inevitable part of enslavement, as becomes clear in the descriptions of slaves arriving in the Americas and in the history of intra-lineage raids in Upper Guinea. Yet with that violence came a cultural accommodation, exemplified by linguistic changes, which became known as Creole and which emerged as a defining characteristic of Atlantic slave societies. The Kriolu language and mixed communities which emerged in Cabo Verde at the end of the fifteenth century soon influenced Atlantic trading communities in West Africa. Gradually, a Creole identity inseparable from slavery and its complexities emerged in a variegated way across the Atlantic world.

Instead of wringing hands at this violence, which accompanied this as all other moments of radical change, I prefer to end by thinking of the inheritors of this history today. I remember the old Manjaku in Simbandi-Balante who welcomed me into the shade of his mango tree in January 2000 and fed me fish from the nearby creek; the king of Canogo in the Bijagó who invited me to stay for a few days in December 1996 and plied me with palm wine as I offered tobacco leaves and aguardente in return; and the young Caboverdeans shouting “fixe!” (“Cool!”) in October 2003 as they tended plantations of maize and cassava in the ruins of the old city of Ribeira Grande, where once their enslaved ancestors had worked. These people were the inheritors of a multi-layered history of violence and exchange, of coercion, self-defence and autonomy, and of the shaping of Creole societies through slavery at an unusually early moment in the history of the world. That history had stood as a marker for what happened later in the Atlantic. Like their ancestors, they made the best of the situation they had been born into, and it was able to bring them joy as well as sadness.

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Livros 9, 16, 19, 26, 38, 44–45, 60, 65–66, 68

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Index

- Abstraction of thought, 223, 281
development of with Atlantic explorations, 122, 126–29
relationship to violence of modernity, 148
- Acculturation
Biafadas' acculturation to *lançados*, 246
Cacheu lineage heads and the use of Portuguese, 153–54
lançados' adoption of African practices, 172, 255
layers of African adoption of European practices, 173
- Afonso V, King of Portugal, 79–80
- African Agency in the Atlantic world, 14, 18, 262, 280
problematic of slavery and, 20–21
African-European alliances, 14–17, 152–55, 172, 268
- African-European exchanges, early evidence of, 17–18, 69–77, 84, 88–89
- African influence on colonization of the Americas, 180–84, 221–22
- Agricultural production, 118, 202, 241–42, 244, 282–83
the decline of agricultural production in favour of slave production, 109–13
gender relations, 104–106, 239, 252
intensive farming in Upper Guinea, 221
provisions for the Middle Passage, 220–21
- slave trade and changes in, 3, 9
use of produce in the African Atlantic, 99–102, 108–10
- Alcatrazes, 113, 159
- Almada, Andre Alvares d', 5, 22, 33, 44, 58–59, 101, 144, 171, 174, 201–202, 204–207, 226–29, 235–37, 241–49, 257, 267
- Almoravids, 38, 40–42
- Almoxarife dos Escravos, 89
- Alvares, Gil, 132
- Alvares, Manoel, 65, 215, 244–45
- Amerigo Vespucci's account of slavery, 184
- Angola, 2, 13, 26, 110, 114, 178, 208, 221, 237, 261
- Antioquia, 218
- Annes, Rodrigo, 78
- Arequipa, 193
- Arguim, 77, 79, 83
- Atlantic Creole Societies, 10–13, 96, 106, 171, 224, 226, 234, 247, 256
the birth of Atlantic Creole culture, 121, 179, 194
- connection to Atlantic slavery, 91–94, 173–74
- definitions of Creolisation, 13
- global connections and, 122
- identity, 276, 281
- inter-racial marriages, 252
- the rise of the *lançados* and, 115–19
- role of Kriolu language in, 259
- Atlantic Slavery, 2–3, 15, 21, 90, 180, 262, 266, 276–77, 284
creolisation and, 114
- expansion in West Africa, 256, 259
and first African-European exchanges, 70

- Atlantic Slavery (*cont.*)
 golden age of Spain and, 285
 ideological and moral justifications for, 75–76
 initial trade to Europe, 77–84
 quantitative approaches to, 4–9
 threats of social disorder, 228
 violence and, 106, 199
- Atlantic World, 10, 14–5, 27, 69, 87, 92, 96, 100, 104–105, 107, 113, 119, 174, 177, 179, 203, 205, 209–10, 224, 247, 261–62, 271, 276–77, 285–86
- African influence in, 18–20, 139, 222–23, 255–56, 283
 birth of, 69
 Cabo Verde and, 263, 267, 269, 284
 economic development and forcible requisition of labor in, 187
 effects on Western Africa of, 145, 153–55, 258
 political balance of, 258–59
 prejudice in, 143, 168, 225–26, 229, 272
 trading communities, 166
 Upper Guinea, 221
- Atkins, John, 1–2
- Badios. *See* Vadios (and Badius)
- Baga, 234–35
- Balanta, 43, 48, 53, 58, 201, 240, 279, 281
 age-grades, 221
 relationship to Mandinka of, 60–62
- Barafulas, 172, 225
- Barassa family, 167–68
- Barbados, 10
- Barbosa, Baltasar, 220, 253, 256
- Bainunk-Kassanké, 33, 36, 60–62, 64–65, 167, 169, 233, 245–49, 251, 257, 280–81
 acculturation to Mandinka of, 48, 54–55
 alliance with New Christians, 149–51, 155–65
 autocratic government, 244
 influence over New Christian practices, 166
 intermarriage with Kaabunké soldiers, 51
 origins of, 40
 markets of, 56
 relationship with *lançados*, 152–55, 170–74, 267–68
 and slave raiding, 200–201
 wars with Pullo, 82
- Benin, 2, 84, 100, 179, 189
- Biafada, 33, 43, 48, 56, 75, 154, 171, 202, 206, 233, 240
 “acceptance” of *lançado* settlers, 245–48, 257
 attacks on *lançado* settlers, 267–68
 decline in agricultural productivity, 241
 defeat of Pullo army, 82
 heavily traded as slaves to the Americas, 201, 245, 280
 kola trade with Sape lineages, 235–36, 250–52
 markets of, 44
 pressured by Kaabu, 242
- Bijagó, 33, 48, 60, 245, 280, 286
- Braço, 258
- Brame, 9, 33, 65, 249, 260, 274
 alliances with *lançados*, 257–58, 267
 assaults on *lançados*, 268
 cultural affinities with neighbouring peoples of, 59–60
 different lineages of, 48
 heavily traded as slaves to the Americas, 200, 267, 280
 raided by Floup, 279
- Brava (Cabo Verde), 112, 136
- Brazil, 10, 179–80, 277
 connections to West Africa, 139, 184
 early slave trade to, 196, 270
 Fernam de Loronha and, 132–33, 222
 New Christians and, 120, 125, 139, 166
- Bugendo, 152–53, 155, 157, 160, 173, 200, 251, 267, 270, 275
 connections to Cabo Verde, 156, 163, 165, 171
 connections to Kongo, 272
lançado activity in, 162, 246
 role in slave trade, 215, 217, 220–21, 244
- Bumi Jeleen (Bemoim), 85–86
- Buur Gebil, King of Jolof people, 80
- Cabo Verde, 5, 22, 27, 77, 95–96, 149, 152, 171–74, 180, 185, 187, 203, 205, 217, 220–22, 234, 246–49, 260, 262–66, 277, 282, 286
 caste identity and prejudice, 165–70, 210–11, 223–30
 contemporary awareness of Jewish history, 121
 early settlement and trade with Africa, 96–103

- first signs of creolisation, 103–107
 growth of colony, 197–99
 Kriolu language and, 12, 123, 275–76
 migration to Upper Guinea, 266–71
 New Christian diaspora in, 131–42
 place of institution of slavery in, 107–15
 trade with Canaries, 212
 trading links with mainland Africa, 155–65, 254–55
 trans-Atlantic slave trade in, 1–2, 179, 183, 188, 191–97, 208, 215, 218–19, 250
Cabral, Pedro Alvares, 132, 184
Cacheu, 48, 55, 152–54, 249, 258, 260, 262, 266–68, 275
Cadamosto, 76, 78–79, 87, 92
Cajor, 67, 76, 81, 84, 90–92, 99, 106, 203–205, 258
Caldeira, Manuel, 219
Campo, Affonso Annes do, 107
Canary Islands, 69, 136–37, 183, 212–14
Cannibalism,
 African preconceptions of European, 87
 European preconceptions of African, 86–87, 237
 Imbangala (or Jaga cannibals), 272
 Manes, 236–37
Cantor (or Kantora), 73, 191
Cape Verde Peninsula, 1, 17, 92, 94, 181, 184, 240
Carrera de Indias, 208, 210
Cartagena de las Índias, 65, 193, 219–21, 239, 262, 265, 270, 284
 contraband slave trade to, 195, 217–18
Carvajal viejo, Luis de, 161–62, 164, 219, 221–22
Casa da Mina, 255
Casa de la Contratación in Seville, 212, 214
Casa dos Escravos in Lisbon, 89
Casamance, 48, 53–4, 64, 82–83, 88–90, 95, 103, 157–58, 167, 171, 173–4, 201, 203, 215, 221, 243, 246, 248, 251, 253–54, 257, 268, 281
 ritual in, 231–32
 sexual relations in, 106
 trade in, 117, 151–55, 202, 258
Casas, Bartolomé de las, 94, 178, 181–87, 194–96
Centinera, Martín de, 262–63, 266
Ceuta, 74–75
Cholula, 211
Cimarrones, 192–93, 240, 277
Classificatory typologies, 63, 276
Climatic change
 drought in Cabo Verde, 260, 262–65
Cocolís, 33, 44, 81, 235
Coimbra, 141
Contraband slave trade, 7–8, 28, 191–92, 196, 207, 212–19, 222, 229, 236, 251, 276
 to Hispaniola, 195, 213–14
Correia e Silva, Martim, 212
Cortés, Hernando de, 193, 211
Courbe, Jajolet de la, 12
Creolisation, 96–97, 112, 115, 119, 140, 170–74, 179–80, 185, 199–200, 203, 228, 246, 254, 256–57, 277
Atlantic influences in Cabo Verde, 220, 226
 development of Kriolu language, 12–13, 96–97, 103, 225, 247
 flexibility and, 113, 155
 freed slave population, 114–15
 New Christians and, 145–46, 160
 the origin of ‘Creole’ as a terminology, 273–76
 places of creolisation and linguistic diversity, 13, 18, 246
 settlement in Cabo Verde, 98–99, 140
 slavery and, 96, 107, 114, 178, 210, 262
 variability of, 146, 148
 violence, 104–106, 113, 155, 174, 187, 189
Cross-cultural trade, 15–16, 41, 146, 254, 283
Cuba, 179, 181, 186, 189, 192–93, 208, 226, 273, 277
Cunha, Pero Vaz de, 85–86
Curaçao, 27
Cuzco, 189
Cycles of violent disorder in Western Africa and Atlantic influences, 77–85, 199–207, 233, 239, 254
Dias family of Cabo Verde, 158–61
Dias, Miçia, 161, 163, 169
Diasporas, 15–19, 27, 64, 66–67, 93, 117, 119, 125, 149–50, 209–10, 223–24, 245, 259, 280, 282
Cabooverdean, 207, 225, 264, 284
Ibero-Moroccan Jewish Diaspora, 75
Islam and, 38–39, 41, 71

- Diasporas (*cont.*)
 long-distance trade and, 41–2, 141, 145,
 154–55, 254
 Jewish Diaspora traders in Sahelian
 regions, 71, 73
 Mandinka Diaspora trade networks,
 55–56, 67, 145, 167, 247
 New Christians, 77, 120–21, 125, 129,
 131, 138–39, 217, 219, 229, 284
 North African trading Diasporas, 74–75
 religion and, 45–46, 141, 272–73
 role in West African History of, 33–34,
 51–52, 55–56, 167, 256, 284
 Sephardic Diaspora, 16
 transnationalism and, 130
 Donelha, Andre, 152, 173, 225, 235–38,
 243–44, 247
 Drake, Francis, 263, 265
Dyula, 37, 42–44, 57, 172, 272
 engagement with lancados, 224, 256
 Mandinka *dyula* diaspora, 167, 247
 shared religious identity, 272
- Elmina, 2, 106, 128, 172, 179, 191, 196,
 237, 265, 272
 England/English, 207, 257
 Estimates of slave exports from West
 Africa, 4–9, 90, 212, 214–16, 267,
 270, 273–74
 Eurocentrism, 23, 170, 271
 Évora, 81, 126, 140–43, 151, 158, 164
- Fernandes, Antonio, 152, 155–57, 164–65,
 174
 Fernandes, Valentim, 95, 143, 160, 234
 Fernandez, Cristoval, 266
 Ferreira, Blas, 217–18, 220
 Flores de Valdes, Diego, 262
 Fogo (Cabo Verde), 95, 114, 123, 131,
 138, 157–58, 160, 164, 168, 198, 263
 connections to Bugendo, 163, 165
 creolisation in, 146–48
 early settlement, 105, 112–13
 Fonseca, Francisco da, 136
 Fosse, Eustache de la, 106
 France/French, 198, 207, 257
 Francisco, Pero, 132
- Gambia River, 3, 5, 26, 50, 57, 73, 78,
 83–84, 87–88, 92–93, 101, 106, 111,
 152, 154, 171, 191, 206–207, 226,
 231, 242–43, 249, 256, 267
- Ganagoga (or João Ferreira), 171
 Garcia, Bartolomeu, 157–58
 Garcia, Manoel, 152, 155–58
 Gender relations
 African women as sexual commodities,
 104–07
 cross-dressing, 163
 proportions of each gender on slave
 trade, 239
 Genoa/Genoese, 72, 130, 139, 187
 connection to trans-Saharan trade, 74
 early settlement of Cabo Verde, 97–99,
 103
 Genocide of Native Americans, 185–88,
 196, 199, 208, 211, 222
 Ghāna, Empire of, 35–40
 Globalization, 13, 122, 139
 evidence of, 69, 74–75, 130, 177,
 229–30
 scholarly disputes about, 130
 Gold coinage, 128
 Gomes, Diogo, 73–74, 79–80, 94, 97
 Gorée, 78
 Grande River, 43–44, 46, 59–60, 75, 82,
 90, 152, 154, 184, 234–36, 242–43,
 246–49, 252–53, 266–67
 Guatemala, 193
 Guinala, 215, 245–46, 258, 268, 275
- Havana, 208, 213, 226, 262, 274, 276
 Hernandez, Andres (alias Angola), 272
 Herrera, Blas. *See* Ferreira, Blas
 Hispaniola, 91, 94, 113, 179, 191, 193–96,
 198, 217–20, 263, 272, 274, 277
 genocide in, 185–86
 slave trade to, 187–88, 213–14, 276
 vicious conquest of, 182–84
 Horses, 107, 112, 238
 and the early slave trade, 99–100
 evidence of use in raids, 79, 244
- Identity, 122, 221, 224–25, 247, 254–55,
 268, 272, 275–76
 New Christians, 145–46
 plural, 121, 140, 149–50, 166, 253
 proto-racial identity and discrimination,
 166–69, 228–29, 263
 transnational and porous identity, 130,
 166, 210, 263
- Ideology, 281
 the institutionalization of ethnicity, 273
 lineages, 62–67

- modernity and slavery, 149
 race ideology, 19, 86–87, 143, 210,
 225–29, 261, 263, 273, 276
- Inca, 208, 211
- Iron, 36, 44–45, 50, 57, 201–202, 257
 illegal Caboverdean trade in, 116–17
 importance in warfare, 118, 240–41
 role of in forming ideas and power,
 59–60
 self-defence and, 83
 trade and procurement, 116–19, 240
 use of for making agricultural
 implements, 118, 221
- Islam, 34, 38, 41, 45, 56, 62, 66, 71,
 73–77, 245, 283
 Christian conflicts with, 85
 diasporas, 75–76, 245
 hybrid form of in medieval West Africa,
 39–40
 literacy, 39
 role of in empire of Ghāna, 38–39
 place of in empire of Kaabu, 42
 trade, 74–77, 223
- Inquisition, 146, 153, 156–57, 169
 escape from, 135
 escape to Brazil, 139
 Canariote inquisition, 136
 Inquisitors of Evora, 158, 178
 interest in Cabo Verde, 167
 Portuguese Inquisition and the New
 Christians, 137, 164, 217
 pressure to establish Tribunal in Cabo
 Verde, 140
 Spanish, 122, 124–25, 164
- Jabundo, 174
- Jalonke, 90, 235
- João III, King of Portugal, 151
- João II, King of Portugal, 132
- Jews, 15, 18, 75, 77, 124, 126, 128–31,
 135–37, 141–43, 147–48, 166, 172,
 224, 283
 attitudes to and of in Cabo Verde
 169–70
 belief in griots as Jews, 143–44, 228–29
 practices observed in Cabo Verde,
 158–61
 relationship to New Christians, 123–25,
 132–33, 138–40, 167
 role in trans-Saharan trade, 72–73
 settlement in the Sahara, 71–72, 77
 weavers in Morocco, 72
- Jolof, 31, 33, 59, 67, 71, 84–87, 93,
 239–40, 257–58, 274, 281
 characteristics of government, 71
cimarrones near Cartagena, 278
 civil wars following early Atlantic trade,
 80–83
 cultural points of contact with the
 Portuguese, 76
 hostility to Atlantic traders, 92
 and Islam, 75
 rebelliousness of in New World, 91
 relationship with Mali, 37, 43, 45,
 55–56
 relationship with Sereer, 203–206, 280
 slavery among, 77
- Jorge, João, 182
- Jorge, Francisco, factor in Bugendo,
 162–63
- Kaabu “Empire”, 33, 35–36, 60, 93, 201,
 235, 258, 278–79
 expansion of, 46–56, 233, 242–45, 281
 relationship to Mali of, 42–43, 82–83,
 91–92, 238
 slavery/slave-raiding and, 61, 231–32
- Kankuran, 231–33
- Ka’ti, Mahmud, 73
- Kola trade, 235, 246
lançado involvement in trade pattern,
 248–52
- Kongo, 2, 13, 102, 112, 120, 178, 189,
 191, 196, 198, 208, 258, 272
- Lagos (Algarve), 72, 89
- Lançados*, 232, 242, 260, 280, 282–83
 and African pluralities, 253–56
 alliance with the Brāme, 266–67
 connection to Cacheu region, 249
 definition of, 115
 evidence of involvement in the slave
 trade, 243, 250–51
 involvement in the kola trade, 248–52
 migration to and settlement in West
 African mainland, 115–19, 151–54,
 158, 224, 245–46, 248, 253, 257,
 266–68
- Landlord-stranger relationship, 260, 268
- Leão, Álvaro de, 164
- Leão, Duarte de, 161–64
- Leão, Jorge, 164
- Leitão, Bartolomeu, Bishop of Cabo Verde,
 169

- Lima, 193, 196, 274
Limpeza de sangue, 169–70, 210, 228
 Lineages, 245–53, 256–59, 267, 280, 284, 286
 competition and the Atlantic trade, 173, 268, 282
 head of Cacheu lineage, 267
 ideology of, 62–67
 importance of to African societies, 50
 marriage in the New World, 276–77
 patterns of in Upper Guinea, 49, 281
 Lisbon, 72, 89, 92, 99, 108, 111–12, 116, 140, 154, 161, 168, 180–81, 194, 198, 255, 263, 272
 Inquisition Tribunal of, 167
 Jewish community in, 125–26, 131–33, 137–38
 slave trading, 214–15
 Loango, 281
 López, Rodrigo, 113
 Loronha, Fernam de (Noronha) 132, 180
 Lugo, Joham and Pero de, 100
 Luso-African ivories, 248, 254
- Madeira, 98, 179, 198
 early trade with Cabo Verde, 100
 Maio (Cabo Verde), 112
 Mali, Empire of, 33–34, 41, 44–45, 51, 53, 72–73, 76, 84, 241, 281, 283
 Islam and, 37–38
 Kaabu and, 42–43, 49, 82–83, 91–92
 knowledge of Mediterranean by, 74
 Manes and, 238–39
 rise to power of, 35–39
 Mancanha, 48, 65
 Mandinka, 27, 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 50, 58–67, 71, 80, 83, 93, 101, 116, 118, 123, 144–45, 151, 201–202, 227, 231–33, 252, 274, 278–80
 adoption of local practices in Upper Guinea by, 50–51
 expansion of, 17–18, 39–43, 89, 242–44, 258, 283
 influence on peoples of Senegambia and Upper Guinea, 44–45, 52–57
 migrations of, 48–49
 settlement of Portuguese close to, 153–54, 245
 slaves in Europe, 81, 84
 trading culture of, 117, 234–35, 247
 Manes, 152, 236–39, 242, 245–46, 252–53, 258, 272, 280
 Mane wars, 233, 238, 240–41, 248–50
 Manoel I, King of Portugal, 111, 116, 124, 134
 Mansa Musa, Emperor of Mali, 40, 43, 74
 Mapuche, 211
 Marabouts, 53, 278–79
 Masatamba, King of Kassanké people, 173, 233, 244, 246, 257–58, 280
 Mascarenhas, Antonio Rodrigues, 134
 Masquerade
 adoption by New Christians of Upper Guinean mask, 163
 masking tradition in the Casamance, 231
 Matrilinearity
 Crypto-Jewish women, 158–61
 Practice in Upper Guinea, 51, 59, 207
 Mestre Dioguo, 162–64, 217
 Mexica, 211
 Mexico City, 161, 189, 192, 194, 197
 Michoacán, 211
 Migrations
 Mandinka migrations, 48–49
 Mane migration, 236–40
 New Christians, migration of, 124–26, 141, 160
 Pullo migrations, 82–83, 172, 235
 Mobility
 and ideologies, 227, 229, 261
 proto-modern mobility, violence, forced displacement and racism, 272–73, 281
 Modernity, 20, 126, 130, 273
 connection to conceptual changes, 122
 global movements and, 122, 274
 scapegoats and, 129
 slavery and,
 violence and, 122–23, 135, 146, 155, 174, 281–82
 Moral aspects of the study of the slave trade, 3–4
 Munzer, Hieronymus, 81
 Nalus, 33, 44, 59–60, 235, 247
 Narría, Juan de, 220, 276
 New Christians, 18–9, 27, 42, 73, 77, 119, 224, 257, 264, 268, 284
 African influence on, 165
 agents of Atlantic creolisation, 160
 alliance with Kassanké, 156, 161–65
 Duarte de Leão's contraband slave network, 217–23
 emergence in Western Africa, 129

- evidence of mixing with Africans, 178
 Garcia, family connection, 157–61
 Iberian Jewish communities in Senegambia, 18
 influence on Old Christian ideas in Cabo Verde, 229–30
 pattern of adaptation in Western Africa, 136, 141–44, 283
 pattern of migration within Iberia, 124–26
rendeiros of Cabo Verde (tax farmers), 131–35
 New Spain, 161, 179, 189, 192, 194, 197, 211, 213, 218, 222, 263, 272, 274, 277, 284
 Noli, Antonio di, 98
 Nuevo Reino de Granada, 208, 218, 270
 Núñez, Miguel, factor in Hispaniola, 219
 Núñez de Padilla, Francisco, 224
 Old Christians, 126, 141–43, 145, 158, 224, 229
 Oral history
 the driving out of Jalonke lineages from Kaabu, 235
 evidence of migration, 83
 legend of the Nyanchos, 243
 metaphor of cannibalism, 237
 oral history archive in Fajara, 69–70
 quantitative account of slaves, 22–28
 Paiva, Gonçallo de, 116
 Pacheco Pereira, Duarte, 90, 108, 117
 Pan-Atlantic, 19, 27–28, 139–40, 178–80, 185, 187–89, 197, 209, 223, 233, 260, 263
 beginning of Atlantic Creole culture, 179
 ideologies spreading across the Atlantic, 269, 271–77
 inter-connection between Western Africa and the Americas, 271–72
 New Christians' marital and trading network 219–20
 space, 178
 Panama, 192–93, 277
 Patrilinearity, 206
 Pereira, Francisco, 213
 Persecution and possible migration to Timbuktu of Cota family of Toledo, 73
 Peru, 191, 197, 208
 Philip II, King of Portugal and Spain, 213
 Pizarro, Francisco de, 190
 Pope Gregory VIII, 168
 Portugal/Portuguese, 17–18, 27, 69, 72–73, 75, 78–82, 85, 88, 92, 98–101, 107, 120, 123, 137, 139–40, 142, 144, 168, 172–73, 179–81, 193, 196–98, 203–06, 227, 244, 246, 252, 264, 283
 activities in Morocco, 74, 77
 changes in economy and worldview, 127–29, 142
 early knowledge of sub-Saharan Africa, 70–71
 early role in African trade, 1–3
 establishment of the Inquisition, 164
 importance of early slave trade to, 89–90
 motivations of early voyages, 78
 relationship with Bumi Jeléen, 85–86
 political strategies in Africa of, 84–85, 112
 slavery in, 114, 178
 trade at Arguim, 73, 79
 trade with Cabo Verde, 107–108, 225
 treatment of New Christians, 124–26, 130–35, 217
 union with Spain, 264, 270
 wars in Angola, 208, 261
 Potosí, 270
 Praia, 113, 168
 Primary creolisation, 34, 51, 53, 57–62, 66, 69
 Pre-Atlantic trade, 72–73
 Pullo, 31, 49, 61, 101
 important late 15th century migrations of, 82–83, 172, 235
 intermarriage by elites with *lançados*, 173
 Purépecha, 211
 Ribeira Grande, 97, 110, 113, 134, 137–38, 140, 165, 265, 268, 286
 caste identity in, 168–69
 connections in Atlantic world, 263
 early establishment of, 97–98, 105
 fear of *vadios*, 264
 growth of, 197–99
 New Christians in, 140–42
 Ritual power, 224
 Roberts, George, 1, 5
 Rodrigues, Duarte, 132
 Rodrigues, Graviel (Gabriel), 137

- Sapes, 33, 44, 81, 90, 152, 216, 233–37, 239–41, 245–46, 248–53, 266, 277, 280
- Santiago (Cabo Verde), 86, 95, 97, 110, 112, 123, 131, 134, 138, 141, 151, 167–68, 180–81, 198, 212, 249, 270, 272
- Creole identity in, 274–75
- crypto-Judaism in, 159–60
- cultivation of cotton, 108
- differences with Fogo, 146–48
- early settlement, 98, 105
- slavery on, 114
- trade with Bugendo, 155–56
- trade with Sereer, 203–205
- trade with Sierra Leone, 101, 111
- São Tomé, 2, 10, 90, 98, 100, 108, 114, 178–79, 191, 194, 196, 272
- connections to slave trade in Kongo, 112
- early Creole society of, 28
- Saracoll, John, 240–41
- scapegoat/s, 126, 129
- scientific worldview, 122, 127, 148, 223, 281, 285
- Senegal River, 31, 43, 45, 55, 69, 71–72, 76, 78–79, 81–82, 84, 86, 90, 96, 99, 101, 171
- Sequeira, Francisco de, 169
- Sereer, 31, 42, 54, 56, 59, 79, 81, 84, 90
- early Atlantic trade of, 90–94
- Gelwaars and, 50–51, 61
- trade with Caboverdeans, 152, 204–05
- trade with English and French, 256–57
- wars with Jolof, 80, 206–07, 280
- Sierra Leone, 5, 11, 31, 33, 44, 90, 99, 101, 111, 151–52, 160, 182, 184, 202, 213, 216, 218, 231, 233–42, 245–46, 248–49, 251–54, 259, 280–81
- Sistema de Castas*, 269
- Slave trade to Europe
- Andalusian ports, 78
 - Canary Islands, 212
 - Portugal, 76, 89
 - Valencia, 75, 81
- Slavery, 18–19, 106, 184–86, 247, 275, 285
- administration of, 104–05, 255, 274
- birth of the Atlantic slave trade, 106
- bureaucracy and, 103–104
- creolisation and, 13–14, 70, 150, 262, 286
- importance in Atlantic economies, 178
- manumission, 113–14
- marriage between slaves in the New World, 276–77
- meaning of in Upper Guinea, 242, 244–45
- New World, 226
- race and, 27–28, 86
- role in early Cabo Verde, 100, 102, 107–15, 227–28
- sexual exploitation, 104–06
- suppliers, 256
- trans-Saharan trade, 37
- Smiths, 36–37, 41–42, 44–45, 49, 53, 57, 118, 238, 252, 279
- Songhay, 73, 82, 84, 238
- Sunjata Keita, 35, 38–39, 43, 49, 53
- Susu, 33, 44, 239–41
- Tabanka, 240
- Tadmakka, 40
- Taroudant, 77
- Tegdaoust, 40
- Timbuktu (Tambucutu), 73–74
- Tlaxcala, 211
- Trans-Atlantic slave trade, 177–80, 189, 191, 206–207, 210–16, 220, 223, 233–34, 251–52, 256, 266
- coincidence with cultural flowering of Spain, 285
- connection to American genocide, 187
- destinations in the Americas, 262
- earliest incarnation of, 192–99
- economic situations and profitability, 179
- effects on African societies, 179, 183, 200–203, 278
- memories of, 279
- regions in Africa, 261–62
- volume, 7, 269–70
- The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, 7, 196, 215–16
- Trans-Saharan trade, 33, 36–38, 40–42, 45, 52, 56–57, 61, 64, 73, 76–77, 79, 81, 84–85, 234, 236, 259, 271, 284
- continuities with early trans-Atlantic trade, 70
- trading networks, 71–72
- Transnationalism, 122, 130–31, 261, 283–84
- Caboverdean traders, 264
- origin of the idea of transnationalism, 229, 272–73

- Transport of building materials from Europe to Cabo Verde, 98
Treaty of Alcaçovas, 99
Vadios (and Badius), 264
Valderrama, Julián, 174
Varela, Antonio, 167
Venice, 72
Veracruz, 270–71
World history, study of, 10, 14, 271
Zaragoza, mines of, 218
Zurara, Gomes Eanes de, 71, 76, 78

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