

Africans in bondage : studies in slavery and the slave trade : essays in honor of Philip D. Curtin on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of African Studies at the University of Wisconsin.

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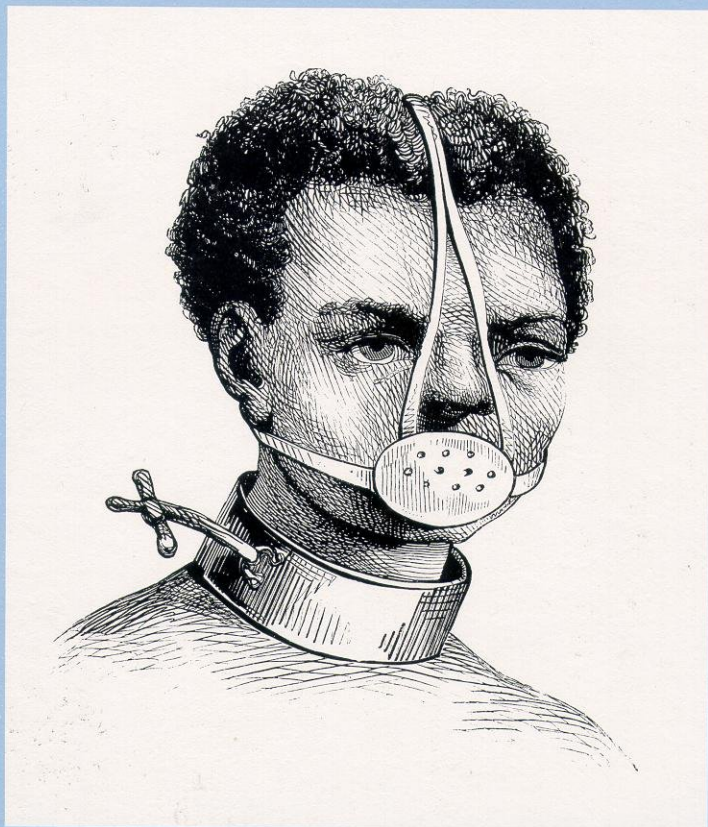
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AFRICANS IN BONDAGE

Studies in Slavery
and the Slave Trade



Edited by Paul E. Lovejoy

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INTRODUCTION

Paul E. Lovejoy

These essays are dedicated to Philip D. Curtin, who was instrumental in establishing the African Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin and in training a generation of scholars there. His influence has been far more extensive than his career at Wisconsin demonstrates. He was a founding member of the editorial board of the Journal of African History; his books and articles have had a strong influence on the historiography of Africa, and more generally on the wider discipline of history itself; and his career has continued after he left Wisconsin for the Johns Hopkins University. He has been president of both the African Studies Association (U.S.) and the American Historical Association, which together represent well his stature both as an Africanist and as an historian. These essays are meant as a tribute to that achievement.

The focus of this volume and the range of contributors reflect the significant impact that Philip Curtin has had on the study of slavery and related issues. Beginning with Two Jamaicas: The Role of Ideas in a Tropical Colony, 1830-1865 (1955) and some of his early articles (1950, 1954), he has been concerned with the issue of slavery, particularly with its importance outside of North America. A pioneering book, Two Jamaicas examined ideas of empire, culture, demography, and society. It was implicitly comparative, not only across cultural boundaries but also with the more accessible history of slavery in the United States. Its conception was broad. It attempted to place Jamaican slavery in a perspective that took into account the African origins of slaves, the European background of commercial capitalism, and the West Indian synthesis of these diverse influences. It raised more questions than it answered, and to his credit, Philip Curtin set out to answer as many of these as possible. He is still doing so.

The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850 (1964) was a logical extension of his work on Jamaica, for it followed the route, backwards from the plantation colonies of the Caribbean, through the imperial network of Great Britain to Africa. In making this trans-Atlantic leap, Philip Curtin initiated an intellectual odyssey that was truly global. He

wanted to understand big patterns of history. Africa became the focus of that reconstruction, but his search took him to Southeast Asia, India, and the Latin America beyond the plantation lowlands. At Wisconsin he consolidated this approach into a comparative world history program. He continued to be interested in the Americas, but he concentrated more and more on the area from where slaves originated. He chose Senegambia as a case study, eventually producing Economic Change in Pre-colonial Africa: Senegambia in the Era of the Slave Trade (1975). A necessary interlude in the pursuit of this study was the compilation of data on the volume, direction and demographic characteristics of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, initially intended as a paragraph in the larger work, then an article in its own right, and finally a monograph of tremendous significance (The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census, 1969). Perhaps as significant were such articles as "Epidemiology and the Slave Trade" (1968), in which he examined the demographic impact of disease on the transport of slaves across the Atlantic, a topic initially explored in The Image of Africa. A quantitative study of the slave trade created the possibility of reconstructing the impact of slavery on African history and helped to place in perspective the relative differences between the various slave societies of the Americas. Philip Curtin led the way in the comparative study of slavery.

A global perspective on history raised numerous other questions, many of which are examined in this volume. Cross-cultural interaction and commercial organization are major concerns of the chapters that follow. Such concerns also characterize Philip Curtin's other research. Most recently, Cross-Cultural Trade in World History (1984) explores the pattern of commerce that predominated before the rise of capitalism and indeed continued to exist between capitalist and non-capitalist economies until recent times. The volume synthesizes a great body of work by other scholars and provides a guide for the reconstruction of history through a comparative framework. It expands upon an analysis of commercial structure that is detailed in Economic Change in Precolonial Africa: Senegambia in the Era of the Slave Trade and numerous articles (cf. 1971a, 1971b, 1971c, 1973, 1983b). And it explores what happens when people cross cultural boundaries, that is, when they move into or beyond cultural frontiers. This theme can be traced back to Two Jamaicas and its analysis of African and European interaction in a Caribbean setting.

Epidemiology, another theme in this book, also has been a central concern of Philip Curtin, and the focus of his current research (cf. 1964, 1968, 1983a, 1985, forthcoming a, b). Mastery of this subject demonstrates an essential ingredient of the Curtin school of history. Analysis inevitably crosses the normal disciplinary boundaries - economics, anthropology, the natural sciences. The study of disease and its impact on

demography are only specific skills that it is sometimes necessary to acquire. Language must be no barrier. Disciplines are to be understood. Written and unwritten sources are to be explored, gathered if necessary. His current research pursues the problem of disease, in a comparative framework, with the assistance of several disciplines and with his usual global perspective.

The contributors to this volume represent many of the strands of Philip Curtin's interests, but by no means all. Inevitably the selection of a focus for a volume such as this one excludes many people and many areas of research. The tribute is no less sincere, nonetheless. Another editor would have selected a different theme. As a teacher and a scholar, Philip Curtin has had an enormous influence that goes far beyond a study of slavery. Indeed demography, epidemiology, commercial structure, the impact of colonialism, and the history of ideas can be and are studied without reference to slavery. Students who have concentrated on Asia or parts of the Americas or topics in African history not directly related to slavery have been automatically excluded from contributing to this volume. Their debt to Philip Curtin, as one source of inspiration in the acquisition of scholarly skills, is no less than that of these contributors, and without intending to dissipate the deficiencies of this volume among those who have not shared in its preparation, Africans in Bondage is nonetheless meant to be a collective gesture of appreciation from all those students who have gained from their association with him.

Inevitably too, students stray from the approaches of their teacher. They explore new questions, probe similar topics in other ways, see new implications in old subjects, find additional data that need interpretation, and experiment with different techniques. Hence many of the conclusions of the following chapters most certainly are not what Philip Curtin would conclude, although in many cases a direct influence is easily discernable. It is to his credit that his students have not stood still but have pushed the boundaries of knowledge and analysis, even when it may require the master to rethink what he once taught. We hope, therefore, that this volume is not only a tribute but also a challenge and an inspiration of its own.

Slavery had a tremendous impact from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. The essays in this volume examine a variety of issues centered on that history. In Chapter 1, David Henige, self-proclaimed critic of historical methodology, considers one of the long standard assumptions of the rise of the Atlantic slave trade: African slaves were imported to replace a decimated Amerindian population. Henige's questions are fundamental to this assumption: what was the size of the Amerindian population at the time of the Spanish conquest, when did the numbers begin to decline, and how do we know the

answers? He concentrates on Hispaniola, where early gold mining and sugar production - the two pillars of the slavery edifice in tropical America - required a considerable labor input. African slaves very soon became the source of that labor but not before the experiment in using Amerindians failed. That failure is closely associated with disease. Henige challenges the widely accepted timing of the epidemiological impact. The difference in the rival interpretations over the chronology of population decline amounts to a mere twelve years, which may seem trivial in the grand scale of things. But Henige shows that an early date for the beginning of the decline is consistent with an interpretation that the Amerindian population of Hispaniola was very large at the time of the Spanish conquest. A later date, and one that is supported by the evidence, is consistent with an interpretation that the Hispaniola population was much smaller than many historians have argued. The established interpretation that the collapse of the Amerindian population accounts for the rising demand for African slaves still stands, but the timing of that demand and the impact on the colonial economy are brought more clearly into focus. The close attention to sources, which Henige so carefully displays, is reminiscent of Curtin's deconstruction of the historiography of the Atlantic slave trade. As Curtin showed in 1969, scholars can easily go astray if they adopt prevailing "truths" without critical assessment.

Colin Palmer (Chapter 2) addresses the question of the number of slaves imported into Spanish America. His examination of the records of the French Guinea Company and the British South Sea Company have enabled him to bring together statistics on a small portion of the early eighteenth-century Atlantic trade. This meticulous study adds to the very large literature on the scale of the slave trade, a subject that uses as its benchmark Curtin's The Atlantic Slave: A Census. My recent synthesis of this literature (Lovejoy 1982: 473-501), which was intended to arrive at better estimates for slave exports from Africa, has demonstrated that Curtin's original projections were remarkably accurate, despite numerous modifications, additions and deletions to his pioneering study. To date no one has attempted to reassess the volume of slave imports into the Americas. One reason for this omission is because there is much additional work that needs to be done on the scale of slave imports. Palmer's study begins to rectify that omission. He shows that at least 89,031 slaves were imported into Spanish America between 1703-1739. Curtin's earlier estimate was that the figure was on the order of 143,560 (Curtin 1969: 25). Palmer's revision, therefore, is less than the original estimate but only represents a known portion of the total trade. Hence the real total may well have been close to Curtin's estimate. The usual problems facing all

scholars of the slave trade - incomplete and sometimes inaccurate data, unrecorded smuggling, and errors in accounting - prevent confirmation of Curtin's figures at this time.

Efforts at quantifying the slave trade, for which Curtin has set the standards, have extended well beyond the question of numbers. In Chapter 3, Joseph Miller addresses one such problem of quantification - the prices of slaves in the southern Atlantic and how these changed over the period of the trade. Miller focusses on the Portuguese sector between Angola and Brazil, a crucial and under-appreciated portion of the trade that probably accounted for a third of all slaves exported from Africa. Miller shows that slave prices in Africa gradually became more closely attached to changes in the demand for slaves in Brazil; that is, the price structure for slaves in Angola and Brazil increasingly became more integrated. This economic integration occurred in three distinct stages, each of which corresponded to periods of economic prosperity in Brazil. The first (1590-1650) was related to Brazilian sugar production; the second (1700-1740) depended upon the mining of gold and diamonds; and the third (1800-1830) was associated with the growth in coffee and cotton production. Miller compares his price data with similar data for West Africa. What is perhaps most promising about his study, however, is the potential it holds for further and more detailed study of slave and other prices. A knowledge of the prices and the volume of all commodities is crucial in any attempt to assess the economic impact of the Atlantic trade on Africa and the Americas.

Mary Karasch (Chapter 4) explores a portion of Brazilian slave society, specifically slave women in Rio de Janeiro in the nineteenth century. The status of women in slavery is now a major concern to historians. Too often, as Karasch points out, slaves are perceived as men. What women did is ignored or assumed. By focussing on this neglected aspect of slavery in the Americas, she demonstrates that established interpretations, especially the view of Brazil presented by G. Freyre, have underrepresented the suffering that underlay slavery. The iron mask that is depicted on the cover of this volume more accurately reflects the lot of most slaves in most situations - male and female - than some romantic views of the past. Slaves in Rio were hardly typical of Brazil as a whole, where the vast majority of slaves worked on the gold and diamond mines of Minas Gerais, in the coffee estates inland from Rio, and in the sugar captaincies of Bahia and Pernambuco, but urban slavery was still part of the total picture. That town life was supposed to be, somehow, better than rural life only highlights the difficulty of seeing slavery in terms that are more or less harsh. Some slaves in Rio may have been better off than those in rural areas, but the bulk of the slave population had to cope with their exploitation wherever they lived.

The southern United States is perhaps the most thoroughly studied slave system in history. And thanks to Curtin, it is now known that in many ways North American slavery was different than slavery in other parts of the Americas. Considering the size of the U.S. slave population at the time of emancipation, the U.S. had imported relatively few slaves - less than 5 percent of total imports into the Americas. And virtually all of these slaves arrived before the major expansion in the use of slaves consequent upon the production of cotton. Still the U.S. was an exceedingly complex slave system. Tom Shick, in Chapter 5, explores a problem of vital concern to the question of African influence on the development of Afro-American culture in the U.S. He addresses the question of medical knowledge among the slave population of coastal South Carolina, an area that has been identified as one where features of the African past were maintained longer than elsewhere in the U.S. South. Shick shows that slaves and their descendants maintained a medicinal and psychological tradition that reinforced an Afro-American subculture. This subculture was not unique to the Sea Islands of South Carolina, as Shick makes clear, but the traditions of the Sea Islands were central to the development of "creole" society in the U.S. South.

In Africa, it is now widely accepted that the export trade had a dramatic impact on the major exporting regions. E. J. Alagoa (Chapter 6) surveys the existing corpus of oral traditions in the Niger Delta in an attempt to uncover popular interpretations of this situation. This survey supplements existing accounts by slaves from the era of the slave trade, which Curtin had earlier collected in Africa Remembered: Narratives of Slaves from the Era of the Slave Trade (1967). Alagoa readily admits that no one has specifically attempted to collect oral data on slavery and the slave trade, but even so some interesting material already exists. The traditions refer to slavery and the slave trade in rather interesting ways. This essay is a teaser. It calls for greater attention to the collection of oral material on slavery and the export trade.

The impact of the trade is clear in the Gabon estuary, which Henry Bucher considers in Chapter 7. Although Gabon was never a major source of slaves, Bucher documents structural changes that can be traced to responses to the external market in slaves. Women were a key element in the commercial networks that were established to feed slaves to the waiting European ships. Marriage alliances permitted the movement of traders inland and the extension of the credit that was necessary for the smooth functioning of trade.

As the slave trade continued to rage within Africa in the middle of the nineteenth century, the British were finally able to put enough pressure on the Atlantic trade so as to reduce the volume of exports. One of the most important experiments to raise a labor force for the West Indies as an alternative to

the use of slaves occurred at this time. As Monica Schuler shows in Chapter 8, the British and French attempted to recruit migrant workers, particularly from among the Kru along the coast of Liberia and western Ivory Coast. Between 1841-1857 many hundreds of Kru men boarded ships for British and French Guiana. Most never came back to West Africa. This experiment, which failed to produce the numbers of workers needed in tropical America, occurred in the context of slavery. The Kru were freemen, but they were being called on to perform the tasks of slaves. Both the French and British had to turn to Asia to find the numbers of recruits that were needed. That most Africans were as reluctant as the Kru to respond to the attractions of free migration demonstrates that the legacy of the slave trade could not easily be overcome.

What was happening in coastal West Africa during this period was an attempt to adjust to the changing demands of the export trade. As Patrick Manning shows (Chapter 9), the scale of slave exports continued at an unprecedented high until mid-century, dropping off earliest on the Gold Coast, then falling off in the Bight of Biafra by the 1830s and finally collapsing in the Bight of Benin by the 1850s. What were coastal merchants to do under these circumstances? Manning's analysis reveals that the large volume of exports in the first several decades of the nineteenth century was in some ways deceptive. The value of exports was relatively low and did not increase very much until palm products became a major component in the export traffic. And the prosperity associated with palm-product exports relied on the domestic use of slaves. The Kru may have emigrated to find work, but the merchants and princes of the Bights of Benin and Biafra were busy adjusting to export markets by redeploying slaves into the internal economy. Manning shows that the timing of this shift varied between the two Bights, but after mid-century the economies of both regions, as measured by the export trade, began to move in tandem.

In my own contribution (Chapter 10), I examine the problems associated with controlling the large slave population of the Sokoto Caliphate, the largest state in nineteenth-century West Africa. The incorporation of slaves into the caliphate was a major aim of state policy. How slaves responded to their condition of servitude has not been well understood, but a study of caliphate slavery reveals that resistance was widespread, particularly in the form of flight. The chapter goes beyond a mere identification of the phenomenon of resistance, moreover. The nature of resistance was closely associated with the dominant ideology that emphasized religious conviction. Islam provided the justification for enslavement, and it served to legitimize many of the acts of resistance by slaves themselves.

Allan Isaacman (Chapter 11) examines the process of ethnic formation in the context of a politically unstable region - the Zambesi basin during the slavery era of the nineteenth century. Chikunda refugees, who fled from slavery but subsequently participated in the enslavement and exploitation of others, moved beyond the frontier of Portuguese control. Originally slaves on Portuguese estates (prazos), the Chikunda escaped into the interior when they were faced with the prospect of being sold to the coast. As transfrontiersmen - a concept developed by Curtin to explain a fluid cultural situation in which individuals and small groups found themselves cut off from their parent society - the Chikunda responded to opportunities to participate in ivory hunting, trade, and slave raiding. As a result they created new communities that rapidly assumed an independent identity. The chapter helps to explain one impact of the slave trade on African societies and how some slaves could respond to their exploitation in a manner that did not question the institution of slavery itself.

Slaves took advantage of many different kinds of opportunities, including a willingness to participate in the colonial conquest. Myron Echenberg (Chapter 12) shows that a major proportion of the recruits in the Tirailleurs Sénégalais, the French army that was organized in Senegal for the conquest of the Western Sudan, were slaves in origin - sometimes fugitives, other times individuals purchased for the army, and at other times still, slaves who belonged to African regiments who were incorporated wholesale into the Tirailleurs. In one sense, then, the French conquest continued an African pattern in which slaves were used extensively in the armies of the indigenous states. Their recruitment was expedient, and the slaves themselves had little, if any, reluctance to fight against African rulers. The use of slaves had the ironic effect, however, of establishing a colonial regime that would ultimately end slavery as an institution.

Finally, Dennis Cordell (Chapter 13) examines the process of enslavement in north-central Africa in a region that was the last part of Africa to be purged of the scourge of large-scale, organized enslavement. Cordell demonstrates the movement of an enslaving frontier, which spread westward and southward into the Ubangi-Shari watershed. This frontier was associated with the demands of the Islamic world for slaves. There were a few individuals - Muhammad al-Sanusi of Dar al-Kuti, Rabiḥ ibn Fadlallah, and Rahma al-Zubayr - who established large military organizations that were designed to capture slaves, and there were many smaller bands of raiders who acted independently but no less determinedly. In fact Cordell concludes that the small operators may have been responsible for the enslavement of more people than the major figures. Whether or not his conclusion is proven correct, his material provides a rare chance to observe the process of enslavement close up.

All the chapters, therefore, touch on one or another of the major themes associated with the study of slavery in Africa and the Americas - the demographic implications of the trade, epidemiology, the volume of the trade, the prices of slaves, the role of women, the impact of the Atlantic trade on African societies, the substitution of other forms of labor for slavery, the political implications of abolition, slave resistance, social mobility for former slaves, and the process of enslavement. And other themes that Philip Curtin has pioneered are central to many of the chapters as well. Problems relating to epidemiology, demography, and cross-cultural interaction do not necessarily relate to slavery, although the cases examined here do. It should not be surprising that Curtin's influence has resulted in the examination of a variety of themes that have been central to his research in new ways. There are no conclusions here, only a demonstrable attempt to continue along lines of enquiry that Curtin knows very well.

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CHAPTER 1

WHEN DID SMALLPOX REACH THE NEW WORLD (AND WHY DOES IT MATTER)?

David Henige

- I. To kill an error is a good a service as, and sometimes even better than, establishing a new truth or fact.¹

The question of the course, character, and magnitude of the epidemiological impact of the discovery of the New World has serious historical implications.² Not only did the spread of diseases in the Americas help shape the Spanish conquest and is significant in terms of the history of Amerindian adaptation to colonialism, but the decline of Amerindian population in tropical areas has long been recognized as a major reason why African slave labor was introduced into the Americas as early as it was. Granted the close connection between the decline in Amerindian population and the development of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, its chronology remains unclear. When exactly and under what circumstances did Amerindian population decline? Beginning with Alfred Crosby's The Columbian Exchange (1972), the discussion has crystallized around two themes: the history of disease generally or of specific diseases, on the one hand, and the role of newly-introduced infectious diseases in depopulating the New World, on the other hand. Many scholars have assumed that there were many millions of Amerindians at the time of first contact and have argued that virulent epidemics of smallpox, typhoid, measles, influenza, and other diseases repeatedly struck the defenseless Indians, in most cases spreading faster than the movement of Europeans themselves, escalating to pandemics, and depopulating wide areas before the Europeans had the chance to estimate the numbers of people in them, let alone try to do anything about the spread of such diseases (Wright 1981: 22-23; Jennings 1975: 21-31; Dobyns 1983).

In this context, a discussion of the date at which smallpox, the most lethal of the new diseases, first appeared in the New World is significant beyond the event itself. It is the purpose of this chapter to review this issue briefly by

bringing together both the early sources and modern interpretations. Two schools of thought exist in the matter. One, of longer standing, holds that smallpox first struck the aboriginal inhabitants of Hispaniola late in 1518, spreading then to the mainland, where it continued for two years or more. A second school, on the other hand, believes that smallpox first arrived as early as 1507 in Hispaniola, the only Spanish settlement at that time. The difference may seem trivial until we remember that some models of aboriginal depopulation would have several millions of Indians dying in Hispaniola between 1492-1496 (Cook and Borah 1971-1979: vol. 1, 376-410). Should it be possible then to demonstrate convincingly that smallpox began its lethal work in 1507, both the arguments and the conclusions of the proponents of high population levels would gain in credibility. If 1518 is the more likely date of introduction, then the Amerindian population of Hispaniola, at least, would almost certainly have been less than previously thought. I begin by discussing the historiography of the case for 1507, continue by surveying briefly the earliest information we have on smallpox in the New World, and conclude by weighing the merits of the two cases and the implications for New World demography in the early colonial period.

- II. The sequence is an impressive tower of authority, though it also suggests that even the best historians may be unduly credulous when they see a footnote to an illustrious predecessor (Curtin 1969: 7).

Tracing the development of the case for the year 1507 is relatively straightforward since it is entirely a modern phenomenon. It is easiest to work back from the present since there is a limited number of sources involved and this procedure allows us to follow the course of the argument by means of the bibliographical citations of those who have championed it.

Most recently Kenneth Kiple (1984: 10), in a study of the biological history of African slaves in the Caribbean, has stated that "the bewildering blitzkrieg of European diseases [began] with smallpox, which apparently reached the New World in 1507." It is not clear why Kiple hedges his observation, but his belief seems to be based on Dixon's classic work on smallpox.³ There Dixon (1962: 192), exhibiting some uncertainty of his own, noted that "smallpox appears to have been introduced into the New World in the West Indies in the year 1507, . . . and was so disastrous that whole tribes were exterminated."

Dixon failed to cite a source for his comment but in fact he was following closely, if unadmittedly, the work of August Hirsch, published in German in the 1860s and in English twenty

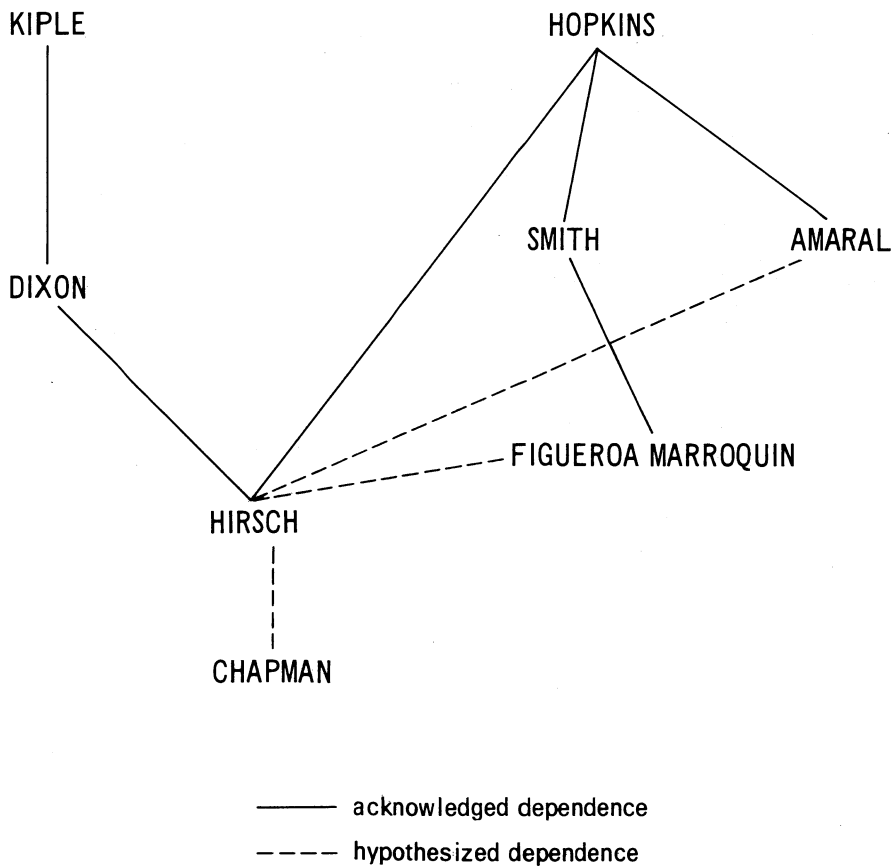
years later (Hirsch 1860-1864: vol. 1, 98; 1883-1886: vol. 1, 136). After adding that he had been unable to learn how long the epidemic lasted or how far it spread, Hirsch (1860-1864: vol. 1, 98), clearly confused in his geography or his history (as well as his chronology), went on to state that "the next information on the disease dates from 1517 [*sic*] when the Spanish imported the disease into Haiti," as though he was unaware that the purported 1507 epidemic had also affected Haiti (that is, Hispaniola). With Hirsch the spore in this particular hunt dies out since, whereas his work is otherwise heavily referenced, he cited no sources for this particular passage.

In his exhaustive history of smallpox, Donald Hopkins (1983: 204) is less cautious than either Kiple or Dixon, stating unreservedly that "the first outbreak [of smallpox] struck the island of Hispaniola in 1507." Hopkins cites Hirsch, as well as two other sources, for this statement. The first is a brief article on the history of smallpox which appeared in a Portuguese medical journal. There one Carlos Gonçalves do Amaral (1960: 541) claimed that "the first outbreak" of smallpox occurred "in 1507 in the island of S. Domingos [Hispaniola], where it recurred in 1517" before spreading to the mainland. Amaral cited no sources but his attribution of the second epidemic to the year 1517 makes it reasonably certain that he was himself also relying on Hirsch.

Hopkins' third source is a recent study (Smith 1974: 6) of a late eighteenth-century effort to introduce vaccination into the Spanish colonies. In providing background to his main story, the author states that "Hispaniola experienced epidemics [of smallpox] in 1507 and 1517." In turn Smith, although including the incorrect date of 1517, cited not Hirsch, but Horacio Figueroa Marroquín's Enfermedades de los conquistadores (1957: 51). For his part, Figueroa Marroquín was rather less categorical, noting only that there had been "various epidemics in the newly-discovered lands, some of which are held to have been smallpox, such as the epidemic in the year 1507, . . . and that of 1517 in Haiti." Figueroa Marroquín failed to cite any sources for his conclusions, but once again his citing of the year 1517 for the second epidemic can only lead us to suspect that he too made use of Hirsch.

In one way or another then (Figure 1.1) all historiographical lines unerringly lead us back to Hirsch's work, where the visible trail grows exceedingly cold - but perhaps not completely cold. While Hirsch did not footnote the particular statement which served either directly or indirectly as the inspiration for his assertion that smallpox had struck Hispaniola in both 1507 and 1517, he had earlier referred to several works on which he drew for his information on the historical incidence of smallpox in the New World (Hirsch 1883-1886: vol. 1, 135-136).⁴ One of these was Nathaniel

**Figure 1.1 HISTORIOGRAPHICAL GENEALOGY
OF HISPANIOLA SMALLPOX EPIDEMIC**



Chapman's pioneering study (1844) of various "eruptive fevers" published some twenty years before Hirsch's German edition first appeared. Comparing Hirsch's account with that of Chapman is inconclusive, but suggestive, and leads me to suspect a derivative relationship, which can be demonstrated best by juxtaposing relevant passages from each of them:

Twenty-five years after the discovery of this continent, [smallpox] occurred, and we are told, destroyed more than a moiety of the population of the provinces into which it penetrated. . . . Brought, afterwards, by emigrants from Europe to our immediate land [i.e., the United States], it swept off, also, several tribes of the aboriginals (Chapman 1844: 136).

The first outbreak of smallpox in the Western Hemisphere took place in the West Indies in 1507, fifteen years after the discovery of America, and it was so disastrous that whole tribes were exterminated by it (Hirsch 1860-1864: vol. 1, 98).

Only speculation is possible, but I suggest that, a) Hirsch's statement was a direct but muddled borrowing from Chapman, a conflation of two distinct incidents mentioned and which were in fact separated in time and place, and, b) that he inadvertently substituted "15" for Chapman's "25." The first might have occurred as a result of Hirsch's unfamiliarity with the English language, the second merely from a lapsus calami or as the subsequent misreading of a handwritten notation. Such an interpretation, while by no means demonstrable, is at least plausible and goes far towards explaining why there seems to be no reference in the literature before Hirsch to a smallpox epidemic in 1507.⁵ If this view is accepted, then it must also be accepted that a date of 1507 for the introduction of smallpox into the New World is no more than an illusion created by accident and perpetuated by carelessness.⁶

Before closing the argument, though, we need to consider some possible arguments (as opposed to simply reiterated assertions) that 1507 actually was a particularly likely year for smallpox finally to have crossed the Atlantic. In that year any ship carrying smallpox would almost certainly have come from Spain. Looking at the situation there we find that it was a bad year for illness - in fact "a very terrible and dreadful" year, characterized by various illnesses in several regions of the country (Bernaldez 1962: 518-519).⁷ In Andalusia there was the plague and modorra, as well as extreme hunger, and modorra and jaundice occurred in several other parts of the country, as did plague and more hunger.⁸ But, among this litany of ills we find smallpox conspicuous only by its absence.⁹

It has also been argued that smallpox must have come with the first slaves that reached Hispaniola directly from Africa rather than by way of Spain.¹⁰ Brau (1966: 315-316), for instance, suggested that smallpox had been introduced by infected slaves illegally brought to Hispaniola from the Levant by Genoese traders. Smith picked this idea up and applied it to the date of 1507, although Brau himself considered that the smallpox of 1518 was "new in the country" (Smith 1974: 6; Brau 1966: 315).

Inevitably this leads us to the question of whether slaves had been brought illegally from Africa to Hispaniola from a very early date - that is, before 1507. Such a contraband trade may have occurred, of course, but one would expect some indication of it even in the exiguous surviving records since the Spanish settlements on Hispaniola were few and small and within easy purview of royal officials, who were bound to take an unfavorable view of smuggling. Yet there are no surviving reports of illegally imported slaves until 1526 (Deive 1980: vol. 1, 159-160). Nor should we forget that Las Casas very definitely stated that at least the smallpox of 1518 had come from Spain.¹¹ Moreover, slaves brought from the Levant would have taken much longer to reach Hispaniola and the twelve-day incubation period that characterizes smallpox would then have played an even more inhibiting role in preventing victims from arriving on the island while still infected than if they had come from the much nearer Iberian peninsula.

In sum, we have no reasonable alternative but to conclude that there is no direct evidence - and no indirect evidence - that smallpox reached Hispaniola before 1518 and a good deal of both to suggest that it did not. The date of 1507 (and for that matter the date of 1517 so often coupled with it) is a historiographical mirage, the result of nothing more than promiscuously copying from one modern study to another. Conversely, the epidemic of 1518 is supported by an abundance of contemporaneous evidence, some of it eyewitness, for its having been the first to reach Hispaniola as well as a surprising, if not absolutely probative, amount of silence about any earlier epidemic.

III. La conviction ne se forme pas par la parole du maître, mais par les documents (Fustel de Coulanges 1893: 407).

If the earliest published reference to smallpox in 1507 is more than three centuries removed from the purported event, this is decidedly not the case for the well-documented epidemic which struck the West Indian islands and then the mainland between 1518 and 1521. This was mentioned by all the major early chroniclers - Peter Martyr, Las Casas, and Oviedo - and,

more importantly, was described in official correspondence even while it was raging. While none of these sources of course was able to anticipate the vagaries of modern scholarship by denying unequivocally that there had been an earlier epidemic in 1507, their descriptions are nonetheless of interest in helping to determine if the 1518-1521 epidemic was actually the very first in the area or whether it was, as Floyd (1973: 191) suggests, "only an intensified aspect of what had been occurring continually, if at times slowly, since at least 1505."

The indispensable account of this episode occurs in a letter written on 10 January 1519 (anon. 1864-1884: vol. 1, 368) by the Hieronymite Fathers then governing Hispaniola to the Spanish king. The Hieronymites had been sent by the Council of the Indies in 1516 to administer the island and deal with complaints by Las Casas and others regarding mistreatment of the dwindling Indian population. As it stands, this letter represents the first reference to smallpox in the New World. At the time it was written smallpox had already killed nearly one-third of the Indians of the island and was still raging. A few of the Spanish had been slightly afflicted and, although none had yet died, all feared the possible effects of the smallpox or some other "pestilence." No mention was made of the African slaves on the island, nor was any hint provided as to the suspected origin of the disease.¹² The Hieronymites reported that the smallpox had spread to the neighboring island of Puerto Rico, where it was producing similar mortality levels.¹³

The account of Peter Martyr followed on the heels on the Hieronymites' report (and may indeed have been based on it). Writing no later than 1520 and, as a member of the Council of the Indies probably basing himself on both correspondence and personal testimony, Martyr (Anghiera 1530: 158, Decade 4, Book 10) offered the most explicit denial in the literature that smallpox had occurred on Hispaniola earlier than 1518. Smallpox was, he wrote, "a disease hitherto unknown" on the island and he associated its appearance (if not quite causally) with the inhumane treatment of the Indians, who were forced to work in the gold mines, but he offered no information as to the cause of the epidemic.¹⁴ Martyr had been writing about Spanish activities in the New World ever since Columbus returned from his first voyage, and he probably would have been aware of and noted any earlier epidemics (Wagner 1946: 239-288; Arciniegas 1983: 525-531; Parks 1954-1955: 209-225).

Bartolomé de las Casas provided the most detailed account of the epidemic, even though he happened to be in Spain during the actual outbreak, returning to Hispaniola in 1520 (Wagner and Parish 1967: 168n). His description, apparently written much later and presumably drawn either from Indian or Spanish eyewitnesses, was included in his massive history of the Indies. Las Casas (1951: vol. 3, 270) related how, when the

disease first struck, the Indians continued their custom of bathing frequently in rivers, indeed began to do so with increasing fervor, expecting that they could wash the disease away. As a result the smallpox spread more rapidly than ever, and, as Las Casas expressed it with his accustomed hyperbole, "shortly all of them died." Unlike the reports of the Hieronymites and of Peter Martyr, Las Casas offered an explanation (of sorts) for the disease's origins in Hispaniola: "some person brought it from Castile," he reported, which could mean either a Spaniard or possibly an African domiciled in Spain.

The clear, if implied, sense of Las Casas' description of the Indians' response to the disease is that smallpox was a new experience to them and that, in their ignorance, they took measures which had entirely counterproductive and fatal effects.¹⁵ We can reasonably assume, I think, that if smallpox had struck the Hispaniola Indians only a decade earlier, either their own experience or the advice of the Spanish, long all too familiar with the disease and anxious to preserve their shrinking labor force, would have prevented the Indians from taking the measures that Las Casas ascribed to them in 1518.

The next account of smallpox in Hispaniola - and the latest having any pretense to being in any way first-hand - was that of Oviedo, who spent many years of his later life on the island. Referring in his monumental history to the year 1518, Oviedo (1851-1855: vol. 1, 105) wrote that "there occurred an epidemic of smallpox so virulent that it left Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, and Cuba desolated of Indians" or "with so few that it seemed a great judgment from heaven."¹⁶ As the successor of Peter Martyr as semi-official historian of the Indies for the Spanish court, Oviedo had access to records in Spain as well as to the records and the collective memory in Hispaniola, yet he mentioned no earlier epidemic.

The earliest extant sources then are unanimous in citing the smallpox epidemic of 1518-1519 in Hispaniola, and equally unanimous in failing to refer to any earlier episode. While it would have been helpful if any of the four primary sources had taken the trouble more frequently to include such terms as "first" or "never before" in their accounts, in fact what they do tell us is very much what we might expect in the circumstances, since none of them had reason to regard the 1518-1519 epidemic as more than the latest disaster in a colony which had already undergone a litany of travails from its very founding. The argument from silence can never be completely foolproof, but in this instance it must be regarded as convincing. If nothing else, it hardly bears imagining that Las Casas (who was in Hispaniola in 1507) would have failed to mention an epidemic of smallpox in that year had it occurred; after all, he was not entirely averse to mentioning other catastrophes which had not occurred.

Finally, I might mention one further early account which adds more silence, yet more muscle, to the argument that there were no smallpox epidemics in the New World prior to 1518. In 1518 the Spanish court decided to replace the regime of the Hieronymites (who in any case were anxious to relinquish their rather unusual duties) with a new administration, one which, it hoped, would finally resolve the protracted Indian question before there were no Indians left. Extensive and detailed instructions were given to Rodrigo de Figueroa, the official charged with effecting the new policies on Hispaniola. In these instructions (which were issued before word of the 1518 epidemic could reach Spain), the King and the Council of the Indies repeatedly underscored their concern that the declining Indian population "maintain and multiply itself."¹⁷ In outlining the projected measures, attention was naturally directed to the causes for this decline. Throughout the documentation these were held to be "ill treatment," largely consisting of overworking the Indians in the mines, as well as "extortions and cruelties." But the principal cause was held to be "hunger."¹⁸

Nowhere is this dreary catalog was there so much as a single mention of smallpox, or indeed of any disease whatever, even though the influence of Las Casas in the preparation of the document is clear throughout (Floyd 1973: 186; Bataillon 1971: 398-401).¹⁹ To anyone familiar with the views and work of Las Casas, it is inconceivable that, had disease (including but not necessarily confined to smallpox) been a serious problem among the Indians of Hispaniola, Spanish officialdom would have ignored its consequences and chosen not to discuss expedients for alleviating it.

Other explanations for the absence of any reference to a smallpox epidemic before 1518 are unconvincing. It is unlikely for instance, that smallpox had been present for some time on the island but had affected only the Africans there; or that the Spanish court viewed disease as an act of God not amenable to royal mandate and therefore not worth mentioning; or even that officials on the island, overlooking the various symptoms that would have been present, had mistakenly thought that the Indians were dying from hunger and ill treatment. While none of these contingencies can logically be ruled out, somehow each of them lacks the requisite plausibility to transform them into alternative hypotheses. This leaves us no choice but to conclude that there had been no serious or epidemic incidence of infectious disease in Hispaniola before late 1518.

- IV. The Mind, before it rationally assents or dissents to any Proposition, ought to examine all the Grounds of Probability, and see how they make, more or less, for

or against it. And upon a due balancing of the whole, reject or receive it, with a more or less firm assent, according to the Preponderancy of the greater Grounds of Probability, on one side or the other (Locke 1894: vol. 2, 366)

The implications of this conclusion are not insignificant. As previously noted, it has been argued that a smallpox epidemic killed an estimated four million people in just four years. According to Cook and Borah (1971-1979: 410): "It seems most unlikely that the sick among the Spaniards would have been kept so isolated that the natives would not have picked up any disease of epidemic possibility." Most certainly, if the population of the Caribbean islands was dense and epidemiologically vulnerable to such communicable diseases as smallpox, then twenty-five years or more of onslaught of the diseases carried by the newcomers would have caused great mortality. An early smallpox epidemic, therefore, presupposes a dense population, but we have seen that there was no epidemic before 1518. That the early Spanish settlers in Hispaniola were chronically ill is undeniable; that they were ill from communicable diseases against which the Indians had no immunity is open to serious question.

Here we are concerned only with determining the odds with respect to smallpox. In the most explicit attempt to deal with the issue, Crosby (1972: 45-46) points out why the particular epidemiological traits of smallpox provided at least temporary immunity to the Indians, simply by ensuring that the disease never reached Hispaniola. Its twelve-day incubation period meant that under ordinary circumstances the virus would have died off during the slow (and relatively infrequent) sea voyages to the Caribbean. But, as he notes, an unusually speedy voyage, the presence of an individual who had not acquired immunity by virtue of an earlier attack (very rare for the time), or the survival of the smallpox virus in pustules or in bales of textiles could have triggered an attack on a virgin population. Each of these was an unlikely contingency at the time and, all things considered, it is not at all surprising that a delay of more than twenty-five years ensued, although a shorter delay would not necessarily be less plausible.

Shrewdly, if unwittingly, Oviedo (1851-1855: vol. 1, 105) mentioned another circumstance which could help explain the particular timing of the 1518-1519 episode. As he put it: "as soon as the Indians were reduced into towns" the epidemic began. Oviedo referred here to the newly implemented policy of resettling the remaining Indians, still scattered around the island, into small settlements which were located near the Spanish towns (Floyd 1973: 176; Simpson 1950: 52-53). From the viewpoint of epidemiology this was fatal on two counts: it brought the Indians into larger and denser groupings, which

would have facilitated high mortality, and it brought them into closer and more continuous contact with possible Spanish (and African) carriers of the disease. Once this happened, it was only a matter of time before the Indians paid the price.²⁰ But until this happened, the demographics of the situation were not particularly conducive to the easy and rapid spread of smallpox.²¹

- V. There is no need, when I have found the source, to follow the streams (John Bolland in Acta Sanctorum 1845: vol. 1, xx).

I began by pointing out that the date of 1507 had recurred with increasing regularity and that it would prove a valuable and much-needed argument for the proponents of large numbers of Indians in Hispaniola and in other parts of the New World since, by their model, it would have provided an early and excellent mechanism for rapid depopulation and, better yet, a mechanism which would provide no opportunities for disconfirmation. Although the proponents of large populations have not yet pushed this particular argument very strenuously, the present discussion may have some value in precluding at least this part of the very circular, yet somehow persuasive, line of reasoning that characterizes that cause. In particular, the case of smallpox in Hispaniola suggests that the first-possible-opportunity scenario that has come to be the cornerstone of the large population argument is inappropriate and presumptuous. The idea that a "virgin" population is at immediate risk from any disease not endemic to it is refuted by the Hispaniola example. It is easy enough to assert that the 1518-1519 epidemic was simply the first recorded one there (or, as Kiple [1984: 193, n 14] puts it, the first "official" one) but to do so merely begs the question in a particularly desperate way. While it is certainly neither possible nor expedient to argue that no newly-imported infectious diseases raged outside the purview of European observation early in the sixteenth century, this must remain (probably for all time) no more than a not unreasonable assumption, entirely devoid of the evidence required to permit serious arguments based on it.

The case discussed here also illustrates a larger problem which has been one endemic among historians of disease - the reluctance, perhaps even the unwillingness, to consult whatever primary sources exist on particular episodes of "epidemic" diseases in ancient, medieval, and early modern times (cf. Hopkins 1983). The premise that there are no substitutes for the original sources as a point of departure seems strangely alien to this field, as it seeks to impose over-arching new interpretations of the ebb and flow of mankind's past

experience. Historians who have studied the impact of disease in the past are unquestionably correct to point out that the role of disease has been largely overlooked, sometimes purposefully, by their predecessors. But if they are right to avoid this example, they are wrong to ignore the methodological criteria for text criticism established by numerous generations of historians.

Beyond these points a few closing reflections may be in order. The fact that smallpox did not strike the Hispaniola Indians until they had begun to be concentrated into settlements by the Spanish only reinforces other evidence that the island's contact population was not particularly large and had been declining ever since the Spanish first arrived. Conversely, were there evidence of an earlier attack - earlier, that is, than the resettlement - it might well lead us to suspect the existence of an aboriginal population which, even in its traditional settlement configuration, was dense.

While the effects of Indian depopulation on the first stirrings of the Atlantic slave trade are obvious enough and have long been appreciated, one must inevitably wonder how different the transition from Indian to African slavery and from gold mining to sugar cane production would have been had there been a dramatic demographic crisis as early as 1507, when the Spanish had as yet colonized only Hispaniola, and in very limited numbers. What effect would an epidemic have had on the impending settlement of nearby islands? More intriguingly, would the timing of the conquest of Mexico (which originated from Cuba) and Peru have been changed if the Hispaniola Indians had disappeared even a decade sooner? It is not unreasonable to speculate that a difference of just a few years, either way, would have affected the Spanish adventure in Peru, which, in its actual timing, could not have been more exquisitely propitious for Spanish fortunes.

NOTES

1. Charles Darwin to A. Stephen Wilson, 5 March 1879 (Darwin 1903: vol. 2, 422).
2. For a similar approach, see Curtin 1969.
3. Kiple actually cites several sources in his relevant footnote, but there is much garbling. Two of the modern sources (Crosby 1972: 39; Ashburn 1947) do not support his statement, while his appeal to the primary sources does not invoke confidence. He cites Oviedo (1851-55: vol. 1, 103) when the relevant passage is on p. 105. Then he mentions las Casas (1951: vol. 3, 558), whereas volume 3 has only 525 pages. Finally, he refers to Antonio de

- Herrera y Tordesillas, Historia general de los hechos de los Castellanos en las islas y tierra firme en el mar océano (17 vols.: Buenos Aires, 1945) 3:374-376. No such edition of Herrera's work was ever published. A seventeen-volume edition was published in Madrid between 1934-1957. In it, pp. 374-376 of volume 3 (published in 1935) deal with Balboa's activities in Panama. A ten-volume edition was published in Asunción in 1945. Pages 374-376 of volume 3 of this edition mention smallpox in Mexico City but do not refer at all to Hispaniola.
4. The English translation of the section on smallpox was nearly twice as long as the first German edition, and these additional comments probably reflected Hirsch's continuing research.
 5. It is just possible that William Robertson's The History of America, several editions of which were published between 1777-1834, played a role in this confusion. As part of the editorial conventions of the time, single dates were placed in the margin next to passages which actually dealt with long-term processes. As it happens, "1507" was placed in the margin of a long section dealing with the depopulation of the New World through, among other things, disease, in at least one edition of the History. This may well have been construed into something more than it meant, or (and more likely) it was not noticed or used at all. See Robertson 1818: vol. 8, 254-255.
 6. It also helps to explain the recurring and slightly erroneous date of 1517 ascribed to the second epidemic.
 7. Bernaldez died in 1513 but his work was not published until 1873.
 8. Modorra was a common disease in both Spain and the Spanish colonies at the time, but it has defied identification with any known modern disease. For modorra, see Ashburn 1947: 149-151.
 9. Nor was it mentioned by Bernaldez (1962: 516-518) under the year 1506, apparently a somewhat less disease-ridden year in Spain. This is not to suggest that such an epidemic in Spain would have been a prerequisite for one in Hispaniola, but only to defuse the issue by showing that there was none.
 10. At first only Africans already resident in Spain were transported to Hispaniola in order that the Spanish authorities could better monitor this traffic. For this and much else on early slavery in Hispaniola, see Deive 1980: vol. 1, 3-50.
 11. Here, however, we must bear in mind that Las Casas probably wrote this account after he had come to regret his advocacy of bringing Africans to Hispaniola to do the work that had been done by Indians. We may reasonably suspect

- that he may have convinced himself that this had no role in the introduction of smallpox without that actually being the case.
12. Letter of 20 May 1519 (anon. 1864-1884: vol. 1, 369-370); undated [1520?] memorial of Hernando de Gorjón (anon. 1864-1884: vol. 1, 429), who also mentioned measles and catarrh.
 13. Letter of 10 January 1519 (anon. 1864-1884: vol. 1, 368).
 14. For Martyr's sources for this decade, see Wagner 1946: 247-255, 263-266.
 15. It is not impossible that the idea of Indians attempting to rid themselves of the smallpox pustules in this way was in the nature of a literary topos. Gómara (1943: vol. 1, 291) explained the high mortality among the Aztecs from it in precisely the same fashion.
 16. For Oviedo's life and work, see, among others, Iglesia 1969: 213-230; Cantù 1976: 207-246; Turner 1967, 1983, 1985; Arrom 1983: 133-145; Ballesteros Gaibrois 1981.
 17. "Instrucciones al licenciado Rodrigo de Figueroa," 9 December 1518 (Serrano y Sanz 1918: dlxxxviii et passim).
 18. Ibid. dlxxxviii, dxciii et passim.
 19. More awkward silence is added by the testimony of several settlers questioned by the Hieronymites in 1517 in preparation for establishing the encomiendas. Each was asked a specified series of questions about the treatment of the Indians, the causes and effects of their diminution, and ways and means to halt it. Several mentioned lack of food resources; none mentioned disease. For the verbatim testimony, see Rodríguez Demorizi 1971: 273-354.
 20. Peter Martyr also mentioned the royal order regrouping the Indians in his account (Anghiera 1530: 158).
 21. Interestingly, Oviedo's use of the phrase "as soon as" ("así como") suggests that he saw the matter (benefiting perhaps from hindsight) as a case of post hoc ergo propter hoc. We shall never know.

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CHAPTER 2

THE COMPANY TRADE AND THE NUMERICAL DISTRIBUTION OF SLAVES TO SPANISH AMERICA, 1703-1739

Colin A. Palmer

During the first four decades of the eighteenth century, the French and the British dominated the legal slave trade to Spanish America. In 1701 the French *Compagnie de Guinée* was awarded the asiento or monopoly contract to deliver 4,800 piezas de Indias annually to Spanish America for ten years beginning in 1702. Twelve years later, in 1713, England won a similar contract at the Treaty of Utrecht to supply Spain's colonies with 4,800 piezas each year for the succeeding thirty years. Although these contractual obligations were never entirely fulfilled, the French Guinea Company and the South Sea Company brought about 89,031 slaves to Spanish America by 1739 when the War of Jenkins Ear effectively ended the Anglo-Spanish contract.

From the inception of the slave trade to the Americas, Spain exercised a close control over its conduct, direction, and flow. Starting in the early sixteenth century, the Spanish government issued licenses to individual traders to deliver a predetermined number of slaves to the colonists. This system of individual licenses continued until the 1590s when the asiento system was introduced. Under this system, Spain awarded a monopoly contract to the successful applicant to supply the colonists with a specified number of slaves annually. The first *Asentista*, the Portuguese entrepreneur Pedro Gómez Reynel, received monopoly rights to introduce 4,250 slaves annually to Spanish America for nine years. Six years later, in 1601, the Crown awarded a second asiento to João Rodrigues Coutinho for the delivery of a similar number of slaves to the Indies. By 1640, four additional contracts had been awarded to Portuguese slave traders. Understandably, the years 1595-1640 have been characterized as the period of the Portuguese asientos (Vila Vilar 1977). Thereafter, contracts were awarded to a number of other businessmen such as the Genoese traders Domingo Grillo and Ambrosio Lomelín in 1662.

In 1675 the Dutch West India Company gained the asiento and Dutchmen won the contract again in 1685 (Rawley 1981: 79-98).

Generally speaking, the Asentistas created a bureaucratic machinery in the colonies to facilitate their conduct of the trade. In the case of the French Guinea Company, for example, factories were established in Santo Domingo, Cartagena, Porto Bello, Panama, Havana, and Buenos Aires. In addition, the Company appointed agents in Maracaibo, Caracas, Río de la Hacha, Santa Marta, Cumaná, Puerto Rico, Porto Bello, Vera Cruz, Margarita and Guatemala.¹ The South Sea Company followed the practice of its predecessor and established permanent factories at Cartagena, Panama, Buenos Aires, Porto Bello, Havana, Vera Cruz and Caracas. These factories were staffed by a President or Governor, an accountant, one or two agents and a secretary. It was the responsibility of these persons to receive and to sell the slaves to the Spaniards and to ensure that the contraband trade was kept to a minimum (Palmer 1981).

The number of slaves that the two companies delivered to the Spanish colonists was considerably lower than their asiento contracts stipulated. In accordance with Imperial perceptions of the needs of the colonists, the contracts provided for the delivery of a specified number of slaves annually to the major ports. The French Guinea Company, for example, was expected to deliver between seven hundred and eight hundred piezas to Buenos Aires annually, while the South Sea Company was held to 1,200.

The two companies' failure to meet these obligations was the result of a number of factors. In the first instance, they experienced internal difficulties of one sort or another that consumed their energies and made more difficult the discharge of their commercial responsibilities. Second, the outbreak of war in Europe led to the interruption of trade for lengthy periods of time. The War of the Spanish Succession hampered the French Guinea Company in the conduct of its trade. In fact, as part of the price of ending the war, the English won the asiento from the Spanish with the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht. In the case of the South Sea Company, hostilities between England and Spain interrupted trade in 1719, and it was not resumed until 1722. Hostilities between the two countries recurred in 1727 and trade ceased until 1729 when peace was restored. Finally, the War of Jenkins Ear halted commerce between the two nations again in 1739 and permanently crippled the asiento trade.

It is also clear that the acquisition of the asiento was more the reflection of a desire to penetrate the Spanish empire in a broader commercial sense and less a commitment to engage exclusively in the slave trade. Accordingly, the contract served as a pretext for indulging in other forms of commerce frequently with the active connivance of the colonial authorities and citizens. The French Guinea Company's ships, for

example, engaged in a vigorous contraband trade with residents at Buenos Aires. As early as 1703, the *Aigle Noir* bought a variety of goods for the illicit trade as did the *Medemblick* and the *Amphitrite* in 1705. This practice proved impossible to control throughout the period of the French asiento (De Studer 1958: 118-126). As late as 1714 representatives of the South Sea Company complained that the French, in violation of the terms of the Treaty of Utrecht, had at least twenty-seven ships trading with the Spaniards: "the French lower the prices of goods and carry the riches of the whole Indies into their dominions."²

The South Sea Company was no more circumspect than the French Guinea Company in the matter of the illicit trade. It was generally known that its ships were always stocked with supplies for the underground or "secret" trade. One widespread practice was to put a few slaves on board a ship to "qualify" it as engaged in the slave trade, thereby assuring its admission to a Spanish port. Once the ship had sold its slaves and the other goods it introduced illicitly, it would then purchase Spanish commodities with the proceeds from the sale. The Spanish crown tried, unsuccessfully, to end this contraband trade from time to time and even appealed to the Company for assistance in this regard. The South Sea Company never admitted its complicity in the contraband trade, although there is no doubt that some of its highest officials were engaged in it. In 1725, to cite but one example, the Spanish authorities at Buenos Aires reported that they had intercepted a letter written by the factors at that port informing the subgovernor and deputy governor of the company that some silver was being sent to London on the *Sea Horse* "on the account of the secret commerce." In addition, the Spaniards seized and held several company ships for varying periods of time on charges that they were involved in the illicit trade.³

In order to minimize the two companies' involvement in the illicit trade in slaves and thereby avoiding the payment of the 33 1/3 peso tax on each pieza, the colonial authorities had to determine the number of slaves in each cargo upon its arrival in port. The state of the slaves' health had to be established before they were allowed to disembark. This was a necessary precaution given the prevailing fear of epidemic diseases. If the cargo received permission from the health inspectors to disembark, the very intricate process of "measuring" or determining the number of piezas de Indias it comprised followed in a few days. It must be remembered that custom duties were calculated on the number of piezas a cargo contained and not on the actual heads of slaves that it delivered.

In order to facilitate the "measurement" process, the slaves were normally divided into four groups generally in accordance with their age, size and sex. Adult males constituted the first group, adult females the second, boys the

third and girls the fourth. The slaves were then measured to determine their height in palmos, the Spanish unit of measure equivalent to eight and one half inches. Those individuals who measured seven palmos, or about five feet, or more were judged to be piezas. But this was not always the case. Slaves who were too old, sick, or who possessed certain physical disabilities could be reduced by one or two palmos and, accordingly, would be counted at less than a pieza. The degree of reduction, of course, depended on the nature of the illness or disability. Table 2.1, which was compiled from the records of the French Guinea Company, shows the kinds of physical disabilities that some slaves possessed and provides a random sample of the proportion of a pieza by which they were reduced. It is important to stress that there was considerable variation in the degree of reduction resulting from certain disabilities, since much depended on the judgement of the officials in charge. Obviously, some disabilities warranted a more severe reduction than others, as was the case with "spots on the skin," presumably because of the association with the deadly smallpox. But there was no uniform standard of deduction that officials were required to accept and enforce.

Table 2.2 gives an example of the measurement process as it applied to a cargo of slaves brought by the South Sea Company to Buenos Aires in 1725. In this instance, a cargo of 278 slaves were judged to constitute 208 $\frac{5}{6}$ piezas de Indias. At least one hundred or approximately 36 percent of these slaves formed piezas. Interestingly, although twenty-five of them were described as being "sick," their maladies were not considered serious enough to be counted at less than a pieza.

The process of determining the number of piezas often led to acrimonious disputes between the Spaniards and the Asentistas. A lower "measurement" was in the best interests of the companies since it allowed them to pay less tax and to introduce more heads of slaves for sale to the colonists. On the other hand, colonial authorities preferred a higher "measurement" since this led to the extraction of more taxes from the traders. The difference between the number of slaves in a cargo and the amount of piezas they constituted could be quite considerable, as examples drawn from Cartagena and Buenos Aires demonstrate (Table 2.3). In such instances, the officials were either quite conservative in their measurement of the cargoes, or the ships brought a disproportionate number of slaves with serious physical disabilities, or they were either deemed to be too young or too old. As Table 2.3 also shows, there could be a close correlation between the number of heads of slaves and the piezas they formed. In cases where the slaves were clearly in good physical condition and of the requisite height and age, they almost all formed piezas.

The Spanish colonists, understandably, demanded slaves of a high quality and were willing to pay the often exorbitant

TABLE 2.1
PHYSICAL DISABILITIES OF SLAVES AND
REDUCTION PER PIEZA AT CARTAGENA, 1703-1713

<u>Disability</u>	<u>Reduction</u> (expressed as part of of <u>pieza</u>)
gray hair	1/3
missing toe	1/6
one eyed	2/4
ringworm covered body	1/4
ringworm, partially covered body	1/6
too old	1/4
spots on the skin (manchas)	3/4
impaired vision	1/3
sores on the hands	1/6
sores on the feet	1/8
hernia	1/4
scurvy	2/8

Source: Preciado 1973: 156.

TABLE 2.2
MEASUREMENT OF 278 SLAVES, BUENOS AIRES, 1725

<u>Number of Slaves</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Measurement</u>	<u>Number of Piezas</u>
50	M	1 <u>pieza</u> each	50
52	M	3/4 <u>pieza</u> each	39
42	M	1/2 <u>pieza</u> each	21
25	F	1 <u>pieza</u> each	25
41	F	2/3 <u>pieza</u> each	27 1/3
21	F	1/2 <u>pieza</u> each	10 1/2
9 (sick)	M	1 <u>pieza</u> each	9
15 (sick)	M	1/2 <u>pieza</u> each	7 1/2
16 (sick)	F	1 <u>pieza</u> each	16
7 (sick)	F	1/2 <u>pieza</u> each	3 1/2
Total 278			208 5/6

Source: Archivo General de Indias, Contaduría 268, ramo 13.

TABLE 2.3

MEASUREMENT OF SELECTED CARGOES OF SLAVES
AT BUENOS AIRES AND CARTAGENA, 1703-1724

<u>Year</u>	<u>Port</u>	<u>Ship</u>	<u>Number of Slaves</u>	<u>Number of Piezas</u>
1703	Buenos Aires	L'opiniâtre	251	132
1703	Cartagena	La Badine	487	486 4/4
1704	Cargegena	La Poli	339	332 4/4
1705	Buenos Aires	L'Africain	340	262
1705	Buenos Aires	Medemblick	197	156
1705	Cartagena	La Badine	14	14
1705	Cartagena	La Genovibe	9	8 1/4
1705	Cartagena	Navio de Corso	67	64 4/4
1708	Cartagena	Santiago	81	66
1709	Cartagena	El Mignon	30	27 1/4
1711	Cartagena	San Jorge	214	187
1712	Cartagena	El Galan	20	18 1/4
1712	Buenos Aires	L'Amphitrite	548	462 1/2
1713	Buenos Aires	L'Aurore	148	112 1/2
1713	Cartagena	?	35	33 4/4
1715	Cartagena	Sara	283	255 3/4
1718	Cartagena	El Neptuno	130	111
1722	Cartagena	El Asiento	60	56 4/4
1723	Cartagena	Ppe de Asturias	236	230 3/4
1723	Cartagena	Reina de España	200	199
1723	Buenos Aires	Feadrin	538	390
1724	Buenos Aires	Carteret	327	259

Sources: De Studer 1958: 110-126; Preciado 1972: 159-161.

price asked for them (De Studer 1958: 117-118, cuadro iv; Palmer 1981: 122-128). Such slaves had to be in their most productive years, generally between the ages of fourteen and twenty-five and free of any physical disabilities. As a rule, the two companies preferred to purchase their slaves from private or independent traders in the Caribbean islands and then resell them to the Spaniards. The French Guinea Company purchased a good proportion of its slaves from the Dutch in Curacao and Bonaire, the Danes in St. Thomas, from the English in Jamaica and Barbados and from French traders in Martinique. The South Sea Company, in its turn, relied very heavily on the Jamaican markets for its slaves but also purchased them in Barbados, St. Christopher, Curacao and St. Eustatias.⁴

While the two companies obtained the vast majority of their slaves in the Caribbean islands, they also brought their slaves directly from the African coast. Between 1703-1713, for instance, at least three of the twenty-four French Guinea Company's ships that delivered their slaves to Cartagena came directly from Africa. La Badine brought 487 slaves in 1703, El Mignon arrived with thirty in 1709 and 396 in 1713. At least three other ships that disembarked their slaves in Cartagena during these years may have originated in Africa, but the evidence is inconclusive (De Studer 1958: 112-114, cuadro iv).⁵

The slaves that were purchased in the islands generally arrived in a much healthier condition than those who came directly from Africa. Many of these Africans had had the opportunity to rest and recover from illnesses they had contacted during the Atlantic passage or prior to departure. Company traders recognized that healthy slaves were most saleable and fetched higher prices than those who were physically incapacitated. Consequently, it was in their best interest to purchase such individuals in the Caribbean islands or to allow the ships that came directly from Africa to dock in the island ports to "refresh" or allow their slaves to recover from various diseases before proceeding to the Spanish markets.

The cargoes that arrived directly from Africa always included a high proportion of individuals who were sick. When the French Guinea Company's vessel L'Aigle docked in Buenos Aires in 1703, for example, it reported a loss of 325 slaves during the voyage from Cape Mesurado, Loango and Cabinda, and approximately fifty additional slaves died in the port before they could be measured. Two years later, L'Amphitrite brought 288 slaves to that port suffering from smallpox, tuberculosis, the mumps and "fevers". This unfortunate vessel had lost 275 of its human cargo during its seventy-seven day voyage from the African coast. In 1709 the same ship delivered a cargo of 298 slaves, of whom thirty-five were sick. The South Sea Company's vessels fared no better in their voyages from Africa. In a sample of 13,194 slaves who came from Africa and disembarked at Buenos Aires between 1715-1738, 1,012 (7.7 percent) arrived sick.⁶ In contrast, the vessels that originated in Jamaica or Barbados had a lower level of sickness. Of 4,079 slaves that the South Sea Company's agents dispatched from Jamaica and Barbados to Porto Bello between 1716-25, only 171 or 4.2 percent arrived ill (Palmer 1981: 119).

In addition to the problems caused by disease, Asentistas had to confront the threat to their monopoly posed by contraband traders. The Spanish colonists frequently complained about the inability of the companies to meet their demand for slaves and were not reluctant to make purchases from interlopers. On their part, the contraband traders were only too willing to supply the colonists with the slaves they needed, often at a price lower than that offered by the company

traders. Under the terms of the asiento contract signed by both the French and the English, the Asentistas were empowered to seize, or to have seized on their behalf, contraband slaves and sell them. Such seizures, generally referred to as "prize slaves," were then credited to the Asentista as part of their annual delivery. The Spanish authorities, for example, seized five contraband vessels between 1703-1713 at Cartagena. Those ships carried 640 or approximately 19.5 percent of the total number of slaves delivered to that factory by the French Guinea Company vessels during those years (Preciado 1973: 159-161).

The companies, on the one hand, expended much energy in trying to control the trading activities of the interlopers. On the other hand, the colonial authorities were often less than vigilant in ferreting out these illicit traders and seizing their slaves. In response to the complaints of the company traders, the colonial authorities would, on occasion, invite the colonists who bought slaves illegally to identify themselves and regularize their purchases. This meant, in practice, that the colonists would pay a fine, known as an indulto on each pieza de India or proportion thereof. Since such slaves were then credited to the companies' annual quota, the fine would usually be large enough to cover the 33 1/3 pesos in tax that the companies paid on each peiza they introduced and to yield a profit of about 50 piezas. Owners of contraband slaves ran the risk of having them seized so it was to their advantage to have them "indulted." The numbers of such slaves, naturally, varied from factory to factory and over time but they were not inconsiderable. As Table 2.4 shows, 710 slaves were indulted between 1716-1719 at the various Spanish markets, almost half of whom were indulted at Havana and Porto Bello.

In spite of the fact that the slave trade did not consistently command the trading priority of the companies, they did succeed in satisfying the minimum needs of the colonists for slaves. The French Guinea Company delivered about 19,269 slaves between the years 1703-1715. Although the company lost the asiento in 1713 to the British, it still continued to introduce slaves sporadically for a number of years, accurately claiming that since it had not met its annual obligations in the preceding ten years it retained the right to sell slaves to the Spaniards for three years after the expiration of the contract.⁷ An analysis of the distribution patterns of the Guinea Company's trade indicates that Porto Bello received most of the slaves, followed by Cartagena and Buenos Aires.⁸

Although company records indicate that Porto Bello received 4,981 slaves (3,069 piezas), it is not possible to present an annual breakdown of delivery to that port for this study (Preciado 1973: 165). Cartagena, as the second most active port received 4,251 slaves between 1703-1713 (Table 2.5). It is noteworthy that indulted slaves comprised 3.3

TABLE 2.4

NUMBER OF SLAVES INDULTED AT SELECTED MARKETS, 1716-1719

<u>Market</u>	<u>Number of Slaves Indulted</u>
Cartagena	73
Trinidad	31
Santa Marta	71
Santo Domingo	10
Maracaibo	25
St. Agustín [Florida]	6
Santiago de Cuba	1
Porto Bello and Panama	246
Puerto Rico	32
Havana	124
Caracas	91
Total	710

Source: Archivo General de Indias, Contaduría 266, ramo 3; 267, ramos 1-6; Indiferente 2847.

percent, prize slaves 15 percent, and commissioned slaves 4.6 percent of the total deliveries at that port. As was the pattern at the other ports during the period, the overwhelming majority of the slaves were brought by the company traders.

Buenos Aires ranked third, the company having delivered 3,475 slaves there between 1703-1714. Caracas ranked fourth since the company disembarked 2,349 slaves there during the period March 1704 to May 1712. The smaller ports received considerably fewer slaves. Havana obtained 1,642, Panama 864, Santo Domingo 435, Santa Marta 434, Vera Cruz 434, and Santiago de Cuba, 404 (Preciado 1973: 165). This latter port was one of the principal centers of the contraband trade, and the first prize slaves were taken there as early as 1703. Table 2.5 synthesizes the statistical information for the years 1703-1715.

The South Sea Company held the asiento for a much longer period of time than the Guinea Company, so it is not surprising that it was able to deliver a larger number of slaves to the colonists. Surviving records allow us to undertake a port by port accounting of arrivals between 1714-1739. Our calculation suggests that the factories at Porto Bello and Panama obtained the largest number of slaves, 19,662 during the years 1715-1738 (Table 2.7). Many of these slaves were eventually sold in Bolivia, Chile, and parts of Argentina and Peru.

TABLE 2.5
SLAVES IMPORTED BY THE FRENCH GUINEA COMPANY, 1703-1713

<u>Year</u>	<u>Carta- gena^c</u>	<u>Buenos Aires^d</u>	<u>Cara- cas^e</u>	<u>Havana^f</u>	<u>Santo- Domingo^g</u>	<u>Santa^h Marta</u>	<u>Santiago de Cubaⁱ</u>
1703	785	367	-	72	-	80	43
1704	339	48	404	-	54	40	39
1705	119	473	237	234	7	-	48
1706	-	-	197	-	24	-	-
1707	-	340	-	-	-	-	6
1708	81	797	253	52	36	50	55
1709	154	298	289	-	72	-	5
1710	360	301	162	30	29	10	-
1711	422	-	142	-	66	-	93
1712	404	702	442	187	32	-	86
1713	609	148	12	644	40	-	29
1714	-	1	195	90	35	-	-
1715	-	-	-	75	10	-	-
Indulted							
slaves	141	-	-	33	30	-	-
Prize							
slaves	640	-	16	51	-	-	-
Commis- sion							
slaves ^a	197	-	-	-	-	254	-
Misc. ^b	-	-	-	174	-	-	-
Total	4,251	3,475 (2,802 5/6 piezas)	2,349	1,642	435	434 (188½ piezas)	404 (218 1/3 piezas)

Sources:

a. These were probably slaves that crew members were allowed to introduce and sell on their private account but with the sales being credited to the company's annual quota.

b. According to the ms. records, these slaves were introduced at different times during the period, probably in small numbers.

c. Calculations based on Preciado 1973: 159-161.

d. Calculations based on De Studer 1958: 126.

e. AGI Indiferente General, 2800.

f. AGI Indiferente General, 2800.

g. AGI Indiferente General, 2800.

h. Calculations based on Preciado 1973: 164.

i. AGI Indiferente General 2800.

TABLE 2.6

SLAVES DELIVERED TO SPANISH AMERICA
BY THE FRENCH GUINEA COMPANY, 1703-1715

<u>Period</u>	<u>Port or country of entry</u>	<u>Number of Slaves</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1703-1714	Buenos Aires	3,475	18.0
1703-1715	Havana	1,642	8.5
1703-1715	Santiago de Cuba	404	2.1
1704-1715	Santo Domingo	435	2.3
1704-1712	Caracas	2,349	12.2
1703-1713	Cartagena	4,251	22.1
1703-1713	Santa Marta	434	2.3
1703-1713	Porto Bello	4,981	25.8
1703-1713	Vera Cruz	434	2.3
1703-1713	Panama	864	4.5
Total		19,269	100.1

Sources: AGI, Indiferente General 2800, Preciado 1972:165; De Studer 1958:106-128.

Buenos Aires and Cartagena ranked second and third respectively in the number of slaves they received. Buenos Aires received 16,222 slaves between 1715-1738 (Table 2.8) and 10,549 were disembarked at Cartagena between 1714-1736 (Table 2.9). Havana received somewhat less; 5,240 slaves were landed there between 1715-1739. Vera Cruz did less business, receiving only 3,011 African slaves between 1716-1739. The factory at Santiago de Cuba obtained 976 slaves for the years 1716-1718 and 1731-1733 (Palmer 1981: 106-109). Unfortunately the shipping records are not available for the remaining years.

Equally unfortunate is the fact that the records available for the smaller markets are scattered and do not permit us to provide a complete statistical picture of the trade to those areas. Extant records indicate that Maracaibo received 563 slaves between 1717-1734, Campeche 805 between 1725-1739, Santa Marta 222 between 1725-1735. Similarly, 162 slaves went to Guatemala between 1731-1733 while Santo Domingo received 103 and Puerto Rico 115 during those years (Palmer 1981: 106-109). As Table 2.10 suggests, the company's vessels delivered about 64,017 slaves to the Spanish markets during the years of the asiento trade.

The aforementioned figure does not include the number of slaves indulted at the various factories as well as the prize

TABLE 2.7

SLAVES TO PANAMA AND PORTO BELLO, 1715-1738

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Ships</u>	<u>Number of Slaves</u>
1715	1	150
1716	4	911
1717	5	1,093
1718	8	1,584
1722	5	890
1722	-	5 ^a
1723	6	1,408
1724	7	1,676
1725	6	1,646
1726	5	588
1727	1	299
1729	2	214
1730	5	1,328
1731	9	2,075
1732	5	1,518
1733	5	1,213
1734	2	271
1735	5	1,047
1736	4	897
1737	2	699
1738	1	150
Total		19,662

Source: AGI, Contaduría 267, ramos 2,8; 268, ramo 3; Indiferente, 2810, 2812, 1813, 2816.

a. These slaves arrived on four cargo vessels.

slaves. As has been indicated earlier (Table 2.4), the available data suggest that the company indulted 710 slaves between 1716-1719 at various markets. It is also known that 389 were indulted at Porto Bello and Panama in 1723 and 145 at Santiago de Cuba in 1733.⁹ In addition, the South Sea Company's factors reported that they received 143,329 pesos in net proceeds from the slaves they indulted between 1731-1736. We cannot be sure how many slaves they comprised (or where the *indultos* occurred) but it may be possible to arrive at a reasonable estimate. It is known that the company usually received a profit of about 50 pesos on each slave it indulted. Consequently, the net receipt of 143,329 pesos would have resulted from the indulting of

TABLE 2.8

SLAVES TO BUENOS AIRES, 1715-1738

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Ships</u>	<u>Number of Slaves</u>
1715	2	616
1716	3	758
1717	3	633
1718	4	1,158
1719	1	208
1722	1	370
1723	3	1,388
1724	4	1,340
1725	4	1,520
1726	3	1,102
1727	2	521
1728	1	135
1730	5	1,921
1731	4	1,432
1732	2	1,085
1734	1	448
1736	2	658
1737	1	357
1738	2	572
Total	48	16,222

Source: AGI, Contaduría 268, ramo 7, Indiferente, 2800.

2,867 piezas. If we assume further, and conservatively, that the average slave comprised $\frac{3}{4}$ of a pieza, then the number of actual heads of slaves would have amounted to about 3,823 during those five years. The total number of slaves indulted can now be estimated at 5,067.¹⁰ In addition, scattered records suggest that there were 678 prize slaves seized between 1716 and 1737.¹¹ Based on these calculations, the number of indulted and prize slaves amounted to 5,745. Accordingly, it may now be suggested (Table 2.10) that the South Sea Company introduced at least 69,762 slaves to Spanish America during the years when it held the asiento.¹² The combined deliveries of the two companies can now be placed at 89,031 slaves.

Our statistical analysis of the extent of the company trade for the years 1703-1739 is as complete as current data will allow. Yet considerable gaps remain in the accounting, particularly for the smaller markets. It is entirely possible that these markets received only the small number of slaves

TABLE 2.9

SLAVES TO CARTAGENA, 1714-1736

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Ships</u>	<u>Number of Slaves</u>
1714	1	174
1715	1	283
1716	3	313
1717	5	349
1718	3	291
1722	4	480
1723	3	789
1724	5	789
1725	5	1,298
1726	3	420
1727	3	320
1730	4	731
1731	5	1,077
1732	5	718
1733	4	700
1734	5	840
1735	4	401
1736	5	576
Total	68	10,549

Source: AGI, Contaduría 267, ramo 1; 268, ramo 2; Indiferente; 2809, 2813.

indicated in the extant records, and that there were prolonged periods of time when they were ignored by the Asentistas. If this is correct, then the figures advanced in this study probably closely approximate the total number of slaves supplied by the two companies. It must be emphasized that with the exception of the estimate provided for the slaves indulted by the South Sea Company, the figures included here represent known deliveries of slaves. What is clear, however, is that the Asentistas supplied fewer slaves than the colonists needed and that they failed to fulfill their contractual obligations. Contraband traders, conceivably, may have sold the Spaniards as many as or even more slaves than their legal counterparts but this dimension of the trade, unfortunately, will forever be confined to the realm of scholarly speculation.

TABLE 2.10

SLAVES DELIVERED TO SPANISH AMERICA
BY THE SOUTH SEA COMPANY, 1714-1739

Period	Port or Country of Entry	Number of Slaves (known arrivals)	Percentage
1715-1738	Panama and Porto Bello	19,662	28.2
1715-1738	Buenos Aires	16,222	23.3
1714-1736	Cartagena	10,549	15.1
1715-1738	Havana	6,387	9.2
1716-1718, 1731-1733	Santiago de Cuba	976	1.4
1715-1739	Caracas	5,240	7.5
1713-1734	Maracaibo	563	0.8
1725-1739	Campeche	805	1.2
1725-1735	Santa Marta	222	0.3
1731-1733	Guatemala	162	0.2
1731-1733	Puerto Rico	115	0.2
1731-1733	Santo Domingo	103	0.1
1716-1739	Vera Cruz	3,011	4.3
	Indulted slaves	5,067	7.3
	Prize slaves	678	1.0
	Total	69,762	100.1

Source: Calculations based on AGI Contaduría 267, ramo 1, 168, ramo 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, Indiferente 2786, 2800, 2801, 2807, 2809-11, 2815, 2817, 2818. Shelburne Mss. vol. 43, 247.

NOTES

1. Surprisingly, there are not to my knowledge any book-length studies of the French Guinea Company. For a good, general analysis of the company with special reference to its conduct of the asiento trade in Buenos Aires, see De Studer 1958: 103-28. Works that may be usefully consulted for a picture of the French slave trade include Stein 1979; Scelle 1906; Rinchon 1956; and Martin 1931. A particularly useful set of statistics on the trade, particularly after 1714, can be found in Mettas 1979.
2. Additional Manuscripts, vol. 25550, p. 20, British Museum, London.

3. Indiferente General, vol. 2785, Archivo de Indias, Seville (hereafter cited as AGI Indiferente); Palmer 1981: 83-94, 136-38.
4. AGI Indiferente 2800; AGI Contraduría 267, 268.
5. De Studer 1958: 112-14, cuadro iv; AGI Contaduría, 267, 268; AGI Indiferente 2800-17; Palmer 1981: 98-9.
6. AGI Indiferente, 2809; De Studer 1985: 235; B.M. 25494-584.
7. This was permitted under the terms of the asiento contract.
8. My calculations are based primarily on the Spanish colonial records in Seville, particularly Indiferente 2800.
9. BM, 25564, pp. 12-24; 25563, p. 162; 25554, p. 52.
10. See Lord Shelburne Papers, Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan, vol. 43, 428-29.
11. AGI, Contaduría 266, ramos 8, 9; 267, ramos 1-6, AGI Indiferente 2800-17, 2847.
12. The figures advanced in my Human Cargoes are somewhat higher. The discrepancy arises from the fact that I provided estimates of the trade to some of the smaller markets as well as of the number of prize and indulted slaves in that book. I have chosen not to make any estimates of that nature in this article but rather to confine my analysis to known deliveries.

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CHAPTER 3

SLAVE PRICES IN THE PORTUGUESE SOUTHERN ATLANTIC, 1600-1830

Joseph C. Miller

Prices for slaves rose in three major surges from the seventeenth century through the early nineteenth century in Portugal's southern Atlantic colonies. Each increase was associated with the growth cycles in Brazilian exports of sugar, gold, and cotton and coffee. At Luanda, Portugal's main African slaving port, the cost of slaves remained stable through the first of the three cycles in the seventeenth century, which suggests that Brazilian market forces were not then sufficiently strong to affect the price structure in Africa. The two later cycles in which Brazilian slave prices rose were matched by price inflations in Africa. By the eighteenth century, therefore, slave prices in Africa appear to have responded to price rises in Brazil. This growing responsiveness of slave prices in Africa to the currency value of captive labor in Brazil reflected Angola's growing integration into the exchange economy of the Atlantic. The rise in the Luanda price of slaves also matched increased commercialization of the processes of enslavement in the western-central African interior, supporting economically specialized slaving regimes and helping to cover rising costs of delivering the steady stream of enslaved men and women to embarkation points on the coast.

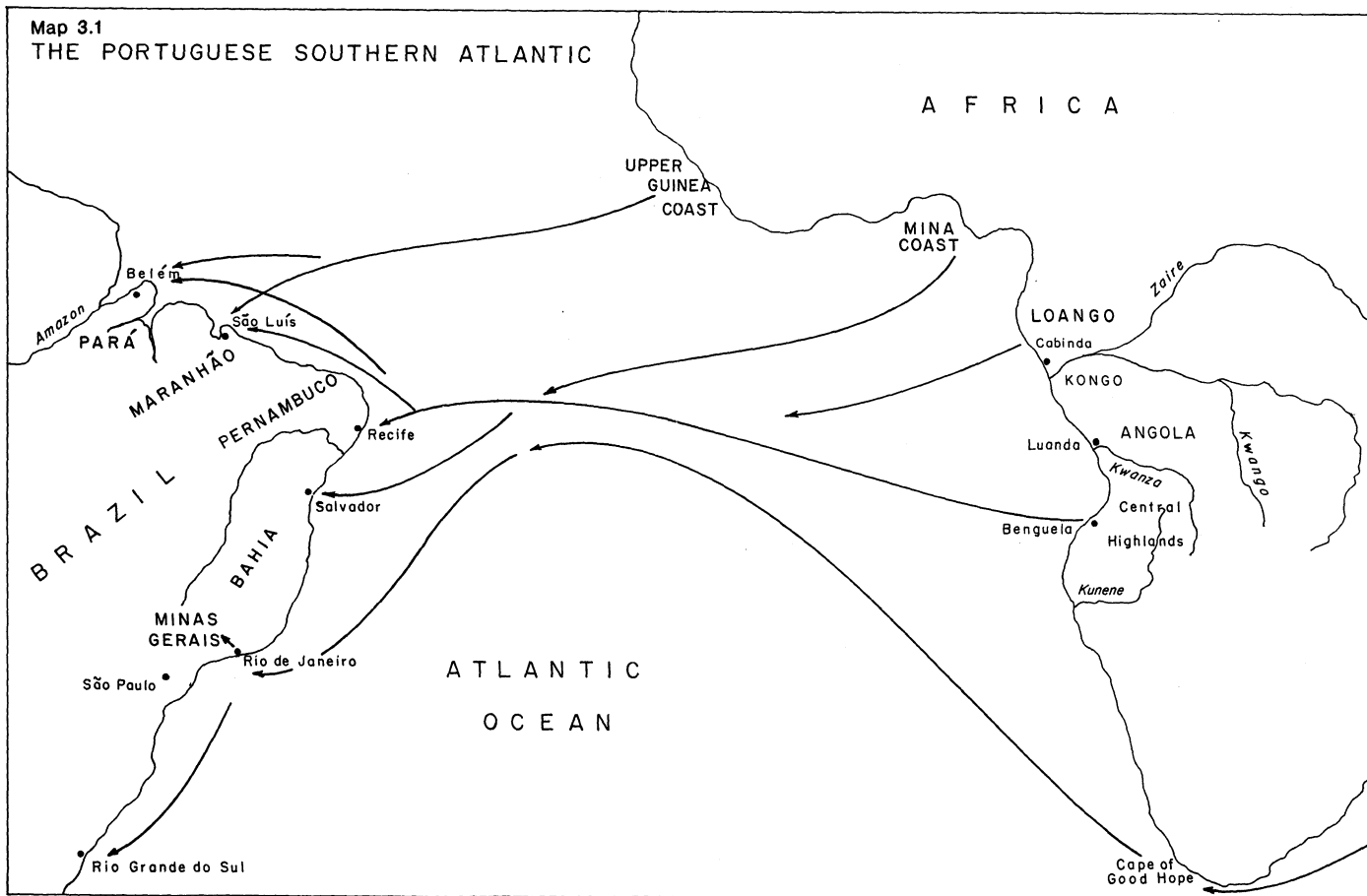
Slavers active in the south Atlantic carried perhaps a third of the 11.5-12 million Africans exported to the Americas between c. 1520 and 1860 (Curtin 1969; Lovejoy 1982). They acquired three-fourths of these human cargoes in the region known loosely as "Angola," the entire coastline south from the equator to the area of the Kunene River, now the boundary between Angola and Namibia.¹ At Luanda, metropolitan merchants from Lisbon and colonial traders from Brazil competed for slaves coming through supply networks that reached northeast toward Kongo and the relatively populous fringes of the equatorial forest, east beyond the Kwango valley toward Luanda, and southeast across the middle reaches of the Kwanza River.

Lisbon merchants generally held the upper hand there, but by the second half of the eighteenth century Brazilian buyers circumvented metropolitan control elsewhere on the coast. Dutch, British, and French slavers, who took slaves to the Caribbean rather than to the Portuguese captaincies in South America, dominated the coasts north of Luanda from the late seventeenth century until after 1800, when they withdrew, leaving the Portuguese and Brazilians to turn those sources of African labor toward Brazil after 1810 (Miller, forthcoming a; 1983; 1976; 1975; 1979; Klein 1978: Ch. 2-4; Rawley 1981: Ch. 2).

From the 1570s through the end of the seventeenth century, the northeastern Brazil sugar zones in Pernambuco and Bahia took nearly all the slave labor delivered to Portuguese America. Beginning in the 1690s and carrying on into the 1750s, Rio de Janeiro became the main importer of captives from the Angolan coast, mostly to staff booming gold and diamond mines in the interior captaincy of Minas Gerais. The sugar captaincies then turned their attention to other sources of slaves on the "Mina" coast of West Africa - the "Slave Coast" of the Bight of Benin. At the end of the eighteenth century, Brazil entered a period of growth in commodity exports sometimes termed the colony's "agricultural renaissance." These exports included sugar and coffee from around Rio and cotton from Pernambuco and the far northern captaincies of Maranhão and Pará. Some of the new slaves came from the upper Guinea ports of Cacheu and Bissau, Brazil's third major source of slaves, but many others originated in central Africa, particularly after British efforts to abolish Atlantic slaving began to limit West African sources after 1812. Brazilians then turned to other slaving regions beyond the Cape of Good Hope in southeastern Africa. Throughout the period of the legal trade, which ended in 1830, Portuguese and Brazilian slavers could offload only at Rio in the south, at Recife in Pernambuco, at Salvador in Bahia, at São Luís in Maranhão, and at Belém in Pará (the last two only from the late 1750s on), and smugglers also took captives south to the Plata estuary, where Spanish buyers paid for African labor in prized silver coin.

Prices in Brazil

The unit in which the Portuguese priced slaves in Brazil was usually the imperial currency of account, the real (plural, réis), with amounts written as 300 réis, or \$300, the "\$" symbol marking the thousands: 3\$000, three thousand réis, 30\$000, thirty thousand réis, or 300\$000, three hundred thousand réis. European coins, ducats, maravedis, florins, pounds Sterling, and the like, seldom circulated in the Portuguese southern Atlantic, but Brazilian gold cruzados, each equivalent



MAP I

to \$400 réis, minted from the gleaming yield of the mines in Minas Gerais, became an important alternate standard for denoting slave prices early in the eighteenth century. Toward the end of the century, silver dobras became common within the Portuguese currency sphere, though not to denominate prices, which continued to be expressed in réis, at 12\$800 to the dobra. At times, particularly before the middle of the eighteenth century, Brazilian export commodities - chests of sugar, rolls of tobacco, and the like - also served locally as standards of value, but they seldom usurped the imperial currencies of account with respect to slaves. The real was sufficiently common that all prices discussed here have been converted to that form.

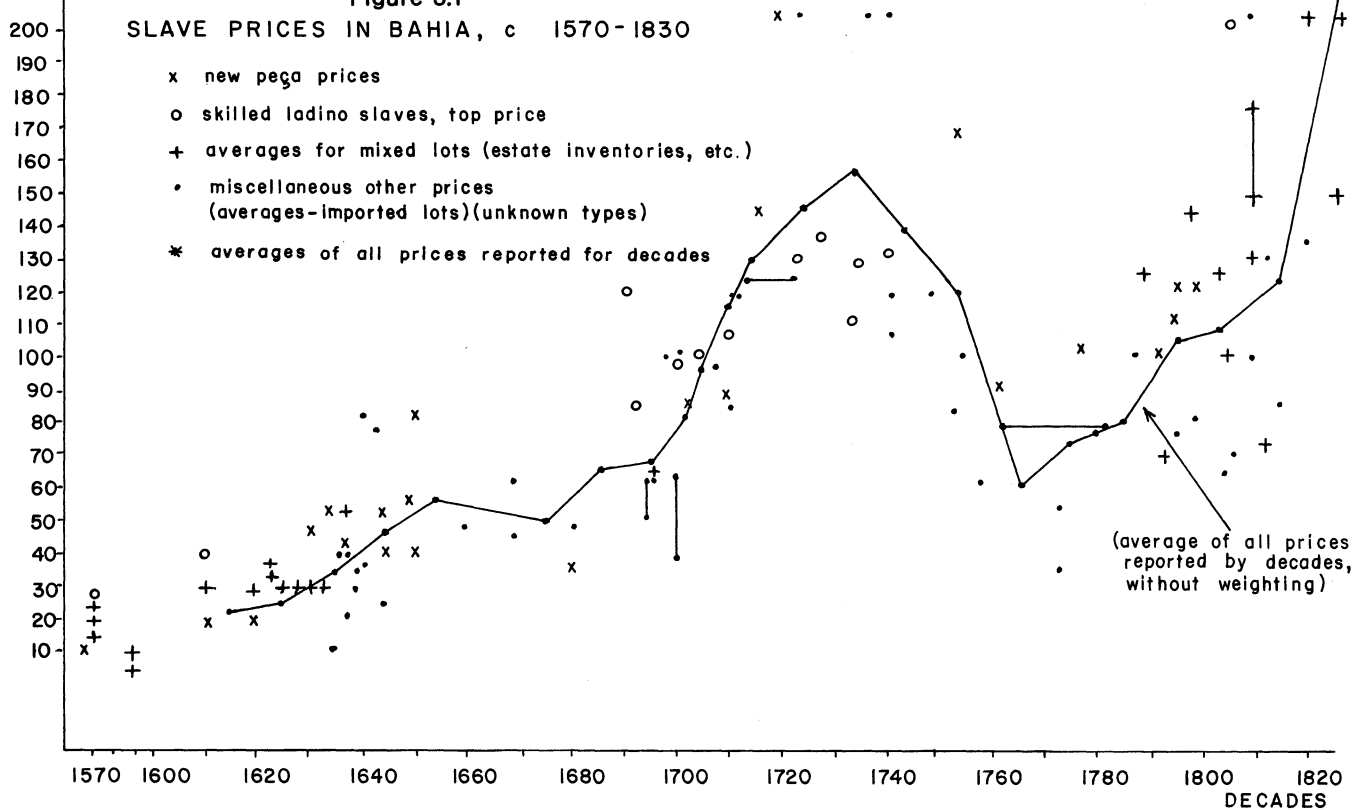
For most of the seventeenth century and well into the eighteenth, Brazilians tended to quote market prices for slaves less often in terms of the individuals actually bought and sold and more frequently with reference to an abstract standardized unit of imported labor, a strong, healthy adult African male just off the boat, which they termed a "piece," or peça in Portuguese. The term derived from an expression employed in Africa very early in the history of slaving, when male adults sold allegedly for a single "piece" of imported cloth. The nominal Brazilian "price" of slaves was therefore often a relatively stable round figure in réis, with actual transactions taking place across a range of values, all more or less keyed to the standard of a healthy imported male. Actual prices ranged from two or three times the peça value for a skilled Brazil-born house servant to a small fraction of that amount for ill or maimed individuals with no other qualities to recommend them. This pricing technique based on the peça was most prominent in the early days, when little actual currency circulated in the colonial Brazilian economy (Buescu 1972). Over time, the mature healthy males on which its meaning rested became rare² and monetization spread more widely through Brazil. As a result, the peça standard faded out of use, and Brazilians began to price the individuals actually exchanged directly in terms of réis, referring to "slaves" (escravos), or to "heads" (cabeças), as if the Africans were livestock.

The prosperous sugar economy of Pernambuco and Bahia led Brazilian currency prices for slaves steadily upward from the late sixteenth century to a first historic peak in the 1650s.³ Only scattered information illuminates prices of African slaves during the initial boom in sugar planting before 1600. In those years Brazilian planters still drew their labor partially from local Indian populations and from Indian slaves brought from São Paulo and the southern interior behind Rio de Janeiro. A separate, and lower, scale of prices existed for these American Indian slaves, and they must have limited demand and prices for Africans at least until about the 1570s (Schwartz 1978: 77, 78). In the last decades of the sixteenth century,

PRICE (réis)

Figure 3.1

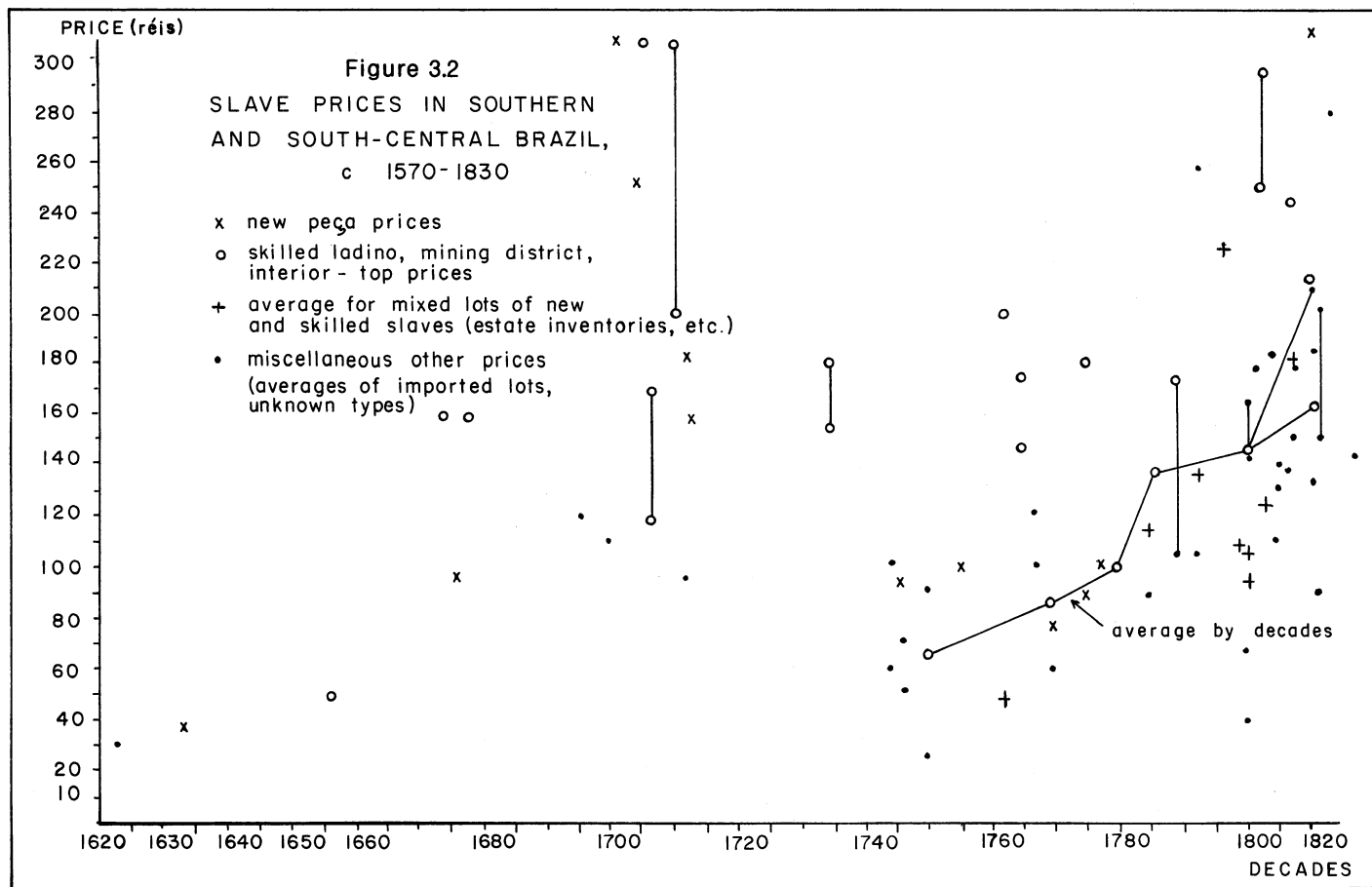
SLAVE PRICES IN BAHIA, c 1570-1830



epidemics, Indian recalcitrance, and Crown opposition to continued enslavement of its native Brazilian subjects left Bahia and Pernambuco dependent on African labor at the very moment when European demand for Brazilian sugar was on the rise. Prices accordingly doubled from perhaps 9\$000 (Buescu 1972: 30, 45) to 20\$000 (Buescu 1972: 44; Schwartz 1978: 77, 78) and started an upward trend that lasted through the Dutch occupation of the rich northeastern Brazilian sugar plantations from 1630-1654. Prices peaked in the vicinity of 45\$000 to 55\$000 (Schwartz 1973: 194). With the restoration of Portuguese authority, the Dutch transferred their know-how and considerable capital resources to developing virgin cane lands in and around the Caribbean. The expansion of sugar production in the new, lower-cost plantations of the West Indies left the Brazilian sugar industry to sink into a decline that reduced demand for new African slaves and allowed prices to slip downward, at least through the 1660s and 1670s (Alden, forthcoming; Schwartz 1973: 194; Buescu 1972: 72). At the same time, prices for acculturated slaves in Bahia appear to have risen as the sugar economy developed urban and commercial sectors (Schwartz 1974: 629). Demand for skilled labor exceeded the number of trained slaves among slave imports.

Rio de Janeiro developed as a way station to the Spanish colonies along the Plata early in the seventeenth century. Rio began to export manioc flour shortly thereafter and sold some sugar as well, but the city and its hinterland took few African slaves until the opening of the gold mines in Minas Gerais at the very end of the 1600s. Southern Brazil could not compete earlier with the high prices for new Africans set by the prosperous sugar captaincies. Competition from Spanish buyers along the Plata, who paid in silver for slaves sold illegally below prices established by holders of monopoly import contracts (the *asientos*), also kept local prices beyond the reach of most Rio planters. Indians, mostly resident in the vicinity but also some captured by the Paulista slavers southwest of the Rio area, supplied nearly all of the area's labor requirements before then. Prices for Africans sold at Rio before the mining boom are rare, but available data fall in the general range of those current farther north (Salvador 1978: 64).

The discovery of gold, and later diamonds, in the 1690s in the mountains west of Rio led to a demand for labor that slave suppliers met only with the greatest difficulty. Prices were already rising, doubling between the 1670s and 1692 (Taunay 1941: 103). After gold was found in 1695, prices soared to levels that on occasion reached ten times those prevalent a few years earlier (Taunay 1941: 175; Buescu 1972: 109, 152). Ordinary new slaves at the Rio dockside went from 110\$000 to 120\$000 at the end of the decade and appear to have reached more than 200\$000 by the late 1710s, provoking an ineffective legal ceiling on prices of 160\$000 (Rout 1976: 136). In the



mining districts in the interior, prices apparently steadied around 300\$000 before 1720, with exceptional slaves bringing in excess of 400\$000 during the 1730s (Buescu 1972: 81; Russell-Wood 1982: 109).

Prices for slaves at Bahia moved up with the growth in demand for labor in Minas Gerais, despite the weakness of Brazilian sugar on European markets. Bahian planters sold off excess slaves from the slack sugar economy, and merchants in Salvador diverted supplies of new African labor to the booming market at Rio de Janeiro. From levels estimated at 40\$000 to 60\$000 early in the 1690s (Buescu 1972: 72-73; Alden, forthcoming; Rau 1956; Miller 1984: 25-27, Table III), the currency value of slaves rose toward 100\$000 by the turn of the century (Buescu 1972: 74; Rout 1976: 152; Schwartz 1974: 629). They held steady between 1700-1710 but then rose again to 200\$000 by around 1720, a level they maintained until about 1740 (Schwartz 1974: 629; Alden, forthcoming; Buescu 1972: 86; Verger 1968: 98).

Bahian sugar planters did not have the réis to replace their existing labor force at the inflated currency values created by southern Brazilian miners, who paid readily for slaves in gold. Bahians managed to maintain their sugar plantations only by selling slaves to the mines for specie (or gold dust or bars) and by developing the trade in third-grade tobacco to the Bight of Benin (Verger 1968). By selling an otherwise valueless local byproduct of Bahia's secondary tobacco sector, they acquired slaves outside the colony's Lisbon-oriented cash economy. They mounted their own slaving ventures and cured the tobacco sent to West Africa with similarly low-cost molasses byproducts of the sugar production process. By that means, they acquired African labor at an effective non-cash cost far below the inflated currency prices for slaves.

Gold production in Minas Gerais leveled off at mid-century, and slave prices all along the coast from Pernambuco south dropped back toward levels that sugar planters could afford to pay. From a range between 100\$000 and 120\$000 at Bahia, the réis value of good new slaves fell to 60\$000 to 70\$000 by the end of the 1750s.⁴ In the 1760s, entire lots sold at Pernambuco with average prices per slave only 36\$000 to 55\$000.⁵ At Rio, the nominal - but less and less meaningful - price for the prime adult male peça lingered at about 100\$000, but the youths and other less desirable individuals actually delivered by that time typically sold for prices between 40\$000 and 69\$000, with occasional shipments going for even less.⁶ The currency value of slaves may have remained slightly higher in the Rio market than in the northeast because of lingering demand in Minas Gerais and because of the opportunity to send slaves south to sell for silver in the Plata. Southern Brazilian planters developed their own equivalent of the Bahian

tobacco trade to the Bight of Benin sometime around this period, shipping cheap, fiery cane brandy known as gerebita, an inexpensive variant of the subsequently romanticized Brazilian cachaça, to Luanda and Benguela. Like the third-rate tobacco from Bahia, Rio gerebita converted an otherwise unsalable byproduct of the sugar economy to advantage. Rio planters imported slaves that otherwise they could not have afforded at réis prices set by competition from the mining areas of Portuguese and Spanish America, even at the depressed levels of the 1750s, 1760s, and 1770s.

Brazil's far northern captaincies of Pará and Maranhão became significant importers of slaves at about this period (Alden 1983). After 1758, imperial reforms emanating from Portugal and new development plans implemented by the powerful prime minister of Portugal under King D. José I (1750-1777), Sebastião José de Carvalho e Mello, later named Marquis of Pombal, created modest markets for new slaves in what was known as the Estado do Maranhão. Slave prices in these areas, formerly served mostly through Pernambuco and after 1758 supplied with labor exclusively through a chartered monopoly trading company, the Companhia Geral do Grão Pará e Maranhão (Maranhão Company) (Carreira 1967; Dias 1971), generally ran significantly higher than at the open slave ports, just as prices for new slaves anywhere in the Brazilian interior generally reflected the high costs of moving them from dockside to remote planters, ranchers, and miners. The slaves reaching northern Brazil included a far larger percentage of captives from Cacheu and Bissau, African sources given to the chartered Maranhão Company as monopolies, than did cargoes landed at Pernambuco and points south, with only a minority coming through the commercial circuits of the southern Atlantic. Slaves from Luanda, where the Maranhão Company bought them in competition with the other slavers active in the Angolan market, sold at slightly below 60\$000, at a period when prices in Bahia and Rio were not far below that level. The slaves from Cacheu and Bissau brought 70\$000 to 76\$000 each (Carreira 1967: 373-378; Dias 1971: 379-382, 391, 393, 396-399, 400, 403, 419; Lopes 1944: 137).

By the 1780s, Brazilian agriculture had recovered, and prices for slaves had firmed throughout the colony. Rio took the lead, fueled by urban growth after Lisbon moved the colonial viceregal seat there from Bahia in 1763 (Bauss 1977; Brown 1985). Portuguese efforts to develop Brazil's economic potential received a fortuitous boost when the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars disrupted the normal Caribbean and North American sources of sugar, cotton, tobacco, and other American commodities during the 1790s, and new prosperity spread through captaincies from Rio Grande do Sul in the far south to the Amazon in the north. In the north, prices rose toward 100\$000 in Maranhão (Lopes 1944: 137). At Bahia, 100\$000 also became

the standard price, and acculturated slaves with skills were appraised at 120\$000 to 125\$000 (anon. 1905; Mattoso 1979: 79-81, 108; Lugar 1980: 321). The nominal 100\$000 value of new slaves at Rio became the actual average dockside price paid during the 1780s and 1790s (Taunay 1941: 223, 250; Lopes 1944: 157; Bauss 1983: 332-333).

The Portuguese court, driven out of Portugal by a French invasion, resettled in Rio in 1809 and opened Brazil's ports to British merchants. The resulting flow of British capital into Brazil's export-producing sectors raised slave prices again as labor was needed to grow the cotton, coffee, and sugar that Brazil sent to Europe. Slave prices reached new heights in the 1810s and 1820s, generally 130\$000 to 150\$000 by 1810-1815, and 150\$000 to 200\$000 after 1820 (Mattoso 1979: 108; Stein 1957: 229; Taunay 1941: 278, 284; Karasch 1987, citing Weech 1831: 106). At the same time, the British hastened to interdict the Atlantic slaving on which Brazilian economic growth depended. Their opposition to the trade led to alarm at the impending termination of the trade, confirmed by treaty in 1827 with implementation set for 1830. Prices then soared again, with buyers generally paying 250\$000 to 300\$000 per slave to stock up labor in advance of the anticipated end of importing, but twice that, and more, in urban areas for slaves possessing skills (Moreira 1974: 186, citing Wehling 1971: vol. 1, 521-532; Stein 1957: 229).

Currency prices for slaves in Brazil thus rose in three waves between 1570-1830, each reaching a crest higher than the last. The first doubled or tripled previous values during the prosperous years of Brazilian sugar exports in the first half of the seventeenth century. The second, originating in the gold diggings of Minas Gerais but overspreading markets for slaves in the northeastern sugar captaincies as well, once again lifted prices for slave labor to levels two to three times those of the preceding years of slack demand. In the third wave, revived agriculture throughout Brazil, exaggerated by panic at the approaching end of slave importing, raised prices yet another time by the same factor of two or three.

Steady inflation in the real exaggerated the apparent magnitude of the seventeenth-century rise, as the Portuguese currency lost more than 60 percent of its value in pounds Sterling between 1600-1680, but the entire eighteenth-century gold cycle took place in a time of relatively stable prices, with the real remaining steady in relation to the pound from 1680 until the 1790s. Thereafter during the renaissance of Brazilian agriculture it lost one-fourth of its value by the 1820s. In constant prices, the trough in the 1670s and 1680s dropped prices for slaves below those that had prevailed at the beginning of the boom in Brazilian sugar. The gold-based increases of the first half of the eighteenth century were real

enough, and the trough of the 1760s-1770s bottomed out above the base of a century earlier. The increase in prices for slaves during the final decades of the legal trade sent real prices above those of the most prosperous years of the gold boom, except for the truly exceptional values commanded earlier by skilled slaves in the mining districts.

Prices at Luanda

Angola remained on the outer fringe of the Portuguese currency zone until about 1750. The réis prices for slaves at Luanda at first responded only sluggishly to price movements in Brazil. Virtually no gold or silver circulated as currency in Africa before the very end of the eighteenth century. Rather, transactions between Portuguese and Brazilian buyers in Luanda and local residents selling slaves from the interior of the colony before about the 1740s or 1750s mostly took place in terms of local currencies: blocks of salt or raffia palm cloths of African manufacture for transactions in the domestic economy and imported textiles for the export trade in slaves. Only very scattered data reveal glimpses of the actual African prices of slaves in terms of quantities of textiles, but it is clear that the value of slaves FOB Luanda rose steadily through the years. Along the Loango coast, north of the mouth of the Zaire River, buyers and sellers negotiated prices in multiples of the original peça (Martin 1972: 108-112), but at Luanda (and presumably also at Benguela) they combined similar selections of imported goods to create a "bundle," or banzo, equivalent to the peça slave that grew in value and complexity over time.⁷

Transactions expressed in currency at Luanda, particularly in the seventeenth century and early in the eighteenth, tended to involve imported trade goods, not slaves, and so slaves technically had no direct price in Portuguese réis. Lisbon suppliers of the textiles and other components of the banzo priced imports in réis to merchants in Luanda and took returns in bills of exchange, IOUs, or promises to pay réis or specie in Brazil upon realization of the proceeds of selling slaves there. Slavers at Luanda thus did not sell captives in Africa but rather owned them throughout the middle passage and finally sold them through agents in Bahia, Pernambuco, or Rio at the currency prices prevailing there. Their Brazilian agents then credited the currency value of the Luanda slavers' notes to accounts held for the Lisbon merchant (Miller 1984).

The seventeenth-century réis "slave price" at Luanda therefore represented not the currency value of slaves in Africa but rather an appraisal of the quantity of trade goods that Lisbon importers regarded as safe to lend against an Angolan slaver's promise to pay for them later, if and when the slave proceeds of trade goods he had borrowed months and years

before in Africa arrived safely in Brazil. This conventional appraisal value referred exclusively to the peça considered standard in the trade, without regard to what sort of individuals slavers actually managed to put on board the ships in Luanda's harbor.

The réis value of slaves in Angola comes gradually into focus over the same years that African labor acquired a coherent price structure in Brazil. Although sugar planters on the equatorial island of São Tomé had bought slaves from the vicinity of the Kwanza River since the middle of the sixteenth century, Lisbon traders with goods valued in réis and calculating the advantage of the trade in imperial currencies appeared on the scene only with the creation of a formal donatary colony at Luanda in 1575, very nearly coincident with Brazil's takeoff into prominence as a producer of sugar (Birmingham 1966; Heintze 1981, 1981-1982, 1984). The volume of slaves exported from Luanda rose to significant levels a generation later, after about 1610. Scattered and difficult-to-interpret reports of the réis values of goods given for slaves in these early years rose from negligible levels in the 1580s to 12\$000 in 1601 (Ravenstein 1901: 19ff). They probably represented only a small portion of the general value of labor to African sellers in Angola at that time, as most slaves originated as war captives or as refugees from droughts and epidemics in the immediate hinterland of Luanda and accordingly sold at genuinely distress prices, unburdened by high transport costs to the point of sale at the coast (Miller 1982).

Angolan slaving settled into a period of relative stability for most of the rest of the seventeenth century, with almost unvarying currency lien-values for slaves delivered at Luanda. Slaves then came only in part from commercial transactions involving trade goods, and importers seem to have settled on 21\$000 and then 22\$000 as the value of the merchandise they were willing to lend against future sales of slaves in Brazil. As late as 1689, reports from Luanda still cited 22\$000 as the "price" of slaves there, though indications are that less desirable individuals actually brought correspondingly lower commitments of trade goods from the Lisbon backers of the trade.⁸

Despite the nominal stability of the currency lien-value of slaves in Angola during this period, the quantities of goods that Africans received from their slaves must have fallen with inflation in the Portuguese real (Wilson 1977: 207). Though we have no information on the quantity-prices paid for slaves in Angola before 1700, colonists may have merely supplemented the commercial component of their slaving with low-cost outright seizures and kidnappings that absorbed the rising costs of the goods available to them. Increased Brazilian currency prices for slaves during the 1630s might have allowed their Angolan owners to use réis credits they earned there, above the value

of the notes encumbering their slaves, to buy supplementary imports on their own accounts through merchants in Bahia and Recife. What is interesting about the continued stability of the 22\$000 Luanda lien-value of slaves during the 1670s and 1680s is that the importers managed to hold firm at a time when Angolan slaveowners had to sell their human property for significantly reduced currency prices in Brazil. The Angolans thus absorbed all the losses attendant on selling slaves in the depressed economy of the American colony at the end of the century.

Until the end of the seventeenth century, the main catchment area for slaves reaching Luanda remained within relatively easy walking distance of the colonial port - in southern Kongo just beyond the Dande River, south of the Kwanza, and in the valley of the Kwango River at the eastern boundary of the small territory claimed by the Portuguese. A few slaves came also from Benguela at that time, though nearly all from the western slopes of the great plateau just inland. Portuguese raiding accounted for a significant proportion of the captives. All told, acquisition and transport costs remained about as low as military commanders could keep them.

The structure of Angolan slaving shifted into a more commercialized and much more costly mode at the end of the seventeenth century. By the 1720s, Portuguese and Brazilian buyers at Luanda faced extensive competition from British and other foreigners buying slaves along the Loango coast. African merchants north of the Zaire River siphoned off slaves from as far south as the Bengo River on Angola's immediate northern flank. The war zones, always sources of inexpensive slaves requiring relatively little prior investment in trade goods, had moved east well beyond the Kwango. Areas nearer the coast recovered the populations they had lost in the violence of preceding decades, in significant part by retaining slaves moving west toward the coast. The western regions still provided slaves for export, but they did so on the basis of fully commercialized purchases and debt peonage that required import goods bought with réis. At Benguela, the area of wars moved east onto the plateau. Longer transport routes and more heavily capitalized methods of slaving both absorbed much greater investments of trade goods. Higher transport costs and increased mortality among the slaves coming from remote war zones balanced the expensive investments in réis required to extract slaves from the more peaceful areas near the coast, but both meant that slavers could afford to buy labor to send to Brazil only if supported by higher lien-values in goods offered against their IOUs at Luanda.

The gold boom at Rio de Janeiro enabled Luanda slavers to obligate themselves more heavily against future shipments of slaves to Brazil, and then some, owing to the riches they could reap from delivering labor to the mines. Between 1690-1710

appraisal values at Luanda rose by more than 50 percent from the old level of 22\$000, stabilizing between 30\$000 and 50\$000 for the duration of the period of intense labor demand in Minas Gerais.⁹

The mid-century depression in Brazilian réis prices for slaves produced no comparable decline in the value of the prime peça slave in Africa, largely owing to the higher purchase and delivery costs in the interior. Angolan buyers could not obtain slaves without continuing to give roughly the same quantity of goods to African sellers as had become the accepted level in the preceding period of Brazilian prosperity. Lisbon suppliers had to take notes that covered the increased value of the imports they loaned. As a result, the lien-value of prime slaves at Luanda dropped only briefly in the early 1760s, perhaps by 25 percent or so, but on a much smaller scale than the 60-70 percent decline in the sales price of slaves in Brazil between the 1750s and 1760s.¹⁰

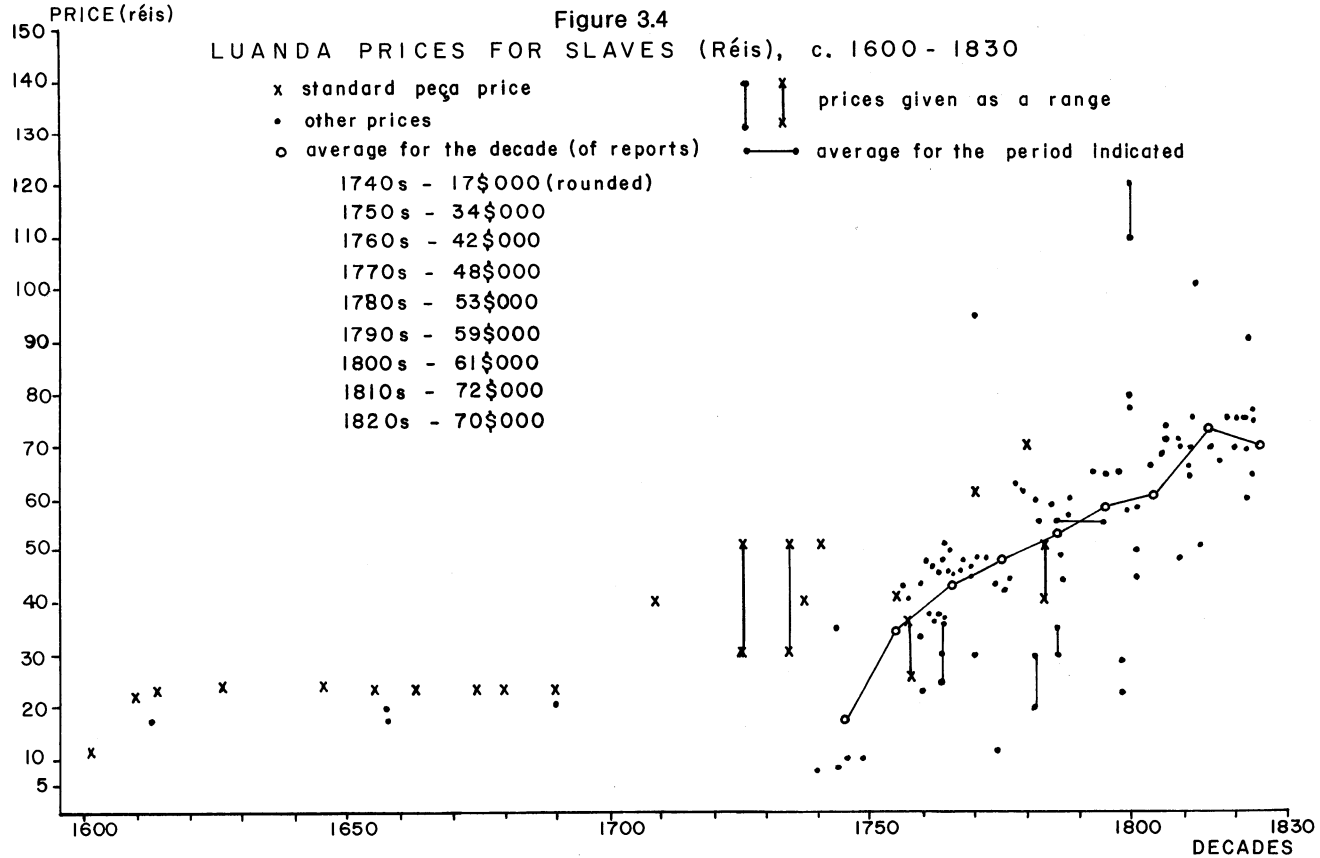
Rather, buyers and sellers adjusted in other ways. Brazilians relied heavily on gerebita that they could offer at very low cost in réis but that had high value in Africa. Lisbon sellers continued to sell high-priced goods on credit to slavers in Angola well in advance of receiving payment from them in Brazil, but the Angolan slavers covered these debts only very slowly, or sometimes not at all. The price decline in fact was greater than the drop in the nominal lien-values, and importers absorbed some of the costs in the form of bad debts. The Angolans who owned the slaves endured a sharp squeeze on the trading margins to which they had been accustomed. Some went bankrupt, others simply evaded paying off the notes they wrote, and many supplemented their unprofitable trade to Brazil with smuggling to the British and French, who paid much larger quantities of trade goods.

At the same time, Lisbon merchants attempted to buy slaves directly in Angola, principally through the Companhia Geral de Pernambuco e Paraíba (Pernambuco Company), a sister company to the Maranhão Company active at Luanda between 1760-1775 (Ribeiro Júnior 1976). The growing prominence of direct transactions in slaves at Luanda added réis prices for the goods actually sold there to the peça lien-values generally reported for earlier eras. Pernambuco Company records provide most of the prices of this order available before the mid-1780s, but they are of dubious representativeness, since the Company factors worked under a variety of constraints that did not apply to the remainder of the trade. The currency value of slaves (in goods priced in réis) at Luanda becomes clear only after about 1784, when Brazilians buying slaves on their own accounts replaced Lisbon importers as the primary non-Angolans active in the trade.

Luanda réis prices for average slaves - usually small boys far less valuable than the adult male peça, but the majority of

Figure 3.4

LUANDA PRICES FOR SLAVES (Réis), c. 1600 - 1830



the captives available by this late period - rose steadily from the depressed 1760s through the 1810s, from perhaps 35\$000 to 45\$000 in the 1760s to 55\$000 in the mid-1780s, 60\$000 in the prosperous 1790s and 1800s, and 70\$000 or more after 1810.¹¹ Data from Benguela indicate a similar upward trajectory, with some temporary weakness after 1810, when slavers from Brazil abandoned the southern Angolan port in favor of the Loango coast and other areas north of Luanda that the British vacated after 1807. This shift represented a major northward movement in the geography of Angolan slaving during the last years of the trade and may have contributed to a softening in Luanda prices in the early 1820s. Few data illuminate Angolan prices in the last panicky years of legal slaving in the southern Atlantic, but prices surely rose in concert with the value of slaves in Brazil.¹²

Though réis values of slaves at Luanda and Benguela generally increased after 1800 or so, they probably translated into smaller real prices in goods delivered to African sellers. The Luanda currency price of slaves was sometimes paid in Spanish silver, but not often enough to eliminate the dominant circulation of textiles and other imports. Hence, inflation in the currency prices of goods reduced the quantities that Africans received in exchange for slaves. The sterling value of the Portuguese currency declined by about 25 percent from 1810 to the mid-1820s, while the currency cost of slaves rose only by about 20 percent. The value of the goods given to Africans was even less, since the prices reported for the period after 1785 were "costs on board ship" that included maintenance costs for slaves awaiting embarkation in the barracoons of Luanda (\$600 per diem, or perhaps 2 percent of the FOB cost), taxes and fees paid the government (8\$700, or about 12-15 percent), and other expenses not included in the costs reported earlier as "prices."¹³

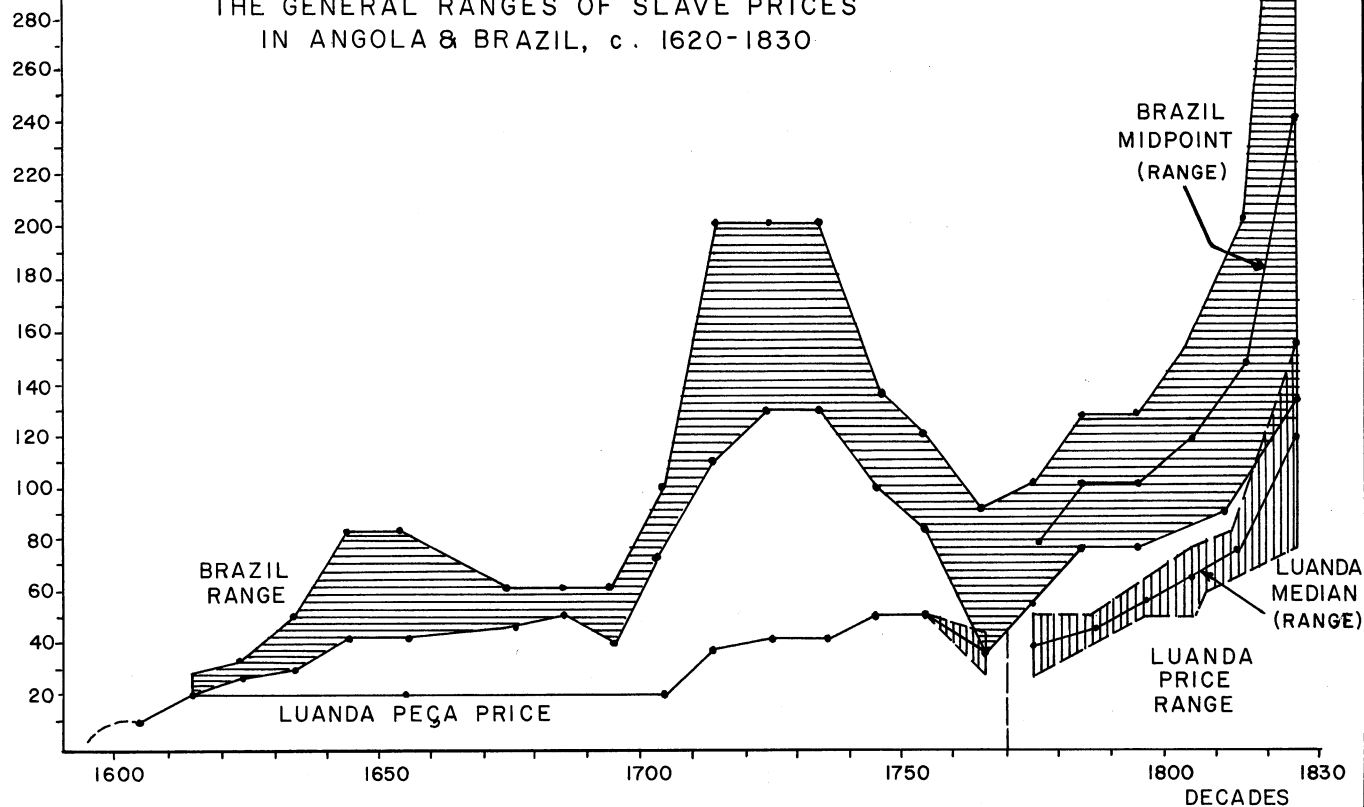
Portuguese and Brazilian buyers could still buy slaves at low prices largely because a devastating drought between 1785-1794 provoked wars and created refugees. Drought, war and epidemic kept captives and refugees flowing to the coast until at least 1820, though overall volume tended to decline thereafter at both Luanda and Benguela, except for the very last years of the trade. Local labor supplies within the Portuguese colony were even depleted in order to provide captives for the booming Brazilian market. Even so Brazil had to receive a growing percentage of its slaves from the Loango coast and Mozambique after 1810.

The rise in currency prices for slaves at Luanda after the late eighteenth century demonstrates that western central Africa had become more fully integrated with the commercial economy of the South Atlantic than before. Brazil's seventeenth-century sugar cycle passed without altering the standard lien-value for slaves in Angola. The dramatic inflation in

PRICE (réis)

Figure 3.5

THE GENERAL RANGES OF SLAVE PRICES
IN ANGOLA & BRAZIL, c. 1620-1830



slave prices during the Minas Gerais gold rush produced only a belated and modest increase in Angolan prices, as the Luanda cost of slaves reached its peak only in the 1740s and 1750s when Brazilian slave prices were already falling sharply. The delay suggests that this earlier increase in Angolan slave prices derived as much from rising purchase and delivery expenses in Africa and from growing competition from Lisbon merchants, eager to acquire American gold by selling goods or buying slaves at Luanda, as from the cash returns available in Brazil. Only the last rise in prices from the trough of the 1760s closely matched a parallel price trend in Brazil.

The integration of the Angolan trade into the world economy was reflected in the gradual transfer of slaving from Luanda-based slave sellers to buyers from Lisbon and, eventually, from Brazil. In the seventeenth century, Luanda slavers had bought their captives at a cost in imported goods that was largely independent of the commercial economy of the Atlantic and responded rather to supply conditions in Africa, which varied mostly owing to wars and droughts. But by the eighteenth century, Africans delivered slaves to the coast through much more thoroughly commercialized processes of enslavement and transport, and they relied heavily on prior Portuguese commitments of réis-priced trade goods to do so. When rising slave prices in Brazil enabled both established Angolan slavers and metropolitan merchants intent on intruding on slaving at Luanda to afford greater quantities of trade goods, prices rose in the African colony. The Africans invested the greater quantities of imports in consolidating new supply networks. When buyers from Brazil began to acquire slaves directly in Angola at the end of the eighteenth century, they paid prices that much more clearly reflected the rising value of slaves in Brazil. By the 1820s, prices also reflected the increased competition met from alternate sources of captive labor along the Loango coast and in southeastern Africa. Slaving in Luanda, once an extension of the internal trade and politics of western central Africa, had become an outpost of the cash economy of Brazil.

Larger Comparisons

The long-term increase in the currency value of slaves, though reduced by inflation in the Portuguese real, was magnified by a steady decline in the amount of labor represented by the "slaves" priced. The early data represent full peça slaves (healthy adult males) while later data do not. The later data refer rather to the much younger, smaller, and weakened refugees from drought who were more common by the end of the eighteenth century. Buyers thus paid even more for an

equivalent unit of labor than nominal increases in réis prices suggest.

The decline in the age and health of the average slave forced Brazilian slave owners to pay for the restoration, maintenance, and training of the young and the sick in Brazil. This shift toward "final finishing" of the labor force in America made a gruesome kind of economic sense for the Brazilians: masters saved police and discipline costs by concentrating on younger, more malleable new arrivals. Local training also reduced the commitment of scarce imperial currency credits necessary to maintain the work force because planters relied on the non-cash provisioning and rearing sectors of the colonial economy rather than buy better quality slaves for réis. In this respect, accepting younger slaves extended Brazilian efforts to buy the African labor with their own rum and tobacco, without going through the expensive réis credit arrangements under which Lisbon merchants delivered slaves. The advantage to the Brazilians worked to the detriment of the slavers in Angola, who had to accept correspondingly lower margins on the slaves they sold in Brazil. It worked even more against the interests of metropolitan merchants who, for the same reason, sold fewer goods in Africa for each unit of labor eventually put to work on the plantations in Brazil than the earlier business centered on peça slaves had allowed.

The profitability of southern Atlantic slaving varied according to the traders' positions in the series of exchanges that passed slaves on from the interior of Africa to the plantations and mines of Brazil. Though we lack data on the margins available to the African producers of slaves, the politics and transportation networks that they constructed out of their gains leave the impression that they found considerable advantage in the trade. The Angolan merchants who owned the slaves from their places of purchase in the African interior until they were sold in Brazilian ports clearly were squeezed when réis prices declined in Brazil late in the seventeenth century and in the middle of the eighteenth century. They escaped from these pressures by acquiring slaves through violence, by smuggling to non-Portuguese slavers, by incorporating cheap Brazilian gerebita in the banzos they paid for slaves, and by defaulting on debts they owed to merchants from Lisbon.

Angolan slavers may have made substantial gains in réis during the sugar boom and during the first years of the gold rush. The resumption of economic growth in Brazil after 1780, however, found them increasingly committed to the Angolan interior, selling their slaves on the coast and thereby being excluded from the profits available across the Atlantic.

A rough comparison between peça lien-values at Luanda and in Brazil suggests that margins of 150-200 percent were normal

TABLE 3.1

ESTIMATED TRADING MARGINS, ANGOLA TO BRAZIL (RÉIS)

<u>Decade</u>	<u>Angola price</u> ^a	<u>Brazilian prices</u> ^b	<u>Margin (réis)</u> ^c	<u>Difference</u> ^d
1600	12\$000			
1610	21\$000	21\$000 - 28\$000	00 - 7\$000	33.3%
1620	21\$000	26\$000 - 30\$000	5\$000 - 9\$000	42.9%
1630	21\$000	30\$000 - 50\$000	9\$000 - 29\$000	138.1%
1640	21\$000	40\$000 - 80\$000	19\$000 - 59\$000	281.0%
1650	22\$000	40\$000 - 80\$000	18\$000 - 58\$000	263.6%
1660	22\$000	(??)	n/a	n/a
1670	22\$000	45\$000 - 60\$000	23\$000 - 38\$000	172.7%
1680	22\$000	50\$000 - 60\$000	28\$000 - 38\$000	172.7%
1690	22\$000	40\$000 - 60\$000	18\$000 - 38\$000	172.7%
1700	22\$000	75\$000 - 95\$000	53\$000 - 73\$000	331.8%
1710	35\$000	110\$000 - 200\$000	75\$000 - 165\$000	471.4%
1720	30\$000 to 50\$000	130\$000 - 200\$000	90\$000 - 160\$000	320.0%
1730	40\$000	130\$000 - 200\$000	90\$000 - 160\$000	400.0%
1740	50\$000	100\$000 - 135\$000	50\$000 - 85\$000	170.0%
1750	50\$000(+)	85\$000 - 120\$000	35\$000 - 70\$000	140.0%
1760	35\$000 to 50\$000	35\$000 - 90\$000	00 - 40\$000	80.0%
1770	40\$000 to 60\$000	55\$000 - 100\$000	27\$500	55.0%
1780	40\$000 to 60\$000	75\$000 - 125\$000	50\$000	100.0%
1790	60\$000 to 80\$000	75\$000 - 125\$000	30\$000	60.0%
1800	50\$000 to 75\$000	80\$000 - 150\$000	52\$500	84.0%
1810	68\$000 to 80\$000	90\$000 - 200\$000	71\$000	95.9%
1820	70\$000 to 150\$000	130\$000 - 350\$000	127\$500	113.3%

Notes:

a. Tables IV-VI in Miller, forthcoming b.

b. Tables XII-XIV in Miller, forthcoming b.

c. Calculated from the higher Luanda price, presumably that for a prime slave, to the range of Brazilian prices shown before 1770; thereafter calculated from the mid-points of ranges.

d. Percentage of gain from the Luanda prime price (before 1770) to the top end of the Brazilian range shown; after 1770, mid-points of both ranges are used.

early in the seventeenth century. These widened briefly to nearly 500 percent between 1700-1740 before narrowing back to the previous levels in the 1740s and 1750s. During the depression in the middle of the eighteenth century, traders had as little as 55-80 percent of the prime slave lien-value to cover all expenses of boarding in Luanda and of transportation and mortality on the way to Brazil. The margins available on the slaves actually traded may have been considerably less, since prices in the chartered company records and most prices after 1780 were consistently lower. Margins then declined steadily from about 100 percent in the 1780s to the 60-percent range in the 1790s. The trading margin widened again after 1800 as Brazilians bid up prices on the strength of their agricultural renaissance, but the gain reached no more than 115 percent, even when the end of legal slaving approached in the 1820s. Increases in African costs in this late period went far to keep these percentages modest by earlier standards. No doubt the much higher costs of bringing slaves from the center of the African continent contributed to the long-term erosion of transatlantic markups, but so did the growing integration of the African and Atlantic economies. Profitability varied little in the long run, though it fluctuated considerably from decade to decade.

The costs that these margins had to cover included mortality in Angola and during the middle passage, taxes, and freight charges. For the period as a whole, deaths among slaves regularly ran around 50 percent, with higher mortality at sea earlier in the seventeenth century, but later more deaths occurred in the interior as trade routes lengthened. Slave deaths at sea declined from 50 percent to only 5-10 percent after 1800. Taxes remained roughly constant in the vicinity of 10\$000 after the 1650s, or nearly half of the Luanda value of a slave then, declining to 15 percent later. Maintenance charges in Luanda and during the ocean voyage probably were about 3\$000 to 4\$000 (two-thirds higher after 1815), or 15-20 percent early on but only about 5 percent later. Freight charges rose from 4\$000 in the seventeenth century to 6\$000 during the eighteenth century until the 1790s, and they increased to 12\$800 (the silver *dobra*) thereafter; slavers thus paid about 20 percent of the value of a peça in Luanda before 1700 in fees for maritime transport, almost as much from 1700 to the 1770s, less in the 1780s and 1790s, but almost the same as before the 1770s during the last decades of the legal trade. Commissions paid to the merchants in Luanda and in Brazil who handled the slaves for the Angolan owners ran anywhere from 4 percent to about 8 percent.

On top of these normal costs, shortages of shipping at Luanda during the years of highest demand for slaves in Minas Gerais allowed captains to collect surcharges up to four times the amount of the authorized freight fee. Epidemics early in

the century could sweep away more than half the slaves embarking on ships, and total losses to death and flight probably amounted to half again that amount on occasion. Slavers also had to pay bribes and other extraordinary charges to government officials.

TABLE 3.2

APPROXIMATE COSTS OF SHIPPING SLAVES, ANGOLA TO BRAZIL

<u>Category</u>	<u>Early Percentage</u>	<u>Late Percentage</u>
Mortality	50	5-10
Taxes	45	15
Maintenance	15-20	5
Freight	20	20
Commissions	4-8	4-8
NORMAL TOTAL	134-143	49-58
Extraordinary costs (epidemics, bribes, etc.)	100+	25+
Estimated normal margins	150-200	60-100

In view of these charges, roughly totaling a third more than the nominal prime cost of slaves at Luanda early in the history of the trade and running half again as much by its last years, the estimated margins suggest that gains were possible in good years but turned into losses, sometimes catastrophic ones, when slave mortality rose or when other unusual costs appeared. Angolan slavers suffered enormous losses during the 1710s and 1720s when, despite high returns on slaves reaching Rio, shipping surcharges and virulent epidemic smallpox wiped out potential gains. The reduced trading margins of the 1760s produced continual complaints of losses in Brazil and allegations of smuggling to foreign buyers offering better prices elsewhere. Slave sellers did better in the 1730s and 1740s but had to fend off Lisbon merchants fighting their way into the trade. Brazilian merchants were able to buy into the slave trade in Africa when prices rose after 1780, and as a result they captured the réis trading profits of that era from the Luandans. The golden age of Angolan slaving from the point of view of traders at Luanda probably lay in the seventeenth century, and then primarily in the 1620s and 1630s.

The gap between dockside prices in the Brazilian ports and higher costs of labor delivered to the plantation and mining

zones of the interior points to the fact that the highest reported Brazilian prices included distribution costs incurred by retailers. Planters and miners who paid these prices gained when the European value of their sugar, cotton or gold was rising faster than the price they paid for slaves, but they ran up debits in Portugal when European prices failed to cover inflation in the supplies they brought from Lisbon and the higher-priced slaves that arrived in the wake of increased prices of the goods sold for slaves in Africa.

Lastly in the chain of parties interested in the profits to be made in the southern Atlantic, merchants in Lisbon counted their profits in terms that had very little reference to the prices for slaves. They sought réis credits by selling their goods at high prices in Luanda and then by recovering the returns of those sales through bills of exchange ultimately paid out of the profits of Brazilian produce in Europe. When European demand for Brazilian commodities was high, the gains flowed through to their considerable advantage, but when sugar prices fell, or when the gold of Minas Gerais was depleted, they felt the pinch. Their concerns extended to the costs of the Asian cottons, British woolens, and other northern European manufactures upon which nearly all relied to maintain their position in African markets, but contemplation of these prices in Europe would take this study far beyond a manageable scale. It is relevant here to note only that the trading margins on slaves in the southern Atlantic affected Lisbon at one or more removes.

After the 1720s, the British and French found "Angola" slaves less costly in terms of the currency prime costs of the goods they had to pay than were slaves from most parts of West Africa. By "Angola," the French and British meant primarily the Loango coast, though they also bought slaves south of the Zaire estuary. Their African suppliers drew a significant proportion of the slaves they sold from the same hinterland that Portuguese and Brazilian merchants tapped through Luanda. In the 1770s and 1780s the French also acquired thousands of slaves south of Luanda from sources that also sent slaves to Brazilian buyers at Benguela. To a significant extent, though not one precisely quantifiable, the "Angola" slaves bought by the French and British could be considered competitive with captives sold at the two Portuguese colonial ports, in the sense that all took slaves from the same sources in the interior. The price series developed for Luanda ought then to approximate what non-Portuguese buyers paid for central African slaves along adjacent parts of the coast.

It is difficult to assess European currency exchange rates in a context where no transactions between different currencies in fact occurred,¹⁴ but Luanda réis values for slaves seem to have run generally below what the British and others were paying elsewhere in Africa in the seventeenth and eighteenth

TABLE 3.3

LUANDA AVERAGE SLAVE PRICES (£) COMPARED TO SLAVE PRICES ELSEWHERE

Decade	Luanda ^a (réis)	Conversion rates	Luanda (£)	Cabinda (£)	West Africa (£)		Curtin ^d
					Bean ^b	LeVeen ^c	
1600	12\$000	1\$308	9.2				
1610	21\$000		16.1				
1620	21\$000		16.1				
1630	21\$000		16.1				
1640	21\$000	1\$942	10.8	4			
1650	22\$000						
1660	22\$000						
1670	22\$000						
1680	21\$000	3\$555	5.9	4			
1690	21\$000					5.0-5.4	5.2
1700	22\$000		6.2	5.8	12.6	7.5-8.8	
1710	35\$000		9.8		16.8	10.4-11.4	9.7
1720	40\$000		11.3	9.5	14.2	9.8-12.4	5.6-9.4
1730	40\$000		11.3		20.2	11.1-14.0	9.0-14.4
1740	50\$000		14.1		17.7	13.8-15.3	12.8
1750	50\$000		14.1	7-24	17.7	12.5-16.2	12.8
1760	42\$000		11.8	11-30	20.0	15.5	14.1-18.3
1770	48\$000		13.5	24-28	11.4- 21.0	8.0-19.4	17.9
1780	53\$000		14.9		29.1	8.0-27.0	21.0-27.1
1790	59\$000	3\$328	17.7		25.3		27.5
1800	61\$000	3\$870	15.8		23.5		
1810	72\$000	4\$243	17.0				
1820	70\$000	4\$429	15.8 to 33.9				
	rising to 150\$000 by end of decade						

Notes:

a. Prime slaves until the 1750s, mid-points of reported ranges thereafter.

b. Bean 1975; Le Veen 1975: 9; Gemery and Hogendorn 1975: 156.

c. LeVeen 1977: 146, summarizing Bean for "prime male slaves" in West Africa by decades, 1690-1776.

d. Curtin 1975: 159.

centuries. The accuracy of the comparison between the prices reported from Luanda and those from West Africa suffers from differences in what the "costs" of slaves from each area must have represented. British prices from West Africa were the "prime (currency) costs" in Europe of the goods they exchanged for actual slaves along the coast, while the *lien*-values reported for *peça* slaves at Luanda before the 1770s included large markups on goods revalued at Luanda in *réis*, as well as other *réis* allowances to cover risks of remitting these revenues to Brazil in bills of exchange. In general, it would appear that these additions put the *réis* prices of goods exchanged for slaves at Luanda well above their prime cost in Lisbon. The rule of thumb was that merchants doubled their currency prices between Portugal and Angola. Lisbon prime costs of goods equivalent to the prices in British or French records were also already higher than what northern European slavers paid for much the same merchandise in their home ports. To render the two series fully comparable, of course, it would be necessary to correct further for possible differences in the physical stature and health of the slaves provided from each of the two African regions. "Angola" slaves often acquired reputations in both the Caribbean and Brazil for weakness and sickness in comparison to those from West Africa (Geggus 1978). The implied lower labor capacity and shortened life expectancies of central African slaves would tend to reduce the apparent gap in the prices for the two regions. Table 3.3 thus gives only indirect information about the goods-values that central African merchants received for their slaves, when compared to those earned by West Africans.

Without correcting for any of these distorting factors, currency prices for prime slaves at Luanda appear to have run generally above average prices along the Loango coast until the 1760s. Thereafter, slaves along the Angolan coast were cheaper, and in the 1780s, 1790s, and 1800s, West African slaves cost 50 percent more than Angolan ones. Lisbon merchants complained bitterly at times about foreigners who paid twice what they could afford for slaves at Luanda, but their complaints may reveal as much about the squeeze that their efforts to offer prices competitive with British and French buyers placed on the Lisbon-to-Luanda margin as about the quantities of goods African sellers received for their slaves.

A more direct indication of the real degree of price differential on the European side might come from the accounting costs that the two chartered Portuguese companies attributed to the slaves they bought in Angola and in West Africa. The Maranhão Company priced the goods it expended for slaves in upper Guinea between 1756-1778 at an average of 71\$415, 84.8 percent more than the 39\$650 they paid in Luanda. The small purchases the Pernambuco Company made at Mina, in the Bight of Benin, averaged 55\$662, only 19.3 percent more than its 46\$648

average cost of slaves in Angola between 1760-1788 (Carreira 1983: 65; Klein 1978: 46, for comparison). The greater discrepancy between the Maranhão Company's costs in West Africa and in Angola may be attributed in part to the Company's concentration of its purchases of slaves at Luanda during only a few years, when it abandoned its upper Guinea monopoly to take advantage of the depressed central African prices late in the 1750s and early in the 1760s. Further, the Maranhão Company paid more for its upper Guinea slaves generally than the Pernambuco Company spent at Mina. The remaining differences between what the companies paid at Luanda and the average cost of West African slaves provide modest support for a conclusion that central African slaves were relatively cheap.

The degree of difference between prices for slaves in central and in West Africa also varied over time with the general patterns of slaving in the Atlantic. Prices in Angola and in West Africa were out of step at the end of the seventeenth century. West Indian demand pushed up the value of West African slaves during the 1690s at a time when the Brazilian labor market served by Angola went into decline, and not until the gold mines in Minas Gerais took up the slack in the following decades did prices in Angola and in West Africa move closer together again. One might expect to find veteran slavers from West Africa attracted to central Africa during this period of growing differentials, and indeed the Dutch, followed by the French and eventually the British, advanced south to Loango and toward Luanda beginning just about that time.

The Luanda *réis* cost of prime male slaves rose to levels close (80 percent or more) to the costs of comparable labor in West Africa during the gold boom from the 1720s to the 1750s, but it dropped behind again in the 1760s, when soft mid-eighteenth-century prices in Brazil coincided with continued high demand for slaves in the Caribbean. Predictably, the British and French returned to Angola in force at the end of the Seven Years War in 1763. By the 1770s, foreign competition brought the Luanda price for prime slaves back up to levels comparable to what the British and French were paying elsewhere, though the slaves actually traded seem to have been worth less. Some Portuguese complained that African slavers sold their best slaves to foreign buyers. During the 1780s, the French virtually dominated slaving at Benguela, and the British reigned supreme north of Luanda.

A comparison, also approximate, between the range of the scattered and uncertain slave prices available from Brazil and average prices calculated for slaves in the British West Indies also suggests broad movements that make sense in terms of the general economic histories of the two regions. Slaves sold for similar amounts in the competing sugar economies of the second half of the seventeenth century, at least at the nominal exchange rates then in effect between the Portuguese real and

TABLE 3.4

BRAZILIAN SLAVE PRICES AND PRICES IN THE BRITISH WEST INDIES

<u>Decade</u>	<u>Brazil (réis)</u>	<u>Brazil (£)</u>	<u>West Indies (£)</u>	<u>Jamaica (£)</u>
1640s	40\$000 - 80\$000	20.6-41.2		16.50-17.03
1650s	40\$000 - 80\$000	20.6-41.2		21.12-31.00
1660s	??	??		20.20-21.13
1670s	45\$000 - 60\$000 ^a	23.1-30.9		19.31-22.05
1680s	50\$000 - 60\$000	14.1-16.9		19.31-23.07
1690s	40\$000 - 60\$000	11.3-16.9	24.2	23.07-24.72
1700s	75\$000 - 95\$000	21.1-26.7	24.8	23.52-26.42
1710s	110\$000 - 200\$000 ^b and 250\$000 to 300\$000 at Rio	30.9-56.3 (70.3-84.4)	24.6	21.98-29.33
1720s	130\$000 - 200\$000 ^b	31.6-56.3	24.3	21.98-24.35
1730s	130\$000 - 200\$000 ^b	31.6-56.3	24.3	21.97-28.13
1740s	100\$000 - 135\$000	28.1-38.0	28.2	26.96-31.56
1750s	85\$000 - 120\$000	23.9-33.8	32.8	26.96-33.88
1760s	35\$000 - 90\$000 ^c	9.9-25.3	36.8	32.86-39.82
1770s	55\$000 - 100\$000 ^c	15.5-28.1	40.0 to 40.7	39.82-42.91
1780s	75\$000 - 125\$000 ^d	21.1-35.2	40.0 to 45.0	
1790s	75\$000 - 125\$000	21.1-35.2	53.0	
1800s	80\$000 - 150\$000	20.7-38.8	53.0	
1810s	90\$000 - 200\$000 ^e	21.7-48.2		
1820s	130\$000 - 350\$000 ^f	29.4-79.2		

Sources: Tables 3.1, 3.2; LeVeen 1975: 146, for West Indies; Bean 1975: 210, for Jamaica.

Notes:

- a. Figures seem to be too high.
- b. Period of the gold boom.
- c. Depression.
- d. Recovery.
- e. Skilled slaves cost more.
- f. 300\$000 - 900\$000 at end of decade.

the English pound Sterling. Growing overvaluation of the real after 1650 may exaggerate Brazilian slave prices in terms of pounds, especially during the 1670s, just before its devaluation by over 83 percent. If so, higher slave prices in the West Indies matched the greater prosperity in the new sugar plantations. The low Brazilian prices for slaves in the 1680s and 1690s reflected more accurately the depressed state of the sugar economies of Bahia and Pernambuco. Discovery of gold in Minas Gerais after 1695 brought Brazilian prices back into the range of those in the Caribbean and then held them well above what British planters paid for slaves from the 1710s through the 1740s (at least in the interior), putting further pressure on a Brazilian sugar sector forced to pay premium rates to divert slaves away from the mines while competing in Europe with cheaper sugar from the West Indies. It is clear that Bahia and Pernambuco sugar growers could not have survived this period if they had not developed very low-cost (in terms of réis) rum and tobacco trades with Africa.

The end of the Minas gold boom allowed Brazilian slave prices to fall roughly back into line with those in the Caribbean during the 1750s and then dropped them well below in the 1760s. It was at this period that Luso-Africans in Angola became enthusiastic smugglers to British and French slavers buying for the more prosperous West Indian markets. Brazilian prices recovered in the 1770s and then stabilized between the 1780s and 1800s at perhaps one-half to two-thirds of the value of slaves in the Caribbean. These low labor costs, though perhaps for poorer quality slaves, provided a considerable subsidy that sustained Brazilian sugar, cotton, and tobacco in competition with their West Indian and North American counterparts at the end of the eighteenth century.

One final caveat may further explain the apparent degree of difference in the prices of the slaves in the two major American sources of tropical commodities sent to Europe. Scattered Brazilian prices for resales of slaves at this period range from 150\$000 to 200\$000 (£45.11 - £60.07), considerably higher than the dockside prices available to Angolan slavers. These prices represent the cost of labor delivered to the sugar estates and cotton fields of the interior. It seems likely, therefore, that Brazilian producers paid as much as, or even more than, the price in the West Indies because West Indian planters often obtained their slave labor directly from the wharf. To the extent that the expansion of Brazilian exports brought interior regions far from the colony's ports into production, the effective labor costs may have risen to the advantage of merchant retailers in Brazil. Traders often gained at the expense of producers in the eighteenth-century mercantilist Portuguese empire. Only as the end of legal slaving approached in the 1820s did Brazilian port prices rise toward the same levels as those common in the West Indies some

two decades earlier, on the eve of British abolition of the slave trade there.

NOTES

1. My use of the term includes the region sometimes termed "Congo North"; e.g., Curtin 1969; Klein 1978.
2. The Pernambuco Company was worried about the large numbers of children that its Luanda and Benguela agents bought as early as the 1760s; Arquivo Histórico do Ministério das Finanças (hereafter AHMF), Pernambuco Company, Angola copiador, letter to de Lemos and Souza Portella, 18 September 1765; Benguela copiador, instructions of 4 July 1777; also Carreira 1967: 67-68, 393-394. For "adults" bought by the Pombaline companies described as 12-13-year-old boys and 7-8-year-old girls, see Carreira 1967: 302. Youths and women were described as "most of the slaves who arrive in Brazil" not long after (Mendes 1977: 49). The modal age of thirty-three slaves of known ages reaching Rio in 1785 was 12, and the mean was 17.1 years (Medeiros dos Santos 1973: 58-59). Among the numerous comments on the youthfulness of slaves reaching Brazil early in the nineteenth century, see Luccock 1820: 590; Dr. Joseph Cliffe, quoted in Conrad 1983: 29, 33; Karasch 1987. By 1835 the nominal peça had become a "flawless unbearded youth" past puberty, and the majority of slaves were mere boys (Omboni 1846: 97). Cf. the same trend noticed in the Dutch trade by Postma 1972: 242, fn 25; 1979: 256. Chandler (1981: 146) notes a similar downward shift in the age of slaves obtainable in West Africa, evident there by the end of the seventeenth century.
3. All data presented graphically in this chapter are taken from tabular summaries of prices described in detail in Miller, forthcoming b.
4. Accounts of João Xavier Proença e Sylva (merchant in Luanda), Biblioteca Nacional (Lisbon) (hereafter BNL), código 617, fls. 114, 121, 222.
5. AHMF, Pernambuco Company diário no. 3.
6. Proença e Sylva accounts, BNL, código 617, fl. 619; Klein 1978: 40, fn 22; Mattoso 1979: 79; Dias 1971: 430.
7. For references to the banzo, or bundle of goods, offered for a slave, see petição from D. Maria de Tavora (widow of former governor Manuel Pereira Forjaz, 1607-1611) in Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (Lisbon) (hereafter AHU), Angola cx. 1; defined in Cadornega 1940: vol. 1, 143 and Couto 1972: 223.

8. André Velho da Fonseca first reported this as the Luanda FOB cost, with costs delivered in Brazil as 30\$000 (Felner 1933: 429). For the Dutch period (1641-1648), see Boogaart and Emmer 1979: 364; Cavazzi 1965: vol. 2, 334; Taunay 1941: 135; Miller 1984.
9. Taunay 1941: 140-141, citing P^e Giuseppi Monari di Modena; also see Boxer 1965: 226; Bando of 24 May 1725, AHU, Angola cx. 16; letter from the Senado da Câmara de Luanda (municipal council), 24 January 1728, AHU, Angola cx. 18; Rodrigo Cezar de Menezes (governor, Angola), 30 March 1737, AHU, Angola cx. 19.
10. Exemplary prices given for top grade slaves sold at Luanda from the point of view of a trader in the interior of the colony. Custódio Simões da Silva memória, 25 June 1762, AHU, Angola cx. 29. Also see detailed reconstruction and discussion of prices paid in this era by the Pernambuco and Maranhão Companies in Miller, forthcoming b.
11. Summary trade statistics for this period given as average costs of slaves FOB Luanda, thus including duties and expenses to the point of embarkation above the nominal "price" of slaves at their point of sale in Luanda. "Balanco da importação e exportação. . .," Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro (Rio de Janeiro), lata 7, doc. 1. For discussion of the sources of these and other customs records, see Miller 1986.
12. More than doubled at Benguela between 1825-1828; João Victor Jorge, 25 November 1826, with enclosed statistical reports, AHU, Angola cx. 70; Benguela statistical reports, AHU, Angola, cx. 72.
13. "Costs on board ship, based on accounts submitted to the Customs Clearance Board by merchants of the city," as phrased in the "Relação das fazendas, generos e mais objectos d'importação. . ." for 1810, in AHU, Angola cx. 59.
14. The most direct relevance of these exchange rates lay in their effect on the prices in réis at which Lisbon merchants were able to sell British and other northern European goods in both Brazil and Angola, and conversely in the pounds they were able to obtain for Brazilian sugar, cotton, and so on in Britain.

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CHAPTER 4

ANASTÁCIA AND THE SLAVE WOMEN OF RIO DE JANEIRO

Mary Karasch*

Introduction

In the church of Rosário in Rio de Janeiro, there stands a shrine to a slave woman. Her name was Anastácia. The picture, surrounded by flowers and votive offerings, shows her wearing an iron mask and an iron collar. Anastácia appears to have belonged to a brutal master and to have suffered as greatly as a martyr. To those who pray there, she is a saint who grants cures, graces, and miracles. To the folklorist, she is an example of the evolution of a religious cult around a picture or image, while to the historian, she represents the many slave women who suffered under the conditions of enslavement.¹ Anastácia's memory survives, but history has forgotten many like her.²

The task of this chapter is to examine the condition of slave women, a topic which has been sadly neglected, particularly by those scholars preoccupied with the Freyre thesis.³ The use of "he" for slave - male and female - and "freedman" for freedperson has imposed a bias on research that has interfered with a consideration of the plight of the Anastácias. The iron mask and iron collar of the shrine more accurately represent that plight than Freyre's analysis allows. Because women served as sexual partners of masters and nursed their children, Freyre believed that slavery was a milder institution in Brazil than elsewhere, but an examination of slave women in Rio de Janeiro reveals a more complex situation than Freyre thought and helps us to understand the reality behind the iron mask.

*Portions of this chapter are forthcoming in Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro, 1808-1850, Princeton University Press and printed here with permission.

The Anastácias of Rio

The slave women of Rio were not a uniform group. Their diverse ages, nationalities, and colors affected their treatment, status, and roles. The census of 1849 shows that more than half (57.3 percent) of the slave women had been born in Africa.⁴ Although the Mina women of West Africa fascinated European visitors, less than ten percent of Rio's Africans were West Africans. Instead, two-thirds of them came from the vast region of West Central Africa, now comprising the countries of Gabon, Congo, Zaire, and Angola. Another 15-25 percent, depending on the period, were from East Africa, largely Mozambique (Karasch 1987: Ch. 1).

Brazilian-born slave women were usually distinguished by color. They were either black, parda or mulata, or cabra.⁵ If they came from other regions of Brazil, they were also identified by their province of origin, such as parda da Bahia, Bahian mulatto woman. The typical Brazilian-born slave woman living in Rio was likely to be black and born in the city or elsewhere in the province of Rio de Janeiro.

Another important factor was age. Most African females were young girls, teenagers, or young women, when they first arrived, while all age groups were represented among those born in Brazil. Eleven percent of the newly imported African females were nine years old or younger, while almost two-thirds were between ten and nineteen (Table 4.1). Only about one-quarter were above the age of twenty. These African girls endured the trauma of the trek to the African coast, the infamous middle passage, and the exhibition and sale of their persons, often while nude, in the slave market. On the whole, they were younger than a comparable group of male slaves. One-fifth of African females, based on a life span sample that recorded dates of arrival and of death of 250 African females in Rio, died within three years of arrival. The seasoning process apparently affected males and females equally, since one-fifth of the males also died during that time period. After that life expectancy for males and females diverged. Within nine years 20.8 percent of the females had died as opposed to 15.5 percent of the males (Karasch 1987: Table 4.5). Since African girls were imported at younger ages than African males, it may be that a higher percentage of females died because of complications due to pregnancy and childbirth or because they received worse treatment than males. Tuberculosis also appears to have been a significant factor.

According to data from the Santa Casa da Misericórdia, which assumed responsibility for the burial of many Brazilian-born and African-born slaves, female slaves tended to die younger than males - 54.2 percent of females were under age nine, as opposed to 33.4 percent of males. These figures accord well with another sample from Rio, in which 56 percent

of all those who died in 1845 were under nine, and other data also suggest that female slave children tended to have a higher rate of mortality than males (Karasch 1987: Table 4.6 and Ch. 4).

Table 4.1

COMPARATIVE AGE STRUCTURE OF RIO SLAVES BY SEX, 1833-1852

Age Groups	Imported Africans ^a		Santa Casa Burials ^b	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
0-9	5%	11%	33.4%	54.2%
10-19	59%	63%	16.2%	15.2%
20-49	35%	25%	38.0%	22.1%
50--	1%	1%	12.4%	8.5%
Total	(N=327)	(N=108)	(N=863)	(N=507)

Source: Karasch 1987: Table 2.4, Table 4.4

a. Africans captured in the slave trade

b. Slaves of African and Brazilian birth

Whatever their age, male slaves always outnumbered females, although not as greatly in Rio as in some plantation regions. In the city, female slaves comprised 40 percent of the slave population, both in 1838 and 1849.⁶ In some plantation districts, 70-80 percent of the slave population was male. More female imports were retained in Rio because of their employment in domestic tasks, and hence the ratio of females to males in the city was higher even than the ratios among new imports in general, in which three-fourths of newly arrived slaves were males (Karasch, 1986a: Table 2.3).

In brief, the typical Anastácia of the early nineteenth century was imported from Central Africa as a teenager. Her African birth, black color, youthful age, and minority status in a city of men, both slave and free, set the parameters of her treatment, status, and potential manumission.

Treatment

The issue of treatment has long been debated without much reference to what happened to slave women. If foreign travelers had been more specific as to sex when they praised the "kind" treatment of slaves in Brazil, we might find that they actually meant the "kind" behavior that wealthy owners

displayed toward their female household slaves when they entertained visitors in their homes. Obviously, a master did not punish his slaves - females or males - in the presence of a French traveler who might write about it when he returned to Paris. From some travelers' testimony it seems, however, that a minority of elite slaves, mostly women, did escape "bad treatment." Mortality data of the period 1835-1852 suggests that male slaves had a consistently higher death rate than female slaves (Karasch 1987: Ch. 4), and different mortality rates may indicate variations in treatment between male and female slaves. What was true for male slaves may, therefore, not have been true for female slaves. But not all female slaves were pampered household servants, and they often endured the same living conditions as male slaves, being punished as brutally as the men. They too suffered from public punishment, inadequate shelter, bedding, and clothing, overwork in an insalubrious city, deficient medical care, malnutrition, and disease - all of which seriously affected their ability to survive and bear children. The context of physical abuse and neglectful living conditions is thus crucial to an understanding of why Rio's slave population could not renew itself through natural reproduction.

The police records of the city reveal the variety and brutality of punishments meted out to slave girls and women; the arsenal of torture was extensive. In the households of the period, the most common instruments were the chicote or small whip and the palmatória, a wooden paddle with holes in it.⁷ To punish a slave, the owner held the palmatória by the handle and slapped her hands with it, or, to torture her, the more sensitive parts of the body, such as the breasts. After each day's work, a household's slaves lined up to receive their daily punishment, if "deserved," or to watch their companions receive theirs. A German traveler observed a lady of the house personally discipline her slaves each evening and give one slave woman almost fifty blows with the palmatória and whip a girl of fifteen with swollen hands because she had pleaded not to be beaten again with the palmatória (Weech 1831: vol. 2, 12-15).

While whippings and palmatoadas were the most common forms of punishments used on women, there were even more terrible tortures: whippings in the slave prison; abandonment in a dungeon; imprisonment with forced labor; a visit to the tamer of "refractory slaves"; confinement in leg irons, arm/leg irons, stomach irons, and iron cuffs, collars, and masks; imprisonment in stocks; portorage of heavy burdens, such as chains and blocks of wood; thumbscrews; melted wax; dismemberment; public humiliation; sale outside the city; and even death (Karasch 1987: Ch. 5). In one sample of 262 female slaves who were punished by whippings in 1826, 43.1 percent received one hundred lashes and 49.6 percent two hundred lashes. Two women suffered three hundred lashes and one 250. Women, however,

were rarely confined to the galês (chained gangs of convicted criminals), although one Rita was sentenced to perpetual galês.⁸

Although female slaves were not usually subjected to the worst punishments that males received, such as six hundred lashes, quarry work, and galê service, there was no sex or age discrimination regarding all other forms of correction. The only mitigating circumstances in female punishments were that women were apparently whipped by women in the slave prison, and their mistresses disciplined them in the households. Travelers noted that women punished their slaves more brutally than men, and the police consistently recorded unusual tortures and murders perpetrated by women on their male and female slaves.⁹

The physical abuse of slave women was certainly a contributing factor in some of their early deaths, but the more common result of whippings and palmatoadas was the contraction of tetanus, ulcers, or parasitic infestations through open wounds and sores. Confinement in the slave prison also exposed women to dysentery, hepatitis, and smallpox.

Although abolitionists attributed slave mortality to the infliction of cruel and excessive punishment, neglect appears to have played a more crucial role, especially in the case of women. Inadequate clothing, housing, food, and medical care, especially during pregnancy and while nursing, contributed to women's deaths. Survival in the face of epidemic and endemic diseases was then hindered by the lack of adequate clothing, bedding, or housing in the cold damp of the rainy season, when respiratory ailments and disease-bearing mosquitoes were serious problems. Without proper food, women and their children died of malnutrition. Confined to dark houses and living under crowded conditions, they contracted tuberculosis.

The housing of slave women in Rio was seriously inadequate for their physical and mental well-being. Whereas in plantation areas slaves had small huts or barracks that were separate from their owners' housing, such arrangements were difficult in urban Rio, except in rare situations when owners permitted slaves to live apart from the crowded households. In suburban mansions and urban two-story houses, the slaves slept on the ground floors in dark, damp, poorly-ventilated quarters along with the household goods and animals. In other cases the slaves lived in "dark cubicles" divided by thin partitions in the kitchen area. If the household had many slaves, they had to sleep rolled in blankets or on mats on the floor. Even if space permitted, the maids often slept on the floor outside their owner's door or in their owner's room to chase off rats at night. Household slaves did not even have beds, much less bedrooms, and they lacked privacy.¹⁰

Clothing also had an effect on health. Brazilian-born slave women imitated their mistresses by dressing in heavy long dresses with mantillas (veils) that covered their bodies when

they left the house. While this practice protected them from insect bites on the street, it prevented exposure to the sun. Since they were also confined to shuttered houses except to go to church, Brazilian slave women without access to dairy products were more likely to suffer from Vitamin D deficiencies than African women, who were not semi-cloistered or covered with clothing. On the other hand, Africans were subject to insect bites and the chilly damp of the rainy season. In the early period, new imports were led naked through the streets of Rio to be exposed for sale in public auctions. Later, the Prince Regent ordered that they be landed with a short skirt, which is the most clothing some of them had for the rest of their lives. African girls and women often worked in the streets and households in short skirts and brief blouses that hardly covered the breasts, if at all. Only if they earned enough money to buy cloth to make their own dresses, or their owners bought it, did they have the means to cover their bodies as Brazilian-born slave women did. Their children wore no clothing until five or six or more.

A more pernicious custom that affected all slave women was the one that outlawed the use of shoes, "the badge of freedom." Unless they were permitted to wear shoes or wooden platforms (tamancos), their feet were injured or deformed. In particular, they were subject to tetanus and the bicho-de-pé (chigres), which lamed and crippled them, and to the great debilitator of tropical countries, hookworm (Ewbank 1971: 277, 282; Stein 1970: 186).

Although Europeans regarded Rio as a healthy city for its time, it still had serious health problems that affected all slaves who had to work amidst the city's filth. The lack of sewers, privies, or water closets meant that slaves had to dispose of each household's night soil - usually at a square or on a beach. Swamps in the flat areas of the city bred mosquitoes that carried malaria, elephantiasis (filariasis), and yellow fever (after 1849). Wherever they walked in the city, slaves had to pick their way through streets littered with animal and human excrement, decomposing animals, and even the bodies of slaves abandoned by their owners. Overwork under such conditions often led to serious illnesses.

When they became very sick, they were sent to the Santa Casa da Misericórdia, which admitted slaves to its hospital. Otherwise, they were treated at home by private doctors, barber-surgeons, or African healers. When they had babies, they were attended by black midwives, who also performed the proper religious rituals. Only in difficult childbirths did some owners call in a medical doctor. Few slave women were treated at the Santa Casa for so-called female problems, abortions, or pregnancies (Karasch 1987: Appendix B). As far as we can judge, they turned elsewhere for help with these problems.

Although Rio had many sources of food, the slave diet was usually lacking in essential nutrients, especially those necessary for pregnant and nursing women, such as dairy products and foods rich in protein and iron. Malnourished slaves were those who had to depend on their owners' rations of manioc meal and bananas or oranges. In some cases owners required slaves to find their own food. If slaves were well fed, it was generally due to their own ability to scavenge, buy, beg, or steal. In the mid-nineteenth century slaves were largely vegetarians. They used wheat bread and coffee or maté, a Brazilian tea, for breakfast and supper. For their main meal of the day some subsisted on orange juice and manioc meal, while others ate manioc meal in combination with one or more staples: beans, corn, or rice with a little dried beef, pork fat, or fish, sometimes made up into a stew or soup.

Seriously lacking in their diets were dairy products, unless they had means of raising goats or buying goats' milk. Despite this deficiency, slave women often nursed their babies along with an owner's child until the age of two or more. Unless a woman received adequate amounts of calcium-rich food during this period, her body was depleted of calcium with serious consequences for her own well-being. Furthermore, the nutritional status of the children was also dependent on her diet, and rickets and a host of nutritional diseases plagued slave children.¹¹ Until they were weaned, babies could survive on their mother's milk, although subject to protein deficiencies, but the critical time for slave children was the period when they were shifted to manioc meal and corn or beans without milk or protein and iron-rich foods. Suffering from severe malnutrition, they turned to eating dirt; many died by the age of three (Weech 1828: 113). The children who survived were often those raised in the households as personal pets of the mistress of the house, who fed them table scraps until the age of five or six (Debret 1954: tomo 1, 137, pl. 7).

On the whole, the care and feeding of slave mothers and their children seem to have been inadequate to meet protein, calcium, and iron requirements, in part because owners tended to allot more foodstuffs to male slaves. These then were the female slaves who suffered from malnutrition and its consequences, including retardation of mind and growth, deformed or rachitic bodies, blindness, nervous disorders, scurvy, chronic diarrhea, anemia, miscarriages, still-born babies, and babies of low birth weights. If these calamities alone were not enough to hinder the growth of the slave population, malnutrition also lowered a slave's resistance to the many diseases that plagued Rio.

The principal cause of hospitalization and death of slave females at the Santa Casa da Misericórdia was tuberculosis, which apparently affected slave women more seriously than other groups in the city (Karasch 1987: Ch. 6). Part of the reason

was the low standard of living, since the severity of tuberculosis depends on socio-economic standards. As Doctor Horner reported, it was not common among the "opulent" of the city but "ordinary" among the "indigent" (Horner 1845: 101). Other reasons included a "tendency for active tuberculosis to develop during puberty, during young adulthood in females," and African girls were introduced to the city as teenagers and in a particularly stressful manner. Furthermore, pregnancy enhances the risk of tuberculosis (Waksman 1966: 7-28; Fox *et al.* 1970: 76-78). Thus, rural girls in the prime age group entered the dark, crowded households of a city filled with immigrants from the tuberculosis-infested cities of Europe and the United States and, not surprisingly, caught the disease.

Other causes of sickness and death were dysentery, small pox, tetanus, typhoid fever, hepatitis, gastro-enteritis, pneumonia, pleurisy, bronchitis, childhood diseases such as measles, scarlet fever, and whooping cough, and many unknown fevers. The known fevers such as malaria and yellow fever had a major impact on the health of the slave population. In the case of malaria, slave women without the sickle cell trait suffered from the usual complications that accompany the disease: spontaneous abortions, difficult pregnancies, and deaths during childbirth. Moreover, malaria can be deadly to children, and slave children who were also malnourished were more likely to die in an attack of the fever. Children who inherited the sickle cell trait had some resistance to malaria but were exposed to the debilitation of sickle cell anemia. After 1850 yellow fever and cholera killed many slaves, including women and children, in repeated epidemics.

Perhaps the most feared diseases that attacked slaves were "ophthalmia," a contagious eye disease of the slave trade that blinded them, elephantiasis that disfigured them, and leprosy that led to their isolation in the Lazarus Hospital. The venereal diseases contracted from the transient male population of a port city also played havoc with the health of many slave women. While many Africans who had yaws may have had some resistance to syphilis, which was then endemic in the city, they had no protection against gonorrhea, which seriously affects fertility in women, or other venereal diseases.

Other common health problems included worms, intestinal parasites, and especially hookworm. The extreme weakness and lassitude that owners attributed to laziness were often due to some form of parasite. During the rainy season, colds, influenza, and bronchitis further weakened slaves and often led to deaths due to pneumonia. Other slaves suffered from diarrhea, headaches, nervousness, and skin rashes. The list of debilitating, deadly diseases or their symptoms is interminable.

What killed slave women and affected their child-bearing abilities were the diseases of western urban civilization, i.e., tuberculosis, pneumonia, and measles in combination with

such tropical maladies as malaria, yellow fever (after 1849), yaws, filariasis, and dysentery. While most contagious diseases were beyond the medical control of that period, owners might have helped their slave women survive if only they had not neglected their clothing, food, and shelter (Karasch 1987: Ch. 6).

In brief, the typical Anastácia witnessed the nightly discipline of her companions or suffered a whipping herself. Afterwards, she slept on a mat on the ground floor of her owner's house. Her scanty clothing was no protection against insect bites, and her feet and legs were swollen and ulcerated. She was often hungry and compulsively ate dirt. Her baby was bow-legged and subject to frequent diarrhea, while Anastácia herself suffered from the racking coughs of tuberculosis.

Functions and Status

Slave women in Rio performed a variety of functions, many of which were peculiar to an urban setting or which were more common in towns than in the countryside. To some extent, these functions were similar to those that women performed in Africa, and to that extent, African-born women had fewer adjustments to slavery than their male counterparts. Women predominated in household service and street vending. They performed sexual services and were closely linked with child-rearing. They also did much of the small-scale gardening in or near Rio. Some were engaged in skilled occupations, although not to the same extent as men, and a few even worked in factories.

The most common employment for women in Rio was in the household. If a woman belonged to a single man, she often had the sole responsibility for the care of the house, or she supervised the other slaves as a housekeeper. However, if she were one of fifty or sixty household slaves in a wealthy mansion, she more likely had a specialized task. In a large household, the elite among the slave women were the elegantly dressed mucamas or personal maids of the "first" wife and her daughters. They were usually pardas who were related to the family, or at least crias who had been raised in the household. Mucamas also served as housekeepers or supervisors of the other household slaves, and they were among those selected to nurse and rear their owner's children. If a master did not have a wet nurse among his slaves when his child was born, then he rented one through personal contacts, newspaper ads, or agencies.¹²

Besides mucamas, housekeepers, and nurses, other household slaves were cooks, buyers, seamstresses, laundrywomen, starchers, ironers, maids, and kitchen workers. Although most porters were male slaves, female slaves were used to carry water and refuse. Since most households depended on sources of

water outside the home, slave women made daily trips to wells, fountains, and rivers for fresh water (Vaux 1807: 218-219). After contesting for a place in a crowded line at the water fountains, they balanced water jars on their heads and walked barefooted through the streets of the city. In the evening some had to tote the household's garbage, night soil, and trash on their heads to dump on the beaches. In the absence of male slaves they would even be used as beasts of burden to carry a household's luggage, when the lady of the house went to visit her relatives in the country (Debret 1954: tomo 2, pl. 7).

Household slaves of light color also served as retainers who attended the person of their owners and paraded in Indian-style processions with them in the streets of the city. The French artist Debret has illustrated this picture: the male head of the family, followed by his children placed in order by age, the youngest first, then his pregnant wife, her maid, a parda slave, a black nurse, the personal slave of the nurse, the black servant of the master, a young apprentice slave, and finally the newly purchased African boy (Debret 1954: tomo 1, 126-127, pl. 5). As a German traveler noted, "a white slave" would never give her place to a mulatto, nor a mulatto give hers to a cabra. After the cabra came the creole and finally the African (Weech 1831: vol. 2, 15). Female slaves in Rio, therefore, often enjoyed a higher social status than male slaves, a pattern that was contrary to the values of African men.

Other than household service, street vending was the most common occupation for slave women. While many slave women sold their goods on a full-time basis, others did so only after they completed their household responsibilities. Women sold clothing, drygoods, herbs and potions, saints' images, flowers and jewelry, fresh produce, fruit drinks, and pastries and sweets. Slave women who prospered from the street trade then set up open-air restaurants in which they vended stews, fried fish, barbecued beef, and roasted corn. Others established market stalls or grocery stores, where they sold chickens, fruit, and vegetables. Many of the marketwomen were free or freedwomen. In 1834, for example, 201 free black and thirty-three parda women were street venders and market women. In contrast only fifteen white women worked at these occupations (Karasch 1987: Table 3.8).

Another street "trade" that slave women pursued on a part- or full-time basis was prostitution. Travelers often reported that black women, who were street venders or household slaves during the day, used the night to earn extra money for themselves. While some slave women voluntarily engaged in prostitution, others belonged to owners who forced them into the business by sending them into the streets on a black-for-hire basis.¹³ Unless they earned the money required, they were brutally punished. In 1845, almost all prostitutes in Rio were

slave women, although some freedwomen were too (Cunha 1845: 17-23, 32, 60).

One reason that there was such a demand for slave prostitutes was that males outnumbered females in the city. In 1849 there were 120,730 males to 85,176 females (Karasch 1987: Table 3.6). The shortage of free women thus led men to seek out the slave women of the city, in some cases to exploit them as casual sexual partners, concubines, and mistresses, but in others to form stable consensual unions and in rare cases to marry them in the Catholic Church. In other words, women served the function of providing "families," if only temporarily, for the men in the city, who bought them for companionship and household services.

The uneven sex ratio, the search for female companionship, and the incorporative or familial function are crucial in explaining the status, social mobility, and even opportunities for manumission of slave women in Rio. Unlike other slave societies in which black women were able to form families that lived apart from their owners, a slave woman in Rio was liable to be incorporated into her owner's family and her children by her master recognized as his children. Therefore, a slave woman and her children often lived in a polygynous unit, although neither the Catholic Church nor the government openly recognized her master's other "wives." Prosperous African freedmen who owned slave women had more than one wife too, while some Muslim men had as many as four wives as late as 1906 (Rio 1906: 6). While the Africans and many Brazilian masters openly maintained their black women and black or mulatto children as slaves in their households, others established separate housing for these families, often to protect them from a jealous white wife (Mulvey 1983: 5). Sometimes, however, white women openly acknowledged their husband's second family by signing documents that recognized his children by a slave as legitimate heirs.¹⁴

The skilled occupations largely excluded slave women. In general, the tasks of slave women within the skilled and unskilled manual occupations were limited to healing, nursing, midwifery; dressmaking and crafting items of adornment for women; portage of water and foodstuffs; and collection and processing of foodstuffs. They were not found in highly skilled crafts, such as gold working or iron making, or in those occupations that earned high salaries. Most skilled crafts, except dressmaking, were restricted to men, or had been defined as women's work, such as manioc processing.

At least seven free black and twenty-two parda women were engaged in the mechanical trades in 1834 (Karasch 1987: Table 3.8). Before imported cloth destroyed textile production in the early nineteenth century, slave women also wove cloth, and some continued to produce a cheap cotton cloth used by slaves. As seamstresses they made fine, French-style dresses

and sometimes acquired enough money to earn their freedom. Slave women from the northeastern provinces made lace, while others confected artificial flowers and jewelry from insects.

The only skilled occupation in which women were dominant was the medical specialty of midwifery. Often blending African religious rituals with practical assistance in childbirth, they were the principal source of medical care for women in childbirth, both slave and free. They also nursed the sick and cured diseases. While people of all social groups turned to them in time of sickness, some black nurses apparently specialized in slaves. In 1821, for example, a master advertised a Mina woman as a nurse skilled in the treatment of slaves.¹⁵

Some women were also employed in the factories of Rio. A few worked in the small establishments that made cigars or that processed food and raw materials, although men predominated in these firms. In the relatively large government-owned factories, however, there were more women. The Imperial Gunpowder Factory and the Ironworks of Ipanema each had more than one-hundred slaves, including women and children. Three-fourths of the slaves from Piauí sent to work at the Gunpowder Factory were female, and the rest were children. There were only eight men above the age of fifteen (Karasch 1987: Tables 7.1, 7.2). The women probably raised foodstuffs on the plantation that was attached to the factory, while the men actually made the gunpowder.

It is clear, therefore, that women performed a variety of functions. Debret's illustration of a street procession accurately conveys what a majority of women were doing. The typical slave woman such as Anastácia walked far behind the elegant parda servants when she followed her owner to Mass. Too often she was left behind to do household chores. Sunday work often followed her six-day week that began at 5:30, and, if she engaged in part-time vending, lasted until well after six. A constant cycle of work was the lot of the average slave woman, as opposed to that of the high-status mucamas eulogized by foreign travelers.

Resistance and Autonomy

The iron collar and iron mask in the portrait of Anastácia reveal the suffering of women, but such punishment was meted out because slave women resisted their bondage, probably no less than male slaves but still to such a degree that Freyre's image of Brazilian slavery simply does not stand up to the facts. Anastácia may have had to endure her torture because she had run away, resisted her master, or otherwise demonstrated her open hostility to her condition.

It is, of course, difficult to determine what slave women actually thought about their treatment and status as slaves.

We can only judge by their behavior and actions; not by what they wrote or said.¹⁶ Police records and newspaper advertisements document the fact that many slave women did not passively accept their lot. Newly imported Africans ran away, joined settlements of fugitive slaves, or committed suicide. Others murdered their owners, stole their property, and knifed lovers who left them. Still others turned to religious leaders to master poisons and to manipulate the spirit world against their owners. In these actions, they were often as troublesome as male slaves, and they too were incorrigible, rebellious, disobedient, disrespectful, and insulting.

Only 10-15 percent of the captured fugitives between 1826 and 1837 were females. Nonetheless, women and girls appear to have been more successful in avoiding recapture than males. Newspaper advertisements had a higher percentage of female slaves advertised as missing (26 percent in one sample), which may indicate that slave women found protectors who hid them from the slave patrols. Of all those captured, 74-84 percent were of African birth (Karasch 1987: Tables 10.1, 10.2, 10.3).

Slave women did not merely seek refuge with men within the city. Some joined quilombos, camps of escaped slaves who lived by raiding, subsistence activities, and trade in the mountains about Rio. Of forty-two quilombolas captured by police in various quilombos, nearly 30 per cent were female. But despite terrible living conditions in these settlements, they were preferable to a life in slavery. Food was often scarce, and there was always the threat of police action. When the police raided quilombos, they usually captured women and children, destroyed their homes and crops, and returned them to slavery. To avoid such a fate an old woman at a quilombo in Marcia jumped to her death from a mountain when soldiers destroyed her camp in 1832 (Darwin 1839: 18).

Fugitive slaves, including women, were often recaptured. A slave patrol soon found Eugenie, for example, and she was punished severely the next day (Gendrin 1856: 91). For repeated escapes, women as well as men were sent to the slave prison and given two hundred lashes. Habitual fugitives were sold outside the city or were forced to wear an iron collar, ornamented with an iron trident or a bell. An iron chain that reached to an ankle iron or a heavy block of wood, which had to be toted on the head, was a further impediment to flight for such slaves.

Foiled escapes and fear of punishment led some slave women to commit suicide. The traveler Walsh witnessed the rescue of a fugitive Mina woman who had thrown herself into the sea as she was being returned by a slave patrol (Walsh 1830: vol. 2, 345-347). Overwork in combination with frequent punishments also led to suicide. In 1836 an eleven-year-old child Roza, who was the only servant of a household and who was punished when she could not do all the work, tried to kill herself.

Another reason for suicide was broken love affairs. Isabel, a parda woman and a mucama, was discovered having an affair with a Portuguese worker. Although her master punished her for letting him into his house, she continued to meet her lover until her master caught the man leaving the house once again. While he pursued the man, Isabel fled and drowned herself. Finally, some mothers killed themselves and their children for unknown reasons. In one tragic case, the slave woman survived the suicide attempt but her children died.¹⁷

There were, by contrast, some exceptional slave women who not only earned their manumissions but took out passports and returned to Africa. While many were part of family groups who bought passage on British ships after the abolition of the slave trade in 1850, some went on their own. In 1832, for example, a Benguela freedwoman obtained a passport for herself and her three slave women to return to Benguela. One woman even attempted to seize a boat with eight other blacks and sail back to Africa. They were stopped, however, by a British ship about fifty miles from the coast.¹⁸

On the whole, women were less violent than male slaves, but they too attacked their owners. They participated in plantation rebellions near Rio, although there is no evidence of their involvement in conspiracies in Rio. Few women were imprisoned for the murder of their masters. Of eleven slaves so accused between 1808-1815, only one was a woman (Karasch 1987: Table 10.6). Slave women were notorious for secret, undetected murders, especially of lovers who deserted them, because of their special knowledge of vegetable poisons. Since women were the ones who gathered wild herbs and plants in the hills about Rio, they knew which plants were poisonous and which were not. They also had access to arsenic and to narcotics, which they used to make their owners "gentler" (Sigaud 1844: 138-140; Imbert 1839: vol. 2, 240). Whenever a slave-owner died of an unknown cause, the police routinely imprisoned the household slaves and checked for poison.

The most common crime that slave women committed was theft, but they were also arrested for disorderly conduct and insults to their owners or other whites. Dancing at night was also considered a crime. While slave women were usually not arrested for prostitution, freedwomen were picked up for running brothels in which disturbances, especially among slaves, occurred.

Arrested slave women were sent to the Calabouço, a dark, damp cavern in Castelo mountain; or to a room set aside in the Aljube, which a prison commission described as far worse than the area set aside for male criminals; or, after 1835, to the House of Correction, a new prison for fugitives. In general, female slave criminals were usually confined in the same prison as men but in separate rooms. In some cases they were expected to cook for the male prisoners.

Another punishment meted out to slave women was for excessive drinking or smoking of marconha, known as pango or diamba, a type of marijuana. In nineteenth-century Rio, aguardente or cachaça distilled from sugar cane was drunk by both men and women as a part of their daily meals or in religious rituals. Some drank to excess. Owners then used iron masks to prevent them from drinking or sent these slaves to a clinic that specialized in treating alcoholics.

The alcoholics, thieves, murderers, suicides, quilombolas, and ordinary fugitives illustrate patterns of resistance pursued by women - as well as by men - but they also highlight the individual tragedies of women whose lives were ruined by cachaça, or who were punished so severely that they were driven to suicide. Yet brutal mistreatment and resistance do not form the only picture of enslavement in Rio. In spite of the difficulties of their basic conditions of life, slave women were able to build new lives for themselves and their children in the city of Rio.

The Cultural Life of Slave Women

Slave women assumed a strong position in the maintenance and transmission of African cultural and religious traditions. As a result of their efforts, styles of dress, cuisine, religious expression, and kinship associations developed a unique Brazilian character. The blending of different heritages was a long process but one which ultimately resulted in an elegant Afro-Brazilian style of life. Women were especially critical to this process because they moved between the separate spheres of household and street.¹⁹ They were the cultural brokers between the world of their masters, who, of course, dominated the households, and the world of the streets, where slave men tended to be concentrated.

Other African women preserved what slaves remembered about their African traditions. In the colonial period women played "an important role in the organization of festivals." Mulvey (1983: 14) reports that some positions on the governing boards of colonial confraternities were "customarily reserved for women of African descent. They usually held the position of judge (juiza), queen (rainha), procurator (procuradora), and stewardess (mordoma)."

Although the status of women in nineteenth-century brotherhoods is unclear, queens still reigned and women danced and performed in the theatrical dramas staged by the religious brotherhoods. Women, however, were not members of the capoeira brotherhoods (maltas), since the capoeira was a dance-fight restricted to men and the maltas exercised paramilitary functions in protecting slaves in nineteenth-century Rio (Karasch 1987: Ch. 8, n. 93 and Ch. 9, n. 126).

Clothing was also a feature of culture that was an important vehicle of self-expression. Therefore, some slave women dressed elaborately with gold and silver jewelry - status items of great value that contradicted their social condition. Although wealthy owners clothed their domestic slaves with elegance, others had to earn, make, or steal their small wardrobes. The pictorial record of the diversity of clothing used by slave women is unusually rich for Rio (Coaracy 1965: vol. 3, 331; Vaux 1819: vol. 1, 219-220; Debret 1954: tomo 1, 184-186, pl. 22 and 2, pls. 15-16; Desmons 1963; Ferrez and Naef 1976: 25; Toussaint-Samson, 1891: frontispiece). In the late colonial period many slave women wore blue gowns and black shawls, but after the arrival of the Portuguese court in 1808, slave women copied the French style of dress. In portraits by Debret, most of the women wore classic high-waisted dresses, but combined them with African turbans, striped shawls, or African hairstyles, and they imitated the coiffures of their mistresses. Other slave women dressed in white except for elegant turbans and striped cloths used to tie their babies on their backs.

Debret's portraits also clarify one of the ways in which Brazilian-born slave women distinguished themselves from African-born women; they wore the mantilla or long veil. In the early nineteenth-century, the mantilla, combined with long black dresses, was used by elite women and their Brazilian slaves, but by 1825 only old white women and Brazilian slave women continued to wear it. Fashionable women, Africans included, had abandoned this colonial fashion.

When styles changed again to the wide skirts and narrow waists of the 1860s, household slaves adopted that fashion. While poor slaves only dropped the waists and expanded and lengthened the skirts of their simple dresses, the slaves of the wealthy rivaled plantation mistresses in elegance. Many African women, however, continued to dress in a fashion similar to the pre-1830s style. Photographs from 1865 show black women wearing wide full skirts that reached the floor, along with turbans and draped shawls.

In their habits, many slave women followed African customs. While they rarely used hats, except for straw sun hats, they smoked long-stemmed pipes and carried small purses. Those who maintained African hairstyles added beads, combs, flowers, rue, ribbons, and scarves. They also wore earrings of all sizes and styles. Their many collars of beads bore crosses and amulets, while their wrists and ankles were decorated with bracelets and anklets of gold, silver, or copper. Rings of tiny amulets covered their fingers, while more jewelry hung from their belts (Karasch 1987: Ch. 8). The artistry with which they decorated their persons in both Luso-Brazilian and African styles has withstood the passage of time and is still

preserved within the religious dress of women mediums in Umbanda and Candomblé.

One of the special responsibilities of women was the collection and preparation of foodstuffs. The master chefs of nineteenth-century Rio were black women, and they combined European, Luso-Brazilian, and African culinary styles (Brantly 1984). From the European tradition, women worked with wheat flour to confection pastries and breads; they also made Portuguese soups and codfish dishes. From the Brazilian, they prepared manioc meal, cooked into a thick paste as pirão or roasted as farofa, and corn meal mush (angú de fuba), black beans in an early version of the black bean stew, feijoada, and tropical fruit drinks. But the African dishes and ingredients were central to their cuisines. As in Africa, they cooked lavishly with hot peppers and palm oil (dendê oil) and added peanuts, coconut milk, dried shrimp, ginger, pumpkin, and okra. One of their most famous dishes was the moqueca (muqueca in Angola), which was and still is a ragout of fish, shellfish, or shrimp cooked with dendê oil, hot peppers, and tomatoes. Black cooks were so successful in creating dishes that appealed to their owners that African-influenced culinary traditions are now savored by all classes in Rio, and the old slave dish, the feijoada, appears on the tables of fine restaurants as the "national dish" of Brazil.

For recreation slave women stole moments for music and dance, which were either social or religious in nature. While male slaves played the musical instruments, women accompanied them with hand-clapping and songs or strident loud cries. When they met together on street corners, they joined in the laments for their "native land" and complained about slavery. As they walked through the streets, they sang or musically called out their wares for sale. In small groups they danced to the sound of their own voices and hand-claps. Social dances in which women participated included the lundu in which a man and a woman danced toward each other and bumped their stomachs together; the batuque, an ancestor of the samba in which men and women clapped their hands, shouted a chorus, and danced to drums; and old Luso-Brazilian dances, such as the modinha.

On ceremonial occasions women were especially important in coronation rituals and funerals. As part of the ceremonies in honor of the black wise man, Balthasar, on 6 January, a queen wearing a scarlet mantle decorated with stars was crowned along with a king in the church of Nossa Senhora da Lampadosa. After the religious ceremony, the two presided over popular dances in the squares (Mello Moraes Filho 1967: 399). On the more solemn occasions of the death of one of their fellow slave women, the women of the deceased's ethnic group or nation organized and paid for her funeral. According to Debret, the funeral cortege of a black woman was made up solely of women, who stood on either side of the hammock that carried the body. Other women

watched the procession or stood clapping their hands. They sang songs that lamented slavery or that praised the dead woman (Debret 1954: tomo 2, 184-185, pl. 16).

If the woman was buried as a Catholic, then a Catholic priest performed the funeral Mass and burial rites, but outside the Catholic tradition, women were often the religious leaders in the city. In general, these old black women had an evil reputation among the slaveowners, who regarded them as "sorceresses" who prepared narcotics and poisons and taught slaves how to use them. They were also famous for making the obi charm, a large ram's horn with a painted red tip that warded off the "evil eye." Among the most popular with slaves - and acceptable to the owners - were the skilled healers. One such healer was a "colored 'wise woman,'" who "raised a smoke of dried herbs, muttered over the wound [on a boy's leg], made motions as if stitching its lips up, put on a cataplasm of herbs, sent him home, and in a week he was well." Another slave with a diseased foot visited a "dark sorceress, who talked to it, made signs over it, rubbed it with oil, covered it with a plaster," and in a few days he too was well (Ewbank, 1971: 247-249; MacDouall 1833: 316).

While such scattered references establish that some women followed African healing traditions, others converted to Catholicism. By the 1840s female slaves were more likely to convert than male slaves, as revealed in higher rates of baptism (Karasch 1987: Table 4.8). One reason for conversion was that so many were imported as impressionable young girls below the age of puberty. Once introduced into the households of Rio, they came under the influence of pious elderly women, both free and enslaved. Moreover, they were the ones who had to accompany their mistresses to Mass, observe feast days, say morning and evening prayers, and follow the religious rituals of Catholics in Rio. Foreign travelers were often impressed with the great devotion slave women exhibited in the churches, and they were even permitted to receive such sacraments as the Eucharist (Debret 1954: tomo 2, pl. 31). The greater integration of slave women into the religion of their owners was one more way in which the lives of male and female slaves differed, i.e., the women tended to convert; the men did not.

Assimilation in matters of religion also may have made it easier for women to marry and integrate themselves into the wider society, but few slave women had their marriages sanctified through ceremonies in the Catholic Church. Between 1835-1852, on average only 37 slave women married each year in the Catholic Church. Although the slave population steadily increased until 1849, the number of slave marriages declined in the 1840s (Karasch 1987: Table 9.2). Since slave women rarely married in the Church, those who maintained stable unions and had children were not regarded as respectable women or their children as legitimate. In part, this is what led freedpersons

to seek Church weddings. Records from one parish establish that while slaves rarely married officially in churches, freedpersons did, whether to another freedperson or to a slave (Karasch 1987: Table 9.4). Freedpersons of similar national origin and color sought to legitimize their consensual unions after one or both had escaped the power of their owners. Church marriages in turn contributed to motivations for securing manumission - only with freedom could a woman make a "respectable" union.

Since slaveowners frequently discouraged official marriages, slave women often created ritual families for "fatherless" children through the godparent system. When a baby was baptized, the mother chose a godmother and godfather from among her owners, important people in the city, freedpersons, other household slaves, or friends who were supposed to assume the duties of the physical and spiritual care of the child in the event of her death. One of the customary obligations of godparents was to secure the manumission of a godchild; for this reason, only a few slaveowners agreed to serve as godparents (Rugendas 1967: 135). Nonetheless, manumission records establish that godparents sometimes bought the freedom of children. Hence, in a limited number of cases godparents provided an effective substitute for kinship.

In brief, the typical slave woman, perhaps the Anastácia of the Rosário shrine, arrived from Africa, alone and homesick. The seasoning process during which she was exposed to a new language, religion and customs was accompanied by severe discipline. Efforts to escape were sometimes successful, but more likely than not she was seized by a slave patrol, whether or not she reached a quilombo, and the subsequent punishment was even worse than what she had known before. Iron masks and collars and other instruments of torture taught her to restrain her resistance, although sabotage and acts of violence were still possible, if and when the frustrations of bondage became too great. Usually, however, she became a "troublesome" slave in her master's eyes because she could not be fully controlled. She customarily slipped out at night to dance with others of her nation on the beach and to meet young men. Whether her master approved or not, she might have established a relationship with a male slave. Her owner, however, would have welcomed an ensuing pregnancy, because she could be rented out as a wet nurse. Whether Anastácia was born in Africa or Brazil, she would seek Catholic godparents for her child, since this custom offered the possibility of eventual manumission or at least of assistance in times of hardship. The Anastácias of Rio had had to learn to adjust in order to evade the iron mask.

Manumission

The position and status of slave women in Rio help to explain why almost two-thirds of a sample of 1,319 manumissions between 1807-1831 involved female slaves (Karasch 1987: Tables 11.5, 11.7, 11.8, 11.9). Moreover, almost half of the urban females freed had been born in Africa. Although this sample is from one registry for the years 1807-1831, the census of 1849 also confirms the tendency to manumit females rather than males. In that year there were 6,042 freedwomen and 4,690 freedmen living in the city, that is 56 percent were females, even though male slaves outnumbered female slaves by a ratio of three to two (Karasch 1987: Table 3.6). In other samples from Salvador, Bahia, the same pattern emerges. Schwartz (1974: 611) notes a constant 2:1 ratio of female to male libertos in Bahia, while other data confirm this pattern (Kiernan 1976: 86). In Paraty, for example, 65.5 percent of libertos were female. There are a number of reasons why female slaves were more successful in securing their freedom than male slaves (Karasch 1975b; 1987: Ch. 11). First, female slaves, especially older women, generally cost less than male slaves. Second, male slaves sometimes chose to liberate their wives first, either to ensure that their children would be born free or because their owner refused them permission to buy themselves.²⁰ Third, some women received their freedom because they were household slaves. Mistresses who had spent their entire lives in the company of female slaves, often freed them for reasons of affection. In fact, almost half of the urban owners who freed their slaves were women. Finally, household slaves were freed because they lived in consensual unions with their owners, freedmen, or immigrants. When foreign men returned to Europe, they often freed their slave mistresses.²¹

Women did not have to rely completely on men to buy their freedom, since they were able to earn money on their own as street vendors, market women, and prostitutes. Because African women were especially prominent in the retail trades, some could amass enough capital to buy their freedom. African patterns of economic behavior may also explain the discrepancy in numbers between Brazilian-born and African-born freedwomen. African-born slave women had undergone the trauma of the slave ship and the process of adaptation to a foreign culture. As an immigrant, an African did not follow a Brazilian path to freedom, which was to offer long years of obedient service in a household. Instead, the African went out into the streets and the markets to earn enough money to buy herself.

The maintenance of African cultural patterns may also partially explain the African woman's greater success in being freed than the African man's. In Africa most women did domestic chores, worked in the gardens, raised children, and marketed vegetables and fruits - all skills that were easily

transferred to Rio and made profitable. When men were forced to do such "women's work" in Rio, they rebelled, and male slaves had more difficulty in adapting to slavery in a city like Rio,²² which in turn is reflected in fewer male manumissions, because only "good slaves" were permitted to buy their freedom. Moreover, many disaffected male slaves preferred to "liberate" themselves by running away. They found their freedom in the forests, while the more dependent women had to seek it in the city.

Since industrious women were sometimes able to save money for self-purchase, they did the same for their children. In fact, petitions and letters of liberty reveal that many slave mothers labored to free their children first, often continuing enslaved themselves. Although the literature on manumission mythologizes the purchase of children by white male father-owners, many children, even mulattoes, were actually freed by their black mothers, who bought them with their hard-earned savings or earned their freedom by obedient service. Owners who freed children often noted that they did so because of the good services of the child's mother (Karasch 1987: Ch. 11).

The typical slave freed during the period was a black female, and she obtained her freedom because she paid her owner some form of compensation in service or cash. Unless she had a familial or godchild relationship with her owner, she did not receive her freedom gratuitously. The typical Anastácia never won her freedom, however, for she was unable to save enough money to buy herself, and her owner did not wish to free her.

Conclusion

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Anastácias of the city hardly enjoyed "benevolent" treatment from "kindly" masters or escaped maltreatment simply because they were female. They endured the same nightmare journey to Rio as male slaves, although at younger ages. The hardship, deprivation, and near-starvation they endured as girls or at the age of puberty must have had a severe impact on their future health and child-bearing abilities. If well-fed after arrival in Rio, they might have regained their health, but diets of manioc meal, beans, and corn were wholly inadequate, especially during pregnancy and nursing, and their health rapidly deteriorated. In particular, tuberculosis preyed on slave women, and they had the highest morbidity rate from that disease in the city (Karasch 1987: Table 6.4).

While some slave women escaped these hardships as the elegantly dressed servants of the rich, the majority worked long hours in service and sales occupations. Other slave women, however, never followed the path of assimilation into Cariocan society nor proffered "good services." They ran away,

joined male slaves in quilombos, and lived the dangerous but free life of the fugitive slave. Still others committed suicide, murdered their owners, or stole their property. Such women testified to their unhappiness as slaves through actions if not in actual words. A fortunate few even won their freedom and returned to Africa with husbands and children.

Their actions, as well as their treatment, call into question previous generalizations on the "mildness" of Brazilian slavery and support a growing body of literature that challenges the Freyre thesis on the good treatment allotted slave women and slaves in general. Even in the capital of the Empire of Brazil, where the best medical care existed, slave females died at early ages, and they did not bear enough children to sustain the city's slave population through natural reproduction. Even after centuries of the African slave trade, the city of Rio relied on imported slaves to sustain the slave population. Predictably, once the slave trade was abolished in 1850 the slave population declined steadily until abolition in 1888.

In the period before 1850 the typical Anastácia would have been an unmarried mother, who succeeded in raising only one child after suffering miscarriages and losing infants to early deaths. Living in consensual unions at various times during her short life, she would have had little choice concerning her sexual partners and would not have enjoyed a stable family life as a respected wife and mother. She would not have lived to reach menopause nor see her grandchildren. She would have died by the age of thirty (Karasch 1987: Table 4.4).

NOTES

1. The shrine to Anastácia was located in the Museu do Negro in the church of Nossa Senhora do Rosário and São Benedito, Rua Uruguaiana, in 1978. A picture used for her is in Arago 1839: vol. 1, 76. I have not been able to verify if Anastácia actually lived.
2. The documentary and data base on which this chapter is derived is my Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro, 1808-1850 (Princeton, 1987). Since my conclusions and descriptions of social patterns that affected women are drawn on an extensive body of documentation, only specific quotations or statistical material will be cited here.
3. See Freyre 1963 and 1966. For critiques of Freyre, see Conrad 1983 and Karasch 1974. Conrad's bibliography (1977) indicates some sources on slave women but also illustrates how little research has been done on them in Brazil.

4. The 1849 census (Karasch 1987: Table 3.6) illustrates that the slaves of Rio included 13,411 Brazilian females (of a total of 26,514 Brazilians) and 17,979 foreign females of a total of 52,341. The total female slave population was 31,390 in a total slave population of 78,855.
5. In the nineteenth century parda was the more acceptable term for a mulatto woman, while mulata was often used by masters in a pejorative sense. To call a parda a mulata was to insult her. Cabra was used for both male and female slaves and described those who were racially mixed, who were neither black nor pardo.
6. Census of 1838 (Karasch 1987: Table 3.5). There were 14,945 slave females of a total of 37,137 slaves. See n. 4 above for 1849.
7. Instruments of torture such as iron collars and leg irons are on exhibit at the Museu do Negro in Rio and a palmatória is at the Museu d'Açucar in Recife, Pernambuco. For illustrations see Rugendas 1967: pl. 4/10; Debret 1954: tomo 1, pls. 6, 29; and Goulart 1971.
8. Arquivo Nacional, Manuscript Section, IJ6 191, Secretaria de Polícia da Côrte, Ofícios com anexos (hereafter Polícia). Also see Karasch 1987: Table 5.1.
9. Augustus Earle (Winz, 1962: 71) painted a picture of the whipping of a slave at the slave prison that includes a black woman who holds a whip in her hand. Did she whip the female slaves, as the picture seems to suggest? Ebel (1972: 97) reported that "almost all these inhumanities here practiced against the black" come from women, who treated their slaves with greater harshness than men. One woman killed her slave woman by cooking her mouth. AN, IJ6 169, Polícia, 1834.
10. Floor plans for small and large houses that illustrate slaves' quarters: Debret 1954: tomo 2, pls. 42-43, and 1, pl. 34. The woven mats slaves slept on are depicted in Rugendas, 1967: pl. 4/5.
11. Toussaint-Samson (1891: 40), reported that "many" black children became "bow-legged."
12. A selection of translated want ads for wet nurses is in Conrad 1983: 133-134. He also includes Dr. Imbert's instructions on how to choose a black wet nurse (pp. 135-136) and excerpts from a debate on the relationship between diseased black wet nurses and high child mortality in Rio (pp. 137-139). Dr. Horner (1845: 263) also reported on the "dubious fact" that the "bad" milk used in their tea was "procured from certain negro women kept penned up and fed for the purpose."
13. Harro Harring 1965: n.p. includes a drawing of a woman selecting young slave women at the slave market for prostitution. As late as 1871, the Chief of Police reported that he had liberated 186 slave women "cast into

- prostitution." He also argued that any slave women forced into prostitution should be freed. See Conrad 1983: 129-132.
14. The adoption of slave children and declaration of them as legitimate heirs of their owners appear in the notarial registries. See for example the adoption of Maria parda, Arquivo Nacional, Seção Legislativa e Judiciária, Cartório do Primeiro Ofício de Notas, Escrituras, Livro 210, 21 Apr. 1814, fols. 57-58.
 15. O Diário do Rio de Janeiro 2, no. 7 (9 Nov. 1821): 52.
 16. Types of sources at the Arquivo Nacional for slave women in which they expressed themselves in legal language through a scribe include petitions, inquiries, complaints, etc. See for example, IJ1 94, Côrte, Registro de avisos, a maioria relativos a requerimentos e representações; and IJ3 23, Chancelaria, Ofícios com anexos de Petições ao Imperador. The few extant slave narratives for Rio are by male slaves.
 17. Roza: AN, IJ6 173, Polícia, 5, 8, 16 Nov. 1836; Izabel: IJ6 214, Polícia, 1850; and Karasch 1987, Ch. 10, n. 45.
 18. Karasch 1987: Table 10.5; AN, IJ6 230, Polícia, Passaportes e Relações de Chefe da Polícia, 1832; and Dabadie 1859: 49-50.
 19. A basic cultural distinction in Brazil is between casa (house), the area ruled by women, and rua (street), the domain of men. A common Portuguese saying is, "O homem na praça e a mulher na casa" (The man in the square and the woman in the house) (Mulvey 1983: 6).
 20. Angelica Maria, a parda liberta, won her petition to buy the freedom of her husband, the pardo Venancio. In 1829 another freedwoman Francisca Maria do Nascimento, wife of the elderly pardo slave Izidoro, petitioned for her husband's freedom, but it is uncertain if she won her suit. AN, IJ1 94, Côrte, Registro de avisos, 22 May 1823, fol. 70; and IJ3 23, Chancelaria, Ofícios, 21 Mar. 1829 and 8 Apr. 1829.
 21. Why foreign men sought out black women as sexual partners and "wives" is closely related to the fact that in 1834, for example, there were 5,750 free foreign men but only 977 free foreign women (Karasch 1987: Table 3.4).
 22. Freireyss (1906: 67) notes that women adjusted more easily to slavery and worked "with more taste and less complaints," because they were used to heavy work in Africa, while the men were used to resting after the hunt.

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CHAPTER 5

HEALING AND RACE IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA LOW COUNTRY

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In a world filled with danger and uncertainty, how does one avoid the likelihood of misfortune or when necessary find relief from its afflictions? Before the Age of Enlightenment, Europeans of all social classes sought answers to this question by constructing cosmologies remarkably similar to those in non-Western societies. As Keith Thomas (1971: 51) asserts in his study of systems of belief in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, "the line between magic and religion is one which is impossible to draw in many primitive societies; it is equally difficult to recognize in medieval England" (also see Radding 1979). The rituals of the Church of England were invested with an aura of supernatural power which the faithful believed would help them overcome sickness, escape the ravages of famine, or alleviate other earthly problems. Whether it was the sacrament of the altar, the prayers of the faithful, the Christian symbols, or the worship of saints said to have performed miracles, the Church "appeared as a vast reservoir of magical power, capable of being deployed for a variety of secular purposes" (Thomas 1971: 45). The Church, however, did not own a monopoly on the manipulation of the supernatural, at least not from the laity's point of view. Other belief systems existed and claimed powers equal to or greater than those of the Church. There was no shortage of wizards, necromancers, charmers, conjurers, cunning men, astrologers, prophets, and witches in the cities and in the countryside. Magic and religion often intersected, especially when it came to the problem of disease. Practitioners of magic used the recitation

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of prayers (often in Latin) as part of their repertory of healing techniques and employed Christian charms in their rites. Thus when the Reformation began in England, Protestantism represented a concerted effort to stamp out magic in religion, limit the role of the Church as the dispenser of divine grace, and uphold the view that the individual stood in a direct relationship to God and was solely dependent on God's omnipotence.

In colonial America, the repudiation of magic in religion persisted even among the numerous sects that dissented from the orthodoxy of the Church of England. Euro-Americans associated manipulation of the supernatural with the "devil's work" and placed their faith in Christianity, Western education, and clinical medicine.¹ Afro-Americans, by contrast, understood the world quite differently. Their values were filtered through a belief system inherited from Africa, albeit much disjointed by the circumstances of slavery.

As in the European tradition, concepts of sickness and healing in Africa evolved from religious belief systems. Although the people taken in the trans-Atlantic slave trade were drawn from many distinct societies in west, and to a lesser extent, central Africa, their "world view" was similar in its broad features whether they were Yoruba, Akan, Igbo, or from another ethnic group. Albert J. Raboteau (1978: 7) is correct in emphasizing that "similar modes of perception, shared basic principles, and common patterns of rituals were widespread among different West African religions." For instance, African belief systems seldom recognized discrete categories of "sacred" and "secular." Africans perceived continuity in life forces between the temporal and the spiritual - continuity maintained by the bonds of kinship between ancestors, the living, and the yet unborn. Replete with the potential for good and evil, the spiritual world held powerful influences over the living. Thus the welfare of the individual, his or her kinsmen, and society in general depended on understanding the interlocking complexities of the universe of gods, spirits, and ancestors. Specialists served their communities by explaining the cosmology, defining and directing the appropriate rituals, and determining the cause of misfortune when it occurred. African theories of causation and treatment of illness evolved within this context. Africans believed that sorcery, the actions of spirits, or the malfunctioning of organs in the body could produce illness. Naturally, the appropriate cure required identification of the symptoms with the correct cause.²

Afro-Americans recognized those of their number who had ritual skills, were particularly sensitive to the physical environment, or had esoteric knowledge such as literacy in Arabic. It was from this pool of individuals that came the root doctors (also known as conjurers and hoodoo men and

women), achieving status among their contemporaries for their unusual abilities and power. Root doctors combined practical knowledge of herbal remedies with ritual skills of divination and magic, enabling them to devise therapeutics for a wide variety of illnesses and misfortunes. Euro-Americans flatly rejected their claims to curative power as superstition. Yet root doctors retained high status among Afro-Americans. In fact, geographic and political isolation, the cost of medical care, and the reluctance of physicians to serve Afro-Americans during and after slavery encouraged the practice of home doctoring and the utilization of local herbalists and other "unorthodox" healers. As professionalization of medicine based on scientific methods extended its benefits to most other Americans, black people, particularly those living in rural areas, became even more isolated. By and large, Afro-Americans remained dependent on the root-and-herb tradition for their primary medical therapeutics until well into the twentieth century. It was not superstition that perpetuated the practice but rather the race and socio-economic status of Afro-Americans as well as the underlying influence of their inherited belief system. This situation was particularly evident in the South Carolina low country.

The South Carolina low country, encompassing Charleston and the neighboring coastal sea islands, retained a persistent reputation as an unhealthy region for permanent residence until the twentieth century. "Silent armies" of the microbiological world manifested their presence through endemic diseases and periodic epidemics. The most deadly consequence of European settlement in the Carolina low country for Amerindians proved to be disease. Gene Waddell (1980: 14) estimates that in the first two centuries of contact with Europeans "nearly six of every seven Indians on the Lower Coast died of causes directly related to them." Sea island tribes like the Edisto, Kiawah, Kussoe, and the St. Helena all but vanished by 1743. Native Americans succumbed to the onslaught because "they lacked any immunity to a whole host of diseases due to microorganisms which the Europeans and Africans brought with them and scattered broadside throughout the New World. Susceptibility to sickness meant weakness in war" (Simpson 1980: 42).³ Epidemics also exacted a fearsome toll among Europeans and Africans in the towns and on the plantations of the low country. Until medical science provided protection from contagious diseases, sea islanders, black and white, shared a fundamental helplessness in the face of cholera, yellow fever, and other dreaded scourges (Duffy 1953).⁴

On the sea islands, isolated from most medical practitioners, the prevalence of disease influenced antebellum plantation life. Planters and their families learned through painful experience to avoid staying on their plantations during the summer months, acknowledged as the "sickly season" for whites.

The wealthy had several options. They could retire to "the salts," the various coastal towns acclaimed for the ameliorative quality of the salt-water breezes. If there was no sign of yellow fever, they could elect to spend time living in Charleston partaking of the social amenities there. Sometimes entire families would make annual pilgrimages to northern resorts like those in Newport, Rhode Island, or visit relatives and friends elsewhere in the North. In any case, the planter class migrants seldom returned to their estates until after the first frost (Brewster 1947). Less prosperous individuals and families sought temporary haven in Beaufort or in other hamlets like Eddingsville, Grahamville, and St. Helenaville, which had a reputation for being relatively salubrious during the steamy months of summer. But despite these measures, the planters could not escape the problem disease posed for their slaves or for themselves in residence in the low country.

Thomas Chaplin, a middling planter on St. Helena Island, fought an ongoing battle against sickness that constantly threatened to bring tragedy to his family and slaves. His private journal bears melancholy testament to the struggle and its frustrations. When he or a member of his family became ill, Chaplin immediately sent for a doctor from Beaufort, but when a slave complained of a malady, he wondered whether the person was feigning illness to avoid work. Such was his thinking when one of his slaves tried to stay in from the fields one morning. "Helen had an idea of laying up today, but I saw that nothing much was the matter, and made her go out to work. I am determined to look more closely into their complaints and not allow any one to shirk from their work and sham sickness." Three months later Chaplin again was suspicious of Helen's complaints. "Helen reported to be speechless this morning. I went to see her. Am inclined to believe there is some pretence about her not being able to speak. She recovered her speech and senses remarkably quick and was able to get in and out of bed herself after I had been to the trouble of sending for a doctor."⁵ At times Chaplin's scepticism worked against his interests, as when another slave became seriously ill and no one informed him how grave the situation had become until it was too late. His frustration and underlying guilt is clear from his journal entry, but his remarks illustrate as well the inherent ambivalence of his position when it came to discerning illness among slaves:

While at supper Amy came in crying - said Summer was worse. When I got to the negro house found him perfectly dead. . . . We were all under the impression that he was getting better and was so reported to us by his mother and old Judy, who was attending him. . . . I was not informed that he had vomited or something might have been done for him. Even at that late hour, I

certainly would have sent for a doctor, but he would have been too late. . . . [My] wife should [have] been informed of it or myself when I returned at night, but these infernal stupids kept saying he was better till an hour before his death. I blame them very much - but it can't be undone now, but ought to have a lesson for the future.⁶

Chaplin was reluctant to bear the cost of sending for a doctor every time slaves complained of ailments and thus usually ministered to them himself or permitted another option that he described in 1846. "Sent for Billy, he came over from the main[land] to bring his sister Nancy to my old man Sancho - to see if he, as a negro doctor can do anything for her. . . . The woman has been sick for 2 years and will not speak to any one." Years later Chaplin commented on Sancho's performance in treating Nancy. "She got well, but not cured by old Sancho, and lived many years, died from 3 or 4 years back."⁷

Thomas Chaplin's doubts of the "negro doctor's" curative skills notwithstanding, the ingredients of Sancho's remedies probably were not too dissimilar from many medical treatments recommended by nineteenth-century physicians. For example, in Henry Wilkins' The Family Advisor (1833) and among the popular "do-it-yourself" manuals relied upon by many southern planters, the treatment of illnesses ranging from bilious fevers to inflammation of the stomach generally included the use of medicines derived from botanical sources. The Family Advisor frequently mentioned Dover's Powder, jalap, ipecacuana, and Powder of Virginia - all root derivatives. Herbal concoctions such as camomile tea and bitter herb poultice also were sanctioned by The Family Advisor as efficacious in the treatment of many human disorders (Wilkins 1833).

Belief in the curative power of nature as illustrated by the remedies found in The Family Advisor had numerous adherents within the medical profession. In a commissioned report to the fledgling American Medical Association in 1849, Dr. Francis P. Porcher of Charleston provided his colleagues with a comprehensive inventory of indigenous South Carolina plants possessing medicinal value - a list totaling 410 species. In many cases he cited Afro-Americans as his authority for the attributes of particular plants. As a remedy for flatulent colic as well as snakebite, Porcher identified Agave Virginica, found in "Wassamasaw, St. John's" [and in the] vic[inity] of Cha'ston" and known by slaves as the Rattlesnake's master. He described Veronica angusifolia as a root "used by the negroes in South Carolina as a remedy for the bite of serpents. It is also considered by them to be aphrodisiac." Porcher also listed Cyperus articulatus, a grasslike plant which "grows on Hilton-Head Island." He noted that in Guinea "this is considered one of their remedies for worms" (Porcher 1849: 790, 833, 850).

Thus it would seem that knowledge of roots and herbs employed by individuals like Sancho diffused outside the slave community, even while masters like Thomas Chaplin remained dubious. In fact, it is not unlikely that the procedures and prescriptions of Sancho and other "negro doctors" were no worse, and possibly superior, to the bleeding, purging, and blistering techniques of early nineteenth-century physicians. In 1878 one medical doctor candidly characterized the early state of the art in healing within his profession. "It is fortunate in that day that we had a hardy, well developed race of men and women, possessing sufficient tenacity of life to not only resist the disease, but the remedies used to combat it" (quoted in Berman 1978: 77).

The influence of root doctors in the South Carolina low country troubled Euro-Americans for reasons that went beyond the question of efficacy. They worried about the larger implications of Afro-Americans claiming the power to alter reality. Such was the case in 1822 when the Charleston police accused one Gullah Jack of using his skill as a root doctor to attract participants to the slave conspiracy organized by Denmark Vesey. During the trials which followed the betrayal of the plot, one witness testified that Gullah Jack had bragged that "all his country born promised to join [the conspiracy] because he was a doctor." The witness revealed that Gullah Jack gave him dry food consisting of corn and ground nuts and declared that if he placed a crab-claw in his mouth "you can't then be wounded." The Charleston court sentenced Gullah Jack to death but not before addressing his role in the conspiracy in terms that highlight the basic conflict between divergent belief systems:

The Court after deliberately considering all the circumstances of your case, are perfectly satisfied of your guilt. In the prosecution of your wicked designs, you were not satisfied with resorting to natural and ordinary means, but endeavored to enlist on your behalf, all the powers of darkness, and employed for that purpose, the most disgusting mummery and superstition. You represented yourself as invulnerable; that you could neither be taken nor destroyed, and that all who fought under your banners would be invincible. While such wretched expedients are calculated to excite the confidence, or alarm the fears of the ignorant and credulous, they produce no other emotion in the minds of the intelligent and enlightened, but contempt and disgust. Your boasted charms have not preserved yourself, and of course could not protect. "Your Altars and your Gods have sunk together in the dust." The airy spectres conjured by you, have been chased away by the superior light of Truth, and you stand

exposed, the miserable and deluded victim of offended Justice. Your days are literally numbered. You will shortly be consigned to the cold and silent grave; and all the Powers of Darkness cannot rescue you from your approaching Fate!

The Court in its self-righteous rhetoric belied its confidence in having exposed Gullah Jack by seeking to induce him to make known the extent of his activities:

Let me then, conjure you to devote the remnant of your miserable existence, in fleeing from the "wrath to come." This can only be done by a full disclosure of the truth. The Court are willing to afford you all the aid in their power, and to permit you any Minister of the Gospel, whom you may select to have free access to you. To him you may unburthen your guilty conscience. Neglect not the opportunity, for there is "no devise nor art in the grave," to which you must shortly be consigned (Starobin 1970: 41-44).

Despite Gullah Jack's ill-fate, the prestige of all root doctors was enhanced by the many clients who sought their services and told others of their methods and results. When the Civil War broke out and the South Carolina sea islands fell under Union army occupation in the wake of Commodore Samuel Francis DuPont's successful seaborne attack on the Port Royal area, northerners discovered how widespread awareness of the supernatural was among the "contraband."⁸

In the course of fulfilling their responsibilities, army surgeons, missionaries, school teachers, and agents of the Freedmen's Bureau ministered to the medical needs of the emancipated slaves. Dr. J. M. Hawks, who came to Edisto Island in 1862, found the task of providing medical care on the islands an enormous undertaking. The dispersal of freedmen on different plantations required Dr. Hawks to make daily trips to visit the sick and infirm. He was appalled by what he considered as gross neglect of slaves under the old regime. On entering one cabin he found a man suffering from fits: "Nine years ago he fell in the fire, and burned his foot and ankle off. No doctor was ever called - the stump has never healed over, it is a large raw sore. He was washing it with urine and warm water and bar soap, and putting on leaves. I gave him some of my ointment and a piece of castile soap, and next time I go, shall take some of Mother's catarrto snuff, and test its virtues."⁹

The Union army also confronted the problem of disease, utilizing far greater resources than were available to Dr. Hawks. For instance, the military set up field hospitals in an attempt to reduce the spread of disease among civilians

and soldiers. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, military commander of an all-black regiment organized on the sea islands, was pleased and slightly bemused by the enthusiasm with which an army surgeon assigned to his command established a hospital and then anxiously awaited his clientele. "He is now, with a hearty professional faith, looking round for somebody to put into it. I am afraid the regiment will accommodate him; for, although he declares that these men do not sham sickness, as he expected, their catarrh is an unpleasant reality" (Higginson 1962: 35-36). An outbreak of smallpox on the sea islands forced military authorities to take measures that included establishing quarantine hospitals. General James C. Beecher noted that of the thirty-five men in a company of U.S. Colored Troops, nineteen came down with smallpox and six died in one month. He reported that among the civilian population of freedmen estimated to be about two thousand on James Island, there were one hundred cases of smallpox:

I have been obligated to order the garrison under canvas. The Surgeon B.F. informs me that application has been made to B.R.F. for the means for establishing a post hospital, but that application was disapproved. I believe that unless such hospital is established the whole Island will be a post hospital during the Summer. . . . At present the infected are mixed up with others in miserable shanties, and all are seriously destitute for proper food.¹⁰

The military's contribution to the health of freedmen was primarily a matter of improving hygiene and diet. Military authorities called attention to poor sanitary conditions, quarantined persons with infectious diseases, and distributed food rations that enhanced the nutritionally-poor diet of the freedmen. Afro-Americans took advantage of all that was offered, but also continued to utilize the services of healers from within their own communities. Laura M. Towne, a school teacher on St. Helena Island, became aware of this fact while treating a small child. She found her efforts undermined by those of a root doctor. Towne expressed no respect for her medical competitor: "We have a new care - poor little Johnny. He was given by his mother to a horrid woman, Bella Lester, who has a horrid husband, Dr. Jacob, as the people call him. He is a man who has poisoned enough people with his herbs and roots, and magic, for his chief remedy with drugs is spells and incantations" (Holland 1969: 232).¹¹

Laura Towne's attitude toward Dr. Jacob was a surface expression of a much deeper philosophical gulf that separated Euro-Americans from Afro-Americans in the nineteenth century. She saw no virtue in treating illness by "spells and incantations" because her concept of disease was shaped by a

European belief system that rejected that method. But as H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr. (1978: 15) observes we must "think of disease neither as an objective entity in the world nor as a concept that admits of a single universal definition: there is not, nor need be, one concept of disease." Dr. Jacob, old man Sancho, Gullah Jack, and their counterparts throughout the South achieved status as healers precisely because most Afro-Americans shared neither Laura Town's belief system nor her concept of disease.

Medical physicians and root doctors alike were equally helpless when illness reached epidemic proportions. In the low country, the city of Charleston was the focal point for contagious diseases. Charleston's population was diverse and grew steadily in the nineteenth century. The laboring classes, both slave and free, lived in congested quarters of the city, notable for their unsanitary conditions. Ships arriving at the Charleston wharves brought passengers who often carried diseases from other parts of the country and abroad. In the urban environment of Charleston no one, regardless of race or social class, was immune to the diseases that flourished in the city.¹² When epidemics broke out and the sick began to die, panic-stricken residents fled into the countryside, inadvertently spreading the contagion. This happened frequently in the 1850s, when epidemics took more than two thousand lives in Charleston. In 1854, with yellow fever raging in the city from mid-August to mid-November, the Charleston Courier observed that the exodus of residents made "the Town appear very lonesome somehow."

Possibly the Charleston exodus accounts for the appearance of the disease in Georgetown and Beaufort during the same year. The pattern recurred in 1857 when yellow fever was confirmed in Charleston and then in Mount Pleasant, two and a half miles away. In 1858 the disease flared up anew, taking 680 lives in Charleston and spreading to nearby Sullivan's Island (anon. 1872: 275-331; Galliard and Kinloch 1854: 26-36; Farley 1978). Communicable diseases also spread in the low country when infected crews and passengers of vessels reached the coast. Quarantine regulations existed as early as 1744 when a pest house operated on Sullivan's Island and health officials inspected vessels for signs of "the plague, smallpox, spotted fever, Siam distemper, and Guinea fever." Yet the very contour of the South Carolina coast, with its ubiquitous creeks and channels, made it impossible for quarantine officials to prevent evasion of their efforts and thus made the regulations largely ineffective.¹³

Epidemics were ghastly experiences. Yet endemic diseases actually took more lives and continued to kill long after vaccinations, new drugs, and insect eradication programs brought pestilential diseases under control. Some maladies afflicted Afro-Americans in particular, and antebellum physi-

cians categorized them as "Negro diseases" (Grier 1853; Cartwright 1851; Yandell 1831).¹⁴ In fact "Negro diseases" were either caused by or aggravated by unsanitary conditions or dietary deficiencies and not racial inevitability. Hookworm infection, dysentery, typhus, and typhoid fever were among the ailments related to unsanitary conditions, while rickets and pellagra were prominent nutrition-related disorders. These diseases, and others like them, persisted among sea island Afro-Americans after slavery because the circumstances of their daily lives remained substantially unchanged.¹⁵ The end of Reconstruction in South Carolina led to the withdrawal of federal support to Afro-Americans, including most of the northern medical practitioners. They would not return until the late 1960s when the federal government funded comprehensive health care centers, including two along the coast between Charleston and the Georgia border.¹⁶

One important exception to the pattern of isolation imposed on the sea islands after 1877 was the continuing influence of Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School on St. Helena Island. Founded in 1862 by Laura M. Towne and Ellen Murray, Penn School stood for the improvement and promotion of the rural environment. The goal was to assist freedmen in maintaining their "independence" as small, landowning peasants in order to minimize the attraction of urban migration. To achieve this end community-oriented programs received priority from the Penn School leadership. Their concept of community health embodied the notion that "better farms and better homes depend largely on better health" (Cooley 1926; 1930; Jacoway 1980). Yet despite the determination of Laura Towne, Ellen Murray, and their successors to promote better health, Penn School was but a small ray of hope set against tremendous adversity.

Penn-sponsored health programs did lead to an upgrading of sanitary standards on St. Helena Island, but resources always were limited. Not until 1908 did Penn School hire a practical nurse to conduct outreach programs in the surrounding community. Dr. York Bailey, a Penn School graduate, returned to practice medicine on St. Helena Island as the first sea island Afro-American trained in medical science (Jacoway 1980: 75-76).¹⁷ But when a typhoid epidemic erupted on the island in 1914, the local resources were insufficient to prevent the scourge from infecting twenty-two people and killing five. Appeals for state assistance went unanswered. Rossa B. Cooley, then principal of Penn School, launched a sanitary campaign in response to the epidemic and by December declared that "we can now report all those families drinking water from driven wells, and 15 sanitary out-houses [constructed]."¹⁸ These kinds of improvement, however, were not enduring and seldom extended beyond the immediate vicinity of Penn School. Hookworm, pellagra, and other diseases remained endemic, and sea

islanders continued to rely on the root doctors and their remedies.

Evidence of the pervasive influence of folk medicine and divination during the twentieth century can be confirmed from a variety of sources. Mamie Garvin Fields, a Charlestonian and graduate of Claflin University, came to John's Island to teach school in 1909. In her memoirs (written in collaboration with her granddaughter, sociologist Karen Fields) she described a prominent root doctor on the island known as Mr. Jimmy Brisbane. Although he was illiterate and crippled, Brisbane prospered by providing a "hand" in the community:

The "hand" was something he would fix up and sell to you. If you wore it on your person, then you had the ability to do whatever you wanted to whoever you wished to hurt. Or if somebody wanted to get you, they would take some of your hair and some dust, put all that in a stocking with a hand and then hang it up behind your house or bury it by your front step. Some people believed in that so strongly until they would leave their homes unless they could come to the doctor and get the hand off them (Fields 1983: 117).

Brisbane's reputation attracted clientele from Charleston and other places in the low country because he not only "worked root" but also interpreted dreams. Mamie Garvin Fields remembered him as "a higher type witchdoctor," implying that the appeal of such practitioners transcended social class (Fields 1983: 121).

Ten years before Mamie Garvin Fields went to John's Island Charles W. Chesnutt published his first book of fiction, The Conjure Woman (1899), a collection of interconnected stories about conjuring on a North Carolina plantation. One of Chesnutt's characters was Tenie, the wife of a slave named Sandy. The couple were both the slave property of Mars Marrabo McSwayne. Tenie was a conjure woman who vowed never to employ her magical skills after converting to Christianity. However, faced with an earnest request from her husband fifteen years after she "got religion," Tenie justified resorting to her old powers by declaring "dey is some things I doan b'lieve it's no sin fer ter do" (Chesnutt 1969: 45-46).¹⁹ By the 1920s such writers as DuBose Heyward and Julia Peterkin joined the "local color" literary tradition by using black life and culture as the subject of serious fiction. Both authors had intimate knowledge of the low country based on long residences in the area and so included conjuring and root doctors in their novels.²⁰

In the same period, social science researchers, fearing that the opening of a bridge connecting the island to the mainland would lead to the erosion of traditions, came to

St. Helena Island to document the life of its inhabitants. Guy B. Johnson, from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, noted in his Folk Culture on St. Helena Island South Carolina (1930), that despite the influence of Penn School,

Undoubtedly there are still some people who patronize "root doctors" or "conjuh men" in order to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or "voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who actually use the folk medicines for various ills, and there are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar phases.²¹

Johnson's restrained and sketchy remarks seem at best understated when considered alongside the contemporary reports of anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston (1931; 1937a; 1937b; 1938). Utilizing the participant-observer technique, Hurston became an apprentice to the grand-nephew of Marie Leveau, the most powerful Creole conjurer in nineteenth-century New Orleans. Hurston's biographer, Robert Hemenway (1977: 124), states that in 1928 Samuel Thompson, Leveau's descendant, initiated Hurston in an elaborate ceremony filled with "both physical and psychic peril." Hurston wrote to her mentor, Franz Boas, to alert him to the significance of her experience and alluded to its bearing on the conclusions of others in the field: "I am finding lots of things which will intrigue you. I find Odom [sic] and Johnson in error constantly." Seemingly worried that her frank statements would be viewed as rash by Boas, she quickly added: "A too hasty generalization. The subject of sympathetic magic is being looked into as thoroughly as I can, and folklore collected, religious expression noted."²² Hurston (1931) published her findings while continuing to study the folklore tradition of Afro-Americans in other localities, including the coastal islands of Florida.²³

Forty years later cultural anthropologists were still able to document the continuing role of folk medicine and its practitioners among sea island Afro-Americans. The botanical pharmacopeia published by Dr. Francis P. Porcher in 1849 includes wild plants that were still being employed for medicinal purposes in the 1960s (Mitchell 1970). Daniel Ellis Moerman (1974: 241) investigated the "system of popular medical treatment based on the use of a variety of natural products." Using social science theory of dependency, Moerman concluded that the system was a response to marginality reflected by "the traditional neglect by professional medicine and the larger society of the health needs of dependent communities."²⁴

The marginality stressed by Moerman was the result of racial segregation and political disfranchisement that institutionalized the dependency and exploitation of Afro-Americans.²⁵ Geographic isolation made these factors particularly salient in

that pressures of assimilation were less pronounced than might otherwise have been the case. Yet this should not obscure the fact that traditional methods of healing based on a holistic belief system have functioned vibrantly alongside readily available medical science in many situations where isolation was not an important factor (Ayensu 1981: 87-97). Thus Afro-Americans of the South Carolina low country utilized root doctors and their therapeutics as the first line of defense in a world filled with dangers and uncertainties; a strategy based on both tradition and results.

NOTES

1. This is not to say that magic was totally eliminated from the Protestant belief system. Magical formulas for healing were known and used by South Carolinians of German background as late as 1900. For example, the incantation for a burn or scald was: "The Holy Woman goes out over the land; what carries her in her hand? A fire-brand. Eat not in you, eat not around you. In the Names of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen." See Hawkins 1907: 165-174.
2. For an illuminating discussion of disease and therapeutics in African society, see Feierman 1979.
3. For the microbiological impact of European and African migration to the New World, see Crosby 1972; McNeill 1976; and Curtin 1965.
4. For an understanding of the impact of cholera on nineteenth-century America, see Rosenberg 1962. Yellow fever epidemics were particularly virulent in southern port cities of the nineteenth century. See, for example, Pearce 1978: 448-472; Cain 1856, and Duffy 1966.
5. February 19, 1850, May 11, 1850, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina.
6. April 28, 1850, Chaplin Journal.
7. February 20, 1846, and additional entry dated 1876, Chaplin Journal.
8. Folklorist Elsie Clews Parson came to the sea islands in 1919 to collect materials. Her published monograph (1923) contains a great deal of data on supernatural beliefs. See also Georgia Writer's Project 1940; and Puckett 1969.
9. J. M. Hawks to Esther Hawks, April 22, 1862, The Papers of J. M. Hawks and Esther Hawks, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
10. James C. Beecher to Capt. M. N. Rice, March 16, 1866, Records of the Field Offices of the Bureau of Refugees,

- Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Record Group 105, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
11. This incident was by no means the only time Laura Towne encountered such problems while providing medical treatment to freedmen. See, for example, Rose 1964:98.
 12. John C. Calhoun believed that the health problems of Charlestonians were the result of social habits. In 1807 he declared that fever among the city dwellers was "a curse for their intemperance and debaucheries;" quoted in Rogers 1969: 168.
 13. South Carolina physicians believed that yellow fever might have been imported when the disease hit Port Royal in 1877 despite the quarantine regulations then in effect. See Simons 1878: 36-44. Waring 1967: 59-70 discusses the public health policies established in Charleston during the nineteenth century.
 14. Since 1951 when William Dosite Postell published The Health of Slaves on Southern Plantations, historians have continued to examine the question of health, disease, and race in the South; see in particular Savitt 1978; Jones 1981; Kiple and King 1981 and Ettling 1981.
 15. The case of pellagra is particularly instructive on this point. This nutritional disorder persists on the sea islands while elsewhere in America it has become extremely rare; see Babcock 1911: 299-314 and Shaw 1968. An excellent history tracing the discovery of pellagra in the United States and the search for its cause and cure is Etheridge 1972.
 16. Federal funding for comprehensive health care centers targeted at medically underserved populations was an outgrowth of the findings of the Senate Select Committee hearing on Nutrition and Human Needs chaired by Sen. George McGovern in 1969. The Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Center on John's Island and the Jasper-Beaufort County Comprehensive Health Care Center were first funded by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in 1970.
 17. After graduating from Penn School, York Bailey attended Biddle University in North Carolina and then the School of Medicine at Howard University in Washington, D.C. He graduated in 1906 and began his practice on St. Helena Island in the following year where he served until his death in 1971. For insights into the struggles of Afro-Americans to gain access to the professional world of science and medicine during the early twentieth century, see Morais 1967 and Manning 1983.
 18. Annual Report of the Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School of St. Helena Island, Beaufort County, South Carolina; Fifty-fifth Year 1916-1917, p. 31.

19. For literary analysis of Chesnutt's fiction, see, Britt 1972; Render 1980; and Andrews 1980: 41-73.
20. DuBose Heyward (1885-1940) published Porgy in 1925 and Mamba's Daughters in 1929. For an analysis of the use of root doctors as characters in the novels of Julia Peterkin (1880-1961), see Yates 1946. A retired white sheriff from Beaufort Country describes his encounters with root doctors while working in the 1920s in McTeer 1970: 19-41.
21. It should be noted that Johnson's theory of the origins of Gullah, the language dialect of low country Afro-Americans, set forth in his book was subsequently challenged by Turner 1949.
22. Hurston refers to Howard W. Odum, founder of the Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Guy Benton Johnson. For a history of the Institute, see Johnson and Johnson 1980.
23. Additional material on folk medicine and magic appeared in subsequent publications by Hurston (1937a, 1937b, 1938).
24. For documentation on the impact of poverty and political isolation on the quality of health among sea island Afro-Americans, see: "Nutrition and Human Needs," Hearing before the Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs of the United States Senate, Part IV: South Carolina, 90th Cong., 2d sess., and 92st Cong., 1st sess., (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969).
25. The history of race relations in South Carolina since Reconstruction can be found in Tindall 1966 and Newby 1973.

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CHAPTER 6

THE SLAVE TRADE IN NIGER DELTA ORAL TRADITION AND HISTORY

E. J. Alagoa

The scope of this study is limited to the overseas trade in slaves as it has been remembered in the oral traditions of the Niger Delta, and to the effects of that trade on the history of the delta. Information on the slave trade, based mainly on the records of European observers and participants, is to be found in the general works on the history of the Niger Delta by K. O. Dike (1956) and G. I. Jones (1963). Both authors concentrate on the city-states of the eastern delta, namely, Bonny, Kalabari, Okrika and Nembe, and have paid attention to the consequences of the abolition of the trade by Britain in 1807, to the growth of the palm-oil and kernel trade in its place, and to the significance and role of slaves in the internal political, social, and economic history of the delta. Robin Horton (1969) has paid particular attention to the role of persons incorporated into Kalabari society and to the effects of the overseas trade on the development of the institutions of the city-state from those of the village polity.

Similarly, the processes and effects of the overseas slave trade in the western delta feature in the work of A.F.C. Ryder (1959) and P.C. Lloyd (1963). Ryder discusses the trade of the Benin kingdom at its port of Ughoton on the upper Benin River from the first visits of the Portuguese in about 1485 through the period of Dutch activities to British colonial takeover in 1897. Lloyd studies the effects of Itsekiri control of trade in the western delta on the politics and society of the Itsekiri kingdom.

Dike (1956: 1) identifies two periods of European activity in the Niger Delta: first, a period beginning with the advent of the Portuguese in the fifteenth century to the British abolition of the slave trade in 1807, and second, the period 1807-1885. This periodization distinguishes between the slave trade and the trade in palm oil and kernels. Jones (1963: 89-90) notes gradual expansion of the slave trade through the

eighteenth century to "a peak in the Rio Real of about 15,000 to 20,000 annually in the first quarter of the nineteenth century." Jones suggests that the slave trade came to an end as a result of the British naval blockade "after 1839," followed by an increase in palm-oil exports to a peak in 1855. Palm kernels became a commodity in the trade from 1870, while the establishment of a British Protectorate after 1885 coincided with a further increase in the quantity of trade. Dike (1956: 98) also noted that the slave trade did not end in 1807 with the British declaration of abolition. He recorded the account of a British captain who saw between sixteen and twenty slaving ships at Bonny in 1827, but none in 1837. But he also noted that the success of the British naval squadron operating from Fernando Po (Equatorial Guinea) in driving the slave trade from the ports of Bonny and Elem Kalabari actually increased exports from the port of Brass. It was this continuing slave trade that persuaded the British government representatives on the spot to enter into the so-called "slave trade treaties" with the delta states from 1839 to the 1850s.

Elem Kalabari apparently predominated as a center for the slave trade until the end of the seventeenth century. From about 1699 through the nineteenth century, Bonny became the most important center of the overseas trade in slaves and then in palm oil and kernels. Opobo took over this position of leadership in the palm-oil trade from about 1870. The varying importance of the different states in the nineteenth century in terms of the slave trade is shown by the efforts the British made to sign treaties to abolish the trade and to enforce abolition. The first treaty of its type was signed with the kingdom of Bonny on 11 March 1839, a second on 20 August 1841, and a third on 21 November 1848. Compensation for loss of trade to the value of \$2,000-\$10,000 a year were agreed to be paid to the rulers. The treaty with Elem Kalabari was only signed 8 August 1851 and with Nembe (Brass) on 17 November 1856. These treaties were the subject of disputes over payment of compensation by the British and the commitment to compliance by delta rulers. If the British had doubts about the good faith of the local rulers, the rulers were equally skeptical about the British change of attitude about the slave trade. In the 1841 treaty, King Pepple had a clause inserted to protect himself against any subsequent shift of position on the part of the British:

That should Great Britain at any time permit the Slave Trade to be carried on again, the Chiefs of the Bonny shall be at liberty to carry on the Slave Trade also.

But between the desire for the fees, the activities of the British preventive squadron, and the growing profitability of

the trade in palm oil, the overseas slave trade gradually disappeared in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The slaves sold at the ports of the eastern Niger Delta came predominantly from the Igbo country. Nembe (Brass) also received slaves from beyond the Igbo country down the Niger, from the Igala, and other northern Nigerian peoples. In the western delta, some western Igbo passed through Itsekiri middlemen, as well as Urhobo, Isoko and other groups from the regions under Benin influence. Some riverine Yoruba also came through the lagoon trade into the western delta. Thus Osifekunde, an Ijebu, had been captured by Ijo pirates (Lloyd 1967). Slaves sold at Bonny were acquired mainly through the system of trade and the oracle based at Arochuku (Dike 1956: 40). Since the Obi Nkita quarter dominant at Arochuku had established special relations with the rulers at Bonny, that city-state also became dominant in the slave trade in the delta. The Aro controlled most trade routes to the coast in the Igbo hinterland. In addition to the Aro oracle, the blacksmithing community of Awka also operated the Agbala oracle which enabled them to operate freely over wide areas. The Aro used mercenary allies to raid communities which defied the decisions of their oracle, and so collected slaves in this manner also. Other slaves sold at the delta ports had been disposed of by their parents, uncles or other relations. Others had been kidnapped, taken as war prisoners, or convicted of offences within their communities. The traders of the delta, then, did not themselves raid for the slaves they sold to the ships but procured them from communities adjoining the delta or through the Aro and other trading communities of the hinterland. Some of the slaves came from a long way inland, usually passing through many intermediaries.

The European traders soon came to terms on procedures for the conduct of the trade with the delta communities. The visitors paid dues to the local rulers for permission to commence trade, and slaves were paid for in a copper currency or in copper or brass bars. The ships also received yams, "bananas" and livestock to feed the slaves on the Atlantic crossing. It may be noted that some of these trade practices and procedures were dictated by trade patterns already established in the Niger Delta (Alagoa 1970). It was, of course, not by chance that the Portuguese and Dutch traders called at the ports on the Rio Real. Elem Kalabari and Bonny, and apparently also Nembe (Brass), and Okrika, were already centers of local trade into the hinterland and within the delta, and they were political centers of authority in their respective parts of the Niger Delta. All the early visitors noted the large size of the canoes operated by the delta communities, reported to be the largest on the Guinea coast. The use of copper in exchange, too, was not fortuitous. Pereira (c. 1508) reported that the delta traders paid salt for the produce of

the hinterland, and noted that they wore "copper necklaces," and preferred to receive from the Portuguese copper bars and bracelets or manillas. John Barbot (1732) reported that the people of Elem Kalabari reworked the imported copper "with much art, splitting the bar into three parts, from one end to the other, which they polish as fine as gold, and twist the three pieces together very ingeniously, like cords, to make what sorts of arm-rings they please."

Dike (1956: 23-25) speculated that the delta city-states came into being as a result of the slave trade. According to his reconstruction, the early Ijo settlers in the delta moved in small scale migrations from Benin. They created little fishing villages subsisting on salt-boiling as an additional activity. Once the slave trade across the Atlantic began, the hinterland communities were attracted to the coast, the Igbo, in particular, coming down in voluntary migrations to take up places in the delta suitable as ports for the trade. This immigrant population converted the fishing villages into city-states in the period 1450-1800. Additional increments to the populations of these states were made through the purchases of slaves, especially during the nineteenth century.

Horton (1969) also suggests the overseas slave trade as the major stimulus in the transformation of the fishing villages into city-states. He does not, however, suggest that the slave trade induced voluntary migrants from the hinterland, or that such migrants, voluntary or forced, were the creative agents. Rather, he suggests that the opportunities and challenges created by the overseas trade induced the inhabitants of the delta cities to make structural changes which account for the social, political and economic institutions of the city-states.

It has already been shown elsewhere (Alagoa 1966-1967) that there are no traditions for massive migrations into the Niger Delta from the hinterland in the period 1450-1800. The oral traditions concerning the period of the slave trade suggest that it was the old established communities which received the visitors and made accommodations in their activities and systems to take advantage of the new opportunities. Increments to the population during the period resulted from slaves that were retained in the community. Accordingly, the Horton thesis is more relevant to the situation with the proviso that many of the institutional changes induced by the overseas trade had already begun as a result of the internal long distance trade into the hinterland and within the Niger Delta (Alagoa 1971a). What the slave trade appears to have done was to accelerate processes already in operation.

Dike (1956: 153-165) suggests a second consequence of the slave trade. According to this hypothesis, between 1850-1875 the slaves in each of the delta states and in Calabar revolted. Revolts are stated to have occurred twice in Bonny in 1855 and

in 1869. It has again been shown that the problems that arose in the delta states in the nineteenth century were not slave revolts but rather struggles for political power among the ruling elites (Alagoa 1971b). The process for the acculturation of slaves into the delta communities was such that no revolt of slaves was theoretically possible. They were ritually incorporated as children of their masters' wives and became full members of the lineages or "war-canoe houses" (wari) of their masters. They were also able to achieve political authority and become heads of these "houses." The political struggles to which Dike refers all related to struggles for power between groups of "houses" within the various states for control of kingship (amanyanabo). Each group contained within it house heads who were of slave origin. The most celebrated case was that of 1869 in Bonny in which Jaja took away his own faction to found the new state of Opobo at the estuary of the Imo River. In this case Jaja as a former slave was head of a royal house, but in other cases in Nembe, Okrika, and Elem Kalabari, factions were led by non-slave leaders.

It was only in the Efik state of Calabar that what appeared to be a genuine slave movement occurred in the middle of the nineteenth century. Here, slaves were segregated physically and placed in slave plantations. Only the few slaves serving in the city in the households of the leaders had a chance to become integrated, and then only to a limited extent. To keep the slaves and the poor in their place, membership in the Ekpe secret society, which was the major executive authority in Calabar, was closed to these classes. Finally, slaves served as victims in funeral sacrifices and suffered other disabilities. In these circumstances, the slaves in the plantations rose against the ruling classes in the city to force them to improve the social and economic condition of the slaves.

It may be noted that there were other consequences of the slave trade in the internal history of the Niger Delta city-states. Some of these consequences resulted from the problems of absorbing new members of the community through the slave trade, while others were the result of new wealth and new power bases created by the slave trade.

The Slave Trade in Niger Delta Oral Tradition

No attempt has yet been made to collect oral traditions in any part of the Niger Delta specifically on the subject of the overseas slave trade. The following brief discussion relates to statements concerning the slave trade that have been recorded in the course of collecting historical traditions. These traditions provide relatively little information on the trade, which may reflect the role assigned to the slave trade in the

historical consciousness of the people, or it may merely represent the neglect of the slave trade theme in research.

Bonny traditions concerning the beginning of the slave trade show that the siting of the city was not related to the trade and in fact that the town preceded the onset of the trade (Alagoa and Fombo 1972: 3ff). The founders migrated from the central delta eastward, but through the hinterland, re-entering the delta by way of the Imo River valley. The attraction of the Bonny area was the abundance of game and birds (okolo, curlews). The hunter who led the migrants took them first to a site out of reach of the Bonny River estuary at Orupiri. After a generation a move was made to a site within reach of the estuary, but still along a side creek of the Bonny River. According to the traditions, even this move occurred prior to the arrival of the Portuguese on the Rio Real. The Portuguese visitors did call on Asimini, the ruling king, but found it more convenient to do business at the neighboring city-state of Elem Kalabari because the Bonny River was then narrow and shallow. To ensure regular visits by the foreign ships, Asimini sacrificed "his daughter Ogbolo to the sea gods in order to deepen the estuary. . . . After the sacrifice, the river gradually widened, and ships began to visit Bonny regularly for trade" (Alagoa and Fombo 1972: 7). An annual sacrifice to the gods of the sea became customary.

The Kalabari have a different tradition to explain the advantage that Bonny gained as the port nearer to the estuary in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Alagoa 1972: 141). According to this tradition, after Oruyingi, Mother of the gods, had given birth to all the gods, she asked them what they desired for the peoples over whose destiny they would preside. Owoamekaso, goddess of the Kalabari, asked for a book that would attract the European ships to Elem Kalabari. After they left the presence of Oruyingi Ikuba, god of the Bonny people, became jealous and tried to seize the book and take it away from Owoamekaso. Ikuba went away with a larger fragment of the book, and so attracted the larger ships to Bonny, only the smaller ships passing through to Elem Kalabari.

The siting of settlements provides some evidence of the manner in which slaves were obtained within the delta. Although the delta city-states did not, as a rule, raid for slaves in the hinterland, but obtained the bulk of the slaves for export through purchase, there is evidence of some raiding within the delta itself on weaker communities. This is revealed in the traditions of these small communities and reflected in the siting of their settlements, away from the major river-courses. This situation is most clearly evident in the siting of the villages on the beach island between the Brass and Nun Rivers. The towns of Egwema and Beletiemu now stand on the main river connecting the Brass and Nun. But these sites were only very recently occupied. Their inhabitants still keep

shrines on their original settlements that are sited in the center of the island between the Atlantic and the Akassa Creek. The original settlements are named ama-ogbo, central town or town center. The reason for locating the towns away from the river was clearly to escape the attention of pirates and slave raiders.

The village of Elem Bakana in the Kalabari area is still located in its old site away from the river. When I visited the village in 1964, the men sang songs in which they suggested that it was necessary to ensure that even the smoke from their fires could not be seen by canoes passing on the river (Alagoa 1972: 140). Elem Bakana, as well as the neighboring villages of Bukuma, Obonoma, and Udekama, may have been raided by Kalabari slave dealers. These communities were of a different culture and spoke a language different from the Kalabari. But it would appear that raiding took place even among Kalabari-speaking communities. Thus, the traditions concerning Agbaniye Ejike, King of Bile, who ruled in the eighteenth century, state that he raided and sacked all the neighboring Kalabari communities. In a praise song to King Amakiri of Elem Kalabari, the savagery of Agbaniye Ejike is contrasted with the constructive leadership of Amakiri, who extended his authority by serving as protector of the threatened communities (Alagoa 1972: 139).

In the western delta, the Ijo communities were placed in a peripheral position in relation to Itsekiri and Benin. In response they preyed on the trade of these two kingdoms, sometimes supplying slaves to Itsekiri. Ijo piracy is reported in most of the accounts of European visitors to the western delta, and Ijo traditions confirm these piratical activities as well as the supremacy of Itsekiri in the overseas trade (Alagoa 1972: 25-83). The Kabo, for example, were notorious for their piracy on the Forcados River. The Erohwa, an Isoko group, were driven inland from their old site on the Forcados close to the site of Patani, one of the best known raiding communities (Hubbard 1948: 96-97).

There are few, if any, published accounts of European raids for slaves in the Niger Delta, or indeed, on most of the Nigerian coast. The Portuguese were more directly concerned with the business of collecting slaves in the Congo, Angola, and the Senegambia. A tradition among the Kabo suggests that the idea of European raids for slaves was not a far-fetched one, however. The Kabo account of how they lost control of the slave trade on the Forcados River to the Mein group relates to fear of European raids. During a period of low water, a rumor spread that the Europeans would come up the river in the following flood season and capture any persons they saw (Hubbard 1948: 186; Alagoa 1972: 74-75). The Kabo proceeded to dam the river and to divert it from their settlements. By the following flood season, the river had been effectively rechanneled through the territory of the neighboring Mein. The

expected raids did not come, and the Kabo became dissatisfied with their new location in what had become the Kabo Creek, and began a series of new settlements on the new Forcados channel in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Despite the record of violence in the Niger Delta, the more centralized and powerful states and rulers tended to work for good order, but to their own advantage. The states tried to keep the level of slave raids to a minimum. Many accounts of wars undertaken by the states relate to punishments against unruly communities along the trade routes. This violence along the trade routes and the competition between the various states and within states between lineages (wari, houses) became one reason for retaining more and more of slaves to increase the force of war-canoe hands.

Finally, there are a few instances of traditional evidence concerning particular aspects of the slave trade within the communities. The names of two important "houses" among the Kalabari are considered to be related to the practice of building slave stores or barracoons (barrikos) in a section of the delta ports for the security of slaves. The lineages of Birimoni (Omoni), meaning, literally, slave quarter, and Barboy, apparently derived from barracoon boy, demonstrate the connection between the trade and these "houses" (Jones 1963: 137-8). These groups were probably created in the eighteenth century at a time when Elem Kalabari was already crowded and the founder of the Omoni house could find no room for expansion, except into the area of the slave barracoons. The Barboy leader, Odum, on the other hand, had been assigned duties among the barracoons in his youth.

In Nembe, two cases of conflict between the metropolis and the community of Okpoama in the nineteenth century resulted from circumstances created by the slave trade (Alagoa and Williamson 1983: 71-79). Isele, regent of Okpoama, raided the Ogbia village of Okpokiri because he had been harrassed by some villagers on his return from the Aboh market in 1870. The raid got him into trouble with the rulers of Nembe because Okpokiri had placed itself under the protection of Bokolo, priest of the national god. Okpoama had to make reparations to Nembe. In the second case, it was members of the Igbeta house of Nembe living in Okpoama who were the occasion for a disagreement. The Igbeta house charged that a number of persons had fled to Okpoama in order to escape the opprobrium of their slave origin and the obligations of their status. They came by night to capture their members but were themselves seized and beaten up by the people of Okpoama. The matter had to be settled after the intervention of the amanyanabo of Nembe.

The Okpokiri incident is similar to the case of the Kalabari communities which sought the protection of King Amakiri in order to escape the predations of Agbaniye Ejike of Bile. The conditions created by the slave trade in the Niger

Delta apparently obliged smaller communities to seek the protection of the more powerful ones. The Okpoama attack on Okpokiri and the action taken by Nembe show the seriousness with which such covenants of submission and protection were taken. The Okpoama case suggests that the incorporation of slaves into houses was a continuous problem. Treatment of individual slaves and former slaves varied, often with the type of leadership. Individuals could change allegiance by escaping to other communities. Sometimes the original purchase price could be demanded as compensation for such losses.

The drum praise title, kule, of Mingi, the early eighteenth century amanyanabo of Nembe, suggests that some of the leaders showed no mercy to slaves caught in an escape attempt. Mingi took the title, Omoni mangiya/pele. "When a slave runs, he is executed." It is clear that slaves could not win the full confidence of their host communities until they showed themselves integrated and reconciled to their new homes. At the same time, the host communities were reminded that the mere action of purchase did not mean that the slave-owner automatically became the master of the slave's mind and body. In the words of a Nembe proverb: Omoni febo/bio fegha: "He who buys a slave does not buy his mind." The business of gaining the loyalty of a slave required subtler means beyond the purchase price of the body.

Niger Delta Slaves in the New World

The Niger Delta traditions of internal conflicts and local raids suggest that small numbers of people from the Niger Delta were sold across the Atlantic along with slaves from the hinterland. This conclusion is confirmed by evidence of peoples of Niger Delta origin in the New World.

A recent study of Berbice Dutch, the creole pidgin spoken along the tributaries of the Berbice river in Guiana, shows an unusually large vocabulary derived from the eastern Ijo dialects of Kalabari, Okrika, Ibaní, and Nembe (Smith, Robertson and Williamson, forthcoming). Berbice Dutch was shown to be composed of 60.7-66.5 percent Dutch, 22.5-25 percent Ijo, and smaller contributions from English, Amerindian, Portuguese, and other languages, in spite of the fact that the majority of the present speakers of Berbice Dutch are of Amerindian (Arawak) origin or of mixed race. The explanation would seem to be that the pidgin came into being at a time when a slave population of predominantly eastern Niger Delta origin interacted with Dutch slave owners and plantation supervisors.

Other New World references to "Calaba" and "Calabaris" in Suriname (Price 1976: 15) cannot be exclusively related to Ijo peoples of the Niger Delta. They could also refer to Igbo and

other slaves shipped from the port of Elem Kalabari. Thus the Awka maroon or bush negro community of Suriname probably took its name from the Igbo community of the same name. Similar conjectures may be made concerning the connection between the Aluku or Boni community of maroons in Guiana (from Tata Boni, the leader) because of the similarity of the name to Bonny, or concerning the relationship of Brosi of Suriname to Brass or Nembe in the Niger Delta (Herskovits and Herskovits 1969: 88). Such correlations must remain conjectures, especially since the number of Ijo slaves exported from the Niger Delta ports must have been a very small proportion of the total number of slaves exported. Nonetheless, Norval Smith notes in a personal communication that "there appears to be at least one or two Eastern Ijo lexical items in Sranan, the main creole language of Surinam. The most striking of these which is shared in fact by all the Surinam creole languages is/fufuru/'thief'."

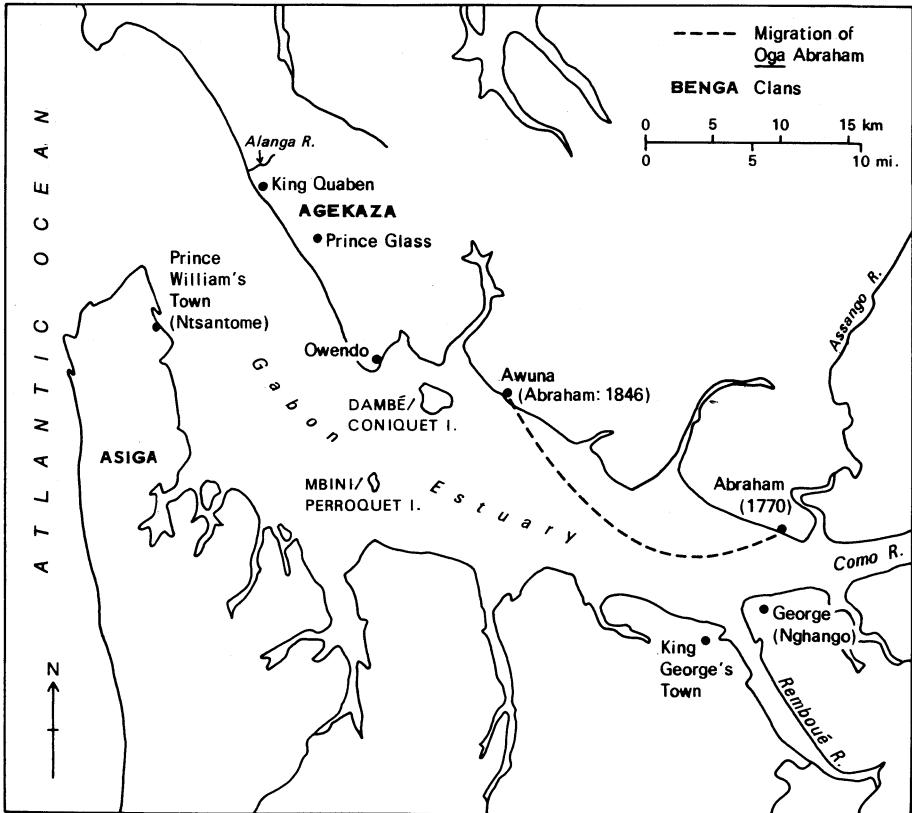
According to a Nembe proverb, when fish is unfairly shared, the man who eats the bones does not forget the experience, although the man who eats the flesh does. The victim remembers, the victor forgets. In the case of the slave trade, the circumstances in the Niger Delta are such that forgetting has been predominant. In the first place, most of the victims were shipped across the Atlantic. In the second, those left in the Delta were incorporated into the communities under circumstances that did not encourage remembrance of a slave past or identity. Among communities that suffered slave raids, also, there has been no eagerness to remember. In the Niger Delta, the slave trade has not featured as a large element of its oral tradition, although, as this chapter has demonstrated, there are some interesting morcels.

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Map 7.1 THE GABON ESTUARY, c. 1830



Cartographic Office, York University

CHAPTER 7

THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE AND THE GABON ESTUARY: THE MPONGWE TO 1860

Henry Bucher

The Gabon estuary represents a portion of the African coast where the volume of slave exports was always relatively small; yet the slave trade had an important impact on local society and economy. An assessment of this impact indicates that Mpongwe society experienced structural changes related to the efforts to control trade, including but not exclusively the trade in slaves. Among these changes were the development of commercial institutions that derived from slave trading, social contracts based on the use of women as collateral for trade and as the link in establishing trading alliances, and a regional stratification that was based partly on wealth from trade and partly on ethnicity, particularly clan loyalty.

Most of the Mpongwe clans began arriving in the Gabon estuary - or coalescing there - after the sixteenth century (Bucher 1975), but the people of the estuary probably traded by sea as far north as Cameroon and as far south as Cape Lopez before the Gabon area was part of a vast regional trading system in central Africa (Vansina 1962: 387). Though commercial ties with the interior usually involved a relay trade between neighbors, the system as a whole was extensive. After 1500, regional trade tied into long-distance routes at several points along the coast north of the Zaire River, including the Gabon estuary, so that slaves and ivory were exchanged for European and coastal goods (Vrijman 1936). The Mpongwe clans evolved in this context. Originally there appear to have been twenty clans, but eventually three of these (Agulamba, Asiga, and Agekaza) emerged as the dominant ones because they were able to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the establishment of European firms in the estuary. The emergence of these dominant clans took place after the end of the eighteenth century and was largely completed by the mid-nineteenth century. Even then, fourteen less important clans were still recognizable. Whether the others had declined because of warfare and disease, or whether they simply migrated to the

commercial vortex and were subsequently incorporated, is impossible to determine for the earlier years.

The European presence in the estuary dated to the Portuguese period in the sixteenth century, when slaves and ivory first became the staple exports. A common pattern that developed then, and prevailed later as well, was to buy slaves in Gabon and Cape Lopez and then sell them on the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe for gold (Leers 1665: 313). Beeswax, honey, barwood and palm oil were also exported (Lopes 1591; Ruiters 1623; Bosman 1704), while the principal imports included a variety of cloth strips, rum and other alcoholic drinks, iron bars, firearms, powder and knives (Brun 1624; Barbot 1732; Bowdich 1819). No permanent trading posts were on shore beyond Calabar in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; instead, ships stopped briefly to buy whatever they could before moving on to more profitable ports of call. By the early decades of the eighteenth century, French ships began to stop at Gabon, and they were soon followed by British ships. Although Gabon slaves were considered of inferior quality to those in West Africa, they were still bought, but ivory, barwood and camwood gradually increased in importance (Isert 1743: 132). By the second half of the eighteenth century, French and English trade increased markedly (Charbonnier n.d.: 11). Between 1763-1792, more French slavers (twenty-one) called at Gabon than at any other point south of Calabar (Mettas 1973). The French focused on Gabon, not because risks were fewer but because intense competition forced them to develop new markets (Bréard 1883: 529). After the start of the French revolution in 1789, however, Bristol and Liverpool merchants surpassed those from the French ports, and English domination remained secure through the first decade of the nineteenth century (Denucé 1937).

Commercial rivalries among the Mpongwe clans focused on the institution of oga or clan chief. The office is probably very old, but it assumed new significance as a result of European contacts. Names like Abraham, George, Passall, Glass and Denis were used by European traders to refer to specific oga, and in some cases these names were used for villages too. These names became so closely associated with political office that it is possible to trace the rise and fall of some of the clans.

In the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, for example, the Agulamba, under Oga George, was the most powerful clan in the estuary. George lived at Nghango at the mouth of the Remboué (Renaud 1838; Bowdich 1819: 423), which became the principal port for the English trade (Map 7.1). George had even been to Liverpool and spoke reasonably good English. Between 1775-1830, Nghango flourished as a center for the export of slaves, ivory and wood. Nghango was strategically connected to the Ogooué-Congo region and

thereby had access to the commodities of the interior, including ivory and woods but especially slaves.

The main rivals of the Agulamba clan were the Agekaza, who were first established at "Abraham's town" before the late eighteenth century. Their oga was known as Abraham, and following the general pattern, Abraham was a name used by a succession of oga. In 1770, Captain David Henderson visited Abraham's town to purchase wood for transport to New York. At this time, Abraham was established some twenty-five miles beyond Mbini/Perroquet Island, and "King Abraham's people" were organized in groups of eight or ten, dressed for war, in preparation for securing slaves "by treachery or force." They had muskets and lances but apparently no supplies. Henderson's ship waited for two weeks, but the war party only came back with a few slaves, about five in number. Such expeditions appear to have been common, according to a son of the oga who returned to New York with Henderson's ship. This man hoped to "become a great Man" himself by arming his father's people and sending them to capture slaves (Great Britain, PP 1789, 26: 646). The rise of such young men was also a pattern in the development of the estuary.

Oga Abraham successfully transferred his settlement to Awuna, 25 kilometers closer to the ocean, sometime after 1770. Abraham's followers included some Agungu, besides members of the Agekaza clan (Raponda-Walker 1960: 51ff). In the late eighteenth century, Oga Abraham probably presided over both clans, and it appears that the Agungu were assimilated. By 1810 at least, the Agekaza were firmly established in the estuary on the right bank above Owendo. Some of their villages shifted, but they stayed within the territory encompassed by Owendo and the Alanga River (Map 7.1). The Skekiani and Bakele, non-Mpongwe groups, occupied the villages left by the westward migration of the Agekaza and other Mpongwe clans.

Trade in the estuary was hazardous, both for Europeans and Mpongwe. The Europeans considered the local people to be dangerous and tricky, and the Mpongwe had ample proof that Europeans could not always be trusted either. While Henderson was in the estuary, for example, a Liverpool scow seized three canoes which had come to trade; a Dutch slaver pursued the English ship out of the river - an indication that the intense trade rivalry within the estuary often reflected global conflicts of interest and that the Mpongwe were willing to play off Europeans against each other (Great Britain, PP 1789). The canoemen were being held as pawns, which was fair game under the slaving rules, but such acts could result in immediate violence and reinforced mutual mistrust.

It is impossible to determine how many slaves were exported annually at the end of the eighteenth century.¹ Although Europeans continued to consider slaves from Gabon interior to those from other parts of the African coast, ships

still frequented the estuary (Rinchon 1964: 115; Adams 1823: 250). One source estimates that five hundred slaves were exported annually from Gabon and Cape Lopez (W. Walker 1844). Between January 8, 1789 and June 9, 1799, at least eight Liverpool ships with a total capacity of 2,067 slaves were listed as bound for Gabon, but the ships probably stopped at other ports between Gabon and the Gambia and hence the figure does not accurately represent the number of slaves exported from Gabon (Donnan 1965: 598, 642). Most slaves came from the area between Cape Lopez and the mouth of the Zaire River (Rinchon 1964: 36). The fact that some ships avoided the trade in slaves all together and dealt only in ivory and wood demonstrates that the slave trade was hardly as profitable in the estuary as it was elsewhere (Rinchon 1964: 115; Adams 1823: 250). Sydenham Teaste of Bristol, for example, claimed that he avoided the slave trade there and bartered for ivory and woods (Great Britain, PP 1789).

The intense competition for European trade by the Mpongwe clans encouraged the seaward movement of villages along both banks of the estuary. The movement of Abraham's followers to Awuna was only an eighteenth-century example of a phenomenon that continued thereafter. Eventually this movement towards the mouth of the estuary undermined the dominant position of the Agulamba, although the Agulamba were not fully eclipsed until about 1840. On the left shore, the Asiga emerged victorious, ultimately controlling the left bank peninsula but sharing it with less powerful clans. On the right shore, the Agekaza not only surpassed all other contenders but also struggled among themselves. Because trade led to wealth and wealth to power, succession disputes were common. Occasionally a young man set up a temporary village a few kilometers seaward of the ruling oga's, paddled out to incoming ships, and persuaded the captain to let him pilot the ship to the oga's town. These young men ingratiated themselves to the village leaders and assured some profits to their own accounts. Young traders most probably transacted some trade without passing through their elders, in hopes of gaining enough wealth to increase the number of their wives and the size and prestige of their families and villages. In a comparatively short time, a successful man could claim the throne, could be offered it on the demise of the incumbent oga, or could simply create an mbata (stool) and name his village the new center of what would in time be a clan.²

This last eventuality was, of course, the most difficult to achieve, but it happened a few times in the late 1700s. Such "leapfrogging," or a variant of it, continued well into the nineteenth century. By at least 1810, two factions of the Agekaza, one at the mouth of the Como River and the other not far away, were installed on the right bank at the places permanently associated with their families throughout the

nineteenth century - the very sites that have become the nucleus of Libreville (Bucher 1977; Griswold, June 6, 1842). These factions were under Quaw Ben (Quaben) and Prince Glass. The establishment of these Agekaza centers effectively usurped the position of Awuna.

Some visitors in the estuary between 1818-1820 speak only of King George of the Agulamba with the briefest mention of Quaw Ben (Quaben) and Prince Glass, whose towns they had to pass to reach George (Bowdich 1819: 423). This reference underlines the common practice wherein one captain adopted a specific village for trade, becoming a trusted friend of its chief over a long period of time (S. Bowdich 1835). Thus we find "contradictions" in the documents on the relative importance of chiefs (Brooks 1970: 338). Each oga and his head trader supported his favorite captain but subverted and even sabotaged other European traders. By force of these circumstances, one captain's trusted chief was another captain's scoundrel. The same exigencies explain why some captains referred to their choice of trader as "king" and another man who appeared less important to him as "prince"; indeed, a strong captain could determine which Mpongwe leader prevailed as oga of his clan.³

As the Agulamba gradually declined between 1820-1840, the Agekaza and Asiga supplanted them as the dominant clans in the estuary. By 1830, Kaka-Rapono/Quaben was the most powerful Agekaza leader, with Prince Glass as his second. Prince William (Rapontchombo/Denis) of the Asiga had a small village on the left bank. Both Agekaza and Asiga were gaining influence with the Europeans, and the slave trade continued to be the determining factor in the new rivalry (Map 7.1).

Indeed, the first references to Rapontchombo/Denis, or to any Asiga on the left bank, appear after 1830 and are related to the slave trade, even though the slave trade was supposedly abolished by then. In 1833, a French naval commander reminded the Asiga personally of an agreement forbidding the trade on the left bank (France ANFB 1933, 556). Rapontchombo/Denis argued that he had little choice because only one French commercial vessel had paid a visit since that agreement, and he needed to pay for imports somehow (Great Britain, PRO 3535).

The first four decades of the 1800s found British traders frequenting the Agulamba and then shifting to the Agekaza, while the French traders and subsequently their naval personnel developed close ties with the Asiga. We know that the French slave trade was active in Gabon between 1760-1790 and probably centered at Ntsantomè (Bucher 1977: 69), attracting several clans to the northern parts of the left bank peninsula. After the French Revolution, Spanish and Portuguese traders were more active among the Asiga. As far as the slave trade is concerned, this remained the case into the middle of the nineteenth century.

The years 1800-1840 were the most crucial in developing the fortunes of the Mpongwe. The Agekaza, under the same pressures to end the slave trade as the Asiga, had more incentive to do so. Their legitimate trade with Europe and America adequately compensated for losses, and they were able to outflank the Asiga commercially as the slave trade declined on the right bank.

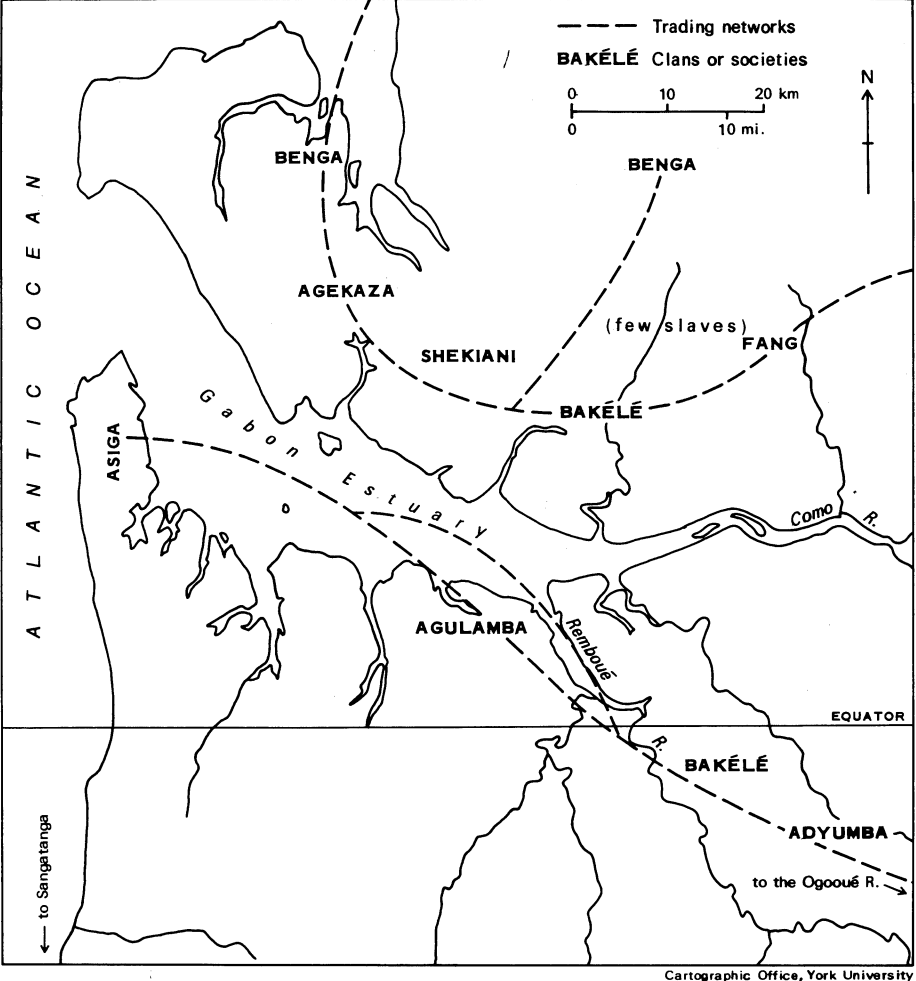
The French became the patrons of the Asiga by the late 1830s, and by circumstances beyond France's control, unwilling supporters of an efficient and lucrative slave-trading system dependent primarily on the Agulamba and their wide network of trade alliances up the Remboué and Ogooué rivers (Patterson 1975). On the right bank, the English and American traders consolidated close associations with the Agekaza. Although the Agekaza dealt primarily in legitimate trade, their leaders did not bypass opportunities to deal in slaves if they thought they could escape observation.

Rapontchombo/Denis appeared determined to welcome slavers. Because his political fortunes were tied to French power, he solicited first French and then other European trade, and he excluded both Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries (J. L. Wilson 1851). His later refusal to permit the French to build a naval station on Asiga land was certainly based on his decision to continue the slave trade. English patronage and the arrival of missionaries on the right bank after 1841 placed the Agekaza in an advantageous position to adapt to the decline in the slave trade with little economic loss.

Several internal factors also affected the responses of the Asiga and Agekaza to the Europeans in the estuary. Indeed, the internal factors may have been more important than the external ones. One such factor was regional trade with non-Mpongwe groups, particularly Bakélé, Shekiani, Benga and Fang. An overview of the structure of this trade indicates that the Agulamba-Adyumba commercial network depended initially on the Bakélé middlemen, while the Agekaza worked through the Shekiani and Benga (Map 7.2). The Asiga were ultimately linked to the Tio system at Malebo (Stanley) Pool through the Ogooué trade (Vansina 1973). This system was more advanced and more intricately tied to the slave trade than the Agekaza network with the Fang up the Como River and its tributaries and with various groups in the region of modern Equatorial Guinea through the Mondah-Muni river systems.

The Fang allegedly refused to sell or buy slaves before the mid-nineteenth century (J. L. Wilson 1842: 117). This boycott, coupled with their skill as hunters, suggests the probability that ivory was more abundant at lower cost through the Agekaza-Shekiani system, while slaves were cheaper through the Asiga-Agulamba network. Other internal factors were at work, including geographical considerations. The direction of the currents favored the right bank, whose terrain and harbors

Map 7.2 THE TRADING NETWORKS OF THE RIGHT AND LEFT BANKS, c.1840



were also better than the lowland, sandy peninsula on the left bank. Nevertheless, all the Mpongwe clans were involved in the slave trade at different levels even after the middle of the nineteenth century.

The Mpongwe had great difficulty in understanding how a traffic that flourished as a response to European demands suddenly became forbidden. They knew how to profit from inter-European rivalries, but by the 1830s, slavers were being seized by ships sailing the same flags. By the late 1830s, the Mpongwe were heading toward a collision with European traders. Indeed, a series of altercations in the late 1830s - usually resulting from trade misunderstandings - opened the door to France's demands for a more permanent military presence. Armed forts to protect legitimate trade as well as to enforce the abolition of the slave trade became French policy - but not without years of Mpongwe resistance (Bucher 1973). The early adaptation of the Agekaza to European demands assured their ultimate ascendancy over all other clans in the estuary.

The external trade had a decided impact on the mechanisms of exchange, most especially on the currency system. Before the rise of slave exports, and indeed for some time after, slaves and other local goods, including salt, tobacco and alcoholic beverages, were used as currency. Salt, like traditionally made alcoholic beverages and tobacco, was easily divisible and thus flexible enough to use for most transactions. All were storable for brief periods, but they were also consumable. The advent of the slave trade demanded standards of exchange that were at once easily exchangeable, in universally high demand, and non-perishable. Besides local commodity currencies, new mechanisms of exchange evolved out of the exigencies of the external trade. Since demand differed along the coast, and each area offered a variety of goods of varying values, no regional standard developed for the coastal trade. The merchandise most commonly employed for payment included iron and copper bars, numerous varieties of cloth, ivory, and above all slaves themselves (Johnson 1966).

In the sixteenth century, an "ideal man" was purchased for a fixed number of iron or copper bars or a regulated length of india cotton, usually referred to as a "piece" (peça, pièce) or "Indian Piece."⁴ At the end of the seventeenth century, a fortieth part of a piece was a section of cloth eighteen inches long and twelve inches wide. A Guinea piece was so called after a special print from Pondichery. An ideal slave in the estuary was a man between fifteen and thirty years old, sane, in good health, well built, who had all his teeth. The number of "pieces" he was worth depended not only on the area of the coast but also on the time period. In time, the slave was referred to as a peça (Table 7.1). Based on the ideal man as a unit, two children from four to eight years old were equivalent to one unit, as were two men between thirty-five and forty-

TABLE 7.1

SLAVE PRICES IN PIECES NEAR THE EQUATOR, 1700-1786

<u>Year</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Value in Pieces</u>	<u>Source</u>
c. 1700	South of Equator	8 (man) 7 (woman)	Rinchon 1964: 181
1721-37	Angola	33	Atkins 1723: 166
1750	Cabinda	30	Rinchon 1964: 181
1750	"Coast"	9-12	Augeard 1901: 29
1776	Guinea	30 plus dash of 6	Proyart 1776: 149
1784	Cabinda to Zafre	43	Labarthe, in Rinchon 1964: 182-183
1786	Malimba to Ambriz	56	Adams 1823: 248- 249

five. Three youths from eight to fifteen were two units and so forth (Denucé 1937: 47; Augeard 1901: 29).

The Mpongwe referred to this unit of account as ewonjo or the igolo ñ'osaka; that is, the "head" or the "price of a slave." Another word for slave, onive, derived from the root meaning "possess." An onivisi w'asaka (possessor of slaves) was a rich man, or simply onivisi. Although the actual price of slaves fluctuated, the "ideal man" was one of the most stable units of account. In the estuary at the mid-nineteenth century, an ewonjo was valued at forty dollars worth of goods (Table 7.2) (W. Walker, March 23, 1848).

Since the Mpongwe demanded a variety of goods in the trading process, it was impossible to deal with values in the abstract. Thus, a number of smaller items were grouped into a package, the entire contents of which were worth one ideal slave, one hundred pounds of ivory, a ton of barwood, or some other unit of account. This form of barter was called the "bundle trade" in the estuary, comparable to the "assortment bargaining" described by Curtin along the coast to the north (Curtin 1975: 247ff.).

By the mid-nineteenth century, the "bundle trade" had reached a degree of sophistication in Gabon that challenged the

TABLE 7.2

THE SLAVE BUNDLE IN GABON, 1678-1870

<u>Year</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1678-1679	150-250 pounds of ivory for a man ^a
1839	For an ideal man: 140 to 150 francs in merchandise; rifle, sword (manchette), barrel of powder (12 pounds). 16 bottles of rum or eau-de-vie, 15 or 16 pieces of common cloth, some trinkets (bangatelles), e.g., vases, plates, wool caps, etc.
1839-1842	For an ideal man: 9 bars (iron) or 18 bottles of eau-de-vie. ^c
1843	For an ideal man: 1 hogshead of rum ^d
1848	For an ideal man: \$40 in goods ^e
1848	For men, \$40; for children (10-19 years), \$20 ^f
1853	For a child: \$17.00 (85 francs) in merchandise; 11 pieces (cloth?) of merchandise (44 francs); 1 rifle (17.50 francs); 1 barrel of powder (7.50 francs); 2 iron bars (2.00 francs); 1 copper bar (1.00 franc); 1 shirt (2.50 francs); 1 cutlass (9.83 francs); 1 knife (.19 franc); 1 razor (.25 franc); 1 scissors (.19 franc); 1 cap (.60 franc); 1 lighter/briquet (.10 franc); 2 pipes (.10 franc); 2 (heads?) tobacco (.10 franc); 5 flints (.05 franc); 1 box (2.50 francs); 1 small bell (.50 franc); 1 mirror (.25 franc) diverse objects (4.00 francs) ^g
1858	80-120 francs ^h
1860s	\$30-\$35 ⁱ
1865	From \$30 as follows: 12 romals (cloth valued at ±\$1.00 per romal); 1 gun; 1 keg of powder; 1 iron pot; 2 iron bars; 2 brass rods; 2 heads of tobacco; 1 shirt; 1 red cap; 2 gunflints; 1 fire-steel; 1 cutlass, 1 small bell; 1 pine chest; 1 stone jar; 2 pipes. ^j
1870s	For a man, 100 francs; for a woman, 150 francs in salt ^k

Sources:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a. Barbot 1732: 391 | g. Lossedat 1853: 148, III |
| b. Bouët 1848: 193 | h. Deyrolle 1858: 21 |
| c. Broquant 1839: 79ff | i. Burton 1876: vol. 1, |
| d. W. Walker, Diary, March 21 | 73-74 |
| e. W. Walker, Diary, August 10 | j. Wilson 1872: 147 |
| f. Méquet 1848: vol. 2, 3 | k. CSSP, <u>BG</u> , 9(1870), 759 |

best supercargoes and the most experienced Mpongwe traders.⁵ Even after slaves were no longer exported, the price of one slave was still the standard. The Mpongwe called the bundle ita, a term used originally in connection with the hunt (J. L. Wilson 1856: 245; Bouët 1848: 153ff.).⁶ Fluctuations in prices and quantities of slave exports over a given period have been linked to corresponding changes in politics and market conditions locally and in Europe (Manning 1982: 10ff). Although data on the quantity of slaves exported from the estuary are meager, we do have enough on prices to draw some conclusions. In the general vicinity of the equator, the price of a slave in terms of "pieces" (Table 7.1) increased seven fold from about 1700-1786, although prices still varied with time and place. Within the estuary, the value of a slave fluctuated from twenty to forty dollars depending on sex and fitness. Women were more valuable than men to the Mpongwe; but as slaves, women brought lower prices than men from the Europeans, who were looking for strong workers for labor-intensive industries. Iron bars decreased greatly in value or size after 1839 (Table 7.2). While the price of the ideal slave remained the standard of value over a long period of time, the fluctuations indicated by European data are most likely due to the changes in the value of goods in Britain and France (Lovejoy 1983: 51).

Trade along the coast below Calabar was normally carried out on the ship's deck well into the first half of the nineteenth century. Although each chief in the Gabon estuary preferred trade to take place ashore in his jurisdiction, the captain's bias was to cast anchor off shore of the village whose oga was his usual trading partner and bargain aboard ship. In part, captains did not trust the Mpongwe, but they also believed the shore climate to be unhealthy. Furthermore, commerce had not reached the level that justified the high cost of permanently manned trading houses (Brunschwig 1962; Schnapper 1961: 128ff). Trade aboard ship was a slow process, testing the patience of the supercargo and crew and ultimately favoring the Mpongwe, who were quite willing to wait weeks for a favorable change in price.

The primary reason why the first Europeans had to wait so long in the Gabon estuary for inland products was the nature of the regional trade. As soon as a ship arrived, complex trading procedures between the Mpongwe and the captain or supercargo began (Bucher 1977: 167ff). After the final agreement on price, the Mpongwe trader left women and other pawns with the European trader and took some goods up river or a few miles by inland path to the closest Shekiani village. After seeing the European imports and going through the customary ceremonies, bargaining began and an exchange value was determined. The Shekiani then collected barwood, ebony and beeswax, and hunted for ivory while the Mpongwe waited. For larger transactions, Shekiani traders took the Mpongwe goods (less their due)

farther up river to a Bakélé village. The Mpongwe trader was given a house and a woman (*isukō*) with all the necessities for comfortably awaiting the return of ivory and slaves. The Shekiani trader was similarly received in the Bakélé village, and the system continued inland until as many slaves and as much ivory as possible had been purchased. Each trader, after retaining his portion of the European goods, bargained for at least as much in ivory and other items as he had promised his creditor. The farther the goods went inland, the higher their value grew in relation to ivory and slaves. In a few weeks at the least, and a few months at the most, the European had his African goods in the estuary. If one trader broke his word, however, or one canoe capsized, a very serious "palaver" would ensue, involving the whole chain of debtors and creditors (Du Chaillu 1862: 380ff; Reade 1873: vol. 1, 22ff).

A Bakélé or Shekiani could initiate the trade cycle by sending ivory to the estuary, but his security was almost nil and hospitality apparently functioned only in the opposite direction. There is some evidence that ivory and slaves were once sent to the Mpongwe on credit, but the numerous disputes that ensued left the interior groups wanting, with no recourse for settling their grievances. As Europeans increasingly extended credit to the Mpongwe, the trend was for the trade cycle to be initiated from the estuary.

The flow of information was also an important feature of the trade. The inland people attempted to compensate for the favorable flow of credit to the Mpongwe by spreading rumors about their own access to ivory and other goods. A Bakélé trader, for instance, would start a rumor that he had an enormous tusk. The oldest man in the village had never seen a larger one. Someone would add that a cat had raised a litter of kittens in the hollow end. Measurements would be sent down river, and they, along with the stories, would grow with each successive messenger who hoped to benefit. If a ship were in the estuary, the captain was sure to hear the story from several sources and would be tempted (especially if he were inexperienced) to trust a significant amount of goods for such a prize, often to his great disappointment (J. L. Wilson 1856: 248).

One of the most important aspects of the trade cycle was the establishment of temporary alliances with women (*asukō*). Many of these alliances probably became permanent as both parties recognized the value of in-laws in strengthening trust in the trading cycle and in developing a more stable pattern for trade. Furthermore, intermarriages primarily for commercial reasons tended to lessen the chances of warfare. In some cases, a temporary liaison became permanent as part of a trade settlement, either out of desire or expediency (W. Walker February 13, 1843; August 10, 1848).

By the nineteenth century the flow of goods inland was matched by the movement of women in the opposite direction. While some evidence suggests that Bakélé women may have gone in both directions, Mpongwe women did not (Braouëzec 1861: 349). The mechanisms of long-distance trade, and especially the role of women, led to an early identification of the Mpongwe with Europeans and to the sentiment still voiced today that they are "the whites of Equatorial Africa." Whether Mpongwe men encouraged permanent relationships between European traders and Mpongwe women is questionable, but temporary ones were necessary and desirable for the expedition of the trading cycle (R. Walker 1866).

Goods required in marriage payments were essentially obtained through long-distance trade - a factor that determined and strengthened the inland-to-coast movement of women. Bridewealth for women from the interior consisted almost entirely of European goods, and the symbolic payments made for exchange marriages (mpenga) between Mpongwe families were also in goods of European origin, at least after 1840. Marriage within Mpongwe society and between the Mpongwe and other societies became increasingly associated with, and to some extent dependent upon, the mechanisms of the trade cycle.

Long-distance trade, then, either initiated or accentuated stratification between the coastal and inland societies. Apart from internal social distinctions based on clan, age, and sex, a class/ethnic division developed over time. This distinction may have begun before the penetration of European goods, but foreign goods provided a firmer basis for social stratification. The slave trade further accentuated the distinction. The flow of women in the opposite direction from the prestige goods had led, by 1800 at the latest, to a clear coast-to-forest trading hierarchy. The European role in this stratification was evident from the beginning, but the move from shipboard trade to land-based trade institutionalized that role. The precise date when land trade replaced ship trade is not known, but the establishment of Fort Aumale in 1844 by the French encouraged the private companies to build trading houses. The French naval presence on shore further interfered with the slave trade, which thereafter declined significantly, although it continued to the south (Vignon 1856).

After the beginning of barter on land, and especially after the construction of trading houses, it became easier for a young and comparatively inexperienced trader to receive enough goods on trust to begin at least one modest expedition up river. Friendship with a European merchant or the recommendation of a missionary was enough to warrant considerable credit. A trader needed canoes to carry goods up river and domestic slaves or kin to paddle the canoes. Each successful trading venture provided a basis for new and more extensive ones. After each trading cycle, a man improved his position

in terms of wealth, prestige and power by acquiring more wives and slaves, who, in turn, increased his family and his ability to invest in inland trading ventures. He might even become a patron for other traders. In some cases, trade increased the power of an oga; in others, young men who were successful in trade stood in a good position to become oga through traditional succession (Bucher 1977). By 1860, young men could no longer set up new villages, since the Agekaza on the right bank and the Asiga on the left already occupied the most strategic areas for trade with ships that entered the estuary.

After the 1850s some Mpongwe traders moved up river to places that had been ancestral lands in the eighteenth century. There they set up posts in or close to Shekiani villages, which lost their role as intermediaries in the trade with the interior. Indeed, intermarriage with the Mpongwe led to the assimilation of the Shekiani villages above Owendo. In earlier years, the Shekiani were not allowed in Mpongwe trading houses when business was being conducted - an attempt to keep them from the secrets of the trade.

The fact that the Mpongwe managed to obtain credit amounting to thousands of dollars in goods from European captains, and some goods on credit from the interior, while withholding payment for months and even years, is some indication of the relative wealth accumulated under their control - wealth constantly being used to reproduce itself in the form of domestic slaves, wives and patronage. The one-way movement of women was the most important mechanism the Mpongwe had for guarding their monopoly. Another was the common myth, encouraged by the coastal groups, that Europeans ate slaves - a corollary to the belief fostered by the Mpongwe and accepted by the Europeans that the interior groups were cannibals. Such stories were effective for several decades in deterring the interior groups and the Europeans from direct trade (Bucher 1977: 183).

NOTES

1. For the volume of slave exports, see Curtin 1969 and Lovejoy 1983.
2. The present "Mbatavéa" in Libreville is both a section of the city and a river that marked the northwest limits of the Agekaza/Glass at the beginning of French jurisdiction (1844), and it is still considered the boundary between Glass and the Plateau (Raponda-Walker 1963: 92).
3. An 1834 English map shows "King Quaben" and "King George's Town" in their habitual location. A "Prince William's Town" is noted on the left bank, one of the earliest

- English references to Rapontchombo/Denis (J. Arrowsmith, London, 1834 in Randles 1968).
4. The standard "piece" of cloth worth the ideal slave was forty lengths of india cloth at 18" by 12" a length (Rinchon 1929: 181).
 5. Most European commercial vessels had a supercargo who was responsible for all decisions regarding trade. In most of the American ships, however, the captain doubled as the supercargo, one probable reason for offering lower prices than the French. On the ceremonial aspects of the trade, see Linschoten 1934: 11-12; Astley 1745: vol. 3, 124.
 6. The "Round Trade" and "Sorting" were other names for the Bundle Trade (Wilson 1856: 245; Polanyi 1964; Walker 1876: 589ff; Bouët 1948: 153ff).

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CHAPTER 8

KRU EMIGRATION TO BRITISH AND FRENCH GUIANA, 1841-1857

Monica Schuler

Introduction

When slavery was abolished in the nineteenth century, imperialist nations revived the use of indentured labor for plantation production. As a result, contract labor circled the globe, and Asians and Africans moved from non-capitalist to capitalist production sectors (Saunders 1984; Tinker 1974; Corbitt 1971; Stewart 1951; Renault 1976; Laurence 1971; Adamson 1971; Schuler 1980; Galenson 1984). One such movement was the mid-nineteenth century importation of migrant workers from the Kru Coast of West Africa to British and French Guiana and, to a lesser extent, to Jamaica, Trinidad and Martinique.¹

The Kru were a voluntary contingent among approximately 52,000, mostly involuntary, indentured Africans who migrated to the Caribbean and the Guianas between the 1840s and 1860s to swell relatively small post-emancipation populations.² Although constituting a modest proportion of the over 600,000 indentured immigrants to the Caribbean region between 1835-1917, the Kru and other Africans arrived fairly early in the immigration era, and over a relatively short period, thereby concentrating their impact (Schuler 1980: 112-113; Roberts and Byrne 1966: 125-131; Renault 1976: 176-177; Roberts and Johnson 1972: 7; Laurence 1971: 42; Brereton 1981: 101-103; Mam-Lam-Fouck 1982: 142, 147; Lacascade 1907: 70-72; Knight 1978: 142).

The best available estimate of total Kru emigration to the Guianas and Caribbean is 2,421.³ Some two hundred emigrated to Jamaica, 150 went to Trinidad, and an estimated 260 went to Martinique (Wood 1981: 274).⁴ The majority found their way to British and French Guiana. Approximately 989 Kru men and an undetermined but small number of Kru women migrated to British Guiana between 1841-1853, and another 822 Kru went to French Guiana between 1854-1857. The Kru were a majority of the Africans who went to French Guiana. Although the Kru

constituted only seven percent of the total African immigrants embarking for British Guiana, they accounted for approximately 23 percent of workers recruited in Sierra Leone for that colony during the first four years of immigration.⁵ This unexpected Kru presence among liberated African immigrants excited a great deal of interest, and led to a number of recruiting expeditions to the Kru homeland. As a result, British Guiana had the second largest Kru diaspora at mid-century, a claim that French Guiana might have matched if many of its Kru workers had not deserted or died (Wood 1981: 278).⁶ This chapter focuses on the Kru majority who went to the two Guianas.

Kru migration to the Guiana-Caribbean region provides a case study of the intersection of an African subsistence or domestic economy with capitalist plantation economies at a crucial point in modern labor history - when Britain, France and other slave-trading nations agreed to stop the Atlantic slave trade, abolish slavery, and substitute wage labor for slave labor. From the Guiana-Caribbean perspective, the purpose of indentured migration was to remove labor from the influence of normal market forces - to acquire a cheap, controlled work force through labor rent and punitive contracts and to establish a reserve labor force that, through the discipline of high unemployment, would maintain a cheap and regular manpower supply (Adamson 1972: 32-33, 138-139; Adamson 1984: 42-48; Rodney 1980: 34-41). The short-lived Kru immigration scheme thus illustrates a continuing process, "the free transfer of values of pre-capitalist societies to imperialist powers," through labor migration (Meillassoux 1981: 95-98, 105-108).

The Kru originally became involved in maritime employment for Europeans in the seventeenth century in the course of exporting slaves, ivory, palm oil, rice, pepper, and other food products in exchange for European manufactures which the Kru converted into bridewealth. They were among the earliest African migrant wage workers.

The nineteenth century introduced major changes which determined the future direction of Kru commerce and labor migration (Massing 1977: 123-128; Sullivan 1978: 37, 64-68). European industrial development produced a massive demand for raw materials, such as palm oil, lumber, and rice (Meillassoux 1971: 49-50). Naval blockades curtailed the Kru middleman role in the slave trade, but, at the same time, the European demand for Kru labor increased. By 1847, the new Republic of Liberia, in some ways a harbinger of European imperialism, began seriously to erode Kru sovereignty, disrupting the Kru economy in the process (Martin 1968; Sullivan 1978; Shick 1979; Massing 1977, 174).

The Kru responded to these changes by greater participation in the international economy. They increased ivory and palm oil exports, began selling produce to the Afro-Americans

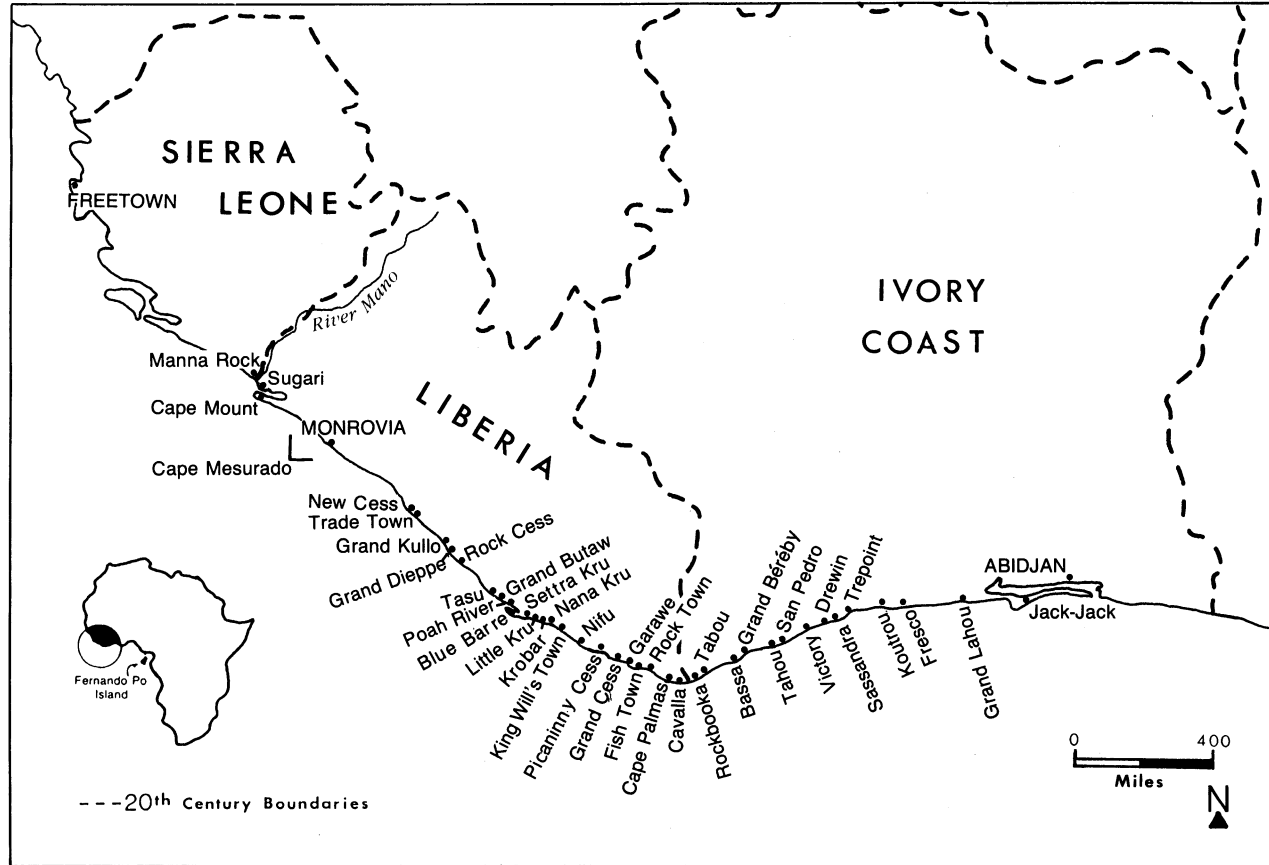
of Liberia, expanded maritime employment in anti-slave trade naval squadrons and/or palm oil ships, and engaged as long-shoremen, construction workers, and agricultural laborers in the European enclaves in West Africa and as far afield as the Panama Canal and the Guianas (Behrens 1974: 29-44, 81; Davis 1968: 50-54; Lynn 1984: 257-278; Brooks 1972: 13-55; Schwartz 1980: 151-154; McEvoy 1970: 155, 163).

The voluntary nature of transatlantic Kru migration as early as the 1840s and 1850s requires explanation, for the Kru were unusual in pre- and early colonial Africa, the Guianas and Caribbean, where compulsion, not economic incentive, accounted for most manpower development (Newbury 1975: 522-527).⁷ This chapter examines the migration push from Kru communities as a response to production and reproduction relations in self-sufficient lineage communities, but also as a defensive reaction to Afro-American settler pressures. The chapter also studies the pull from the Guianas and the West Indies and the countervailing pull that drew people back to the Kru homeland. It provides a brief survey of Kru experiences in the Guianas. Finally, it assesses the swift decline of a labor migration which had raised many hopes at its outset.

The Migration Push: The Kru

Before the twentieth century, the majority of Kru migrants seem to have originated in a coastal area stretching from Cape Mesurado to the Sassandra River (Wilson 1856: 84-85, 98-101). Once they took to maritime service with Europeans, these farming and fishing peoples acquired a special identity as "Krumen," a socio-professional category which may have originated with the mama krao, or Five Towns - Settra Kru, Nana Kru, Little Kru, Krobar, and King Will's Town (McEvoy 1977: 66-67; Behrens 1974: 8, 123-124; Sullivan 1978: 23-25; Davis 1968: 4-8).⁸ The "Kru" were never a single people, but an uncentralized collection of culturally similar dake (dako, sing.), groups of patrilineal land-holding units with common traditions and common political offices. These dake were the largest political and economic units in the Kru area. Most coastal dake occupied large towns, such as Settra Kru (the Wete dako) and Grand Cess (the Siglio dako), where political and commercial activities were concentrated.⁹ The Kabor and Gbeta dake lived in numerous fishing towns. Their inhabitants were skilled surfboaters, and as a result they became pioneers in European trade and maritime employment, and acquired a near-monopoly of external trade and maritime labor (Massing 1977: 62-63, 345-350; Sullivan 1978: 25-35, 66; Bridge 1845: 54-55, 62-63). Individual dake competed with each other and with Afro-American settlements for trade, land, or foreign labor opportunities, and conflict among them was a common feature of

Map 8.1 SOURCES OF KRU MIGRANTS



the 1840s and 1850s, when labor migration to the Guianas occurred (Sullivan 1978: 25-27, 60, 140, 152-159, 209; Martin 1968: 92-193, 237-289, 367-414; Massing 1977: 147-148; Davis 1968: 70-71, 85-86).

Besides the Kru Coast, Kru men could be found at work in many ports, European forts, factories and colonies in West Africa (Behrens 1974: 79-82; Brooks 1972: 25). Guianese and Caribbean labor recruiters were first attracted to the expatriate Kru settlement in Freetown, capital of the British West African colony of Sierra Leone. Krutown, as the Kru enclave in Freetown was called, dated from the early nineteenth century when Kru began to gravitate to Sierra Leone to seek work on merchant ships, naval vessels, and the docks, or they found employment on farms, in European households and in the timber industry. Krutown grew in size, attaining a population of around eight hundred in the 1840s (Curtin 1969: 292n).

Kru labor was acquired through commercial mechanisms that were already established on the Kru Coast. Workers required some payment in advance; that is, recruiters had to extend credit, and payment had to be in an assortment of goods, a type of exchange referred to as "assortment bargaining."¹⁰ The Kru calculated prices in rounds, a round being a collection of goods having a certain value. If Kru labor cost six rounds, for example, a foreign trader paid with six of everything in his stock of merchandise (Massing 1977: 130-131).

The credit aspect of Kru labor traffic involved a kind of double credit. The elders delivered their men to the contractor for payments in merchandise representing one or two months' wages, plus the contractor's promise to repatriate the men after a certain number of years, while the migrants themselves were bound to repay these advances out of future wages (Brooks 1972: 36-37).¹¹ To the Kru, these advances represented the temporary and possibly the permanent loss of migrants (Wilson 1856: 106). Obviously these small sums could not compensate for the loss of a Kru adult as soldier, farmer and father, but this was the best bargain the Kru could strike, and they risked overseas earning opportunities as long as the odds favored repatriation.

Kru migrant workers generally preferred service with naval squadrons, where in the mid-1850s they could earn from \$4-\$10 or 16s.-£2 per month on United States men-of-war, and around £1.10s. or \$7.50 with food on British naval vessels.¹² In addition, Kru sailors received a share of prize money for captured slavers (Brooks 1972: 42-44). Merchant and palm oil ships trading in the Niger Delta paid between \$2-\$5 (8s.-£1) per month (Brooks 1972: 36-37). In the mid-1840s a Liberian experimental farm on the St. Paul River paid Kru only \$3.00 (12s.) per month plus food. In the 1840s Kru in Sierra Leone earned between \$3-\$4 (12-16s.) per month plus a quart of low grade rice and a little salt.¹³

Taken at face value, wages offered by British Guianese recruiters appeared higher than West African wages, although a higher cost-of-living probably made real wages much lower. By performing two sugarcane field tasks a day, a Kru man in British Guiana could earn between \$20-\$33 or £4-£6.6s. per month. This was twice the usual earnings from sugar estate boat work, which the Kru actually preferred, but which they began to desert for field work. In addition, British Guianese employers provided food and clothing for the first six months, permanent rent-free housing, and provision grounds where immigrants could grow their own food. Wages were calculated on the assumption that workers would produce some of their food and perhaps even a surplus for sale. It is unlikely that Kru men who planned to repatriate in a few years went to the trouble of clearing and cultivating land, however, so they would have had to spend some of their earnings for food. In 1846, passage of the Sugar Duties Act caused a decline in wages (Adamson 1972: 32), and in 1850, Kru workers had to accept contracts that paid only the minimum wage in British Guiana. By then, Sierra Leone wages matched the British Guiana minimum of 8d. a day, and employment in British Guiana became less attractive.¹⁴ Kru leaders began to argue that there was no advantage in migrating so far away.¹⁵ French Guiana's wage offer, even though inflated, was not very competitive. French recruiters advertised food rations along with a monthly wage of 15 francs - 11s. 7d. or \$2.89, but immigrants actually earned only 11 francs - 8s.3d. or \$2.00.¹⁶ The first Kru returned home after the termination of French Guiana emigration, too late to alert others to the fraud.

By the time the Kru began to migrate to Guianese and Caribbean plantations, Kru migration was well-established, with returning Kru migrants rapidly integrated into their town and village communities. These were "domestic communities" - self-sustaining, predominantly agricultural communities where individuals used lineage land to satisfy basic needs (Meillassoux 1981: 34). Kru migration developed as an organic element of two basic sets of social relations. The first were production relations, where new work teams emerged generationally, with juniors becoming clients of and making prestations to seniors, who in turn managed and redistributed wealth. The second were reproduction relations where, in production units too small to reproduce themselves regularly, seniors managed group reproduction through the exchange of prepubescent females among similar polygynous communities (Meillassoux 1981: 60-61).¹⁷ While children and wives worked on family farms, young males migrated seasonally to work in the developing European capitalist sector of West Africa in order to increase communal bridewealth stores.

Bridewealth, an abstract representation of marriage claims against pubescent women, circulated through a network of

kinship, affinity, and clientage. Prestation, distribution, and gift exchange acquired, in the process, social and political characteristics which rendered the transformation of goods into trade commodities difficult. Hoarding neutralized the incipient commercial value of bridewealth.¹⁸ Thus Kru migrants sold their labor power in the capitalist sector for commodities which they transformed into non-commercial bridewealth in the domestic sector (Meillassoux 1971: 60-61; 1981: 58-72; Wilson 1856: 108-109, 126-127; Bridge 1845: 38, 56-57).

The annexation of Kru land in the 1840s and 1850s by Afro-American settlers put pressure on the Kru and further pushed migrants outward. The loss of land increased production costs, while settler competition in trade hurt the Kru economy (Massing 1977: 174; Sullivan 1978: 134-220; Martin 1968: 92-120, 161-205, 237-289). The Kru responded by using a portion of migrants' earnings as capital for new commercial ventures which their labor contacts with Europeans facilitated. In this way they successfully defended themselves against Afro-American encroachment for nearly a hundred years (Sullivan 1978: 72).

The Kru tried to defend themselves militarily from the settlers, for increased Afro-American immigration and the attempts of the Liberian Republic to consolidate its position after 1847 threatened Kru territorial sovereignty (Sullivan 1978: 162-205).¹⁹ At this point, the acquisition of guns and gunpowder may have become a major goal of Kru labor migration. Guns, flints and gunpowder were common components of nineteenth century Kru maritime trade. Like any other European product that became useful to the Kru, firearms and ammunition became involved in brideprice, particularly to exchange for cattle, the most important form of bridewealth (Massing 1977: 131-133, 135).²⁰

Recruitment for the Diane in 1855 provides the only known case of firearms payment for Kru labor,²¹ but after 1860 returning Kru migrants appear to have taken back mostly guns and gunpowder (Martin 1968: 241). By the turn of the century, Kru workers were usually paid in guns and powder or else invested most of their after-tax earnings in rifles and cartridges for defense against the Liberians (Brooks 1972: 52-53; Massing 1977: 164-165; Davis 1968: 82).

The agricultural cropping cycle required that Kru migration be seasonal, for men were needed for the heavy work of clearing new farmland before the onset of the rainy season (Massing 1977: 218-220).²² Kru men rarely signed on with ships before their crops were harvested (Massing 1977: 241-243, 246). At first, they migrated for periods of less than a year, but once they became involved in distant plantation employment under contract, absences lengthened. Nevertheless, the Kru were averse to labor service of longer than three years (Wilson 1856: 105-106; Brooks 1972: 37).

Elders supervised labor recruitment of young, usually unmarried men from fifteen to twenty called kafa, and adult soldiers called gbo (Massing 1977: 56, 58, 84-88; Sullivan 1978: 55-56; Frankel 1966: 158-159). The kafa and gbo were age sets, that is, age groups with proper names, distinctive symbols, songs and rites (Massing 1977: 85). Experienced migrant laborers became headmen and recruited workers from the gbo age set of their own town and lineages and possibly from the lineages of affines as well (Behrens 1974: 131). Thus enlarged marriage networks and labor recruitment were mutually beneficial (McEvoy 1970: 156).

Headmen, who earned twice as much as their men, supervised work gang welfare and discipline, for which they received a part of the workers' earnings. Gbo marine laborers usually made a series of one or two-year tours before they turned forty. Before retiring, they trained youths from the kafa age set to take their places, and then settled down on homesteads with wives acquired for them by their elders out of their foreign earnings (Brooks 1972: 30-31). Young workers could be initiated into an age set even in their absence from home, a development that must have counteracted, to some extent, the lengthening of Kru labor service in places like Sierra Leone, Fernando Po, and the Guianas (Frankel 1966: 159).

Upon returning home Kru workers contributed most of their earnings to the community. Town heads had to be supported (Brooks 1972: 67; Frankel 1966: 161), and the family expected the migrant to give most of his earnings to its treasury, the rest going as presents to his mother, sisters and age-mates (Wilson 1856: 106-107; Bridge 1845: 17-18). This surrender of earnings was a protective device by which lineages and communities resisted the disintegration which otherwise would have resulted from expanding commercial relations. There was personal compensation however, for the family provided security. Many retired migrant workers had a second career as merchants, an activity for which European employment constituted a kind of apprenticeship, and their migrant earnings provided necessary capital. Headmen did not have to surrender their earnings to the family treasury but could spend them as they wished, and upon retirement from labor migration they assumed important leadership positions (Brooks 1972: 30, 33, 42; Sullivan 1978: 70-71; Burton 1863: 2: 20). Just as young adulthood was a temporary status, so migrant labor was a temporary occupation, and young Kru men were therefore not a subordinate class. For the successful migrant laborer, there was the almost certain prospect of rising into the senior age grade with a large and prosperous agricultural family, supported in old age by a new generation of young men and their wives (Wilson 1856: 107).

Yet labor migration did involve risks that the Kru could not control. Work was hard and the accident rate often high;

rations were short, and overseas public health conditions were poor. Despite their "hale, healthy and robust" appearance at home, many Kru died during overseas service (Brooks 1972: 12; Burton 1863: 2: 35-36; Wilson 1856: 102; Johnstone 1840: 2-3). Saving money often took longer than anticipated, forcing postponement of repatriation.²³ Repatriation itself was a big problem. Returning migrants were often left to make their way back home from Fernando Po or Sierra Leone. They frequently spent all their earnings, returning home penniless or not at all (Brooks 1972: 46). Returnees might be robbed on the way home (Wilson 1856: 106). So young men generally departed reluctantly and returned eagerly (Brooks 1968: 37). "It is a touching sight," Burton (1863: vol. 2, 35-36) wrote, "to see some poor fellow, with the death rattle in his throat, lying unheeded upon the decks, whilst all others are craning their necks over the bulwarks, and stepping over his almost unconscious body to get the first glimpse of 'we country'." As one man told Burton, the Kru man was "Nigger for ship, king for country" (Burton 1863: vol. 2, 27; McEvoy 1970: 156).

The Migration Pull: The Guianas

The shortlived Kru migration to the Guianas was intended to relieve labor shortages following British and French abolition of slavery in 1834 and 1848, respectively. As emancipated women and children withdrew from plantation labor, and as men refused to work the inhumanly long hours of the slave era, employers faced an initial period of intense competition for labor in what was clearly a sellers' market. During this period, smaller, less efficient, heavily indebted plantations failed. While productivity eventually increased in British Guiana through sugar plantation consolidation and mechanization, slave emancipation in French Guiana premanently depressed sugar, coffee, cotton, and lumber production, and gold mining did not fulfill its promise. In the meantime employers combined to lower wages and to restrict customary workers' benefits such as free housing, kitchen gardens, and food subsidies. Workers retaliated with general strikes or withdrawal from large to small, less labor-intensive plantations, or to vacant lands where they successfully raised domestic food provisions or minor export crops. Planters counterattacked in the short run by passing vagrancy laws and by selling small parcels of land to individual workers whose labor they hoped to retain, while in the long run they enacted legislation to prevent squatting and to limit the sale of crown lands to the rural working class (Brereton 1981: 81; Adamson 1972: 34-41; Rodney 1981: 1-33, 50-58, 90-102; Coudreau 1887: vol. 1, 51-57, 144-152, 160-196; Ministère de la Marine et des Colonies 1884: 165-169; Lacascade 1907: 38-68). Most importantly, planter-

controlled legislatures prevailed upon metropolitan governments to subsidize massive importation of foreign laborers under indentures or labor contracts which tied them to employers for periods ranging from one to six years (Schuler 1980; Laurence 1971; Lacascade 1907: 69-97; Adamson 1972: 41-56; Mam-Lam-Fouck 1982: 130-131).

Possessing only 98,000 people at emancipation, British Guiana became the major importer of indentured labor in the Caribbean. Between 1834-1917 it gained 300,000 immigrants - more than half the number of workers introduced into the British Caribbean. Seventy-nine percent of these immigrants derived from India, 11 percent from Madeira, and 4 percent each from China and Africa (Roberts and Byrne 1966: 127; Roberts and Johnson 1972: 6-7). French Guiana never came close to matching this record. At the time of emancipation in 1848, French Guiana's total population, excluding Amerindians, was only 20,000, and despite government support for immigration, only 10,000 African, Indian and Chinese entered the colony between 1854-1883, when immigration ceased altogether (Mam-Lam-Fouck 1982: 142; Daget 1982: 1, 13, 27; Renault 1976: 176-177).

British Guiana continued to import laborers even after a sufficiency of manpower was achieved in the 1870s (Adamson 1972: 138-139; Rodney 1981: 47, 59). Thus continuous immigration was more than a matter of labor supply and demand. It established a reserve labor force which could be made to work under conditions and for wages which workers would have otherwise rejected. It perpetuated primitive accumulation through the transfer of ready-made adult workers from non-capitalist to capitalist societies, and provided employers with a labor rent since wages represented only the immediate reconstitution of immigrants' labor power (Meillassoux 1981: 92-93, 97, 105-108, 114-115, 154). Kru migrants, the classic pre-capitalist work force, combined all these advantages, but erratic recruitment and repatriation, declining wages, and recruiters' involvement in slave trading, prevented their continuous migration to the Guianas.

Kru Emigration to British Guiana

The British government's fear of a renewal of the slave trade explains why, for the first five years of the African immigration scheme, Kru recruitment occurred in Sierra Leone, a British colony, and not directly on the Kru Coast (Asiegbu 1969: 48-63).²⁴ The Kru were drawn from the Kru settlement in Freetown. They joined other migrants who were liberated Africans, and Kru were among the first group of workers who left from British Guiana, Jamaica and Trinidad in 1841. Kru emigration from Sierra Leone to British Guiana was most intense between 1841-1844, reaching its peak in August 1844 when 110

TABLE 8.1

KRU EMIGRATION TO BRITISH GUIANA, 1841-1853

Year	Ship	S. Leone	Kru Coast	Total	
				Kru	Ship
1841	<u>Superior</u> I	23		23	199
	<u>Superior</u> II	60(a)		60	226
1842	<u>Superior</u> III	60		60	146
1843	<u>Arabian</u> II	16(a)		16	48
	<u>Superior</u> IV	9		9	17
1844	<u>Arabian</u> III	92		92	104
	<u>Arabian</u> IV	2		2	266
	<u>Arabian</u> V	22		22	22
	<u>Arabian</u> VI	110		110	247
	<u>Arabian</u> VII		26	26	212
1845	<u>Louisa Baillie</u> I	3		3	259
	<u>Arabian</u> VIII	2		2	78
1846	<u>Margaret</u>		60	60	164
	<u>Louisa Baillie</u> II	24		24	115
1847	<u>Prince Regent</u>		108	108	108
1850	<u>Glentanner</u> II	10		10	267
	<u>Clarendon</u>	41(c)	38	79	159
1852	<u>Julindur</u>	10		10	140
1853	<u>Elphinstone</u> I		187(b)	187	187
	<u>Elphinstone</u> II		86(b)	86	86
Total		484	505	989	3,050

Sources: CO 111/180, CO 111/182, CO 111/193, CO 111/201, CO 267/176, CO 111/205, CO 111/207, CO 111/208, CO 111/210, CO 267/184, CO 111/221, CO 111/223, CO 111/225, CO 111/231, CO 111/232, CO 111/233, CO 111/253, CO 267/185, CO 267/189, CO 267/214, PP 1851, XXII [1383.], 405, CO 267/215, CO 267/217, PP 1859, XIV [2555. Sess.2], 256, CO 111/244, GNA 1853, PP#1852-53, XL [1647.], 116.

Notes:

a. Plus an unknown number of wives on Superior II; including one wife on Arabian II.

b. Up to twelve people on Elphinstone I and thirty-seven on Elphinstone II were from the Vai area and may have been slaves.

c. The original number of recruits was forty-five, but four escaped.

out of 247 Africans emigrating on the seventh voyage of the Demerara ship Arabian were Kru (Table 8.1). The number plummeted thereafter, and never reached the 1844 level again, and Kru emigration from Sierra Leone ceased along with liberated African emigration in 1852.

Kru Coast recruitment, which began in 1844, was more erratic, for direct shipping between British Guiana and the Kru Coast began late and was short-lived, lasting only from 1850-1853. Despite considerable effort on the part of representatives dispatched from British Guiana, Sierra Leone, and even Trinidad, only six shipments, consisting of a mere 505 workers, left the Kru Coast, all destined for British Guiana (Table 8.1).

To planters stymied by local competition for labor, the potential of this unanticipated group of Africans from Sierra Leone appeared boundless. Jamaica's Immigration Commissioner "never supposed there had existed such a race of men of their color."²⁵ Most noted their prodigious capacity and organization for work, comparing their patient endurance of hard work and even corporal punishment to that of asses or cattle.²⁶ To planters, the Kru of the 1840s had only two weaknesses - a reputed aversion to plantation labor and to long-term or permanent emigration. In the ensuing decade, West Indian and Guianese employers would overcome the supposed Kru objection to plantation labor, but not their opposition to long indentures or permanent migration.

To encourage Kru emigration, both the British and French employed special representatives whom the British called delegates. The British colonies recruited more voluntary laborers than the French, and made greater use of this recruiting technique (Schuler 1980: 15, 19-22, 24). Delegates played an ambiguous role in immigration. They could be at one and the same time representatives of a colonial immigration department, labor recruiters for particular planters, and headmen of their own ethnic group.²⁷ Obvious contradictions existed between the use of delegates to instill confidence in Africans and their use as advertising agents for the dubious attractions of plantation colonies, and British Guianese officials did not hesitate to screen delegates and even repatriates in order to eliminate immigration critics (Asiegbu 1969: 105-111).

R. G. Butts on the Kru Coast, 1844

By the time R. G. Butts, the British Guiana planter, went to West Africa as the Demerara and Berbice planters' representative in 1844, liberated African reluctance to emigrate was marked.²⁸ Butts was to assess prospects for emigration from Sierra Leone and the Kru Coast.²⁹ He arrived in Freetown on the Arabian in late July 1844, accompanied by thirty-seven

African returnees, including eleven Kru men. Butts found little Sierra Leonian or recaptive interest in British Guiana, and secured his first recruits only when the governor sequestered new captives (Schuler 1980: 25-26). Butts met several times with Kru headmen and climaxed his talks with a dinner for over two hundred in Krutown. They agreed to make up any deficiencies in the number of liberated African recruits and requested that British Guiana send a ship directly to the Kru Coast.³⁰

Butts departed for the Kru Coast in September, remaining there until mid-November, 1844. He visited New Cess, a fishing community and one of the last slave-trading towns on the Kru Coast. Joe West, the chief, was at war and had few of his own men to spare but offered to sell Butts from 1,200-1,500 people immediately. Butts declined. At Settra Kru, Butts met with the ruler as well as the town heads of Krobar and Little Kru, then left for Cape Palmas, a main Kru labor recruitment center. Butts spent eight days there as the guest of the nominal Glebo head, King Freeman (Martin 1968: 22, 101-102), who called a public meeting attended by thousands. Butts did his first serious recruiting there, securing Freeman's son and his attendant, the Prince's Mouth or spokesman, to visit British Guiana as the chiefs' delegates at \$5 (£1) per month, and to return by August 1845.³¹ Butts left Cape Palmas with twenty-five recruits, sailed as far as the five Krao towns, and then walked "the whole breadth of the Kroo country with a large retinue," before returning to Freetown.³²

Butts discovered that Kru leaders favored emigration to British Guiana as a practical education for their men as well as for the money they could earn, but they objected to the non-return of Kru workers and to the continued use of Sierra Leone as an entrepôt in the Kru labor traffic. His "clear understanding with these people" was that the migrants would work five years in British Guiana at current wages. They could return cost-free in five years, or sooner if they paid \$2 for each year they did not work.³³

Back in Sierra Leone Butts found that the reluctance of captives to emigrate had spread to the Kru, including thirty who accompanied him from the Kru Coast and who decided to remain in Sierra Leone. He sailed on the Arabian in January 1845 with 217 Africans of whom only twenty-six were Kru, including Prince Freeman and his spokesman.³⁴

Three months after the Arabian's arrival, the British Guiana governor reported that "Mr. Butts, Gribbo Chief and his 'mouth' or minister . . . have . . . been perambulating the Colony and it appears are very desirous that their countrymen should come to this land - where, they say, the men are 'Gods'."³⁵ The prince and his attendant appear to have returned to Sierra Leone a few months later. The next British Guianese recruiter on the Kru Coast tried to locate them but

failed, and the colony never capitalized on whatever goodwill the Prince's visit may have generated.³⁶

The Margaret and Prince Regent Recruitments, 1846, 1847

Butts' voyage failed to produce a formal Kru Coast-British Guiana emigration scheme, and the two following recruiting expeditions were afterthoughts, the result of failures to fill the ships Margaret and Prince Regent elsewhere. These ships were chartered by a group of planters in Berbice County. T. C. Bagot, formerly a civil servant and secretary of a private immigration society, acted as recruiting agent for the Margaret, which went to Sierra Leone in 1845 with Bagot, thirty-six Africans and their children. Each carried \$200-\$800, plus trunks of goods and clothing. These signs of material success failed to tempt many Sierra Leonians, however.³⁷

Bagot secured only 118 labor recruits, and proceeded to the Kru Coast without permission. From January 9-12, 1846 he held talks with Kru Coast leaders, including the Settra Kru merchant factor Jack Purser, who later became sub-agent of emigration for British Guiana. Bagot secured sixty laborers from Settra Kru, Krobar, Nana Kru, Little and Great Nifu and Grand Cess.³⁸ Jack Purser, King John of Settra Kru, and the Niffu ruler each entrusted a son to him "to learn to read and write and to work good work," and the Nifu and Grand Cess people sent a delegate to inspect the colony.

The Kru proposed a British Guiana-Kru Coast shipping service which would provide opportunities to export palm oil to British Guiana in exchange for sugar and rum. Bagot endorsed the idea of closer contact but envisioned it only in terms of a steady Kru labor supply, and nothing came of the proposal.

Bagot offered employment terms similar to Butts', but he seems to have confused the Kru, who believed they could return home free of charge after three years instead of after the statutory five years' residence. To instill confidence, Bagot presented affidavits to the leaders who entrusted workers to him, but the affidavits were vague.³⁹ Jack Purser's merely stated that "his son should return, or be sent back to give him, and his countrymen, information of that country, as a means of establishing a belief of what is told them, and as an encouragement for a more extensive emigration there." Purser's understanding was different, however, and in March 1847 he appealed to the governor of Sierra Leone to help bring Settra Kru's sons back from Berbice, claiming that "they faithfully agreed they should bring back our children to us last rainy season, and we are afraid they have done bad."⁴⁰

When Purser's inquiries reached British Guiana, the governor claimed that only two men from Purser's list were

willing to return home immediately. The sons of the Settra Kru ruler and Purser were among four who allegedly wished to remain longer. The remaining six supposedly could not be located. That month thirty-three Kru men returned to Africa carrying a total of £571.15s.10d. with them.⁴¹ Many more had applied, but officials, intent on preventing dissatisfied immigrants from returning, apparently detained immigration critics (Asiegbu 1969: 104-111).

In 1847 the Berbice planters chartered the Prince Regent to sail to St. Helena "or wherever there was a prospect of obtaining emigrants." Once more the search failed, and so the ship headed for the Kru Coast, collecting 108 Kru workers from Great and Little Nifu, Grand Cess, Poah River, Garawe, and Cape Palmas.⁴²

In April of the following year, the Bangalore, failing, like the others, to get any laborers at Freetown, became the sole Trinidad transport to visit the Kru Coast. The effort failed, for the Kru continued to complain about their emigrants' long absences, but knowledge of this did not deter British Guiana's planters from trying again.⁴³ They sent sixty Kru men to Sierra Leone in June 1850, and resumed Kru Coast recruitment in September with the expedition of the Clarendon, under a Colonial Office contract with the shipping firm of Hyde, Hodge and Company (Asiegbu 1969: 138-139).⁴⁴

The Clarendon on the Kru Coast September-October 1850

In an attempt to streamline operations and prevent abuses, the Colonial Office made Hyde, Hodge responsible for recruitment as well as repatriation and indenture (Asiegbu 1969: 138-139). This meant that the company's agent issued contracts on the Kru Coast instead of in British Guiana. The terms included three years' labor service at the British Guiana minimum wage of 8d. per day. The Kru could choose their own employers if they were willing to forfeit guaranteed repatriation in the company's ships. None appear to have exercised this option.⁴⁵

Eighty resident liberated Africans and forty-five Kru men boarded the ship in Sierra Leone.⁴⁶ Accompanied by Fisher, the Sierra Leone government emigration agent, Hyde, Hodge's agent enrolled five River Cess laborers at Monrovia, three at River Cess, and then stopped at Settra Kru, Nana Kru, and King Will's Town. These three Kru towns were still hostile to emigration, and were also at war. A King Will's man who had returned recently from British Guiana on the Clarendon headed for a second term in the colony. He was penniless, however, presumably having lost his savings in Freetown, and although he reported favorably on the colony, his own condition belied his

words. Nevertheless, he persuaded three of his relatives to join the ship, while he remained behind.

Nifu leaders, angry that none of their men were on board, ordered the recruiters to move on. A four-day stay at Grand Cess proved nearly as unproductive, and only eight persons volunteered. Indeed, the stop gave four Poah River recruits from the Sierra Leone contingent an opportunity to abscond. The Clarendon's tour ended at Cape Palmas, where despite Glebo bitterness at the long absence of their men in British Guiana, twenty-six Glebo volunteered.⁴⁷

The Two Elphinstone Voyages, 1853

The final recruiting voyages to the Kru Coast were made by Hyde, Hodge's Elphinstone in January-February and September, 1853, under a new contract with the British Guiana government. This authorized the company to import 15,000 Kru workers over a six-year period, at a bounty of £7 per adult and a rate of £4.10s. for each person repatriated (Aslegbu 1969: 146).⁴⁸ The contract remained in force for only one year, however, and fell far short of its target.

The first expedition secured a total of 187 Kru and Vai. For the first time in British Guiana's Kru Coast recruitment, a ship took on laborers at Cape Mount in Tewa Vai country, west of the Kru area, a location where slave trading with Spaniards continued (Holsoe 1977: 138-143). The recruiters secured seventy-eight men from Trade Town, Manna, Rock Cess, Tarsu, and Grand Butaw. Hostility to the recruiters reached a peak in other communities, whose sons had not returned from British Guiana. At one town (Settra Kru?), more than one thousand people, some brandishing knives and "implements of war," made "fearful gestures" and danced around Thenstead, the company's agent, and Thibon, the ship's West Indian surgeon, shouting, "You come for more Boys; where are those you took away." Nifu leaders threatened to detain the two men until their sons returned, but they escaped.⁴⁹

The recruiters headed for Cape Palmas after collecting a few men from Grand Cess, but upon learning that Cape Palmas leaders also forbade emigration until the return of their men from the Clarendon voyage, they proceeded to Half Cavalla.⁵⁰ It was probably there that four or five Christian Kru boarded the ship.⁵¹ Little interest was shown at Half Cavalla, and the recruiters moved on to Tabou, where they enlisted ninety-seven men before departing for British Guiana.⁵²

Hyde, Hodge's recruitment terms for the Elphinstone's first voyage are well-documented. The company's agent followed normal Kru Coast hiring practices, paying duth, or tribute, to the elders, and advancing goods allegedly worth \$10.00 or £2., approximately two months' wages, to each recruit (Wilson 1856:

106).⁵³ While the amount and cost of each item advanced to Kru migrants in 1853 is unknown, available accounts make it clear that the transactions involved the customary round trade. The merchandise assortment closely resembled other nineteenth-century imports, except that guns and gunpowder were absent. The assortment included iron coffers, leaf tobacco, box locks and keys, soap, rum, and textiles.⁵⁴

The first month's advance was intended to compensate an emigrant's relatives and friends for his loss; the second outfitted the emigrant in a suit consisting of a pair of duck trousers, a striped shirt, and a red cap. This suit, donned before departure, was stripped off at embarkation and presented to friends remaining behind. The company reserved another outfit for the men to wear upon disembarkation.⁵⁵

In 1853, a competitive British Guiana daily wage ranged from 1s. 4d. to 2s. and might be as high as 2s. 8d. with task work. The Elphinstone Kru contracts restricted Kru wages to 10d. a day, however.⁵⁶ Working a six-day week, at 10d. per day, a Kru laborer could earn only £1 per month, from which his employer would deduct 2s. a month for about twenty months to repay the debt to Hyde, Hodge. The recruits were unaware of these realities, and Hyde, Hodge maintained a deliberate silence on the issue, arguing that in the "infancy of Emigration," it would not do to "clog the advances with specific conditions of repayment out of future wages," and left the matter to employers.⁵⁷

The company inflated the prime cost of the merchandise advanced to the Kru, first submitting a bill of £477.10s., and then lowering it to £279.2s.8d. in response to complaints from the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners, who considered it normal practice for merchants to mark up goods 500-600 percent above their prime cost in England. The Commissioners awarded the company only £282, a sum that also covered insurance, freight and warehouse costs. This protected the British Guiana legislature, which had to pay the bill, but not the Kru workers.⁵⁸ As we shall see, a shrewd Kru chief, Jombo, renegotiated the contract on more favorable terms upon his arrival in British Guiana.

Hyde, Hodge's biggest coup was the engagement of Jombo, an influential leader of Picanniny Cess, who also represented Fishmen from Manna, Tarsu, and Little Butaw. Having worked in Sierra Leone, Jombo spoke English, and he agreed to act as a salaried interpreter and general assistant; he was to inspect labor conditions in British Guiana and return immediately with previous Kru migrants, or else there would be no further emigration from the towns he represented.⁵⁹

Jombo's decision to become involved in the Elphinstone recruitment may have resulted from intense friction between the towns he represented and the American settlers in Sinoe County, Liberia. Butaw had blockaded settler-interior commerce since

1846, and animosities intensified in December 1853 when the settlers interdicted Tarsu, Grand and Little Butaw. War broke out in 1855 (Sullivan 1978: 209-219). Under such conditions, the return of Kru migrants and their savings from British Guiana may have been imperative. When Jombo arrived in British Guiana, he appeared preoccupied with the Kru-Sinoe County settler conflict, for he informed the governor that he had been making war on the Afro-Americans. Accompanied by six compatriots, he toured the East Coast of Demerara county by train, visiting Kru workers on estates and Kru freeholders in the villages where he apparently realized his goal of collecting \$1.00 from every Kru man in the colony. Local officials thought the men would never comply, but they did, demonstrating Jombo's "extraordinary influence over his countrymen," from whom he reaped "a golden harvest."⁶⁰ The tax collection may have been for the Kru war effort.⁶¹

Having learned from the governor himself that the Kru could earn up to three times as much as the contractual 10d. a day, Jombo demanded they be paid the going rate without having to forfeit their right to free repatriation; otherwise he would not allow them to remain. The governor was outraged but complied, requiring, however, a fifty-cent monthly deduction to pay for repatriation. The men remained obliged to repay the advances.

Fifty-two Kru men and six children departed with Jombo. The men stated that they would return with these six-to-seven-year-olds after "mak[ing] the children Kroos. . . ."⁶² They left for Sierra Leone and the Kru Coast in early April 1853 without a doctor; thirteen passengers contracted smallpox, and two died. Fisher dispatched forty-six returnees to their respective homes, and secured forty-five fresh recruits in their place. Another forty men, twenty-one from Cape Mount, sixteen from Monrovia, and three from Trade Town, were added to the Elphinstone passengers before it departed in September with eighty-five emigrants. Four men who had arrived in her earlier in the year travelled as delegates. An eighty-sixth passenger, omitted in some counts, could have been Prince Jombo's promised brother.⁶³ This was the Elphinstone's second and last voyage to British Guiana, and it marked the end of Kru Coast recruitment.

Ultimately, British Guiana's Kru labor recruitment foundered, not on the Kru Coast, but on a decision to recruit in the adjacent Tewo and Gallinas regions of the Vai. A struggle to end the slave trade began in 1848 when coastal Vai chiefs, hoping to increase their access to British imports through "legitimate" trade, agreed to stop the slave trade.⁶⁴ Interior chiefs resented the loss of slave trade revenues, however, and pro- and anti-slave trade factions fought a war which the latter won in 1849 with British assistance. That year Liberian forces, with British and United States naval

support, attacked and destroyed coastal slave barracoons from the Gallinas River (Vai) to Trade Town (Kru), and the Liberians purchased the region from local rulers. Internal wars continued into the 1850s, ending in 1856, three years after the termination of British Guiana's recruitment and two years after the beginning of labor recruitment for French Guiana. The Liberian government failed to control Vai-Spanish and Vai-French slaving activities in the fifties, and for their part, the Vai found it impossible to replace the labor traffic. A hundred thousand people either died or were sold as slaves in this period, a development that involved both Guianas (Holsoe 1967: 138-155; 1977: 293-296).⁶⁵

Accusations of Hyde, Hodge slave-trading among the Vai surfaced in Liberia in February 1853 in the wake of recruitment for the Elphinstone. The Cape Mount Vai ruler, George Cain, had contracted to supply J. N. Lewis, Hyde, Hodge's Monrovia agent, with laborers who were actually De and Gola captives. Lewis allegedly "bought" (i.e., he paid "wage advances") two lots of ten and twelve De and Gola slaves from Prince Mana, son of King Siaka of the Gallinas Vai, and he took them to Monrovia in April to await the ship's return.⁶⁶ Four escaped from Monrovia to Cape Mount, and two of them were taken on board the British naval vessel Polyphemus.⁶⁷ The fate of the remaining eighteen is unknown, although they may have been among twenty-one Cape Mount or sixteen Monrovia recruits noted in the Elphinstone passenger list. Although the Liberian president issued a proclamation that April, warning that the advance paid to recruits had tempted slave traders to deal with Hyde, Hodge's agents, he did not prevent the sailing of emigrants recruited at Cape Mount.⁶⁸

Hyde, Hodge denied the charges of slave-trading and withdrew from Kru Coast recruiting as "unremunerative."⁶⁹ The Colonial Office upheld the company's innocence but conceded that the emigration scheme was being "converted into a means of disposing of captives taken in war." Accordingly, all African labor recruitment outside of British colonies was discontinued.⁷⁰

Just as British Guiana's Kru Coast recruitment ended in 1853, the French government decided to recruit African labor through rachat préalable or "redemption." This involved the purchase of African slaves who were "manumitted" and transported to French colonies as indentured laborers.⁷¹ The policy was implemented in 1856 over British protests that it contravened the 1845 Anglo-French Convention for the termination of the slave trade.⁷² The French remained obdurate on the subject until 1860, when the British opened India to French labor recruiters in exchange for French termination of African labor recruitment (Renault 1976: 24-48, 55-60, 96-102, 113-114, 119-120).

Kru Emigration to French Guiana

Four shipping companies recruited and transported Africans to the French colonies, but only two, Maison Maës of Nantes and Régis Frères of Marseilles, did so regularly. Maës, through its agent Captain Chevalier, an old slave trader, became the sole supplier of laborers from an area stretching from Gorée, Senegal to the Ivory Coast.⁷³ Under the first of three contracts Chevalier undertook to recruit four hundred Africans at a bounty of 125 francs per adult.⁷⁴ A second contract in 1855 required him to supply three thousand Africans, and an 1858 contract set the number of Africans at 2,500, raising the bounty to 500 francs because slaves were allegedly more expensive than voluntary laborers (Renault 1976: 103).

Chevalier operated as a coaster, moving from French Gorée (Senegal) to Bissau (Portuguese Guinea), Sierra Leone, the Vai and Kru Coasts, as well as the Avikam and Alladian of Cape Lahou and Grand Jack-Jack in the eastern Ivory Coast. On occasion he sailed further east, visiting the British outpost at Cape Coast on the Gold Coast, the Spanish island of Fernando Po, and Gabon. Chevalier's recruits, supervised by French naval personnel, "signed" labor contracts on the spot. Between 1854-1857, Chevalier made five deliveries from West Africa to French Guiana and one delivery to Martinique (Renault 1976: 36-38, 43-48, 62-64, 94, 102-103, 188-189).⁷⁵

Chevalier's labor transactions, like those of Hyde, Hodge, followed standard Kru Coast practice. Given French approval of rachat préalable, it is difficult to determine exactly when Chevalier used merchandise advances in the usual Kru way and when these advances became the purchase price of involuntary labor recruits. At embarkation, he paid recruits sums of forty to sixty francs (£1.10s. to £2.5s.), part in cash, part in merchandise or clothing. According to the French naval supervisor on the Orion, slave recruits bought their freedom with these advances (Renault 1976: 63). Recruits "signed" six year indentures, with a promise of 15 francs (11s. 7d.) per month, plus food, housing, kitchen garden, tools, and the right to repatriation or re-engagement after six years.⁷⁶ Advances, whether to voluntary or "redeemed" labor recruits, had to be repaid out of future wages.

Table 8.2 identifies the people recruited for the four successful Chevalier voyages to West Africa. A fifth, the Phénix voyage of 1858-1859, failed. While the period involved is short and the sample small, some distinctions between the 1854 voyage of the Cinq-Frères and the 1857 voyage of the Orion are significant. For example, after 1855, the supply of laborers from Gorée declined, perhaps as a result of Gorée French resistance to the loss of valuable Senegalese labor (Renault 1976: 54). Vai towns, which contributed minimally to the first three ships, contributed heavily in 1857 and probably

TABLE 8.2

WEST AFRICANS RECRUITED FOR FRENCH GUIANA, 1854-1857

<u>Origins</u>	<u>C.Frères</u> 1854	<u>Diane I</u> 1856	<u>Diane II</u> 1856	<u>Orion</u> 1857	<u>TOTAL</u>
Gorée (b)	22	62	4	--	88
Bissau (d)	--	18	--	--	18
Freetown	33	14	17	--	64
Mano River (c)	--	--	--	9	9
Mana Rock (c)	--	--	--	19	19
Sugari (Sowi) (c)	--	--	--	14	14
Mataman (c)	--	--	--	85	85
Cape Mount (c)	8	1	8	--	17
Cape Mesurado (a)	--	2	--	--	2
Monrovia (a)	--	--	8	--	8
New Cess (a)	--	22	1	9	32
Trade Town (a)	3	56	2	91	152
Chimfroo Point (a)	12	--	17	--	29
Grand Kullo (a)	5	7	--	1	13
Grand Dieppe (a)	--	5	--	--	5
Poah River (a)	3	--	--	--	3
Nana Kru (a)	1	--	1	--	2
Nifu (a)	--	--	24	4	28
Picaninny Cess (a)	--	--	12	--	12
Garawe	--	--	8	--	8
Fish Town (a)	--	--	8	--	8
Rock Town (a)	--	5	27	--	32
Cape Palmas (a)	--	6	--	--	6
Cavalla (a)	4	35	10	--	49
Rockbooka (a)	5	--	7	--	12
Tabou (a)	6	31	19	--	56
Bassa (a)	59	15	15	--	89
Béréby (a)	51	27	14	3	95
San Pedro (a)	15	--	19	--	34
Victory (a)	--	--	5	--	5
Drewin (a)	--	--	29	--	29
Sassandra					
(San André) (a)	--	--	33	1	34
Trepoint (a)	--	--	14	--	14
Koutrou (a)	--	--	1	--	1
Half Lahou (e)	3	--	--	--	3
Grand Lahou (e)	7	--	21	5	33
Grand Jack					
Jack (f)	--	--	--	6	6
Cape Coast (g)	--	3	--	--	3

<u>Origins</u>	<u>C.Frères</u> 1854	<u>Diane I</u> 1856	<u>Diane II</u> 1856	<u>Orion</u> 1857	<u>TOTAL</u>
TOTAL DISEMBARKED	237	309	324	247	1,117
DEATHS AT SEA	8	3	--	32	43
DESERTERS	6	14	2	--	22
TOTAL RECRUITED	251	326	326	279	1,182

Sources: ANSOM, Guyane F223, C. Chaila, "Relevé nominatif et signalétique des immigrants africains introduits dans la Guyane française par les navires les Cinq-Frères, Diane 1er voyage, Diane 2e voyage, et l'Orion, du 11 novembre 1854 au 20 novembre 1857, Cayenne, 25 septembre 1869"; F208, "État nominatif des passagers immigrants arrivés sur le navire les Cinqs-Frères, Capitaine Chevalier"; Guyane F209, A. Mênard, "Procès-verbal de réception des immigrants africains arrivés sur le vapeur à hélice la Diane, Capitaine Chevalier, le 26 janvier 1856"; "État nominatif et signalétique des immigrants africains arrivés le 20 novembre 1857 sur le trois-mâts français l'Orion, Capitaine Pigote"; F213, A. Mênard, "Procès-verbal de réception des immigrants africains sur le trois-mâts français l'Orion"; Renault 1976: 176.⁸³

Notes:

- a. Kru Coast. Chimfroo Point was connected with Trade Town.
- b. From Senegal and Cacheu, Portuguese Guinea. It is unclear whether these were slaves or voluntary laborers.⁸⁴ One was an unemployed Frenchman from Gorée seeking work in French Guiana.
- c. Vai area, including Vai and probably De and Gola captives.
- d. Portuguese Guinea.
- e. Avikam, also known as Kwakwa and Lahu (Wilson 1856: 142-143; Ceccaldi 1974: 296, 299, 301, 303, 1126-32, 1155; Bouët 1848: 98)
- f. Alladian (Ceccaldi 1974: 1147-1157).
- g. One of these, a twelve-year-old named Quéké, became Chevalier's servant, and left with him.

would have continued to do so had not British and Liberian intervention terminated their relationship with Chevalier. His success at Trade Town (Kru), whose slave trade Liberia claimed to have stopped by 1849, is noteworthy. British Guiana's recruiters had little or no luck at Trade Town in the late 1840s and early 1850s, yet in 1856 and 1857 Chevalier acquired two large contingents of fifty-six and ninety-one people, including thirty women.⁷⁷ Such large contingents were unusual in the Kru labor traffic, and they suggest a renewed slave trade. Chevalier concentrated on Kru towns east of Cape Palmas, especially Béréby, and even penetrated beyond the Kru

Coast to the Akan culture area between Grand Lahou and Grand Jack-Jack.⁷⁸

Shipboard mortality (Table 8.2), absent for Kru emigration to British Guiana, was a feature of three out of the four West African contingents for French Guiana. The thirty-two deaths on the Orion in 1857 - four times the number on the Cinq-Frères - compares with recaptive African mortality on British Guianese and West Indian vessels. This is not surprising, since redeemed or recaptive slaves would have been less healthy than voluntary Kru migrants (Schuler 1980: 26-28, 114-115; Asiegbu 1969: 132-133). Desertions, on the other hand, peaked at fourteen with the 1855 voyage of the Diane but dropped to zero on the voyage of the Orion; by then Chevalier had learned to confine his discontented passengers below deck (Renault 1976: 63).⁷⁹

The Cinq-Frères and Diane recruitments: 1854, 1855, 1856

As Table 8.2 illustrates, in their first three West African voyages, the Cinq-Frères and Diane recruited mostly Kru, including those from Sierra Leone.⁸⁰ Vai towns were absent from the ships' itineraries, but the large number of people recruited by the Diane at Trade Town in 1855 suggests slave-trading.

Desertions troubled Chevalier's recruitment, and he lost six recruits from the Cinq-Frères and fourteen from the Diane's first voyage. While only two recruits ultimately deserted during the Diane's second voyage, a spectacular, if unsuccessful, mass desertion occurred on the day of embarkation at Rock Town. Twenty canoe skippers and several chiefs visiting the Diane suddenly jumped overboard, dragging with them some twenty recruits, whose advances they had just received. They boarded waiting canoes and paddled ashore. Seven or eight stragglers were apprehended, and six of the principal Rock Town chiefs failed to escape. Five were placed in irons, while the sixth was sent ashore with a message that the fourteen deserters must return in an hour or the remaining five chiefs would be handed over to the Liberians. When twelve deserters returned, Chevalier released the chiefs and departed.

While we do not know the reasons for previous Kru desertions, complaints made to Denis, government supervisor on the Diane's second voyage, suggest that many Kru had misunderstood, or had been deceived, as to the length of their indentures. Some insisted that they had agreed to stay only one year, others, two years. Denis dismissed them as rascals and warned the governor to ignore such complaints, but they often deserted after they reached French Guiana.⁸¹

The Orion Recruitment: 1857

In 1857, Chevalier arrived on the Liberian coast aboard the Orion and acquired 227 laborers between the Mano River (Vai) and Trade Town. He had little luck on the rest of the Kru Coast, for the Kru were concerned about the failure of previous emigrants to return.⁸² This was Chevalier's last successful recruiting voyage to West Africa, for earlier in the year an uprising of captives on the Réunion vessel Regina Coeli had alerted the Liberian authorities to French slave-trading activities (Roberts 1858: 44-46; Brittan 1860: 159-160; Renault 1976: 66).

Recruitment for Phénix II: 1858-1859

Vai chiefs, including Chevalier's major labor supplier, Thomas Cole of Sewulu on the lower Mano River, started a war with Prince Mana of the Gallinas in order to raise captives for the French (Holsoe 1967: 96, 119, 168-170). To combat this return to slave trading, Liberian authorities requested a British naval patrol for the Cape Mount region. One such patrol intercepted the Phénix.

Chevalier had already secured ten men and a woman, including five Africans from the ill-fated Regina Coeli contingent, when British officers, accompanied by a Liberian official and an armed policeman, boarded his ship (Holsoe 1967: 170). The Liberian recognised one of the recruits, a liberated African named Séré, a leader of the Regina Coeli uprising, who confirmed that he had been forcibly embarked, and stated that he wished to leave the ship. Séré was clearly a slave, for Chevalier demanded that the Liberian reimburse him for Séré's purchase price. Unlike Séré, none of the other recruits expressed any desire to leave the ship.⁸⁵ The Liberian president acquired receipts for the slaves purchased by Chevalier, among whom, it was alleged, were recent liberated African arrivals from the United States frigate Niagara. Anonymous Kru traders were also implicated. The Phénix, expelled from Liberia for illegal slave trading, then turned south, securing 421 slaves at Gabon (Renault 1976: 64-65).⁸⁶ Chevalier never returned to his old haunts in West Africa and ceased recruiting for the colonies in 1859.

Once more, Kru labor recruitment for a Guiana colony had foundered when recruiters, stymied by Kru resistance to emigration, began seeking workers on the Vai coast, which meant trading in slaves. In the end, doubts about the utility of rachat as a labor recruitment technique led to a search for alternate labor sources, which resulted in an agreement with the British to recruit Indians, rather than Africans (Renault 1976: 105, 113).

The Kru in British and French Guiana

From the Kru viewpoint, the success of labor migration depended on migrants returning home with their earnings, but Guianese employers and officials judged labor migration successful if immigrants remained permanently in the Guianas. Few Kru appear to have returned home. British Guiana's repatriation records show that only 196, or 20 percent, of 989 Kru immigrants returned to Africa.⁸⁷ Only 120 out of 822 Kru - 15 percent - returned from French Guiana (Table 8.3).

The departure of the Elphinstone from British Guiana in April 1853 was the last opportunity for government assisted repatriation directly to the Kru Coast. By 1856, whether by choice or because they had no choice in the matter of repatriation, Kru from the Elphinstone's first voyage in 1853, their indentures expired, began to demand the commutation money promised to immigrants who waived their right to repatriation.⁸⁸ Others soon began to demand repatriation, at least in part because of severe hardship in the colony. Between 1856-1858 the colony suffered from drought, a drop in provision prices, and a cholera epidemic.⁸⁹ Competition from East Indian and Madeiran indentured immigrants may also have provided increased incentive to return to Africa. Adamson (1972: 138) links an increase of Indian repatriation petitions after 1876 with the sizeable labor surplus created by continued immigration. Indenture-expired immigrant Africans appear to have felt this pressure a decade or two earlier than Indians.⁹⁰

In 1858 two hundred Kru men petitioned the government for repatriation, pointing out that most had worked three times as long as East Indian indentured laborers, without receiving bonuses for remaining in the colony.⁹¹ This was the first in a series of such petitions from Kru, Sierra Leonians and recaptive Africans, but the official response was always the same: "It is impossible for the government to provide a vessel every time these persons wish to go back. . . . They are perfectly able to earn enough to pay their own passages if an opportunity should offer."⁹² Africans did not understand that they forfeited their repatriation rights if they did not file claims within two years of eligibility.

Some Africans did manage to finance their own return. In late 1858, an undetermined number booked passage at \$30.00 per person on a vessel going to the Gambia.⁹³ In March 1861, more than one hundred Africans from all over the colony prepared to return to Africa on a ship they had chartered.⁹⁴ Opportunities for Kru immigrants to return to Africa thus existed, although it is not known whether any took advantage of them.

Prevented from repatriating, many Kru settled permanently in British Guiana and worked in a variety of occupations. For instance, by the early 1850s Kru men rented farms in the Canal No. 1 district of the West Bank, Demerara area, where they

TABLE 8.3

THE KRU IN FRENCH GUIANA, 1854-1869

	<u>C.Frères</u>		<u>Diane I</u>		<u>Diane II</u>		<u>Orion</u>			
	1854		1856		1856		1857			
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Kru</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Kru</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Kru</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Kru</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>KRU</u>
Died	56	48	89	59	53	45	68	35	266	187
Deserted	46	40	48	37	125	118	14	9	233	204
Repatriated (a)	57	43	28	25	53	52	--	--	138	120
Delegates 1856 (b)	2	2	1	--	--	--	--	--	3	2
Reengaged	57	48	116	86	80	67	156	62	409	263
Imprisoned	3	3	2	1	4	4	1	--	10	8
Settled in colony	13	10	9	9	4	4	5	3	31	26
Disposition unknown	1	1	4	4	2	1	3	--	10	6
"Not indentured" (c)	--	--	11	6	2	--	--	--	13	6
Other departures (d)	2	--	1	--	1	--	--	--	4	--
Disembarked	237	195	309	227	324	291	247	109	1,117	822

Sources: ANSOM, Guyane F223, C. Chaila, "Relevé nominatif et signalétique des immigrants africains introduits dans la Guyane française par les navires les Cinq-Frères, Diane 1er voyage, Diane 2e voyage, et l'Orion, du 11 novembre 1854 au 20 novembre 1857, Cayenne, 25 septembre 1869"; Guyane F208, "État nominatif des passagers immigrants arrivés sur le navire les Cinqs-Frères, Capitaine Chevalier"; A. Mênard, "Procès-verbal de réception des immigrants africains arrivés sur le navire les Cinqs-Frères"; Guyane F209, "État nominatif des immigrants arrivés à la Guyane française le 6 janvier 1856 sur le vapeur à hélice la Diane, Capitaine Chevalier," A. Mênard, "Procès-verbal de réception des immigrants africains arrivés sur le vapeur à hélice la Diane, Capitaine Chevalier, le 26 janvier 1856," C. Chevalier, E. Vincent et A. Mênard, "Procès-verbal de réception des immigrants africains arrivés sur le vapeur à hélice la Diane, le 21 juin 1856"; Guyane F213, "État nominatif et signalétique des immigrants africains arrivés le 20 novembre 1857 sur le trois-mâts français l'Orion, Capitaine Pigote"; Guyane F220, "Rapatriement. État nominatif des immigrants africains embarqués à bord du Lawrence, capitaine Hanson, armateur S. E. Fabens, parti du port de Cayenne le 15 décembre 1860 pour se rendre en ligne directe à Sierra Leone"; "État nominatif des immigrants africains

introduire à la Guyane, le 11 novembre 1854, par le navire les Cinq-Frères, et les 6 janvier et 20 juin 1856, par le navire la Diane (1er et 2e voyages), embarqués ce jour, à bord du navire le R. B. Sumner, capitaine Upton, pour être rapatriés directement à Sierra Leone aux frais de la Caisse d'Immigration."

Notes:

a. These totals follow an 1869 immigrant record (see Chaila, above). The passenger list for the 1860 repatriation ship Lawrence, which took fifty-five Cinq-Frères immigrants (plus a French Guianese wife and five children) back to West Africa, tallies with the 1869 record. The Sumner repatriated two Cinq-Frères immigrants, twenty-four Diane I immigrants plus a child, and fifty Diane II immigrants in 1862, seven fewer repatriates than the 1869 list indicates. The discrepancy cannot be explained, unless some of the repatriates recorded in the 1869 list left in other vessels.

b. Delegates apparently did not return to French Guiana.

c. The notation, "sans engagement," usually indicates physical disability, implying "unemployed" as well.

d. They included two Cinq-Frères passengers: a Frenchman from Gorée who moved to Surinam in 1858, and a mulatto from New Brunswick, Canada, via Freetown, who left for the U.S.A. in 1860; and two Diane I passengers from Gorée: a man who left for an unknown destination in 1862 and another who left on a Bordeaux ship in September 1865.

attracted attention as Obeah men, or diviners.⁹⁵ In the 1860s and 1870s some Kru still worked on sugar estates as casual laborers,⁹⁶ while others were considered the best timber workers, haulers and boatmen in British Guiana (Rodney 1981: 252). Henry Kirke, Sheriff of Demerara and Essequibo, hired Kru boatmen, "splendid men, with filed teeth, and tattoos on their noses and cheeks. They were tireless oarsmen and splendid swimmers; and when their arms became a little weary, they roused their spirits by chanting wild Kroo songs, which marked time to the measured beat of the oars" (Kirke 1898: 171-172).⁹⁷

The Kru in French Guiana experienced disappointment much sooner than their compatriots in British Guiana. Jobs were one source of discontent, for many had anticipated urban employment. Instead, they worked on plantations, in logging camps, in the colonial Isle du Salut penal settlement, and in various colonial maritime services. Actual Kru wages are difficult to establish, but they were definitely a source of frustration. Chevalier promised them 15 francs per month. The governor said they earned only 11 francs. Foremen earned a supplementary monthly wage of 3-5 francs. Immigrant supplies included hammocks, a daily tobacco ration, plus food rations of rice,

biscuit or bread, salt pork or dried beef, and salt. Foremen received a rum ration. Sick or injured immigrants earned only half-wages during hospitalization and, judging from the large number of deaths, immigrants must often have been incapacitated by illness.⁹⁸

An extensive record of Kru deaths, desertions, repatriation, and re-indentures exists for French Guiana. An 1869 demand by Grand Lahou leaders for the repatriation of laborers who went to French Guiana and Martinique led the administration to produce a summary of the years 1854-1869 which provides details on the West African geographical origins of immigrants, repatriations, desertions, deaths, re-indentures, imprisonment, and local settlement. Table 8.3 uses these statistics to outline the Kru experience in French Guiana.

Nearly half of the West African immigrant labor force was lost through death or desertion before the first immigrants became eligible for repatriation in 1860. A majority of the eligible Cinq-Frères survivors, a total of seventy-four, excluding prisoners, applied for repatriation at the expiration of their indentures. At the last moment nineteen changed their minds, but the rest returned to Africa on the Lawrence in 1860. Two Cinq-Frères immigrants later joined eighty repatriates from the two Diane voyages when they returned to West Africa on the Summer in 1862.

Most French Guianese Kru never returned to Africa. Many extended their indentures, and a few settled as proprietors or independent wage laborers. Some served prison sentences. The bounty of 200 francs paid to Cinq-Frères immigrants willing to re-indent for six years may have been attractive to many.⁹⁹ The greatest number of re-indentures were Orion immigrants whose original contracts expired in December 1863; they were encouraged to re-indent by bounties of 60 francs for two years, and 30 francs for one year.¹⁰⁰

Immigrants commonly expressed their discontent with working conditions in French Guiana and the French West Indies by deserting.¹⁰¹ Irregular payment of wages, harsh labor regimes, and contract fraud, including alleged broken promises of two-year indentures, high wages, and jobs in Cayenne shops, caused the discontent. At the same time, Kru sailors brought back tales of more attractive jobs and higher wages from British Guiana.¹⁰² The Kru capitalized on their seamanship to flee the colony for British Guiana, and even Barbados.¹⁰³ Most deserters either slipped on board foreign vessels or, in groups of ten to two dozen, appropriated government or private boats and sailing vessels and escaped by sea to British Guiana, whose governors, under the terms of Britain's extradition treaty with France, did not have to return them and consistently refused to do so.¹⁰⁴ One group of eleven sailed a stolen vessel to the island of Barbados.¹⁰⁵ By August of 1857, increased patrols

led to the apprehension and imprisonment of a greater number of deserters.¹⁰⁶

French Guiana actually lost more indentured workers - 266 - through death than through desertion, a loss about which official correspondence is strangely silent. Almost two-thirds of the deceased - 187 - were Kru. It is likely that many Kru succumbed to malaria, the colony's major killer disease (Dupont-Gonin 1970: 77; Mam-Lam-Fouck 1982: 144; Pierre 1896).¹⁰⁷

Thus, through a combination of desertions or death and the breakdown of repatriation programs, many Kru never returned home from the Guianas.

Conclusion

Social and economic conditions on the Guianese as well as on the African side made for a number of contradictions in the attempted transition from slave trading to the recruitment of voluntary migrant workers such as the Kru. European employers did not really desire a free and independent labor force after emancipation, merely one that they could control without the stigma of slavery. Even as they claimed to be searching for free labor market conditions in Africa, they devised indentured labor systems to prevent the development of free labor markets in the plantation colonies. Because indenture was a temporary status, however, no one would confuse it with slavery. On the African side what employers sought in theory, at least, was some sovereign people willing and able to devise a system by which disciplined, hardworking young men could be detached without force from land and lineage to rotate in and out of European overseas export enclaves under a system of indenture with low, fixed wages. It was difficult to find African societies which would participate in labor traffic on such terms, especially when they discovered how erratic repatriation could be.¹⁰⁸

Most coastal African societies suffered population and labor shortages themselves and defined wealth largely in terms of the number of dependents whose services specific lineages could control. As a result, many were not merely reluctant but structurally unable to part with a portion of their most able workers for long periods unless they could find a way to replace them. The function of the slave trade had been to avoid the issue of loss and replacement of local manpower by forcing other, interior societies to bear the loss, while coastal middlemen monopolized the exchange of these people for European merchandise. The Vai, who typified this approach, were more representative of mid-nineteenth century coastal Africa than the Kru, who expanded reproduction and production

through the acquisition of wives whose brideprice they raised through migrant labor.

Labor migration for societies like the Kru is usually explained by the desire to procure European goods for bride-wealth, with the implication that the acquisition of wives derived primarily from internally-generated needs. The expansion of Kru migration to the Guianas was probably a defensive reaction to a new set of external conditions in the 1840s and 1850s - naval blockade of the slave trade and Afro-American commercial competition and aggression which reduced the Kru capacity to earn bridewealth and firearms for defense. To compensate, the Kru crossed the Atlantic to territories that promised more jobs and higher wages than they could earn in West Africa or at sea. Some Kru leaders even hoped to expand foreign trade by establishing direct shipping links with British Guiana. On every count their hopes were dashed, and surely too few returned home to make a difference.

By 1850, western Kru leaders were becoming convinced that transatlantic migration was a mistake. They complained, first, that low wages and high living costs retarded Kru savings and delayed repatriation; second, that in British Guiana Kru men developed "habits of comfort and extravagance," thereby impeding readjustment to Kru Coast lifestyles; and third, that too many returnees got only as far as Sierra Leone, where they squandered their earnings. Kru leaders concluded that labor in West Africa was preferable to overseas migration.¹⁰⁹ The establishment of direct transport service between British Guiana and the Kru Coast in 1850, and the despatch of Chief Jombo to British Guiana in 1853 promised to counteract these tendencies, but Kru Coast recruitment ended abruptly. The failure of repatriation, increasing Kru-Liberian wars in the second half of the 1850s, and coercive French recruiting methods account for the decline of Kru emigration to the Guianas. Kru migration was already moribund when Guianese recruiters began to deal with Vai slave traders, precipitating the termination of Kru Coast recruitment.

By the turn of the century, the advance of European imperialism and the extension of Liberian control over the western Kru and French control over the eastern Kru induced the Kru to become more deeply involved in the developing capitalist world economy in Africa. At the same time, Liberian and French direction made it difficult for the Kru to control their own migration and their earnings from migrant labor, and the benefits of labor migration became increasingly restricted. (Behrens 1974: 89-111; Massing 1977: 147-174; Sundiata 1980).

NOTES

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2. With the exception of a few thousand liberated African settlers in Sierra Leone, most African slaves captured by the British navy from Cuban and Brazilian slavers and landed at Sierra Leone and the South Atlantic island of St. Helena were compelled to emigrate to British plantation colonies (Schuler 1980: 1-29). A small number came from Brazil and Cuba where they had been emancipated by Multinational Mixed Commission Courts (Bethell 1966: 79-93; Roberts and Byrne 1966).
3. Some passenger lists provide immigrants' geographical or ethnic origin, and where this is not done, the Kru may be identified by distinctive mariners' nicknames - Sea Breeze, Yellow Will, or Bottle of Beer, etc. Many Kru adopted ordinary English names, however, and it is not always possible to distinguish them from Sierra Leonians (Tonkin 1980: 652-664).
4. For Martinique see No. 57, B. C. Pine to Earl Grey, 5 June 1848, CO 114/17, J. Joyau, "Procès-verbal constatant le débarquement et la répartition des africains arrivés par le navire le Phénix, Capitaine Gayetti, Fort de France, le 6 juillet 1857, ANSOM, Généralités SA131." The Kru were a majority of the laborers on the Phénix to Martinique. Although an exact ethnic breakdown of these emigrants is not available, all but twenty-four have been counted as Kru.
5. Table 8.1 does not list all ships from Sierra Leone, only those which had Kru passengers.
6. Sierra Leone had the largest Krutown. The Monrovia, Liberia Krutown, much closer to home, had only two hundred to three hundred residents at mid-century; CLEC Eleventh General Report; J. McCrea, "Report on the Passage of the Government Emigrant Ship Clarendon," 18 October 1850, PP 1851, XXII [1383], 413.
7. The Kru became victims of similar compulsion by the Liberian government after 1865. By the 1920s most Kru labor migration to Fernando Po was forced (Sundiata 1980; Massing 1977: 159-171).
8. By the twentieth century, the term "Krumen" came to designate any West African male possessing a mariner's identity card.

9. The size of Kru villages ranged from one to twelve acres, with from forty to 1,500 houses per village. The population of Settra Kru and each of the other Krao towns was "several thousand" in the 1840s (Wilson 1856: 103, 109).
10. See Curtin 1975: 247-253, 259 for a discussion of assortment bargaining in Senegambia. Exchange rates were fairly well established by this time (Newbury 1971: 101). Kru standards of measurement, including weight, varied according to the nature of the product (Bouet-Willaumez 1848: 88, 91-94).
11. See Newbury 1971: 97-99 for credit on the West African coast, and below for a discussion of advances paid to Kru emigrating to British Guiana in 1853.
12. The exchange rate of the dollar to the British pound is calculated at \$5.00 to £1 (LeVeen 1971: 181). British Guiana currency was a combination of the dollar and English and Dutch coins.
13. H. Light to Lord Stanley, 19 March 1845, enclosing R. G. Butts to H.E.F. Young, 12 July-7 August 1844, CO 111/221, No. 57.
14. H. Light to Lord J. Russell, 21 August 1841, enclosing "Returns of Emigrants from Sierra Leone in British Guiana, Quarter Ending 31 July 1841," CO 111/179; Light to Russell, enclosing J. Hackett, "Nominal List of Africans by Superior from Sierra Leone, and Estates Upon Which They Have Been Located," CO 111/182, No. 59; Light to Lord Stanley, 19 April 1842, enclosing "Monthly Return of Emigrants, 1 April 1842," CO 111/190, No. 77; Light to Stanley, 16 November 1844, CO 111/215, No. 242; Barkly to Duke of Newcastle, 22 April 1853, CO 111/294, No. 64.
15. McCrea, "Report on the Passage of the Government Emigrant Ship Clarendon," 18 October 1850.
16. The exchange rate was 9d. per franc (Hansard 3rd series, CXLVI, June-July 1857, 1665-1666, Lord Brougham). For French Guiana wages see Gouverneur au Ministre de la Marine, 5 décembre 1854, P. F. Blanchard au Gouverneur, 23 juillet 1854, ANSOM, Guyane F208; G. Grey to P. E. Wodehouse, 10 March 1855, C. Chevalier, "Emigration for French Guyana, with His Excellency Gov. Hill's Sanction," GNA, No. 6.
17. It was not unusual for a Kru man to have a dozen or more wives (Brooks 1972: 60-61). To achieve a balance between production and reproduction, progeny can be redistributed among productive cells, so the circulation of women includes the idea of the devolution of children (Meillassoux 1981: 58-62).
18. Bridge 1845: 56-57 saw one leader's wall with "seventy coarse colored engravings, glazed and framed . . . copies of the same print, a portrait of King William the Fourth."

19. For Kru relations with Afro-American settlers, see Brooks 1972; Burton 1863: vol. 1, 278; Foote 1854: 182-185, 187-191; Sullivan 1978: 71-75, 142-143, 219-220, 391-395; Martin 1968: 206-289.
20. The Kru also used guns for hunting and fired them at public celebrations (Bridge 1845: 17; Massing 1974: 139). A gun or a barrel of powder was worth one cow or bullock (Brooks 1972: 61-62). Other standard items in a bride-price round were textiles, alcohol, metal containers, and tools.
21. A. Fitzjames to Duke of Newcastle, 13 December 1859, CO 267/264, No. 193.
22. Since Fishmen also farmed (Bridge 1845: 106; Sullivan 1978: 66), they too migrated seasonally. As hinterland peoples became available to work on farms near the coast, the coastal Kru began to migrate year-round (Massing 1977: 241-243, 246), but significant numbers of Kru did not settle abroad until the 1930s (Frankel 1966: 153)).
23. H. Light to Earl Grey, 30 August 1847, VHAJ 1847; McCrea, "Report on the Passage of the Government Emigrant Ship Clarendon," 18 October 1850.
24. See also Earl Grey to H. Light, 2 June 1847, CO 111/244, British Guiana No. 206.
25. A. Barclay to J. Higginson, 21 May 1841, VHAJ 1841-1842, No. 92.
26. R. Guppy to H. Macleod, 18 October 1844, PP 1847-48, XLIV (732), 29-30; H. Light to Lord Stanley, 19 March 1845, enclosing R. G. Butts to H.E.F. Young, 13 March 1845, CO 111/221 No. 57.
27. Third Report on the Slave Trade, H. Barkly and M. Rimington testimony, PP 1848, XXII (536), 91-92, 104-105; H. Light to Lord Stanley, 19 March 1845, enclosing R. G. Butts to H.E.F. Young, 13 March 1845; H. Light to Lord Stanley, Private, 4 June 1845, CO 111/221, No. 57.
28. H. Light to Lord Stanley, 19 March 1845, CO 111/210, No. 57; PP 1847-48, XLIV (732.), 57-58.
29. H. Light to Lord Stanley, 16 May 1844, CO 111/210, No. 107.
30. H. Light to Lord Stanley, 30 September 1844, enclosing R. G. Butts to H.E.F. Young, 23 July-7 August 1844, CO 111/213, No. 200; Light to Stanley enclosing Butts to Young, 13 March 1845, CO 111/221, No. 57.
31. Butts also met with the Governor and members of the Afro-American settlement at Cape Palmas and took two Afro-American delegates with him. Nothing came of the delegation to British Guiana. A few Liberians went to Jamaica in 1841 and 1842 (Schuler 1980: 23, 130-131n).
32. H. Light to Lord Stanley, 19 March 1845 enclosing R. G. Butts to H.E.F. Young, 7 January 1845, CO 111/221, No. 57.

33. H. Light to Lord Stanley, 19 March 1845 enclosing R. G. Butts to H.E.F. Young, 7 January 1845, CO 111/221, No. 57.
34. H. Light to Lord Stanley, 19 March 1845 enclosing R. G. Butts to H.E.F. Young, 13 March 1845, CO 111/221, No. 57. British Guiana's emigration agent in Freetown gave a different breakdown in W. Fergusson to Stanley, 26 November 1845 enclosing R. Fisher, "Emigrants per Arabian, 16 January 1845," CO 267/189, No. 94.
35. H. Light to Lord Stanley, 19 March 1845, CO 111/221, No. 59.
36. H. Light to W. E. Gladstone, 12 June 1846, enclosing T. C. Bagot Report, 7 November 1844-21 January 1845, CO 111/233, No. 111; Light to Lord Stanley, 14 June 1845 enclosing W. Munro to W. Humphrys, 20 May 1845, CO 111/233, No. 127; W. Fergusson to Stanley, 20 October 1845 enclosing J. Hook, 21 August 1845, CO 267/189, No. 89.
37. H. Light to Lord Stanley, 3 October 1845, enclosing W. Humphrys to H.E.F. Young, 1 October 1845, CO 111/225, No. 213; H. Light to W. E. Gladstone, 12 June 1846, enclosing T. C. Bagot Report, 7 November 1844-21 January 1845, CO 111/233, No. 111.
38. N. Macdonald to Lord Stanley, 16 January 1846, CO 267/191, No. 16; N. Macdonald to H. Light, 21 July 1847, SLA, Governor's Letterbook 1846-1848. For Nifu and Grand Cess see Sullivan 1978: 31 and Martin 1968: 50-51.
39. H. Light to W. E. Gladstone, 12 June 1846, with T. C. Bagot Report, 7 November 1844-21 January 1845, CO 111/233, No. 111.
40. VHAJ October-December 1847, Appendix, 187, J. Purser to N. Macdonald, 13 March 1847; N. Macdonald to H. Light, 21 July 1847, SLA, Governor's Letterbook 1846-1848.
41. H. Light to Earl Grey, 30 August 1847 and enclosures, CO 111/245 No. 174.
42. H. Light to Earl Grey, 2 June 1847 and enclosures, Grey to Light, No. 206, 22 July 1847, CO 111/244, No. 112.
43. Earl Grey to W. Walker, 22 July 1848, enclosing W. R. Hamilton Report, CO 114/17, No. 26.
44. The Kru took savings of over £800 with them. Most remained in Sierra Leone, and about eleven returned to Guiana on the Clarendon (H. Barkly to Earl Grey, 3 June 1850, and W. Humphrys to W. Walker, 30 April 1850, CO 111/274, No. 67; Duke of Newcastle to Barkly, 6 May 1853, and R. Fisher to S. Walcott, 15 February 1853, GNA, No. 43; Barkly to Grey, 9 December 1850 with W. Humphrys to W. B. Wolseley, 6 December 1850, CO 111/277, No. 162; N. Macdonald to Grey, 27 November 1850, and Fisher Report, 22 November 1850, CO 267/217, No. 151).

45. N. Macdonald to R. Fisher, 12 August 1850, and Macdonald to H. Barkly, 18 September 1850, SLA, Governor's Letter-book 1848-1851.
46. N. Macdonald to Earl Grey, 21 September 1850, CO 267/217, No. 114.
47. McCrea, "Report on the Passage of the Government Emigrant Ship Clarendon," 18 October, 1850; N. Macdonald to Earl Grey, enclosing R. Fisher Report, 22 November 1850, CO 267/217, No. 151; H. Barkly to Grey, and R. Fisher to W. Humphrys, 13 October 1850, CO 111/277, No. 162.
48. Duke of Newcastle to W. Walker, 12 January 1854, GNA, No. 173.
49. W. Walker to Duke of Newcastle, 7 November 1853, and O. B. Thibon to W. Humphrys, 15 March 1853, CO 111/297, No. 112.
50. Duke of Newcastle to H. Barkly, 6 May 1853, enclosing R. Fisher, Immigration Report, 14 February 1853, GNA, No. 43.
51. Fisher's report ignored them, but Governor Barkly discovered that they were associated with the American Episcopal church at Cape Palmas. The church had a number of stations and schools in the Cape Palmas area which some Glebo attended to learn English in order to obtain good jobs on European ships (Martin 1968: 189-191, 212-226; Scott 1858; H. Barkly to Duke of Newcastle, 18 March 1853, CO 111/293, No. 46).
52. Duke of Newcastle to H. Barkly, 6 May 1853, and R. Fisher to W. Humphrys, 24 January and 14 February 1853, GNA, British Guiana No. 43.
53. Hyde, Hodge claimed the goods were worth \$12.00 (£2. 8s), demanding reimbursement for only \$10.00 (£2.) Duke of Newcastle to P. E. Wodehouse, 25 April 1854, F. Rogers and T.W.C. Murdoch to H. Merivale, 4 April 1854; Hyde, Hodge to S. Walcott, 7 June 1853, R. Fisher to Walcott, 11 August 1853, GNA, No. 17.
54. Viz. checked materials, cotton handkerchiefs, satin stripes, red taffeta, mudapollams, romalls (cotton cloth measuring the size of fifteen hankerchiefs), and Manchester baft, a blue cloth used as currency, the guiné, in West Africa, and as Kru mourning apparel (Brooks 1972: 23; Newbury 1971: 99, 105; Bridge 1845: 38). Compare with Curtin 1975: 259.
55. Duke of Newcastle to P. E. Wodehouse, 15 April 1854, and O. B. Thibon to Hyde, Hodge, 6 June 1853; T. Murdoch to H. Merivale, 7 June 1853, R. Fisher to S. Walcott, 11 August 1853; CO 111/294, No. 64, H. Barkly to Newcastle, 22 April 1853, GNA, No. 17.
56. W. Walker to Duke of Newcastle, 20 October 1853, CO 111/297, No. 102. See Adamson (1972: 111-113) for wages and task work in the 1850s.

57. Duke of Newcastle to P. E. Wodehouse, 15 April 1853, enclosing Hyde, Hodge to S. Walcott, 7 June 1853, GNA, No. 17. In 1854, sixteen Kru struck work to protest weekly wage deductions of 1s. The sum should have been 2s. a month, but the Kru questioned the very legitimacy of deductions, asserting that they had not received any advance payments (Petition of Jumbo, a Crooman, 15 May 1854; J. T. Fraser to E.M.L. Smith, 17 May 1854; J. Gordon to W. Walker, 26 May 1854; W. Walker Minute, 17 May 1854; P. E. Wodehouse Minute, 18 May 1854, GNA, No. 17).
58. Duke of Newcastle to P. E. Wodehouse, 15 April 1854, enclosing: "Messrs. Hyde, Hodge and Co. to J. G. Thenstead," S. Walcott to Hyde, Hodge, 3 June 1853, Hyde, Hodge to Walcott, 7 June 1853, T.W.C. Murdoch to F. Rogers and H. Merivale, 4 April 1854, and "Account of Merchandise Supplied to 191 Kru Emigrants per Elphinstone," GNA, No. 17; also No. 173, Newcastle to W. Walker, 12 January 1854. The usual markup on the West African coast, according to Newbury 1971: 100-101 was 50-100 percent, but the markups continued, even as prime costs fell. See also Massing 1977: 133-134.
59. Duke of Newcastle to H. Barkly, 6 May 1853, enclosing R. Fisher to W. Humphrys, 24 January 1853, Fisher Emigration Report, 14 February 1853, Fisher to S. Walcott, 15 February 1853, GNA, No. 43; W. Walker to Newcastle, 7 November 1853, and O. B. Thibon to W. Humphrys, 15 March 1853, CO 111/297, No. 112.
60. H. Barkly to Duke of Newcastle, 18 March 1853, CO 111/293, No. 46 and same to same, 7 April 1853, CO 111/294, No. 53.
61. In similar circumstances, the Sierra Leone Kru withdrew £600 from their treasury to purchase arms for the Kru struggle against Liberia in 1908 (Massing 1977: 165).
62. H. Barkly to Duke of Newcastle, 7 April 1853, CO 111/294, No. 53; A. Kennedy to Newcastle, 28 May 1853, and R. Fisher to Captain Searle, 27 May 1853, CO 267/232, No. 105; Kennedy to Newcastle, and R. Fisher to S. Walcott, 11 July 1853, CO 267/233, No. 141. At age seven, children were initiated into the set junior to the kafa, known as jilakagbo, or "those below the gbo," who ran errands for adults (Frankel 1966: 159).
63. A. Kennedy to Duke of Newcastle, 17 July 1853, and R. Fisher to S. Walcott, 11 July 1853, CO 267/233, No. 141; Kennedy to Newcastle, 10 October 1853, J. G. Newnham, "Affidavit Concerning Emigration from Liberia via Elphinstone, 13 September 1853", CO 267/234, No. 184; Kennedy to Newcastle, 18 September 1853, Fisher Report, 16 September 1853, CO 267/233, No. 177; W. Walker to Newcastle, 23 November 1853, CO 111/297, No. 122.

64. Prior to 1808, slaves were a small part of Vai export commerce, which consisted of agricultural and forest products produced and transported to the coast by slaves. The anti-slave trade movement caused slave prices to rise, and the Vai expanded slave exports, selling 15,000 slaves a year between 1840-1850, primarily to Spanish slavers (Holsoe 1977: 293-295).
65. In the 1860s, Liberians settled at Cape Mount, and the Vai exported agricultural and forest products, but population shortage was still an issue, and the Vai substituted pawns for slaves, sending pawns as migrant laborers to Fernando Po in the 1890s in order to earn money to pay Liberian taxes (Holsoe 1977: 297-298).
66. For Lewis see A. Kennedy to Duke of Newcastle, 28 April 1853, enclosing J. N. Lewis, Mercantile Advertisement, Liberia Herald, 6 April 1853, CO 267/232, No. 86; Kennedy to Newcastle, 10 October 1853, and J. N. Lewis, "Sailing Permission for the Elphinstone, 10 September 1853," CO 267/234, No. 184. Lewis helped settle the war between the Vai chiefs (Holsoe 1967: 151).
67. Strickland Letter, 10 April 1853, enclosed in A. Kennedy to Duke of Newcastle, 10 October 1853, CO 267/234, No. 184; Kennedy to Newcastle, 28 April 1853, enclosing J. N. Lewis, "Emigrants Wanted!" Liberia Herald, 6 April 1853, CO 267/232, No. 86.
68. A. Kennedy to Duke of Newcastle, 28 April 1853, enclosing J. J. Roberts, "Proclamation," Liberia Herald, 6 April 1853, CO 267/232, No. 86.
69. A. Kennedy to Duke of Newcastle, 10 October 1853, enclosing Barlee to Dyett, 30 September 1853, CO 267/234, No. 184; W. Walker to Newcastle, 23 November 1853, CO 111/297, No. 122.
70. Duke of Newcastle to W. Walker, 12 January 1854, GNA, No. 173; Earl Grey to P. E. Wodehouse, 18 September 1854, GNA, No. 37.
71. The French made such slave purchases for the Mascarene Islands in East Africa, for use in Senegal, for their Gabon garrison, and for military labor in French Guiana and Martinique (Renault 1976: 18-23, 40-41, 75-96, 124-125, 149-156, 176-177; Wickers 1911; Faure 1920: 74-80, 90-100; Curtin 1975: 194-196). No public announcement preceded legalization of rachat, and the Maës contract did not mention it. Régis agreed to recruit only if his contract specified redemption (Renault 1976: 46-47, 57).
72. The Convention remained in effect from 1845-1855 (Schnapper 1961: 73-86). For the Franco-British debate on rachat, see Renault (1976: 31-35, 48-60), and Sir G. Grey to P. E. Wodehouse, 10 March 1855, and "Memorandum in Reply to the French Note of December 23, 1853, Relative to

- the Purchase of African Laborers for French Colonies," GNA, No. 6.
73. Chevalier became a merchant ship captain in 1825 and participated in illegal slave-trading, even after the French squadron captured and condemned his ship (Daget 1986).
 74. Gouverneur au Ministre de la Marine, 5 décembre 1854, ANSOM, Guyane F207. Workers over fourteen years of age qualified as adults. The contract made no mention of rachat, but this does not mean that Chevalier transported only voluntary labor recruits (Renault 1976: 57, 103).
 75. For Martinique see Convoi du Phénix, J. Joyau, "Procès-verbal constatant le débarquement et la répartition des Africains arrivés par le navire le Phénix, Capitaine V. Gayetti, Fort de France, le 6 juillet 1857," ANSOM, Généralités, SA 131.
 76. Gouverneur au Ministre de la Marine, 5 décembre 1854; P. F. Blanchard au Gouverneur, 23 juillet 1854; Hansard 3rd series, CXLVI, June-July 1857, 1665-1666, Lord Brougham, ANSOM, Guyane F208; G. Grey to P. E. Wodehouse, 10 March 1855; C. Chevalier, "Emigration for French Guyana, with His Excellency Gov. Hill's Sanction," GNA, No. 6.
 77. Enlistment of Kru women was unusual. Two of the women had babies. Two of the fifteen Trade Town-Chimfroof Point emigrants on the Cinq-Frères were females. Four women were on the Diane (C. Chevalier, E. Vincent, et A. Mênard, "Procès-verbal," 21 June 1856, ANSOM, Guyane F209).
 78. The French had a customs-house at Grand Jack-Jack, a community of commercial brokers who employed a captive workforce (Augé 1969: 36-39, 42-47; Schnapper 1961: 131-132).
 79. It was not unusual for French labor transports to restrain laborers, nor was it unusual for labor conscripts to desert or revolt (Beachey 1976: 32-33; Renault 1976: 40, 91).
 80. Renault's (1976 35) claim that the Cinq-Frères recruited only on the Kru Coast is inaccurate. Most of the thirty-three Freetown recruits were Kru. One of them absconded and three died at sea (G. Grey to P. E. Wodehouse, 10 March 1855, enclosing poster, "Emigration for French Guyana", GNA, No. 6; P. F. Blanchard au gouverneur de Senegal, 23 July 1854, ANSOM, Guyane F208; F223, C. Chaila, "Relevé nominatif et signalétique des immigrants africains introduits dans la Guyane française par les navires les Cinq-Frères, Diane ler voyage, Diane 2e voyage, et l'Orion, du 11 novembre 1854 au 20 novembre 1857, Cayenne, 25 septembre 1869," ANSOM, Guyane F223).

81. Lt. Denis au Gouverneur, 12 mai 1856, ANSOM, Guyane F209. It was not unusual for a newly hired Kru mariner to slip overboard and return to shore after his advance had been paid (Brooks 1972: 32), but the involvement of so many suggests an unusual cause. Eleven of these recruits were repatriated when their indentures expired. Among the Diane recruits were Christians from the American Episcopal Mission, including the husband of a mission teacher (Brittan 1860: 334).
82. A. Cerisier au Directeur de l'Intérieur, 22 novembre 1857; A. Mênard et al., "Procès-verbal, 21 novembre 1857," ANSOM, Guyane F213.
83. Renault does not include desertions during recruitment for Diane I, but lists three deaths. Mênard mentions a combined total of twelve desertions and deaths. The total of nine desertions and three deaths in Table 8.3 represents the difference between Renault's and Mênard's figures.
84. According to Renault 1976: 35, 54, French authorities in Senegal resented the loss of laborers to the West Indies, and did not permit their recruitment, but that was later on, in 1858, and he fails to support his argument that Chevalier did not use rachat there.
85. The rachat formula required a slave's formal consent to his "redemption" and agreement to emigrate under indenture. In the Régis depots on the Zaire River, slaves who refused to emigrate could remain and work off the cost of their redemption. Chevalier's recruits had to embark or remain as slaves (Renault 1976: 59-63, 116-117).
86. "Rapport du Chirurgien Bonte du Phénix, 8 octobre 1858-20 juin 1859"; CO 267/261, No. 193, S. Hill to E. Bulwer Lytton, No. 193, 18 November 1858, ANSOM, Guyane F212.
87. W. Humphrys, "Statement of the Number of Persons Who Have Been Introduced into the Colony of British Guiana under Promise of Free Returned Passage, and the Number Who Have Left at the Expense of the Colony, 14 August 1850," GNA, No. 17; H. Barkly to Duke of Newcastle, 7 April 1853, CO 111/294, No. 53.
88. Adamson 1972: 108-111; Stimpston et al. to Wodehouse, 2 June 1856; J. G. Austin, "Report," 3 June 1856, GNA, No. 17.
89. Dalton 1855: vol. 2: 107 mentions malaria as prevalent among British Guiana immigrants and field workers. Rev. H. E. Wickham to Rev. E. Hawkins, 15 July 1857; Letters Received, British Guiana 1850-1857, Program, "Day of General Thanksgiving for the Passing Away of the Cholera, 14 February 1858," USPG, Box 1769 British Guiana, etc.; Rev. C. Rattray to Rev. A. Tidman, 10 March 1858, CWM, Incoming Letters, British Guiana: Demerara 1858, Box 8A, 1855-61.

90. G. Philip to F. Hincks, 30 October 1866, GNA, No. 17.
91. J. Francis, T. Reed, W. Anson, B. Nelson, to Lieutenant Governor, 21 March 1858, GNA, No. 17.
92. M. Atkins et al., Petition, 21 April 1858, J. G. Austin and W. Walker Minutes, 22 and 23 April 1858; W. Walker Minute, 22 March 1858, GNA, No. 17. For later petitions see: J. Crosby to W. Walker, 1 September 1859, W. Walker Minutes, 3 September 1859; J. Crosby Minute, 15 September 1862, with D. Thomas et al. to F. Hincks, 15 September 1862; L. Barkly to J. Scott, 6 October 1871; S. Buckner to Governor's Secretary, 11 March 1868, GNA, No. 17.
93. Rev. C. Rattray to Rev. A. Tidman, 11 March 1859, CWM Incoming Letters, British Guiana: Demerara, Box 8A 1855-61, 1859.
94. Rev. J. Scott to Rev. A. Tidman, 7 March 1861, CWM, Incoming Letters, Box 8A 1855-61, 1860-61.
95. C. Rattray to Rev. A. Tidman, 4 March, 4 May 1850, 27 March, 1851, CWM, Incoming Letters, British Guiana: Demerara, Box 7.
96. "Register of Immigrants Arriving in the Colony of British Guiana . . . Who Have Availed Themselves of the Provisions of Ordinance No. 17, 1865"; "Register of Cooly Immigrants Introduced into British Guiana 1866-1884," GNA, No. 17.
97. Most European travellers and mariners commented on Kru boatmen's songs. See Brooks 1972: 42-43.
98. "Arrêté portant règlement sur les salaires, les vivres et l'habillement des engagés africains affectés aux divers services de la Colonie Penitenciaire, le 23 novembre 1854"; Guyane F217, V. Dupuis au Directeur de l'Intérieure, 22 juillet 1856; L'Institut Colonial International 1895, 1:88-108, ANSOM, Guyane F214, No. 657.
99. L. E. de Montravel au Ministre de la Marine, 17 février 1860, ANSOM, Guyane F220.
100. "Extrait du registre des procès-verbaux des délibérations du Conseil Privé de la Guyane française, 25 septembre 1863, arrêté réglant la prime de rengagement à accorder aux immigrants africains du convoi de l'Orion qui contractent un nouvel engagement dans la colonie," ANSOM, Guyane F213.
101. For the French West Indies see S. Hill to E. Bulwer Lytton, 29 July 1858, CO 267/261, No. 140; F. Hincks to Duke of Newcastle, 17 February 1862, and L. E. de Montravel au Gouverneur de la Guyane anglaise, 27 janvier 1862, and Hincks to Montravel, 15 February 1862, CO 111/334, No. 15; also ANSOM, Généralités 118, dossiers 1028, 1032.
102. Baudin au Ministre de la Marine, 16 juillet, 8 août 1857, ANSOM Guyane F214; Baudin au Ministre de la Marine, 5 décembre 1854, 17 février 1857, ANSOM Guyane F207;

- Baudin au ministre de la Marine, 18 février 1857, ANSOM Guyane F210.
103. French Guiana's convicts regularly deserted to such places (P. E. Wodehouse to Duke of Newcastle, 23 January 1860, and enclosures, CO 111/326, No. 10). According to the governor, by September 1857 130 desertions took place - forty-four more than the immigration department recorded (A. Baudin au Ministre de la Marine, 16 septembre 1857, ANSOM Guyane F210; F223, C. Chaila, "Relevé nominatif et signalétique des immigrants africains," ANSOM Guyane F233).
 104. A. Baudin au Ministre de la Marine, 31 octobre 1856; Baudin au gouverneur de la Guyane anglaise, 14 octobre 1856; Baudin au Ministre de la Marine, 17 février 1858; Baudin au Ministre de la Marine, 11 décembre 1856; Baudin au Ministre de la Marine, 18 février 1857 ANSOM Guyane F210; P. E. Wodehouse to H. Labouchere, 23 October 1856 and enclosures, CO 111/312, No. 134; Wodehouse to Labouchere, 2 July 1857, and Labouchere to E. Hammond, 12 August 1857, CO 111/317, No. 82; Wodehouse to Duke of Newcastle, 6 February 1860, CO 111/326, No. 17; Wodehouse to Duke of Newcastle, 8 February 1860, CO 111/326, No. 19; F. Hincks to Duke of Newcastle, 17 February 1862, and attached Colonial Office Minute, CO 111/334, No. 15.
 105. P. E. Wodehouse to H. Labouchere, 25 November 1856, CO 111/313, No. 148; A. Baudin au Ministre de la Marine, 4, 14 novembre 1856, ANSOM Guyane F210.
 106. A. Baudin au Ministre de la Marine, 16 septembre, 15 novembre 1857; Marck au Directeur de l'Intérieure, 13 octobre 1857, ANSOM Guyane F210.
 107. Mam-Lam-Fouck 1982: 144 also cites syphilis and alcoholism as major causes of death.
 108. In the case of Brazil, the Portuguese did find willing collaborators in Angola, but Brazilians refused to allow them to live in Rio. I am grateful to Mary Karasch for this information.
 109. McCrea, "Report on the Passage of the Government Emigrant Ship Clarendon," 18 October 1850.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANSOM	Archives Nationales Service d'Outre-Mer
CLEC	Colonial Land and Emigration Commission
CO	Colonial Office
CWM	Council for World Mission
GNA	Guyana National Archives
PP	Parliamentary Papers
SLA	Sierra Leone Archives
USPG	United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
VHAJ	Votes of the House of Assembly of Jamaica

CHAPTER 9

SLAVE TRADE, "LEGITIMATE" TRADE, AND IMPERIALISM REVISITED: THE CONTROL OF WEALTH IN THE BIGHTS OF BENIN AND BIAFRA

Patrick Manning*

The nineteenth-century transformation of the Bights of Benin and Biafra, set in motion by British abolition of the Atlantic slave trade, is classically seen as having consisted of two stages: the first as an economic change from the slave trade to "legitimate" trade, and the second as a political change from African independence to European colonial rule. Virtually all authors, whatever their different interpretations of the transformation, emphasize the intricacy of the political and economic narrative and the central importance of slavery and the slave trade in the developments of the time (cf. Johnston 1900; Geary 1927). The adventures of this era feature the life stories of many fascinating individuals: King William Dappa Pepple of Bonny, who gained power by signing an anti-slave-trade treaty with the British; King Ghezo of Danhomé, who considered signing such a treaty, but ended up continuing with slave exports; Francisco Felix de Souza, the great slave-trading merchant and ally of Ghezo, Jaja, who rose from the status of slave in Bonny to become the founder of the trading state of Opobo; Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the Yoruba slave trained in Sierra Leone who became Anglican Bishop of the Niger; British officials John H. Glover and Harry Hamilton Johnston, both aggressive imperial agents; and such leading European merchants as Victor Régis and John Holt. The transformation is further depicted in such successful novels as Bruce Chatwin's The Viceroy of Ouidah, Elechi Amadi's The Great Ponds, and Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart.

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Only partly concealed beneath the apparently inherent interest of the heroic men's tales lies an issue with which the chroniclers have wrestled in fascination but which has resisted resolution: the nature of the link between political and economic factors in the nineteenth-century Bights. Were the political factors dominant, as K. O. Dike (1954) suggested? Were the economic factors determinant, as A. G. Hopkins (1968, 1973) has argued? Did Europeans hold the initiative in political and economic affairs, or was it the Africans? How precisely did slavery and the slave trade figure in coastal affairs?

This study reconsiders the nineteenth-century transformation of the Bights of Benin and Biafra, and presents a reformulation of the links between political and economic factors. It is an attempt to draw on the evidence presented by Dike, Hopkins, and other scholars to resolve some of the interpretive contradictions among them. In this analysis I make use of a revised and elaborated framework which, by formalizing analyses often left implicit by previous authors, ends up revising certain of their conclusions. The framework gives particular attention to the control of wealth, in addition to the production of such wealth, and it analyzes the control of wealth in two aspects: the appropriation of wealth by various individuals and social strata, and the disposition of wealth by those who had appropriated it.

Agency and Structure in West Coast Historiography

The pioneers of Nigerian history, K. O. Dike (1954) and Saburi Biobaku (1957), brought the African protagonists of the nineteenth-century transformation to center stage. They sought to refute the Eurocentric focus of their predecessors - British historians of the colonial era such as Allan McPhee (1926) and W. Keith Hancock (1942) - who saw the transformation in terms of the percolation of European interest and enlightened policy. In the eyes of McPhee and Hancock, the Europeans had combined the advantages of trade in legitimate goods with the pressure of British consuls and warships, and had caused African merchants and statesmen to switch from trading in slaves to exporting palm oil. Later on, the restrictive practices of Africans in commerce, clashing with the European devotion to free trade and open markets, had caused the Europeans to assert colonial dominion over the Bights at the end of the nineteenth century. These discussions of nineteenth-century events by McPhee and Hancock were concise and intended mainly to prepare the ground for their main agenda, colonial economic development. Overall, however, they emphasized the role of agency - purposeful actions, in this case those of Europeans on the African coast - as the key factor in bringing about this transformation.

Dike and Biobaku focused entirely on the nineteenth century, and in their hands the precolonial history of the Bights emerged as a set of contests of will, in which European and African protagonists pitted their energies against each other. Dike's book in particular set the canon for a whole series of "trade and politics" studies which focused on the diplomacy of commerce, and in which the levels of commercial activity are seen as being set by political authorities (and particularly African authorities) through their ability to shut off or to encourage commerce (Ikime 1968; Akinjogbin 1967; Newbury 1961; Daaku 1970). These studies, while fundamental in establishing the validity of African history, preserved the emphasis on the centrality of human agency. They tended to convey the assumption that political decisions set the flow of West African wealth: the volume of palm oil or the number of slaves marketed were determined, so it seemed, by the policies of African political leaders.

With the development of interdisciplinary approaches to African history, and because of influences from the fields of anthropology and economics in particular, subsequent investigators of the transformation in the Bights came to see societal structures, rather than human agency, as the key factors causing change. The most influential such study was that of Hopkins (1968), in which he argued that economic factors were the cause of British colonial expansion from Lagos into Western Nigeria (see also Hopkins 1973). Rather than focus simply on international trade, he emphasized the importance of warlords, who rose in the course of the Yoruba wars which followed the collapse of the Oyo Empire in about 1830, and who settled numerous slaves on plantations producing palm oil for export. The central issue was the "crisis of adaptation which the military regimes faced in the era of legitimate commerce" (Hopkins 1968:591). What brought about the British conquest of the region was, in his view, the conflict between British merchants and Yoruba warlords over the share of the declining profits of trade in the 1880s, an era when palm oil prices were collapsing as part of the world-wide decline in agricultural prices.

A.J.H. Latham (1973) proposed an analogous interpretation for Calabar. Latham documented the rise of the palm oil trade as a response to demand, and showed the resultant transformation of Efik society. He gave particular emphasis to the development of factional disputes in the palm-oil era, and argued that British consular authority was drawn into the region as a result of these disputes, until it became supreme in 1891. As he concludes, "annexation was the result of the polygon of forces operating internally and externally at Calabar. These forces were economic, or the by-product of economic forces" (Latham 1973:148; see also 1986).

Thus, according to the economic historians' revisions of the political historians' interpretation, the narratives of the Pepples, Jaja and the Egba rulers might have made for exciting stories, but the economic structures of production and commerce determined the transformation of the Bights. The wills and actions of European and African protagonists, while still important, were factors best seen as functioning within these structural constraints.

Another group of writers gave a different sort of structuralist response to the Dike-Biobaku focus on agency, choosing to emphasize the influence of social rather than economic structures (Jones 1963; Alagoa 1971a, 1971b; Austen 1970). As with the economic historians, these writers revised Dike and Biobaku by placing the free will of African leaders into a web of powerful forces. But the work of Jones and Alagoa for the Bight of Biafra and of Austen on the Bight of Benin emphasized the continuity resulting from the relative inertia of social structures which were closed off to external influences, in contrast to Latham and Hopkins, who emphasized the changes resulting from the dynamism of economic structures which responded readily to outside forces.

In a comparative study of the transformation of the Bights, the present author (Manning 1969) tested a version of the Dike-Biobaku approach (i.e., "West African coastal states . . . maintained the slave trade as long as possible and switched to trade in palm oil as a source of revenue when further exports of slaves became impossible") against a version of the Hopkins-Latham approach (i.e., "The end of the slave trade and the beginning of the palm oil trade were determined less by reasons of state than by accounting of profit and loss"), and found for the latter on the basis of commercial and political evidence. Assuming a need to make a dichotomous choice between agency and structure as the cause of the coastal transformation, structure was the appropriate choice. But this resolution of the issue could not resolve the contrast of the continuity emphasized by social structuralism and the change suggested by economic structuralism. Nor could it purge from the analyst's mind the possibility that agency and structure might be bound up in each other systematically, and that an approach combining the two might provide a more detailed and more satisfying explanation of the nineteenth-century transformation of the Bights. Thus we turn to a reconsideration of the issue.

The Origins of Wealth: Production and Commerce

The nineteenth-century economy and society of the Bights has come to be known in ever-greater detail, and the new evidence facilitates our task of reconsidering the region's

transformation. Recent studies of economic history, in accord with the research agenda of their time, have devoted considerable attention to amassing data on patterns of production. But as this qualitative information is not easily summarized, we must turn to quantitative measures of the economy in order to make a concise presentation. And for a quantitative picture of economic structure, one must rely on commerce: the accompanying graphs of the value of slave and palm product exports provide an index of changes in the regional economic structures.¹

These figures show a period when slave exports were predominant, a period of mixed exports, and a period of concentration on palm product trade. Export income rose from a relatively modest level of £250,000 in the Bight of Benin and £300,000 in the Bight of Biafra at the beginning of the century to a remarkable £1,000,000 for each of the Bights in the 1890s (Figures 9.1 and 9.2). Despite continued high numbers of slave exports in the early decades of the century, the actual value of slave exports dropped in both areas; the decline was most dramatic in the Bight of Biafra, falling to virtually nothing by the end of the 1830s. In the Bight of Benin, by contrast, the decline in the value of slave exports was more gradual and continued through the decade of the 1860s. Palm products more than took up the slack in the value of the export trade, becoming significant in the Bight of Biafra by 1830 and in the Bight of Benin in the 1840s. Thereafter the expansion in trade was closely associated with the volume of palm product exports - palm oil before 1860 and both oil and kernels after 1860. The 1880s were a period of stagnation in both Bights, as prices fell during the first great world depression in agricultural commodities.

At a more detailed level, several interesting contrasts between the two regions emerge. In total revenue, the Bight of Biafra generally led the Bight of Benin throughout the nineteenth century until the 1890s, when the Bights were virtually the same. The Bight of Biafra experienced stagnation in the value of exports from c. 1800 to the 1820s, probably even suffering a modest decline during the second decade of the century, but thereafter revenue grew remarkably fast on the whole. A decade of modest growth occurred in the 1850s, and a temporary set back occurred in the 1880s, but from 1800 to the 1890s the value of exports rose 330 percent. The Bight of Benin, by contrast, suffered a period of gradual decline from c. 1800 to 1840, recovered only to the level of 1800 by 1850, and only took off after 1860. Hence the shift from a reliance on slave exports to palm products occurred much later in the Bight of Benin than in the Bight of Biafra, but the growth of the Bight of Benin export trade was very dramatic in the last four decades of the century, increasing 500 percent.

Figure 9.1 EXPORT REVENUE IN THE BIGHT OF BENIN,
NINETEENTH CENTURY

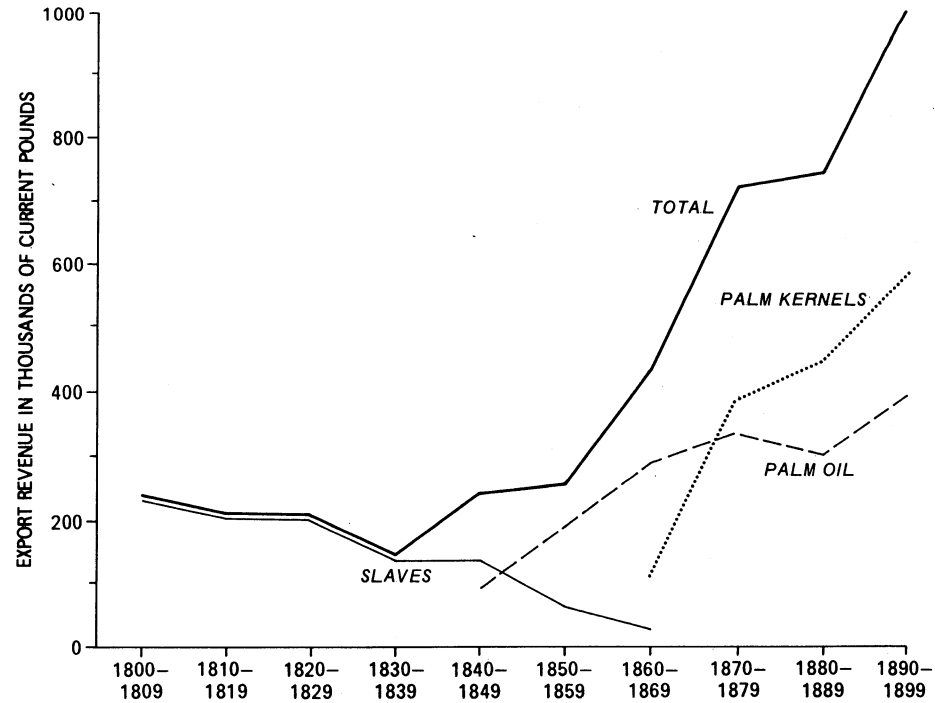
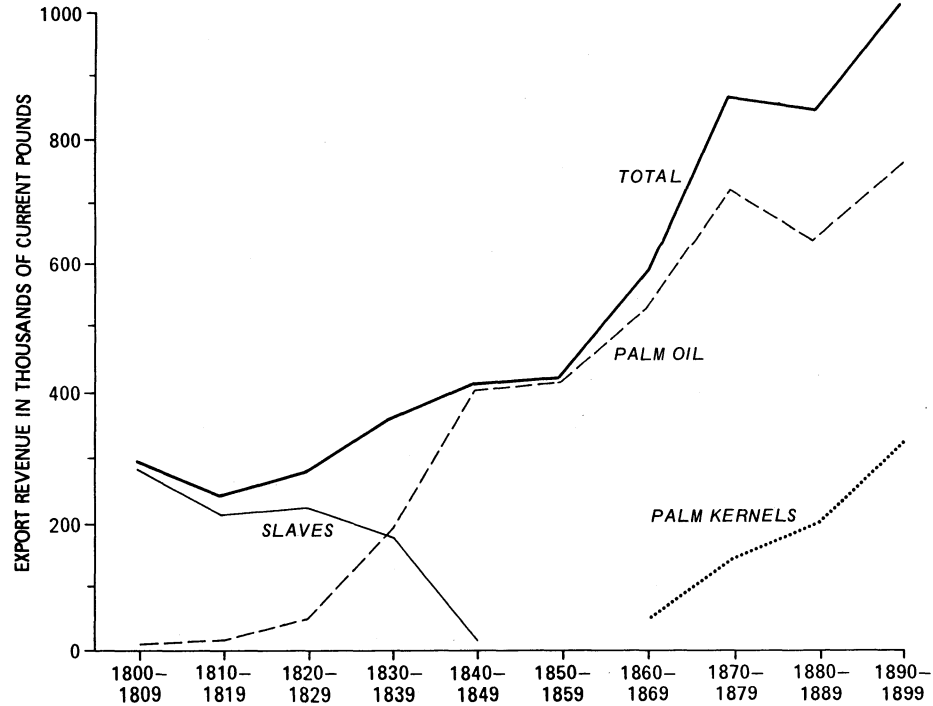


Figure 9.2 EXPORT REVENUE IN THE BIGHT OF BIAFRA,
NINETEENTH CENTURY



In palm oil exports, the Bight of Biafra began earlier than the Bight of Benin, expanded at a very rapid rate of over 10 percent per year in the 1830s and 1840s, and expanded at a slower rate of 1.3 percent for the rest of the century. The value of palm oil exports exceeded (or at least tied) that of slave exports in the Bight of Biafra in the 1830s; such was not the case in the Bight of Benin until the 1850s. The reason for the early expansion of Bight of Biafra palm oil exports is almost certainly that this region was the lowest-cost producer, since it benefitted from very dense and luxuriant oil palm forests and a network of cheap, waterborne transport, though Latham (1986) has noted other factors predisposing this region to early palm oil trade. As European demand for palm oil grew, higher prices and more determined purchasers drew the Bight of Benin and other areas into the market: palm oil exports from the Bight of Benin expanded at a rapid annual rate of nearly 6 percent from the 1840s through the 1860s, and at a slower rate of 2.8 percent thereafter. In fact, early Bight of Benin exports of palm oil may have been somewhat greater than shown in Figure 9.1 because of exports to Brazil whose volume is not yet known (Verger 1953). The volume of palm oil exports from the Bight of Benin never exceeded half that of the Bight of Biafra. Yet total export revenue from the Bight of Benin, which lagged behind that of the Bight of Biafra throughout the century, ultimately surpassed that of its more easterly neighbor.

The reason lay in palm kernels. Palm kernel exports from both regions were negligible until the 1860s, when the new process for manufacturing margarine brought a sharp increase in demand for the light, unsaturated palm kernel oil. With that, palm kernel exports grew rapidly in both regions, at annual rates of roughly 6 percent to the end of the century. But in the Bight of Benin, palm kernels exceeded palm oil as a source of revenue from the 1870s, while in the Bight of Biafra palm kernel exports brought no more than one quarter of export revenue. The single greatest reason for the low ratio of palm oil to palm kernel exports from the Bight of Benin was the higher level of domestic palm oil consumption in the Bight of Benin, as compared with the Bight of Biafra. In addition, the proportionate yield of palm oil to palm kernels seems to have been higher in the Bight of Biafra as a result of the higher humidity and rainfall (Manning 1982).

Each of the three export commodities entailed a contrasting social organization of production. The slave trade required sanction and support by the state, it tended to place wealth into the hands of those already powerful, and its revenues could be gained wherever people were to be found: the slave trade led to an uneven distribution of export revenue. Palm oil production and commerce was susceptible to a degree of consolidation, particularly through the use of slave labor,

though production by smallholders dominated palm oil output. The production and commerce of palm kernels was the least subject of all to consolidation. Palm kernels did not have to be processed and shipped in a timely fashion, as did palm oil, which fetched a lower price if it fermented; and palm kernels were commonly shipped in raffia or jute bags which were easier to move than the three-hundred-gallon puncheons used for palm oil. Palm kernels could thus be separated from the palm nuts by women, children, and the old, who may then have gained a portion of the revenue from their sale.

From a structuralist perspective, and assuming that figures on export commerce are an accurate indicator of the total domestic economy, one may propose an interpretation of the nineteenth century transformation of the Bights based on Figures 9.1 and 9.2. From the 1800s to the 1820s the two regions had roughly constant and nearly equal levels of export revenue: even the Yoruba wars were insufficient to raise Bight of Benin slave export levels above Bight of Biafra levels until the 1840s (Manning 1982; Eltis forthcoming; Law 1982). For the middle three decades of the century the two regions diverged. The Bight of Biafra increased its export earnings in the 1830s and 1840s because the rise in palm oil exports more than compensated for the end of slave exports; the "crisis of adaptation" was thus surmounted with success and with a higher level of export revenue than during the slave-trade years, though export revenue stagnated in the 1850s. For the Bight of Benin, the "crisis of adaptation" was more severe: export revenue declined sharply in the 1830s, while during the next two decades the growth of palm oil exports combined with the continuation of slave exports barely succeeded in bringing export revenue back up to turn-of-the-century levels. Thus, for the Bight of Benin, slave exports lasted some two decades longer, palm oil export growth began some two decades later, and sustained growth in export revenue began two decades later than in the Bight of Biafra. For these reasons we should expect some contrast in the politics of the regions during those decades.

From the 1860s to the 1890s, we again find the two regions synchronized in a pattern of rapidly growing export revenue. For both regions, that growth was halted during the 1880s because of the collapse of palm oil prices. This effect was most severe for the Bight of Biafra because of its relatively high dependence on palm oil exports. The Bight of Benin was less affected because of its larger exports of palm kernels, whose quantities rose faster and whose prices fell to a lesser degree. The more rapid growth rate of Bight of Benin export revenue generally resulted from its larger proportion of palm kernel exports. Bight of Benin export revenue suffered relatively at the beginning of the century, especially in the 1830s, but from that time it grew at an average annual 3.4

percent to the 1890s; Bight of Biafra export revenue grew regularly from the 1820s to the end of the century, but at a lower rate of 1.8 percent (growth rates calculated from Figures 9.1 and 9.2).

The export revenue estimates fit neatly with the interpretations of Hopkins and Latham, in that they show a halt in export growth in the 1880s; they also pinpoint the era of competition between slave trade and palm-oil trade emphasized by Dike and Biobaku for the 1830s and 1840s. This last point confirms Northrup's assertion (1976) that the slave trade and the palm oil trade overlapped for some time in both Bights, though neither this result nor the overall pattern of export revenue necessarily confirms his conclusion that the slave trade promoted economic development.

The above picture of fluctuating export revenue is further confirmed by available figures on currency flows: cowrie shell imports, of which the greatest portion went to the Bight of Benin, declined to a low level in the 1830s and 1840s, and then rose rapidly (Johnson and Hogendorn 1981, 1986; Hopkins 1966). In sum, this relatively detailed picture of the export trade provides a basis for an improved analysis of political and economic transformation in the Bights. It is evident that the marshalling of further detail would extend the predictive power of economic structure in coastal affairs.

It is therefore tempting, in a sense, to dismiss human agency as a causal factor and rely entirely on export commerce as the leading economic sector, the best available index of production, and the determinant of political change. In fact, neither Hopkins nor Latham made such a strong claim. Although their overall conclusions emphasize the economic structure, their presentations include a great deal of information which does not fit rigidly into such an outlook, and which details the role of human agency in the transformation. Their analytical framework deals explicitly with structures, but their analysis of other factors remains implicit. Similarly, Dike and Biobaku argue from relatively explicit premises on the role of political and economic policy in social change and leave implicit their analysis of the role of economic and social structures. So rather than press further the case for the unique determining power of structure, I shall seek out an enlarged framework of analysis, encompassing both structure and agency, and then apply it in an attempt to fit a still larger proportion of the available evidence into clear and chronologically precise patterns.

Control of Wealth as a Framework of Analysis

The present attempt to resolve the dilemma of structure and agency in the politics and economics of the Bights begins by focusing even more heavily on structures, and then moves from that standpoint to incorporate agency. It addresses in specific time frame the issues denoted for precolonial West Africa generally by Law (1978), and it touches on the notion of ideas as a causal factor developed in Berry's twentieth-century analysis (1985). We will consider, in addition to the structures of production and commerce, the distinctions among social strata, and the participation of the various strata in production, appropriation, and disposition of wealth. (The terms production, appropriation, and disposition, while taken from the Marxian lexicon, correspond almost exactly to the Neoclassical terms output, income, and expenditure; the reason for bypassing the Neoclassical terminology here is that the economic analysis is used in explicit combination with an analysis of social structure.) Of these various aspects of the handling of wealth, some will be revealed to lend themselves readily to the exercise of policy options, while in other areas circumstances will tend to force the hands of individual actors. For instance, while West African conditions of productivity and demand put severe constraints on the planting decisions of large landowners, those same landowners had wide latitude in deciding whether to spend their earnings in purchasing new slaves, a political office, or luxury goods. Here, then, we will seek to locate the links between structure and agency, and between economic and political factors. Jaja's policies in Bonny and Opobo succeeded for nearly two decades because they were consistent with (though not exactly determined by) the economic and social conditions of his time; the attempts of Ghezo in Danhomé to bring about changes of similar magnitude failed because his policies were inconsistent with the realities of his situation, but also because he met determined opposition from entrenched interests within and without his kingdom.

By broadening the range of structures considered, we broaden the definition of the social transformation of the nineteenth-century Bights. Changes in items of trade (from slaves to palm products) and in heads of state (from African to European) remain as key elements of the transformation, but these are now joined by changes in systems of production (the rise of slave-labor systems), changes in social structure (the development of a slave class and the rise of a landed interest), and changes in the relative power and wealth of contending social strata (merchant challenge to monarchy, protests by slaves). Not all of these factors were of equal or constant importance, but the result of their inclusion is that the analysis yields a political and economic narrative with a

number of phases in the overall transformation, whereas both the policy-oriented and structuralist approaches tend to imply two or three main steps in the transformation, with the rest of the narrative adding little but detail. The role of slavery in the transformation is both indicative and causative of the link between economics and politics: new institutions of slavery were created and then dismantled during the nineteenth century by purposeful action in response to economic pressures, yet the wills of the slaves and of the slaveowners cannot thereby be discounted.

This is a study of the socio-economic appropriation of wealth and of the socio-political ends to which wealth was put. In this portrayal of the economic side of the West African political drama, the main character types include planters harvesting produce, merchants garnishing commercial profit, princes collecting taxes, and warlords snatching booty. Smaller roles are played by priests and family chiefs, each receiving their appropriate tithes, and master craftsmen collecting manufactures; we may also note the significant divergence in the interests of merchants selling goods from those specializing in slaves (Manning 1985b). In addition to these big men of the Bights there were the masses of peasants, artisans, domestics, and wage workers, along with slaves of many categories.

The appropriation of the fruits of West African labor was complex in its detail, but a simplified social analysis of appropriation captures a significant portion of that complex reality. The producers themselves, first, were able to appropriate much of the wealth they created by retaining the product for their own consumption or by exchanging it for other goods. Merchants large and small, second, were able to appropriate wealth by profiting from the transport and exchange of goods. Princes, third, the more or less legitimately constituted and recognized governmental authorities, appropriated wealth by profiting from taxation of producers and merchants, in return for providing security and justice. Finally warlords - large-scale military powers and small-scale thieves who did not rule but plundered - forcibly appropriated wealth from producers, merchants and princes, with little pretense of providing a quid pro quo.

The disposition of the product of West African labor, while similarly complex in practice, may also be summarized schematically as a set of alternatives open to any group controlling some wealth. The consumption of wealth for subsistence and for reproduction of the population was surely the main avenue of disposition of West African wealth at all times. But in addition, wealth could be invested in a variety of ways: in persons, as through marriage or as in the purchase of slaves; in land, presumably by purchase; in capital and improvements - land clearing by cultivators, boats for fishing

peoples, animals for herders, stocks of goods for merchants. Wealth could further be invested in attempts to gain political control, as through payment of bribes, through support of retainers, or through purchase of arms. Finally, wealth could be disposed of through conspicuous displays for real or imagined prestige, and it could simply be wasted.

The struggle for control of wealth and power took place in each of three arenas - production, appropriation, and disposition of wealth - and involved interactions among them. The productive system was conditioned by a range of economic, ecological, and social factors, so that levels of production can be largely explained in terms of structural imperatives (e.g. prices, levels of rainfall) rather than in terms of human will. Control over appropriation was constrained by limits on the availability of wealth, but the mechanisms of theft, tithing, taxation, coercion, and market pricing were open, within those constraints, to control through policy. The disposition of wealth too was more amenable to human manipulation than its creation, though one's allocation of wealth among various alternative uses was conditioned by their relative profitability. Even in poor regions like the Bights of Benin and Biafra, consumption levels could be determined voluntarily, within limits; individuals and groups could then invest their savings out of consumption into a variety of economic, political and social activities, in pursuit of ends they deemed appropriate to their social station. These might range from purchase of tools to fees for divination ceremonies. Unfortunately, the disposition of wealth is difficult to observe for precolonial West Africa. That is, it is easier to know who siezed slaves or sold palm oil than it is to know how the proceeds from the sale of palm oil or slaves were put to use.

To the degree that the patterns of appropriation and disposition of wealth remained stable over time, the result was the reproduction of the population and of the social and economic structure, and even growth along previous lines. But society changed when the processes of appropriation and disposition of wealth reallocated resources from previous use, even if the underlying patterns of production remained unchanged. Let us now see how this more explicit analytical framework leads to a revised view of nineteenth-century change on the West African coast.

Societal Transformation in the Bights of Benin and Biafra

Paul Lovejoy (1983:170-183, 251-255), in his comprehensive interpretation of slavery in Africa, has given a detailed analysis of slavery and society in the Bights. His study

emphasizes the interaction of the slave trade and the palm oil trade, the growing importance of slavery and slave resistance, and the links between Christianity, anti-slavery, and the imperial conquest. In acknowledging these as key issues, the effort in what follows is to make the detail and the framework more congruent: to tie the overall patterns down to a more specific chronology.

The Efik peoples of Calabar provide clear instances of social and political transformation through the impact of economic forces. Latham (1973) has shown how, during the eighteenth century, the kin-based Efik lineages became, through the incorporation of many slaves into the population, territorial wards where real and fictive kinship were united in geographical units (See also Dike 1954; Nair 1972; Forde 1956; Jones 1963; Alagoa 1971a). At much the same time, the previously dominant water spirit cult, which corresponded to the outlook of a fishing people, was displaced in religious affairs by the Ekpe society, which acted to guarantee payment of debts by its members. Finally a town council, including representatives which were now from wards rather than from lineages, emerged to complete the Efik system of governance. In sum, Efik society adjusted in several ways to the increasing dominance of trade.

In the early nineteenth century a new development took place as a single man, Duke Ephraim (Efion Edem), managed to become at the same time eyamba (head of the Ekpe society) and obong (head of the town council). This was partly a matter of his individual commercial and political skill, but it was also a function of the new pressures on merchants as slave prices began to decline from their turn-of-the-century peak. Duke Ephraim had become the leading trader in Calabar by 1800, he had obtained both leading offices by 1820, and he held them to his death in 1834. Once having gained unprecedented power, he used it to reinforce his position in the slave trade and to obtain a dominant position in the expanding palm oil trade.

The interaction of policy and market forces in the West African political economy is illustrated neatly by two of Duke Ephraim's acts. First, he concentrated trade in his own hands by undermining the local salt industry. All along the West African coast, as the export trade in palm oil expanded, European merchants began to import salt as a product they could exchange for palm oil. From Calabar to the Volta, European salt imports now came to challenge the position of the coastal salt-manufacturing industry (Manning 1985; Maier 1984). In Calabar, Duke Ephraim not only sped this process along, he also diverted additional profits into his own hands by suppressing the salt industry in the coastal area of Tom Shotts (Latham 1973, 1986). This action enabled him to benefit from the import trade in salt at the expense of the Tom Shotts salt workers. Second, at a time when revenue from slave exports was

declining, he secured additional income through the monopolization of customs duties (comey). By 1828 he had successfully forced all European merchants to pay these duties to him and to him alone.

The outlines of Duke Ephraim's remarkable accumulation of wealth are thus fairly clear. His policy for the disposition of his wealth is known in less detail. He purchased thousands of slaves and settled them in the hinterland region of Akpabuyo to produce foodstuffs. This policy clearly increased the numerical strength of his ward, Duke Town. Whether the foodstuffs were sold on the market is not clear, but slave-produced food did support Ephraim's large operations. One may note, however, the parallel between this choice to settle slaves on land for producing foodstuffs with Northrup's report of the equivalent concentration of Igbo slaves on northerly food-producing lands rather than in southerly oil-palm forests (Northrup 1979). In both cases, the production of foodstuffs was indirectly related to the expansion of the palm oil trade, in the case of northern Igbo country because yams were moved into the palm oil belt and in the case of Calabar because of the savings achieved by merchant firms that had to maintain large numbers of people to transport palm products from the interior.

Yet while Duke Ephraim was able to establish an unprecedented centralization of wealth and power in his hands, he was unable to pass that power on, and only one of his successors was ever to hold his two offices at once. His power was ephemeral both because of local institutional reasons and because of changes in the international economy. The easily-concentrated revenue from the slave trade was not to last forever: the volume and prices of slave sales declined in the 1830s because of declining New World demand and because of British efforts at suppressing the slave trade. In the inevitable disputes over the succession to each of Duke Ephraim's offices, there arose accusations of witchcraft. These accusations could only be resolved, if the parties insisted, by recourse to a poison ordeal. The political stalemate among the leading wards and the widespread use of poison meant that many of the best candidates for leadership died. This reinforced international economic pressures and led not only to a reduction in the amount of wealth generated but to its more widespread dispersal among the Efik.

Duke Ephraim presided over a period of transition at Calabar, during which time Calabar's exports shifted from a reliance solely on slaves to a period of mixed exports. As can be seen in Figure 9.2, the years from 1800-1830 were a time of relative stagnation in the value of total exports for the Bight of Biafra as a whole. Duke Ephraim emerged as the dominant figure, forcing his rivals into subordinate positions, and he was the leader in heralding in the new palm oil trade at the

same time that he established control of the old slave trade. In contrast, the bloody succession to Duke Ephraim after 1834, in which a more fragmented political and commercial leadership emerged, occurred at a time of overall rapid economic growth that was characterized by a boom in palm oil exports and the final collapse of slave exports.

An analogous set of developments took place in the Ijo portion of the Niger Delta, centered on the port of Bonny (Dike 1956; Jones 1963; Alagoa 1971a, 1971b). That port, known for the volume of its slave exports in the late eighteenth century, was ruled by the very powerful and successful King Opubu from 1792-1830. He had circumvented the prohibition on unifying the monarchy and commercial leadership by installing his slave, Madu, as head of his own commercial and familial house, the Anna Pepple house. Opubu's reign thus corresponds rather closely to that of Duke Ephraim. Madu became regent on the death of Opubu, and Madu's son Alali became head of the Anna Pepple house and regent as well on Madu's death in 1833. But as in Calabar, this concentration of wealth and political power was broken up by a combination of economic and institutional factors. William Dappa Pepple, the son and legitimate heir of Opubu, was enthroned as king on reaching his majority in 1835, though effective power remained in the hands of the regent. The decline in slave export volume, the European and African competition in the growing palm-oil market, and the British anti-slavery squadron combined to break the power of the regent. In 1836 the British fleet siezed four Spanish slave ships in Bonny, and Alali was forced to sign a treaty on commerce and judicial jurisdiction with the British. This treaty, in turn, provided a pretext for a return of the British fleet in 1837 and the imposition of a second treaty through which Alali was deposed as regent and William Dappa Pepple assumed full royal powers. The contrast of the new king's economic policy with that of his predecessor is shown by his attempt to abolish "trust", the advancing of goods on credit to Bonny merchants: this would have reduced the wealth of his merchant competitors and have increased the importance of his own wealth obtained from comey - export duties on palm oil. The market was expanding too fast, however, to prevent European merchants from extending trust, and the king's attempt at concentration failed.

For Bonny and Calabar, in sum, the decline of slave exports and the rise of palm oil exports in the 1830s corresponded to a period of contested political power. This period of mixed exports in which total revenue continued to grow slowly still resulted in major structural changes in the Bight of Biafra. The move towards monopoly, apparent under Duke Ephraim and King Opubu, was broken at the moment when palm oil exports took off. As might be expected from Neoclassical

economic theory, such periods of expansion allowed new competitors to enter the market (Hogendorn and Lovejoy 1979).

The commercial and political patterns of the Bight of Benin, up through the 1820s, exhibited remarkable parallels with those to the east. The similarities continued into the 1830s, except for the rise of palm oil exports from the Bight of Biafra; then the two regions diverged more sharply during the two decades to follow. There arose during the first half of the century a merchant at Ouidah who exceeded all his rivals for some three decades, Francisco Felix de Souza (Verger 1968). De Souza, who came to West Africa from Brazil in about 1800, and who built up his slave trade from a base in the Portuguese fort at Ouidah, put much of his fortune into financing the coup d'état of Prince Gankpe in 1818, by which the latter overthrew the incumbent Adandozan and became King Ghezo (1818-1858) of Danhomé. The king and his merchant benefactor remained closely allied: de Souza was appointed chacha, to whom were paid most customs duties and who dominated the export of slaves not only for the kingdom of Danhomé but for adjoining regions of the coast. With the temporary collapse of slave exports in the late 1830s, however, de Souza's obligations for imported goods could not be met, and his fortune and power declined accordingly, though he retained his political position until his death in 1849. The similarities with the Bight of Biafra no longer existed. By the 1830s the Bight of Biafra was shifting to the export of palm oil, and export revenue continued to rise. By contrast, the 1830s were a period of declining export revenue in the Bight of Benin. The demand for palm oil was not yet sufficient to call forth a supply from this region, and continued slave exports, even in large quantities, were not enough to offset declining slave prices. De Souza was caught in a squeeze. His decline and his legacy to future generations are portrayed colorfully by Chatwin (1980).

King Ghezo held on for two more decades because his economic interests lay in the taxes and tribute he received from his subjects and to a lesser degree on the revenue from the trade in slaves and other commodities and from the fruits of slave labor. The first two decades of his rule saw a great expansion of Danhomé's power: he renounced tribute payments to Oyo in the 1820s and initiated a series of military campaigns to the east and north that resulted in the acquisition of new territory and many slaves for export. The consolidation of the Egba state at Abeokuta checked Ghezo's territorial expansion in the 1830s, and Danhomé even lost some of the land it had conquered. The new political reality combined with the impact of the trade contraction of the 1830s, which saw the decline of De Souza, and the king had to consider different policies from those that had led to the political expansion of the Danhomé state (Ross 1967). At this point, King Ghezo turned to the rising demand for palm oil as a possible solution to his

difficulties. Thus, with a slight time lag, King Ghezo found himself in a position similar to that of Duke Ephraim and King Opubu, who had earlier consolidated their positions through extending control over the growing palm oil trade at a time when slave exports were declining in value. The period of mixed exports lasted from the late 1830s through the 1850s in the Bight of Benin, two decades later than it had in the Bight of Biafra.

King Ghezo responded to the conditions of the 1840s and 1850s with a policy which contrasted sharply with the military expansion, tribute levying, and slave trading of the first half of his reign. As the export of palm products assumed growing importance, he attempted to gain control of its proceeds, first by dominating its production through the establishment of slave plantations, and then through control of the marketing of palm oil. Beginning in the 1840s, he established royal plantations on and around the Abomey plateau, worked by slave labor, and he required that all palm oil be sold through royal merchants (Ross 1967; Djivo 1979).

The king turned to another Brazilian immigrant merchant, Domingo Martins, as an ally in changing the direction of the Danhomé economy (Ross 1965; Verger 1968). Martins came to West Africa in the 1830s and by 1846 had settled at Porto-Novo beach, where Ghezo granted him a monopoly of trade in return for a payment for the land. His main source of wealth was palm oil, including the produce of his own extensive plantations, but he also participated in slave exporting when the opportunity arose. In 1854, however, he lost heavily when most of his slave cargoes were seized either in West Africa or in Cuba, and he restricted his activities to palm products thereafter.

Despite Ghezo's efforts to monopolize the palm oil trade and thereby find a substitute for the declining trade in slaves, the policies of the Danhomé monarch and his allies ultimately failed. There were three reasons for this failure. First, the commercial activities of many merchants, especially Brazilians and repatriated Yoruba, were beyond the control of the Danhomé state; second, Danhomé accounted for little more than 10 percent of palm product exports from the Bight of Benin; and third, Ghezo ran into trouble with the entrenched military faction within Danhomé.

While Martins' career serves to emphasize Ghezo's efforts to centralize political and economic power in Danhomé, in contrast with other portions of the coast in the 1840s and 1850s, other aspects of his life reflect the growing competitiveness of his era. Martins was one of several thousand Brazilian immigrants to West Africa, most of whom were freed slaves. The Brazilians became an active commercial community from Agoué in the west to Lagos in the east. At much the same time, Sierra Leonian emigrants, most of them Yoruba or of Yoruba ancestry, also settled in significant numbers in

Badagry, Lagos and Abeokuta (Turner 1975; Kopytoff 1965; Biobaku 1957). Samuel Ajayi Crowther, enslaved as a youth and later to become Bishop of the Niger, was among these settlers: it was in accord with their values and his program of conversion that he portrayed domestic slavery as humane (Agiri 1981). Such an attitude reflects the willingness of these repatriates to use slave labor in developing their commercial interests.

The political discontinuity among the Yoruba of the nineteenth century contrasts with the relative stability among their western Aja neighbors, but the battles over control of wealth still had their analogs. Exports of Yoruba slaves grew dramatically during the wars from the 1820s through the 1840s and led to great short-term profits for some warlords and merchants (Law 1977; Ajayi and Smith 1971). Madame Tinubu, the most famous slave merchant of the time on the coast between Lagos and Porto-Novo, amassed a substantial fortune and a great deal of political influence. Variouslly described as the niece or the "close friend" of Akitoye, king of Lagos from 1841-1845, her success reaffirms the importance of connections between the state and slave commerce (Smith 1979). New groups of small-scale merchants, Brazilian and Sierra Leonian, arrived in Lagos at the time of the expansion of "trust" and commercial competition. Most dramatically, however, the dominance of large African merchants in Lagos was broken as the British seized control of the port in 1851 (Biobaku 1957; Newbury 1961; Kopytoff 1965). Madame Tinubu, however, settled in Abeokuta, and later became known as a great patriot for her purchases of arms in the Ijaye war; she was introduced to the visiting Martin Delany as a "princess" (Delany 1861).

In the Yoruba hinterland, the growth of the palm oil trade in the 1840s and 1850s encouraged the settling of large numbers of slaves under the control of warlords now transforming themselves into proprietors of great estates. These are the figures on whom Hopkins (1968, 1973) focused in explaining the tensions among African producers and merchants, on the one hand, and European merchants, on the other hand, which provoked the British conquest of the area. But the focus here on control of wealth encourages us to break down Hopkins' "warlord" group into more specific interest groups. Biobaku (1957:99) argues that in Ibadan, because of the endless fighting from the days of its formation, a strong constitution and coherent government had emerged, while in Abeokuta the contending interests of missionaries, merchants, and owners of land and slaves were more evident. The case of Danhomé shows perhaps more clearly than in the Yoruba case the distinct interests of monarchy, landowner, merchant, and peasant.

Chezo was willing, under the conditions of an expanding palm oil trade that he and his allies tried to dominate, to consider a treaty with the British to abolish the slave trade in return for full recognition. But this policy shift led the

king into conflict with entrenched economic interests: the military and much of the state hierarchy relied on booty from war as a major source of wealth and were reluctant to give up either war with the Egba or slave exports. On the other hand the merchants and producers of palm oil, led by such Ouidah families as Adjovi and Quénun with whom Ghezo carried on his trade, were competitors in that they hoped to benefit even more from unrestricted trade (Forbes 1851; Manning 1982). They could easily look beyond the frontiers of Danhomé to see how the palm oil trade flourished there without state restrictions. Peasant producers inside and outside of Danhomé, meanwhile, accounted for most of the growth in exports of palm products.

One important episode in the continuing policy conflict occurred in 1851 when the British blockaded the entire coast between Agoué and Lagos in an attempt to halt the slave trade. Ghezo had already been forced to recognize the failure of his effort to monopolize the palm oil trade, but he used the pressure of the British blockade to convince the opposing party in Abomey that it was necessary to end slave exports and to renounce war against the Egba in order to reach agreement with the British. The British, however, raised the blockade in July of 1852 without acknowledging that Danhomé had terminated the slave trade, thus denying Ghezo the backing he sought. Then a slave revolt in 1855 undercut any remaining support for Ghezo's policy: Yoruba slaves of the interior plantations planned a great uprising, in association with some Brazilians, to coincide with an Egba attack. The revolt was nipped in the bud, but it ended any great enthusiasm for concentrating large numbers of slaves. From that time on, the royal sector of the palm product market was a significant but never dominant portion of the total. Thus, while Coquery-Vidrovitch (1971) is correct to emphasize the royal effort to achieve monopolistic control of palm oil exports, her analysis should not be construed as demonstrating that palm oil exports from the kingdom were dominantly under royal control (Ross 1967; Law 1977; Manning 1982).

At the same time, the slave revolt provided fuel for the arguments of the war party. Ghezo died in 1858. David Ross (1967) argues that he was murdered by his son, who became king Glele (1858-1889), and who had for some years been leader of the palace faction favoring war with the Egba. The futility of a forward military policy was demonstrated in 1864, when an unsuccessful attack on Abeokuta took place.

The Danhomean slave uprising was no isolated occurrence, but rather one of several such movements by slaves in the 1850s. The earliest of these occurred in the western Niger Delta, where slaves rose to prevent the selection of an Itsekiri monarch and dominated the capital between 1848-1851 (Ikime 1968: 8). Among the Yoruba, slaves began to run away from their masters in significant numbers by the end of the

decade (Agiri 1981; Oroge 1975). There was also considerable unrest among slaves at Calabar and in the eastern Niger Delta - cases to be considered in greater detail below. In general, the spread of discontent among the slave population reflected, on the one hand, increasing oppression of slaves as they came to be held in larger numbers and as their work was focused more systematically on agricultural rather than domestic work, and, on the other hand, increasing social mobility for slaves as the period of social and economic competition created opportunities for individual and even group advancement. These revolts in both the Bights of Benin and Biafra occurred in the 1850s, at a time when the growth in export revenue was temporarily stalled. Hard times probably led masters to demand more work from their slaves, thereby promoting discord which in turn was reinforced by the spread of anti-slavery sentiments through Christian missions (Lovejoy 1983).

In Calabar the many hinterland slaves of Duke ward took to mass demonstrations at moments of political crises, notably in 1850-1852, 1858 and 1861. Dike (1954) called these slave revolts, but Latham (1973) has treated them as reform movements, with the apparent aim of at once maintaining the power of Duke ward and improving their own position within it, especially by ending human sacrifice. The latter interpretation seems better documented, but both are consistent with actions by slaves to share the benefits of a period of competitive expansion in commerce and a relatively open political system.

As in Calabar, a more dispersed system of wealth and power held sway in Bonny during the middle decades of the century. The growth in palm oil exports was financed by an expansion of the "trust" or "credit" system set up in the days of the slave trade. As steamships entered the West African trade in the 1850s, the old sailing merchants entrusted large amounts of imported goods to their African colleagues in an attempt to retain their share of purchases (Dike 1954). Much of this "trust" was lost to the European merchants, but in the course of this competitive period many slaves rose to positions of commercial influence in the Bight of Biafra, at the same time when similar circumstances were bringing Sierra Leonian and Brazilian traders to prominence in the Bight of Benin.

During the 1860s and 1870s, two conflicting trends became apparent in the control of wealth in the Bights of Benin and Biafra. On the one hand, those African merchants who were able to convert their own commercial expansion into the political arena began to emerge in very strong positions. On the other hand, the development of the palm kernel trade in the 1860s tended to favor small producers and thereby undermine the relative importance of large-scale production of palm products. The volume of the kernel trade rose more rapidly than the volume of palm oil, and kernel prices also tended to climb faster in relation to oil. The expansion was so great in the

period 1860-1880, however, that both small and large producers benefitted.

The most outstanding example of a successful African merchant was the former slave Jaja, who in 1863 became head of the Anna Pepple house in Bonny, following the death of the ex-regent Alali. Up to this moment, the rise of Jaja may be taken as emblematic of the mid-century social mobility of slaves. In the same period Oko Jumbo, another ex-slave, was the leading figure in the Manilla Pepple house. But in later years, during which Jaja maintained his leadership through a period of declining prices, his prominence reflected instead an attempted consolidation of power by monarchy: in 1869 he resolved the conflict between the two leading Bonny houses, which threatened civil war, by moving to Opobo and setting up a new trading state there. Relying on his control of transport routes at a crucial bottleneck, this merchant prince established his economic hegemony in the region (Geary 1927; Gertz 1962). An important new element for the interpretation of Jaja's achievement is the recent discovery that Jaja himself was of an aristocratic Igbo lineage in Amaigbo and was kidnapped at the age of about fourteen. He had become king of Opobo by the time he regained contact with his family and so did not return to his ancestral home, but one may ask whether his rise to prominence might have been reinforced by his early socialization (Ofonagoro 1978). These conditions favored the consolidation of commercial enterprise, and they also favored the reassertion of monarchical power to regulate trade. Jaja was able to do both at once. He had established the regional supremacy of Opobo by 1872, and in 1881 he became king of Qua Ibo as well. He indeed carried on the tradition of King Opubu (Dike 1954).

A similar move towards economic and political centralization took place at Calabar, where the struggle centered on the rivalry between the landed interest of Duke ward and the commercial interest of Eyamba ward. Duke Ward achieved a brief consolidation of its power, similar to that of Duke Ephraim before 1834, when in 1880 Prince Duke was selected to hold both the offices of obong and eyamba (Latham 1973).

While the history of the Igbo peoples is becoming known in increasing detail, it remains difficult to tie developments in their homeland to a specific chronology. Thus Northrup (1978, 1979) has documented the nineteenth-century expansion of slavery in some Igbo regions; Ekejiuba (1972a, 1972b) has analyzed Aro trade in slaves and palm products (mainly at the end of the nineteenth century); and Oriji (1977) has argued in contrast to Northrup (1978) that, among the Ngwa Igbo, leading figures concentrated the benefits of palm oil into their own hands through the Okonko secret society in the early days of the trade. Later on, and after the Ngwa began to sell their produce at Opobo, Oriji pictures Ngwa political and economic

life as having become more democratic. But it will take further research to resolve this issue, as with the controversy between Isichei (1976) and Northrup (1978) over the relative benefits of the slave trade and the palm oil trade. The trauma of enslavement and its links to economy and society stand out, meanwhile, in The Great Ponds (Amadi 1969).

The political and economic narratives are known in more detail for interior areas of the Bight of Benin. In Abeokuta, the potential conflicts among merchant, landowner and monarchy were resolved through formation of the Egba United Board of Management (EUBM) under the Sierra Leonian George W. Johnson, beginning in 1865. To the east, however, the supremacy of Ibadan went largely unchallenged from the end of the Ijaye war in 1862 until the outbreak of war again in 1877; to the west, Danhomé continued its policy of war and expansion from the accession of Glele in 1858, and with increasing success in the early 1880s.

The economic crisis of the 1880s was dramatically reflected in the political arena of the Bights of Benin and Biafra. As Hopkins has shown, the sharp drop in prices for palm products created a situation in which European and African rivalries could not be contained. The consequence was the intervention of British and French colonial forces in the Bights which ultimately resulted in the establishment of colonial rule. The British enclave at Lagos, established in 1851 and confirmed in 1861, did not lead to further territorial acquisition in the 1860s and 1870s, and the 1862 French protectorate of Porto-Novo was soon allowed to lapse. But in the 1880s the British and French launched - or perhaps were drawn into - a forward policy, and this time there would be no hiatus in the move inland.

The sharp decline in palm product prices beginning in 1885 clearly created new conditions. Profitability in trade declined on all sides, a phenomenon only partly masked by the continued increase in the volume of palm oil and palm kernel exports. As the Yoruba political leaders tried to increase their tax revenues, and as Yoruba merchants sought to improve prices by acting in combination, so also did the European merchants call for British intervention to prevent both merchants and monarchs from increasing their share of the meager profits available (Hopkins 1968). The actual British seizure of power in the Yoruba hinterland did not take place until 1893. But one may seek to confirm Hopkins' reasoning by looking to Opobo and noting that it was in 1887, immediately following the price collapse, that Consul Johnston siezed Jaja and exiled him. And at Calabar, Eyamba ward finally mounted a successful challenge to Duke ward. Eyamba ward, led by Prince James Eyamba, a Christian, campaigned for British support and then for British annexation of Calabar. The first treaty of

protection was signed in 1884, and actual British administration began in 1891 (Latham 1973).

Hopkins has portrayed the wars among the Yoruba states as examples of Schumpeterian atavism: that is, warlords based on old relations of production entered war to get more land and slaves to participate in legitimate trade, but in so doing undermined the very conditions for such trade. This analysis downplays distinctions among Africans in the 1880s, however, and it thus underemphasizes an important element of internal dissension among Africans facing the advancing Europeans. In general terms, there was an important difference between monarchical interests, whose wealth came primarily from collection of taxes and tribute, and commercial (or landed and commercial) interests, whose wealth came primarily through sale of goods on local and world markets (Agiri 1981). The latter group was restricted, taxed, and at times expropriated by the former; it gradually became alienated and sought a new order based on the free-trade ideology espoused by the Europeans at the coast (Wilks 1975; Manning 1985b). This was the approach of Eyamba ward in Calabar in appealing for British protection. In Abeokuta the EUBM represented an attempt to reform government and achieve a pro-merchant environment without accepting European rule. The reaffirmation of the French protectorate over Porto-Novo in 1883, while partly out of fear of absorption by Danhomé, also corresponded to a victory by the pro-merchant party in domestic politics.

Even Danhomé, the most recalcitrant state of the coast in its relations with Europeans, reflected this tension. The war and peace parties struggled for dominance in the capital, though the war party never lost its hegemony (Ross 1966, 1967; Yoder 1974). But the landed and commercial interests centered in Ouidah became alienated from the state in the 1880s. Chacha Julio F. de Souza, in his capacity as governor of Ouidah, brought in Portuguese missionaries in 1884, and in 1885 he signed treaties with the governor of São Tomé placing Danhomé under the protection of Portugal. The gambit was ill-fated, however, and de Souza paid for his adventurousness with his life. King Glele, learning of the treaty and apparently seeing little advantage in a Portuguese tie, imprisoned the chacha in 1887 (Verger 1968). The war party was to have its last hurrah in its skirmishes with the French army in 1890 and in its glorious immolation at the hands of the French in 1892-1893.

Politics and Economics in the Transformation of the Bights

In this application of a control-of-wealth framework to a well known historical problem, the focus has remained, as in previous studies of this issue, on merchants, heads of state,

and international trade. This is partly inherent in the historical realities of the Bights, but further research would permit the framework to be tested by providing more information on peasants, priests, slaves, and soldiers, by considering gender and age, and by showing how these and other groups disposed of such wealth as they obtained.³ But even this provisional application of the framework yields some new interpretive results.

In the first third of the nineteenth century the Atlantic slave trade favored powerful monarchs and wealthy slave merchants. The middle third of the century, when the palm oil trade expanded most rapidly and came to be dominant, was a period of free-swinging competition and unusual social mobility. The mobility was downward as well as upward, for large numbers of slaves were assigned agricultural production or transport duties in this period. Domestic production of foodstuffs increased as a concomitant of expanding production of exports; much of this too was by slave labor. From the 1860s to the 1880s, as the growth of palm oil exports slowed, there came a time in which political and economic power were consolidated; during this same period, however, the growth in palm kernel exports provided new income, particularly for independent peasants, and perhaps for women and the aged.

These changing economic and social structures and interests were not sufficient to determine a government's policy, nor could a politically-motivated decision be simply translated into commercial change. The links of economics and politics passed through the social structure, which itself changed with time: these included cyclical adjustments in social power which paralleled business cycles, and long-run social transformations. The cyclical changes created open competition and opportunities for mobility in times of economic expansion and transformation; by contrast they led to consolidation, strengthening of hierarchy and occasional dramatic confrontation in times of economic contraction. Individuals were able to take advantage of structural opportunities in each of these situations. Over the course of the century, meanwhile, merchant interests grew steadily in wealth and power. Landowning and slave-owning interests grew as well. A whole new slave class was formed in this period: rather than female slaves being dispersed individually in masters, families as before, now males and females were settled on separate land as slave families. The landed and slave-owning interests gained power partly at the expense of the peasantry, but they also grew at the expense of monarchy. The relative power of monarchs and merchants fluctuated in the course of the events of the century, so that monarchs could appear fierce up to the very end, but the merchants gradually gained enough power to challenge the monarchs. For those who made fortunes from the exploitation of slave labor, the growing possibility of the abolition

of slavery made them seek to redefine their identity as land-owners. The monarchs, pressed by merchants from within and by European merchants and officials from without, could respond only by raising taxes and by strengthening their military forces and their political prerogatives. Merchants and, increasingly, landowners found the monarchical regimes to be oppressive and sought alliances with the Europeans. These conflicts helped clear the way for the European seizure of power at the end of the century, and in some cases even invited it. It is appropriate, from this perspective, that Chinua Achebe's classic novel of the era of colonial conquest, Things Fall Apart, should focus not on the confrontation between Europeans and Africans, but on the conflicts in values and social policies among contending fractions in a set of Igbo villages.

In one sense the European conquest of the Bights is the end of this story. In another sense it is not, as is suggested by events in Opobo. H. H. Johnston abducted Jaja in 1887 because he had refused to allow European merchants access to his interior markets (Jaja had induced one firm, Miller Bros., to break with the others and trade on his conditions). Even after the seizure of Jaja, the chiefs of Opobo refused to provide access to their markets until the British bombarded the town in 1889. Then, when the European merchants finally penetrated inland to Akwete and other markets, they found that the producers would not sell to them. In 1893 they had to agree to resume buying at Opobo (Gertzel 1959). Thus pre-colonial trade and politics became colonial trade and politics.

The continuity is equally explicit in one case from the Bight of Benin. Padonou Quénou, head of the most powerful family in Ouidah and a trading chief for the king of Danhomé, allowed his son, Joseph Tovalou Quénou, to move into exile at Porto-Novo in the 1880s. With the French invasion of Danhomé in 1892, Joseph Tovalou Quénou assumed control of the family's resources, supplied the French forces, and won a position of leadership within the French colonial state, thus preserving the family's interests (Manning 1982).

The similarities in the nineteenth-century developments of the Bights are a reflection of the similar economic pressures they experienced. Some of the differences among areas of the coast may have resulted from social structures, such as the contrast between the ward system of government in Calabar and the centralized monarchy of Danhomé. Yet in each period, events in the region can be clearly identified as resulting from the wills and actions of historical figures: the monopoly power of Domingo Martins in a competitive era, Jaja's creation of a new state, Ghezo's coup d'état; or, by contrast, the passive attitude of King Akitoye as the British took Lagos.

NOTES

1. Sources for Figure 9.1: Manning 1982, 1986; Eltis 1977. Sources for Figure 9.2: Manning 1982, 1986; Latham 1973; Eltis 1977; Northrup 1978. The geographic extent of the Bight of Benin is taken, for these purposes, to include the coast of the Republic of Benin and of Nigeria to the Forcados River; the Bight of Biafra is taken as the coast from the Forcados to Calabar. The Bight of Benin is thus a somewhat longer extent of coast.
2. Slaves from the Bight of Benin are assumed to have been exported roughly half from the coast of modern Nigeria and half from the coast of modern Benin Republic. During the nineteenth century some 80 percent of these slaves were of Yoruba ethnicity, some 15 percent were of Aja ethnicity, and most of the rest were Hausa and Nupe (Manning 1982: 334-35).
3. For an analysis of the control of wealth focusing on gender, see Martin 1984; for elements of such an analysis focusing on the poor, see Iliffe 1984.

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CHAPTER 10

PROBLEMS OF SLAVE CONTROL IN THE SOKOTO CALIPHATE

Paul E. Lovejoy*

Slaves in the Sokoto Caliphate, like slaves in many societies, were difficult to control. By its very nature, slavery is an institution that requires the use of force to obtain recruits and relies on coercion to keep slaves in their place. In the first instance, therefore, slaves had to be intimidated, which involved the omnipresence of terror. Slaves had to cope with this threat, and they did so by accommodating themselves to their condition as much as possible. Sometimes, however, slaves were pushed to the breaking point, and they struck out at their masters or tried to escape their bondage. As Robert Ross (1983) has demonstrated in his study of slavery in Capetown, the point at which slaves resisted their captivity touches a sensitive nerve in any slave system. Ross's insight is as valid for the Sokoto Caliphate as it is for South Africa.

This chapter examines the plight of slaves in the Sokoto Caliphate by focussing on how they struggled against their bonds. Such struggle invariably combined careful consideration of the conditions of slavery and irrational, often sudden, decisions that were prompted by the violence stemming from punishment and by the harsh reality of every-day life. Consequently, any analysis of resistance must also take into account the extent to which slaves were able to accommodate themselves to their servility.

Daily, often passive resistance was a common feature of this slave system, as it was of most others. Such covert testing of the chains, to use a phrase of Michael Craton (1982), was more or less consciously perceived in a context in which slaves sought to avoid punishment but nonetheless registered their discontent. An understanding of this resistance requires an appreciation of the forms and the severity of

*I would like to thank Allen Isaacman and Dennis Cordell for their comments on this chapter.

punishment, a level of analysis that individual slaves had to undertake themselves. Slaves could try to minimize the harsher features of their bondage most effectively when they understood the consequences of such expressions of will. And slaves knew that punishment could be severe if their masters decreed punishment. They also could maximize their material and physical conditions by taking advantage of the avenues of accommodation that existed in caliphate society.

And like other slave regimes, the Sokoto Caliphate maintained a vision of an ideal society that had a place for slaves and justified their bondage. While individual slaves committed errors of judgement and did not always act consciously in their own interests, the evidence on the extent of resistance demonstrates that many, probably most slaves tried to improve their lot by challenging masters to uphold their ideals, and if that failed, by running away or otherwise demonstrating their hostility to their condition. Most of the time, of course, slaves found themselves torn between accommodation and resistance.

In the annals of the caliphate, slaves first demonstrated opposition to their servile status during the jiḥād that brought that caliphate into existence. By claiming allegiance to the cause of Muslim revolution, slaves could seize the opportunity to assert their independence. Consequently, slaves played a major role in the initial uprising in the Hausa states between 1804-1808 and elsewhere later as the jiḥād spread as far west as the modern republic of Burkino Faso (Upper Volta) and as far east as northern and central Cameroon. This prolonged period of expansion and consolidation lasted for several decades after the first phase of the jiḥād was over with the conquest of the central Hausa states of Gobir, Katsina, Kano and Zaria in 1808. Here the appeal of the jiḥād to slaves is examined in four phases: first, the initial four-year rising in Hausaland; second, the campaign among the Gurma in 1809-10, which led to the creation of Liptako; third, the revolt in Oyo between 1817 and the early 1830s, which resulted in the consolidation of the emirate of Ilorin among the northern Yoruba; and fourth the civil wars among the Nupe from the 1820s to 1857, which ultimately resulted in the creation of five emirates, including Bida. In all these cases, Fulbe (Hausa: Fulani) clerics and pastoralists were a crucial component of the uprisings, comprising the leadership, but fugitives provided the fodder for the jiḥād canon. It is not possible to weigh accurately the relative importance of the various components in the jama'a (community); slaves were involved significantly enough to be visible, but to what overall effect is not clear except in these cases.

The struggle between slave and master shifted to a new arena as the caliphate was consolidated. When this shift occurred varied considerably - around 1810 for the central,

Hausa emirates but decades later elsewhere. The timing of the shift depended upon when each of the thirty emirates and numerous sub-emirates were founded. The caliphate extracted a huge slave population from its enemies as the jihad continued on the frontiers, and caliphate officials settled newly-enslaved people in the emirates. It gradually became difficult for fugitive slaves to justify flight on the basis of political and religious loyalty to the jihad. Those people captured in the jihad became political prisoners within the caliphate who had no recognized claim to freedom on the basis of religious conviction. Since the caliphate relied on slave labor to a great extent and used enslavement as a political weapon to extend its authority over much of the central Sudan, slaves had to find other ways to resist, unless they accepted the ideology of the caliphate and used adherence to Islam as the foundation for possible emancipation. Usually, slaves agreed to convert, if they were not Muslims, or reform, if they already considered themselves Muslims, but interpretations of religious orthodoxy varied and were, in any case, a necessary but not sufficient condition of emancipation. Hence a variety of forms of resistance continued and can be documented as a major factor in the governance of master-slave relations as early as the 1820s, within fifteen years of the successful conclusion of the jihad in the central Hausa emirates. Elsewhere, this evolution in the forms of resistance occurred only after the establishment of emirates and the settlement of substantial numbers of slaves.

Daily and often passive resistance, while difficult to document everywhere all the time, appears to have been common throughout the nineteenth century. Flight, in particular, was a major expression of discontent; only now slaves usually did not flee to the cause of the jihad but to the enemies of the caliphate. Slaves also participated in several rebellions, especially after mid-century. Of particular importance is the fact that some slaves joined Islamic reform movements, often millennial in character. The first of these movements began in the late 1840s in Kano; others occurred in Liptako in the 1870s and in Sokoto in the 1890s. The slaves who supported these movements escaped from slavery for political and religious reasons. They perceived their actions in terms of hostility to the caliphate and Islamic orthodoxy. The appeal to people on the basis of religion, which had been an essential feature of the jihad, thus broadened to include different and conflicting doctrines. Slaves and other dissidents were able to twist the ideology of the caliphate to justify resistance to the caliphate itself.

Resistance to slavery erupted most dramatically during and immediately after the European conquest (1897-1903). Slaves deserted on a massive scale, more so than in any earlier period, probably including the jihad itself, although the

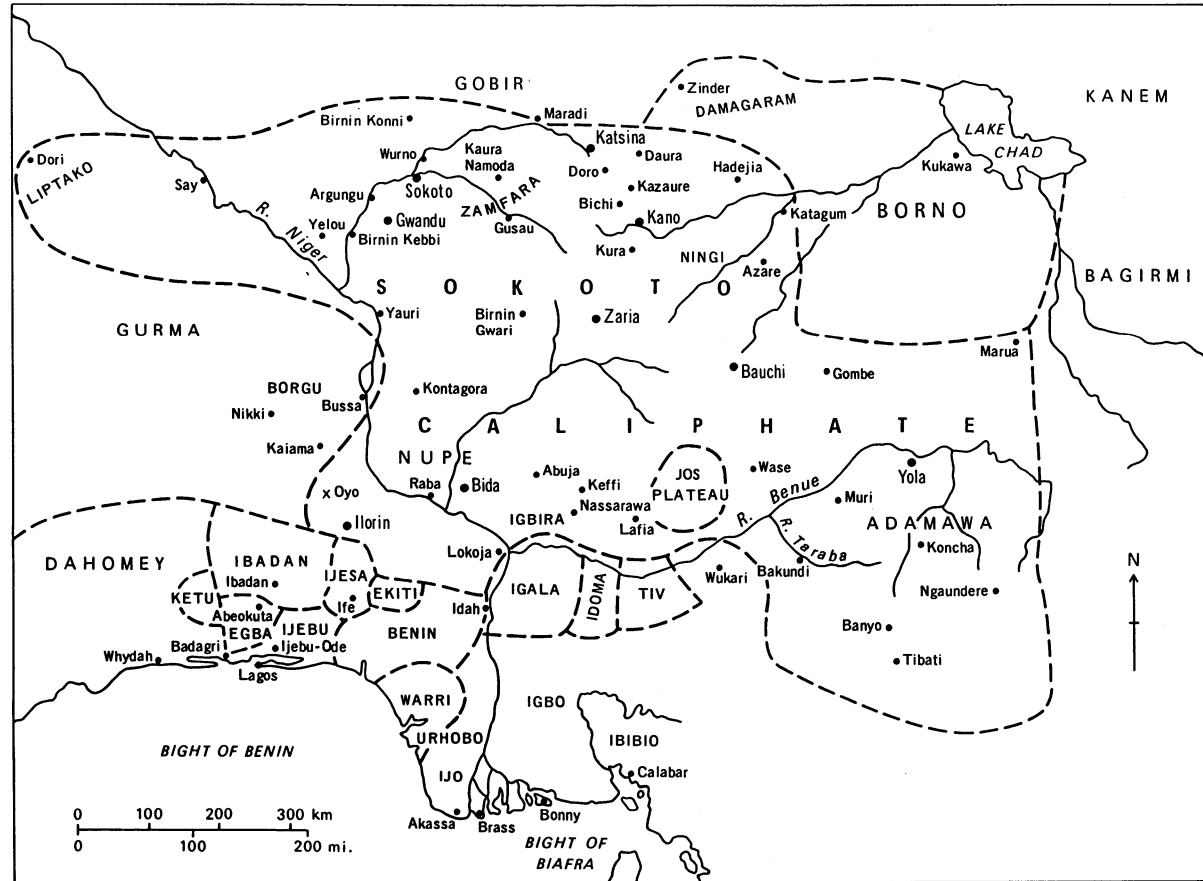
limited documentation on the period before the conquest prevents confirmation of this hypothesis. Those slaves who did not escape were able to renegotiate the terms of their servility, so that work loads and possibilities of emancipation improved. The changes that took place at this time were so significant that they require a separate study (Lovejoy 1986: 74-77, 82-91; Hogendorn and Lovejoy, forthcoming) and hence are mentioned here only to indicate that the process of resistance did not end with the colonial conquest. The focus of the present study, therefore, is the period 1804-1897.

Slavery under the Caliphate

The consolidation of the Sokoto Caliphate between 1804 and the middle of the nineteenth century resulted in a complete reorganization of the political map of the central Sudan, and slavery was an essential instrument of that reorganization. The thirty emirates that were formed owed allegiance to one or the other of the twin capitals of the caliphate - Sokoto and Gwandu (Usman 1979:55; Adeleye 1971; Last 1967; Mahadi 1982; Usman 1981: 94-124). The largest - Fombina (Adamawa) - included sub-emirates under Yola, four of which (Banyo, Tibati, Rafi-Buba, and Ngaundere) were as large as many of the other emirates (Abubaker 1977: 97). A number of factors explain why these emirates stayed together: first, common allegiance to the descendants of Usman dan Fodio, the founder of the caliphate, expressed through tribute payments, often and sometimes entirely, in slaves; second, acceptance of common Islamic legal and religious strictures, many of which were interpreted by Usman dan Fodio, his brother Abdullahi and his son Muhammad Bello; and third, aristocratic governments that drew upon Fulbe clan leaders and clerics - and hence was based on a self-contained and conscious ruling class.

Slavery was an integral part of state policy throughout the nineteenth century. The jihad caused the enslavement of large numbers of people, even as it allowed some slaves who claimed to be Muslims to escape. An old tradition in the western and central Sudan, indeed throughout the Muslim world, allowed for the enslavement of non-Muslims, and the leaders of the jihad fully adhered to that tradition (Lovejoy 1981: 208-209; Barbour and Jacobs 1985). Indeed, enslavement was a cornerstone of caliphate expansion and consolidation. It was used as a weapon to reduce the strength of caliphate enemies. New captives were both exported to obtain foreign goods and, more significantly, incorporated into the caliphate. Slaves performed agricultural labor, engaged in crafts, carried goods, tended livestock, undertook domestic work, staffed the administrative structures of government, filled the ranks of the military, and served as concubines in the often large harems of

Map 10.1 SOKOTO CALIPHATE, c. 1880



the wealthy. They were everywhere, forming a majority of the people in palaces and in the homes of merchants. In some rural districts slaves constituted the bulk of the farming population as early as the 1820s, and the size of this population grew dramatically, although unevenly, during the next seventy years. While a census of the slave population is impossible, Watts (1983: 191) is probably correct in suggesting that by the time of the European conquest there were several million slaves in the caliphate, between 25-50 percent of the total population (Lovejoy 1981: 201; 1979: 1280).

Because enslavement was state policy, sanctified by religion and law, the institutions of slave acquisition and distribution were well developed (Mason 1969; Tambo 1976; Hogendorn 1980; Yakubu 1985: 35-51). Most embarked on annual slave raids, and many emirates required conquered peoples to pay tribute in slaves. The merchant class, which became very influential by the end of the century, moved slaves between emirates and even exported them in considerable numbers across the Sahara desert and southward towards the Guinea coast. While the scale of these annual movements of captives has never been fully studied, it is safe to say that many thousands of individuals were captured and traded in any given year. The trans-Saharan trade alone involved the export of 3,000-6,000 slaves per year between 1810-1830, 4,000-8,000 slaves between 1830-1870, whereupon trade declined because of falling demand in North Africa (Lovejoy 1985: 94). It is likely that a trade of a similar magnitude was directed southward (Tambo, 1976: 204-205; Lovejoy 1981: 202-203). The internal redistribution of slaves must have been on at least the same order as the export trade. Tribute payments to Sokoto and Gwandu alone came to several thousand slaves per year by the middle of the century (Hogendorn 1980: 480; Fisher and Fisher 1970: 150-151).

Many slaves who were settled in the caliphate travelled only a few hundred kilometers from where they had been captured, except for those sent as tribute to Sokoto and Gwandu. In Bauchi, for example, many slaves came from the nearby Jos Plateau (Yakubu 1985: 36-48), while slaves in Zaria often came from Gwari country to the south (Hogendorn 1980). As a result, slave populations frequently included recognizable contingents of people of the same ethnic background. To some extent merchants and owners attempted to break up these potential communities of slaves, but such efforts were far from successful. Nonetheless, the pattern was for slaves of all backgrounds to learn the language of their masters - usually Hausa, the common tongue of the caliphate - and to adopt some of the rudiments of Islam. It may well be that further study will demonstrate that ethnic solidarity was a factor in slave resistance. The relative proximity of slaves to their homelands, however, did mean that escape to familiar territory was sometimes possible.

Aristocratic power translated into the possession of large numbers of slaves. The aristocracy had first claim to new captives; the state legally took a fifth of new captives, although in practice a larger portion - perhaps one-half - became state property, including tribute payments to Sokoto and Gwandu (Last 1967: 106). The emirates used slaves to clear debts, and the remaining slaves were divided among the aristocracy and its clients (Tambo 1976: 199-200; Yakubu 1985: 46). Even some of the official booty was redistributed to loyal followers and thereby also ended up in the control of the aristocracy and its trusted slave officials. Merchants also were able to acquire many slaves in return for credit advanced to the state and aristocrats. Traders also travelled to the field of battle, where slaves were inexpensive, and in this way even those merchants who were not major creditors could gradually buy more and more slaves (Hogendorn 1980).

Among the aristocracy and the merchant class, slave holdings could be very large, amounting to over one thousand slaves for the more important emirs and their major officials and several hundred slaves for the wealthiest merchants (Lovejoy 1979: 1281-1282). Without doubt there were many small holdings; most free adults, especially in the towns, appear to have owned at least one slave by the 1890s, a pattern that probably had been established decades earlier. The proliferation of titled officials and the growth of the merchant class suggest that the number of large slave holdings rose steadily in the course of the century. It may be that most slave owners actually had relatively small holdings, but there is no question that the people who owned the most slaves - aristocrats and merchants - dominated society and economy. Their activities and their access to wealth and power determined in large measure the nature of this slave society.

The treatment of slaves and hence resistance to slavery varied considerably depending upon the location of slaves in society. For purposes of comparison, the situation facing three types of slaves are considered: plantation slaves, domestics, including concubines, and slaves in the military and administration. Slaves in these occupations accounted for the overwhelming majority of the captive population, but the conditions of their servility differed to such an extent that they had few interests in common and certainly had a poorly developed identity as a class.

Plantation slaves seldom lived in the same compounds as their masters and often lived in their own villages in the country while their masters lived in towns. In the largest holdings, masters appointed overseers, who were sometimes slaves themselves, to manage plantations, so that slaves rarely came into contact with their owners. Field workers were often organized into gangs, who farmed the main field of the plantation from sunrise until the 2:00 P.M. prayer, when they broke

for a meal and then were free to work their own, small gardens. There were variations: some slaves had to work for their masters again after the 4:00 P.M. prayer, as late as dusk, but the tradition, as remembered by those who had an ideal of the work regime fixed in their memories, is that slaves only worked until "noon," i.e. the mid-day prayer. Sometimes masters may have let their slaves work on their own more, in return for which they took a portion of the harvest, but communal work on a central field seems to have been most common. It appears that slaves always had the right to their own labor at least one day a week, and some masters even allowed their slaves two days per week. The terms of employment varied, therefore, but the relative distance of slave from master was a common feature of the plantation sector. Most masters visited their estates periodically and often lived there for at least part of the rainy season. There is no evidence that plantation slavery changed much from the 1820s to the 1890s, although the plantation sector certainly expanded considerably in these decades as more and more slaves were settled in rural districts (Lovejoy 1978; 1979; 1981; Hogendorn 1977; Yanusa 1976; Yakubu 1985; Sa'idu 1981: 19-41, 105-140; Baier and Lovejoy 1977; Mahadi 1982: 461-463).

Domestic slaves, by contrast, interacted with their masters regularly. Masters selected the most attractive young girls from their plantations as well as among recent captives for their harems, and sometimes took slave children into the household for training as domestics. Hence there was some movement between plantation and domestic sectors. Concubines and many other domestic slaves could develop ties of dependency that were more or less perceived in terms of kinship. Even in large mercantile and aristocratic households, it was possible for individual domestics to establish strong ties of loyalty to their masters, mistresses or other free members of the household that were seldom possible for plantation workers. Most domestics were women and undertook the heavy tasks associated with the preparation of food, especially grinding grain and carrying water, and they also cleaned compounds and cared for children. Concubines, who usually fulfilled household tasks as well as provided sexual access, were a special sub-category of domestic, and the terms of their servility were clearly defined under Islamic law. Their children by their masters were legally free, a right that appears to have been widely respected; the women themselves could no longer legally be sold once they had given birth and were supposed to be emancipated on the death of their masters. As concubines, they could not terminate their relationship with their masters, and they had heavier workloads than free women. But they were exempted from certain kinds of work, especially agricultural labor, and often received material benefits, particularly clothing and jewelry,

that befitted women of the wealthy and powerful (Lovejoy 1981: 205; Yusufu 1976: 15-34; Fisher and Fisher 1970: 83-126).

Slaves assigned administrative and military duties found themselves in yet another type of relationship, one that approximated clientage. A master was also a patron, and the tasks that a slave performed were intended to promote the interests of the master. Most slaves in this category were males. They filled the lower ranks of the military, caring for horses, transporting baggage and foodstuffs, and staffing the infantry. Sometimes their ranks were drawn from young males on royal plantations, and in some emirates officials had their male slaves farm in the rainy season and join military expeditions in the dry season. Slaves also served in the administration as messengers, tax collectors, and retainers. Their numbers increased in the course of the nineteenth century, and as their influence grew they developed attitudes and behavior that set them off from the rest of society. From the perspective of free peasants and plantation slaves alike they represented the authority of the state. Most of these functionaries wore uniforms and lived in or near the palaces of the emirs or the large compounds of the aristocrats. It was possible for individuals to rise high in the ranks of government and the military, but they did so as clients of free officials who wanted trustworthy subordinates. Specific titles in the military and the courts were reserved for royal slaves, and the emirs and other aristocrats usually placed such individuals in control of their plantations (Yusufu 1976: 42-54).

Slaves contributed their productive activities, in the case of plantation slaves, their social subordination, in the case of domestics, and political intimidation, in the case of government slaves. Collectively, these slaves reinforced a social formation that relied on slavery in complementary ways. Through their labor power, plantation slaves supplied the foodstuffs that sustained the households of the aristocracy and the merchant class. Their contribution was essentially economic, and the product of their labor maintained the political ascendancy of the aristocracy and directly or indirectly contributed to commercial prosperity. Concubines and other domestic slaves maintained the households of the dominant classes, thereby helping to regenerate social relationships. The offspring of concubines were assimilated directly into the families of the merchants and aristocracy, while trusted servants assisted in the business of commercial households, including the marketing of slaves. Government slaves shared in the administration of society, and in so doing guaranteed the primacy of the aristocracy and the subordination of the free peasantry, the merchants, craftsmen, and the dependent, conquered peoples, as well as the rural slave population. Slave soldiers even helped in replenishing and expanding the slave population through enslavement. In different ways, therefore,

slaves assisted in maintaining the structures of their own domination.

Slave Resistance during the Jihad

The political turmoil that accompanied the jihad (1804-1808) allowed many slaves to escape - exactly how many will never be known. Wars are usually remembered as a time when slaves were seized; slaves were booty for those involved. The victors more often bragged about their conquests than reported those slaves who escaped, and the losers blamed their opponents for their misfortune, whether or not slaves were captured or fled. Except in rare cases, such situations were not conducive to historical recording, but we can be certain that slaves did run away when the opportunity presented itself. Political instability was a chronic problem in the central Sudan; the jihad brought some peace and security to areas as they were incorporated into the caliphate, but the extension of the jihad beyond the Hausa heartland took many decades. Raids and counter-raids between the caliphate and its enemies were an annual affair, and during these battles slaves were able to escape.

The historical record for slave escapes during the jihad is fragmentary, both in the initial phase of the jihad in the Hausa region (1804-1808) and in later phases elsewhere. Nonetheless, all available evidence leads toward an important conclusion: fugitive slaves played a major role in its success. The early leaders, most especially Usman dan Fodio himself, mention fugitives in their writings, although they do so in a general way and do not provide eyewitness accounts of slaves participating in battle. For many of the thirty emirates that eventually were established, there is no evidence one way or the other at this time, and it can be expected that future research will uncover a variable pattern of slave involvement, particularly since in Fombina and some other emirates there were relatively few slaves in the pre-jihad societies that were displaced.¹ In Gurma, Oyo and Nupe, however, there is considerable information - oral data and eyewitness accounts - that establish extensive slave participation. In these areas, the jihad destroyed existing states in which there was a sizeable slave population which responded to the call for revolt. The jihad began in Gurma country in 1809-1810; it erupted in stages in Oyo from 1817-1835; and it took the form of protracted civil war in Nupe from the 1820s until 1857. These cases, which are better documented than any other areas of the caliphate, throw light on the probable impact of fugitive slaves in the initial jihad in the Hausa states of Gobir, Kebbi, Katsina, Kano and Zaria between 1804-1808. Whether or not future research will confirm the thesis

presented here is, of course, unclear, but the circumstantial evidence is strong enough, I believe, to warrant my conclusions.

A major complaint that sparked the jihad was that free Muslims had been and were continuing to be enslaved in the central Sudan. The protest against this practice was not new. Since the time of Ahmad Baba, who wrote in the early seventeenth century, some Muslim clerics had accused political authorities of this transgression (Barbour and Jacob 1985; Fisher and Fisher 1970: 30-31). Usman dan Fodio and his supporters repeated this charge, quoting Ahmad Baba and other scholars to strengthen their case.

The accusation that nominally Muslim governments were involved in illegal enslavement was not a protest against slavery as such, but the charge did establish a close correlation between Islam and freedom, on the one hand, and pagans and slavery, on the other (Adeleye 1971: 88-89; Al-Hajj 1979: 12-15). Such complaints reveal that the Muslim leadership perceived that Muslims had a right to their freedom, and that this right could not be denied slaves who claimed, with justification or not, that they had been enslaved illegally. By placing limits on who could be enslaved legitimately, the jihad leaders were interpreting slavery in a religious context that was to help shape the institution under the caliphate. Resistance to slavery thereby assumed specific forms, and indeed in accordance with caliphate ideology accommodation to slavery also was perceived within a religious context.

In his analysis of the social origins of the jihad, Muhammad Al-Hajj (1979: 13) established that fugitive slaves constituted one of the four "discontented elements in Hausa society" which were attracted to the banners of revolt in 1804 (the others being the settled Fulbe [Fulani], the nomadic Fulbe, and the free, Hausa peasantry). Shehu Usman dan Fodio attacked the "uncanonical enslavement" of free Muslims, especially Fulbe, who had found themselves caught in the eighteenth-century wars among the several Hausa states. Usman's community welcomed Muslims, despite their backgrounds. As early as 1788, Usman had secured a number of concessions from Sarkin Gobir Bawa, including the pledge "that nobody who responded to [Usman's] call be prevented from joining his community" and a provision for freeing political prisoners (Al-Hajj 1979: 15). Yunfa, Bawa's successor in Gobir, revoked both of these pledges. The Gobir army attacked the settlement of Abd al-Salam, a follower of Usman, in 1804, and seized many people. It is unclear whether Yunfa had enslaved these captives or was treating them as political prisoners. In either case, Usman's supporters had additional grievances and they retaliated by freeing their compatriots. Now Yunfa ordered Usman to leave Gobir, and the subsequent evacuation, known as hijra [Arabic: flight], was accompanied with an open appeal for

all Muslims, including slaves who were willing to convert, slaves who were already Muslims and free Muslims who had been illegally enslaved. Usman's regulations (1978: 117-120) for the hijra included,

the law concerning giving freedom to slaves of unbelieving Belligerents if they flee to us; . . . the law concerning one who has been found as a slave in the hands of unbelievers and claims to be a freeborn Muslim but has not emigrated: And the law concerning one who has been brought from a land where the selling of free men is common-place and claims to be a free-born Muslim.²

The extent to which this appeal attracted slaves is not certain, despite Al-Hajj's claim, but it is likely that in the ensuing jihad many slaves took the opportunity to escape, sometimes to the side of the rebels and sometimes not. Gimbana, for example, many well have been a center for ex-slaves escaping to the Muslim cause from Gobir (Last 1967: 14 fn).

In Kano, Katsina and Zaria, there is no direct evidence that slaves fled at the time of the jihad, but circumstances suggest that flight was common.³ In all three states, as in Gobir, the old ruling class was dispossessed of its property as well as its political position. In Kano, for example, only one major pre-jihad title holder survived the uprising, and while his estates and official territories were confiscated, he was given control of new areas, albeit on a reduced scale that guaranteed that he could not foment opposition to the new regime (Mahadi 1982: 373). Since titled aristocrats had held large numbers of slaves, both in Kano and elsewhere, the removal of these individuals from office made it easy for slaves, especially on rural estates, to escape. Most dispossessed officials were killed or fled beyond the borders of the new emirates created by the jihad. Temporarily, at least, large numbers of slaves had the opportunity to assert their independence. Undoubtedly, the victors were able to re-establish conditions of servility over many, but the dislocation of the rural population was so considerable that many others could easily have melted into the ranks of the peasantry, joined the jihad forces or tried to return to their original homes elsewhere. Perhaps future research will provide details of the fate of some of these slaves.

In the initial phases (1809-1810) of the jihad in Liptako - the western-most emirate in the caliphate - the Fulbe "promised slaves . . . their freedom" in return for support against the Gurma. One fugitive who achieved particularly startling success was Yobi Katar, who attracted many escaped slaves to his regiment. Subsequent to victory, the Fulbe were

reluctant to honor their promise, and Yobi Katar and his followers deserted Liptako and proceeded to harass the Fulbe until Sokoto "counseled the Fulbe to live up to their obligation to liberate slaves who [had] helped them" (Irwin 1973: 155). This case comes to the attention of history because the Liptako Fulbe violated Usman dan Fodio's "law concerning giving freedom to slaves of unbelieving Belligerents if they flee to us." There must have been many more instances in which fugitive slaves gained their freedom without incident and hence remain unrecorded.

Fugitives and rebellious slaves also were a factor in the success of the jihad in Oyo - the Yoruba kingdom that dominated the interior of the Bight of Benin until its collapse in the 1830s. Indeed R.C.C. Law (1977: 258) has argued that of the many factors contributing to the collapse, the "widespread revolt of the northern slaves held by Oyo slave-owners" was "perhaps most damaging to Oyo."⁴ In 1817 the Oyo cavalry, based at Ilorin, rebelled against the central authority of the state. The military commander, Afonja, incited his slave troops to revolt as a means of increasing his influence. Yoruba oral tradition, as recorded by Samuel Johnson (1921: 193) at the end of the nineteenth century, attributed much of the success of this revolt to fugitive slaves:

All the Hausa slaves in the adjacent towns hitherto employed as barbers, rope-makers, and cowherds, now deserted their masters and flocked to Ilorin under the standard of Afonja the Kankanfo and were protected against their masters. . . .

As the slaves were mostly Muslims from further north, they welcomed the opportunity offered by Afonja, initially to support him, but eventually to join the jihad and to encourage other slaves to do likewise. Ali Eisami, a Borno slave in the capital at the time, was just such a slave and fearing as much, his master sold him to the coast, whence he was transported to the Americas. According to Ali, "a war arose: now, all the slaves who went to the war, became free; so when the slaves heard this good news, they all ran away" - all of them except those like the unfortunate Ali (Smith, Last and Gubio 1967: 212).

These rebels, including a recognizable contingent of fugitive slaves, were responsible for undermining Oyo authority in many parts of the empire. In 1821, for example, an invading army of Fulbe, Oyo Muslims and runaway slaves attacked Osogun, the native town of Samuel Ajayi Crowther, who later became a bishop of the Church Missionary Society (Schön and Crowther 1842: 372-373; Law 1977: 257). Crowther's description of this attack is significant because his identification of a fugitive slave faction in the invading army demonstrates that people in

the Oyo empire recognized at the time that a slave revolt was in progress. There can be no better indication that slaves did not accept their lot. Islam provided a rallying cry for active resistance, if not revenge, against not only their Oyo masters but the Oyo political system itself.

In 1823 or 1824, the Muslim revolt turned on its initiator, Afonja, who no longer could control his troops. Afonja died at the hands of assassins. Now the escaped slaves and other Muslims formally recognized the suzerainty of the caliphate. The alafin (king) of Oyo identified the rebels as "his slaves from Housa" and told Hugh Clapperton (1829: 28, 39) in 1826 that they had "been in rebellion these two years," and now had "joined the Fellatahs," that is the caliphate (Law 1977: 259). Clapperton (1829: 204) learned that the Jihad forces had earlier,

entered Eyeo, or Katunga, the capital, a great part of which they burnt down, giving liberty to all the Mahometan slaves, and encouraging others to kill their pagan masters and join them.

Oyo did not finally fall until the early 1830s. Clapperton's account has credibility precisely because he learned from the Oyo opponents of the Jihad how the revolutionary army was using Islam to undermine Oyo power by appealing to the slave population. As in Liptako, fugitive slaves were a factor in the success of Jihad.

Fugitive slaves became a pawn in the struggle for political supremacy, again in the name of Islam, in the neighboring province of Nupe, where a protracted civil war between Muslim Fulbe, Muslim Nupe and traditional claimants to Nupe political office lasted until 1857 (Mason 1983: 23-48; 1970: 82, 169). Malam Dendo, from a base at Raba on the Niger River, emerged as the dominant figure by the 1830s, but his authority was far from secure and Raba was eventually destroyed. In 1831, the Lander brothers (1832: vol. II, 71) (on their way to explore the course of the Niger River) learned that Dendo appealed to slaves: "All runaway slaves are encouraged to join the ranks on condition of receiving their freedom; and they are joined by a vast number from the surrounding country." MacGregor Laird (Laird and Oldfield 1837: vol. 2, 87), who journeyed up the Niger to Nupe in 1841 after the Landers had shown the way downstream, reported much the same: "The army of Rabbah is composed of liberated slaves, whose freedom is granted on consideration of their taking up arms." As the Nupe case demonstrates, the appeal to slaves could not guarantee political success, but as in Oyo, Liptako and probably elsewhere too slaves could exploit the political situation and establish a new life for themselves as free Muslims in the emerging caliphate.

The absorption of discontented slaves into the jihad presented new opportunities for escape. Usually slaves had not been part of political struggles, although it can be assumed that wars and dynastic disputes had enabled them to escape. Indeed slaves had to flee, for they were seized as booty. Re-enslavement had long been a principal technique of erasing the gradual assimilation of slaves into society. By appealing directly to slaves, asking them to join the Muslim cause, Usman dan Fodio introduced ideology into slave resistance, perhaps for the first time in the central Sudan. Now slaves could flee because they were Muslims; not to flee left them open to re-enslavement, as before. Moreover, escape from slavery during the jihad on the claim of Islamic belief was sufficient reason to be accepted as a free person.

Resistance and Accommodation under the Caliphate

How slaves responded to their captivity depended upon a variety of factors, including their position in society, their age and gender, their work regime, whether or not they had been born into slavery or recently captured, the geographical distance from the point of enslavement if recently seized, and the concentration of slaves who shared a similar identity. Concubines, field hands and soldiers anticipated different fates; their response to bondage was governed as much by where they found themselves as by their constant reassessment of whether or not their expectations were being realized. Any slave, no matter what category he or she fitted into, might well feel over-worked beyond what was considered customary. A concubine who did not receive as much clothing as her rivals could feel aggrieved sufficiently to attempt escape or to try to murder her master. A field hand always faced the threat of severe whipping or other punishment, whether or not he or she worked hard. It did not take much temptation to run away. A slave bureaucrat could not prevent his master from taking out his political frustrations on him, and he could respond to such behavior by absconding with his master's goods to a distant market town.

The extent of acculturation influenced the forms of resistance, not because slaves always acted rationally - although sometimes they did - but because individuals could not hope to blend into caliphate society if they were not sufficiently practised in Islamic rituals or if they did not speak Hausa fluently. Furthermore, women in urban households were usually restricted in their movements and had fewer opportunities to escape, although they were exposed more fully to Islamic culture than rural slaves. Even if they did escape, it was not acceptable for women to be on their own; they needed an accomplice, preferably a male or someone who could pose as kin.

In contrast, plantation slaves could not be watched as carefully but had less chance to acquire more than the rudiments of language and religious training. If they escaped they might have trouble disguising the fact that they were fugitives. These problems of resistance, especially flight, help explain why accommodation within slavery was always a factor in the thinking of slaves.

Despite these variables, broad patterns can be identified in the forms of accommodation and resistance. First, slaves acted differently in the jihad than they did later. Initially, it was possible to escape if slaves heeded the call to join the Muslim cause (Lovejoy 1986a). Accommodation to slavery had little appeal then, although undoubtedly some slaves stayed with their owners, and slaves belonging to supporters of the jihad did not necessarily benefit from the uprising. Second, later moments of political crisis that punctuated the normal course of the nineteenth century also affected slave actions. Dynastic disputes, civil wars, and foreign invasions presented specific opportunities and dangers that individual slaves had to confront, often unexpectedly. Third, dissent within the caliphate sometimes attracted slaves, and when individual slaves became identified with popular movements they got caught up in broader issues.

Despite the importance of specific historical moments, accommodation was usually necessary for survival. Each slave had to decide the extent to which he or she should give into his or her master's will. The dialectics of slavery involved accommodation and resistance. Individuals committed acts of resistance that ranged from the symbolic to the extreme when oppression and the indignity of slavery became overwhelming; often they acted out of desperation or because of a rare opportunity. Of course individual slaves could adopt behavior that consistently strained the bonds through sabotage, deliberate laziness and other forms of resistance, but usually slaves tried to establish a niche for themselves where they could benefit from the advantages of acculturation and gradually reduce their burden. In short, individuals had to come to terms with slavery while they remained in captivity. Although Michael Craton (1982: 14) - describing slavery in the Americas - perhaps claims too much for any slave regime when he writes that "the slave system was shaped largely by the slaves," accommodation to slavery was an active response by slaves who were trying to minimize their oppression, and to the extent that slaves stretched the opportunities for accommodation, they helped shape the slave system as much as they did when they resisted.

The institutions that allowed for the amelioration of status included: death-bed proclamations of emancipation, army service, government duty, concubinage, self-purchase (murgu), and the ransom (fansa) of third parties. Access to these

opportunities of course varied with the location of slaves in society and other factors, but the possibilities for improved status and complete freedom were real and widely understood. The institutionalization of these measures was cast in a specific Islamic mold which reinforced the religious component of caliphate ideology. Concubinage and emancipation as a religious act were long recognized in Islamic law and tradition, and it was to be expected that a regime that came to power on the appeal of religious revival should publicly encourage adherence to such principles. Administrative duty and military service too were part of the Islamic heritage, although bureaucrats and soldiers were usually not given their freedom as such. The continued servility of these favored slaves remained a technicality in many instances; their status as clients tended to replace their legal position in society (cf. Pipes 1981: 21-22). Concubines, too, remained slaves in law, but the restrictions on their sale and the promise of eventual freedom after the birth of children were safeguarded both in the courts and in public opinion. The fact that several sultans of the caliphate were sons of concubines served as a powerful example to be followed by the rest of society.

Favored slaves could lose their positions or be denied rights that had been acquired, and pious masters were not compelled to observe Islamic ideals through acts of generosity towards slaves. No doubt some masters even refused to recognize the free status of children by concubines. Illegal acts, inhumane treatment and irreligion probably frustrated the process of accommodation in numerous instances, for traditions recount that moral pressure sometimes had to be brought to bear on masters who violated custom and religion (Lugard 1906: 299, 300-301; 1970: 247; Lovejoy 1981: 233-238).

Self-purchase (murgu) was one opportunity for improving status, but it was possible only for male slaves who were fully acculturated and had thereby accommodated themselves to their subordinate status. If the master agreed - and he had the right to refuse - a slave could have his purchase price set and then work on his own account, paying weekly or monthly installments towards eventual emancipation (Lovejoy 1981: 233-234; Schön and Crowther 1842: 187; Ferguson 1973: 231-232; Lugard 1970: 232-234; 1906: 147-148, 302, 307-308).⁵ Such an arrangement was often in the interest of the master, who received a fixed, non-taxable source of income that could be re-invested in the purchase of another slave. Since individuals purchasing their freedom were often skilled, their purchase-price was usually relatively high in comparison to new captives, and hence masters could even earn enough money through murgu to buy more than one slave. Murgu was not only acceptable religious behavior but a good investment. James Richardson (1953: vol. 2, 274) learned in the 1850s that many slaves in Kano were held under such terms:

these are permitted to work on their own account, and they pay him [their owner] as their lord and master a certain number of cowries every month: some bring one hundred, some three hundred or six hundred, or as low as fifty cowries a month. On the accumulation of these various monthly payments of the poor slaves the great man subsists, and is rich and powerful in the country. This system prevails in all the Fellatah districts [i.e., throughout the caliphate].

Richardson's report demonstrates that the institution of murgu was fully developed by mid-century. By then large numbers of slaves had been incorporated, even as a steady stream of new captives arrived to take the places of those attaining their freedom. Although most plantation slaves were not in a position to avail themselves of murgu, many domestic slaves were.

Individual slaves somehow found their niche along a continuum from successful incorporation, with some social mobility, to successful flight and the establishment anew of ties outside the master's community. The ideological framework of caliphate society encouraged accommodation and thereby submission to the master's authority. In theory, new slaves entered a period of tutelage during which they acquired the tools of religious and cultural assimilation. Yet, remembering other days, slaves smarting from present indignities pulled against their bonds. Clever slaves learned to adjust to a situation that promised amelioration but constantly tempted them to escape.

Daily resistance, passive or otherwise, was intrinsic to caliphate slavery and assumed forms that were common elsewhere. Slaves were pictured as lazy, untrustworthy, and stupid, charges that most certainly were true in individual cases, but when masters applied such judgements categorically to the slave population, then masters were inadvertently providing circumstantial evidence that slaves were doing less than was desired of them. As Imam Imoru, the learned jurist and scholar, put it:

People have nothing but contempt for slaves in Hausaland. The slaves suffer: people look at slaves as worthless creatures; they do not consider them human beings; and they treat them harshly (Ferguson 1973: 230).

In short, the lazy slave was perceived as not working hard enough; the untrustworthy slave was thought to be taking things that the master did not want him to have, and the stupid slave took longer to understand or to accomplish a task and thereby reduced efficiency. Slaves were even identified as being idiots or weak-minded; these were categorical allegations.

Such people were shashasha [unreliable], and with such people one was not supposed to be angry (Dalziel 1937: 42). But such behavior was often used to disguise forgetfulness, to escape punishment and to secure favor. To the extent that slaves displayed behavior that could be criticized, they were setting limits on what could be expected, whether or not their actions were intended or in their self-interest. Consequently, they placed restrictions on the degree to which they could be exploited.

Evidence for such passive resistance is fragmentary but nonetheless conclusive (Tahir 1975: 330). Proverbs demonstrate that sabotage and theft were common: hasada ba ta hana bawa rado - "envy will not stop the slave from getting his share", that is even if the slave has to steal to get it (Whitting 1940: 94). Sometimes slaves resorted to protective medicines to fool their masters, although the effectiveness of such measures is open to question. The plant Jussiaea suffruticosa was mixed with natron as one preparation. According to Dalziel (1937: 42), who compiled botanical information in the 1920's and 1930s, "a slave who does wrong rubs his body with the plant or sucks it with red natron to escape detection or to avoid pain if beaten for his fault."

Discipline problems also offer proof of resistance. Slaves were punished for failure to report for work, laziness and disobedience.⁶ Slaves were whipped, tied in the sun, and restrained with ropes and leg-irons; female slaves were usually whipped out of sight of the male slaves but males were made an example in front of others. J. S. Hogendorn (1977: 376) describes the measures employed on Zaria plantations as follows:

Serious offenders usually were beaten or fastened to a large log in the sun. Depending on how long it continued, the latter method could be mild or severe. Beating as punishment for various offenses was done in the field with a supple branch of the kargo tree, which was said to cause more pain than a blow from a small leather whip, but serious flagellations (as for a recaptured runaway) were held in a special punishment house where the slaves were assembled to witness the event. Before it began, a formal announcement of the offense was made. Sarkin gandu [the overseer] did not administer the strokes; this was the duty of a special freeman.

As in other plantation societies, violence was an essential feature of slave discipline, whipping being a crucial means of social control. An individual did not have to experience a beating to know that it was preferable to avoid punishment.

Hogendorn's data indirectly confirm that slaves resisted their exploitation in ways not unlike the ways slaves reacted in the Americas and elsewhere. Such acts of resistance even led to attempts on the lives of masters. In the 1820s Clapperton reported that an Arab merchant in Katagum slept with a dagger and loaded pistol because he feared his household slaves; such stories among the merchant community were common, and it was female slaves who caused the most trouble: "the master being often strangled at night by the women of his household" (Denham, Clapperton and Oudney 1826: 132).⁷

As Hogendorn (1977: 376, 379) has shown in his study of two Zaria plantations, slaves were even sold for "bad behavior." Indiscipline, and therefore slave resistance, is difficult to quantify, but it appears to have been as common as one would expect, most especially through the practice of selling uncooperative slaves, usually under humiliating circumstances (Lugard 1906: 303). Recalcitrant slaves were accused of wanting to change masters; popular tradition even allowed for slaves to damage the property of another master as a means of forcing such a sale as compensation for the damage. Among the Tuareg who did business in the caliphate, cutting the ear of someone's camel was sufficient grounds for such a transfer of ownership (Baier and Lovejoy 1977). Despite the impression that slaves voluntarily decided to change masters, the more likely reason was that masters were tired of insubordination and chose to replace difficult slaves through sale. In Kano, Zaria and probably other towns, slaves were rubbed with ash and displayed in the market-place (Hogendorn 1980: 489).⁸ The ash symbolized their sorry fate, for only recalcitrant slaves were punished in this fashion. Slaves sold as the result of bankruptcy or the division of inheritance were sold privately. And the ash was punishment, not only because it was a visible symbol, but because the slaves slept in rooms filled with ashes until they were sold.

The supposedly "voluntary" nature of these sales conformed with the dominant ideology of the caliphate, which pictured slavery as a benign institution that brought pagans into the Islamic fold. Masters were perceived as the reluctant party, even to the point that they are remembered begging slaves not "to take themselves to market." But the reasons that are remembered for such sales are not so different from the conditions of sales in other regimes in which slaves performed vital economic functions. Slaves "demanded to be sold" because of "maltreatment, too much work, lack of enough food, lack of clothes, cursing and beating:" these were the conditions that led to "the worsening of relations between a master and a slave."⁹

Through the rich proverbial wisdom of the Hausa language, masters recognized the inherent contradiction in a slave system based on violence and a religious doctrine that emphasized

leniency. Slaves were needed as workers; the problem was how best to maximize their labor. Another proverb explained the dilemma: "however useless a slave, it is better than a house without one" (komi mugun bawa ya fi gidan wolfi) (Merrick 1905: 30). "Uselessness" is often a sign of resistance to slavery. When possible, slaves worked slowly for their master, reserving their energies for their own farms and crafts. Hugh Clapperton (1829: 210), who was in Sokoto in 1827, learned that "disobedient slaves, who, on a complaint to the sultan that they will not work, are sent to prison."

Their only food is the bran or husks of millet and dourra [sorghum], with water; but their friends are allowed to give them food, if they have any. It is a filthy place, and the terror of the men-slaves of Soccato. The prisoners are taken out, two and two, every day to work at the walls, or any laborious work which may occur.

Similar prisons were found at Kano and probably other towns as well (Lovejoy 1981: 232-233; Yunusa 1976: 23-24).¹⁰ Masters could dictate the terms of imprisonment and periodically checked on their slaves to see if they had been "broken."

The severity of slave discipline can be an indication of the extent of resistance or the sadism of individual masters or both, and certainly the treatment of slaves varied more with the temperaments of individual masters than with time. At least the available evidence does not suggest changes over time. Harsh treatment had long been an established feature of slavery. Heinrich Barth, who was in Kano in 1851, learned that local Arab merchants treated their slaves severely, in contrast to other slave owners, whom Barth thought were more lenient. But Barth observed Arab owners and only heard about the more "mild" treatment of other slaves (Barth 1857-1859: vol. I, 527). The story of one slave, recaptured in Keffi after escaping from Bauchi in the 1870s or early 1880s, makes it clear that punishment could be severe on the estates of aristocrats, although the fact that this slave had been a fugitive complicates the analysis. The slave recounted to Sir H. H. Johnston (1889: 111), "when I failed to do good work, I got many a flogging from the overseer of the governor's plantations; and one day it was said to me that as I was a worthless slave I should be sold in the market." Other cases from Kano also demonstrate that conditions on royal plantations were not always pleasant. An overseer (sarkin gandu) had the power to get rid of a slave he did not like, although final authority to sell slaves rested with the master or his manager.¹¹ Shortly after the British conquest of Sokoto in 1903, Resident Temple had to deal with the plight of a boy whose hands were so tightly bound that one fell off and the other was maimed.¹²

Although Temple thought that such cases were uncommon, it is unlikely that he was in a position to judge. Considering British attitudes toward slavery, it is a wonder even this case came to the Resident's attention. Oral traditions, which date to the late nineteenth century, emphasize that wealthy merchants generally pushed their slaves harder than aristocrats, but even this distinction did not always apply.¹³

Flight from Slavery under the Caliphate

Although many slaves took the opportunity of joining the jihād as a means of asserting their freedom, captives who were seized in the holy war were obviously not able to claim that they deserved freedom, unless they could prove the difficult case that they were Muslims before they were enslaved and hence were being held illegally. And conversion to Islam after capture was not grounds for emancipation. By then, slaves either had to adjust to their servility or wait for the chance to flee; that is, an appeal for freedom on the basis of religion only worked while the jihād was in progress. Thereafter, slaves had to adopt other strategies of resistance. Because of geography and political insecurity, flight continued to be one such strategy, so that there was a steady trickle of slaves escaping from their bondage throughout the nineteenth century.

The geography of the central Sudan facilitated escape. The open savanna offered few natural barriers that could contain slaves. Even the Niger and Benue Rivers were not serious obstacles to slaves who needed to cross over to reach home country. As Clapperton (1829: 143-144) noted in 1827, "Those who are taken when grown-up men or women, and even boys and girls, run whenever an opportunity offers, and, whenever they can, they take their owner's goods or cattle to assist them on their journey. Instances of the kind happened every night." Clapperton was at Kulfu, in northern Nupe, which was the principal market-town between the Hausa cities and the Niger River in the 1820s. Similar observations could be made for many other places in the caliphate at different times in the nineteenth century,¹⁴ especially during periods of political turmoil, such as the Zamfara uprising (1817-1818), the Hadejia rebellion under Buhari (1848-1863), the Bauchi civil war (1881-1882), the Kano civil war (1893-1894), and succession disputes elsewhere (e.g., Kano 1819; Zaria 1873, 1897; Yola 1872) (Mahadi 1982: 388-393; Adeleye 1971: 61). Additional opportunities - indeed opportunities bordering on necessity - presented themselves because of raiding from caliphate enemies and revolts among the peasantry. Argungu (90 km west of Sokoto), Maradi (75 km north of Katsina), Ningi (between Kano and Bauchi), Abuja (in southern Zaria, 140 km east of Bida), Damagaram (200 km north of Kano), and other strongholds

harassed the caliphate periodically, often staging raids deep into caliphate territory. Although slaves in the path of these forays were seized, it can be assumed that many others were not captured but took the chance to flee instead.

The major problems for fugitive slaves were distance and insecurity on the frontiers of the caliphate. It was often difficult for slaves to return to home villages, even if it was known that a village still existed. Journeys for many new captives were long, and recent captives could not easily retrace their steps, even if they knew the way. The best strategy for masters was to buy slaves whose homes were at a distance, as Frederick Schön (Schön and Crowther 1842: 187) learned in Nupe in the 1840s: "The Egga people seldom make or purchase slaves from their own, that is, the Nufi nation; but always prefer purchasing such whose native countries are far away." Nonetheless, large expanses of territory were sparsely populated, and fugitives could hide from caliphate authorities. It was more difficult to become attached to a functioning community, although one can assume not impossible. Insecurity continued to be a problem, whether slaves were moved considerable distances from the point of capture or not. The effect of caliphate raids and the counter-raids from enemy fortifications was that huge tracts of land were simply unsafe to live in. Undoubtedly, individuals lived by foraging the countryside, and bandits, some of whom must have been fugitive slaves, plagued the highways. Even so, raiding parties prevented the consolidation of independent settlements, except in hill retreats, and refugees from the caliphate armies soon occupied such sanctuaries as the jihad spread outward.

References to fugitives are scattered throughout the available documentation. Given the nature of the data, it is not possible to establish the incidence of such escapes or to determine if the number of escapes increased or decreased at different periods. But the haphazard record does suggest that flight was a major problem. A significant portion of the surviving correspondence between the various emirates concerns efforts to track down fugitive slaves (Aliyu 1974: 634-642; Adeleye 1971: 88; Backwell 1927: 17, 36-37; Last 1967: 199).¹⁵ These letters accused people of being fugitives, asked for assistance in locating missing slaves, and announced that individuals had fled. Correspondence reveals that the government of Bauchi, for example, was in regular contact with Sokoto, Misau, Gombe, Katagum, and, to a lesser extent, Muri about such matters. Forty percent of over three hundred surviving Bauchi letters relate to fugitives (Yakubu 1985: 77). Similar letters have also been found among the correspondence between Sokoto and other emirates. Such evidence establishes not only that escapes were common but that masters reported flights to the authorities. The correspondence largely

concerns the escape of individual slaves, although small groups of slaves are mentioned on occasion.¹⁶

Slaves sometimes were physically confined to prevent flight. Imam Imoru observed, "the owner is not prevented from tying [a slave] up to prevent him from running away" (Ferguson 1973: 231). Indeed, as one proverb advised, "the shackle is the medicine for a runaway slave" (Ferguson 1973: 330). As S. Passarge (1895: 486-487) observed in Adamawa in 1894: "slaves are often employed for heavy labor, especially work in the fields, are often treated badly - at least regarding their food - and are sold frequently. Sometimes they even have to work in chains in order to prevent them from escaping." Masters resorted to special charms to prevent flight (Yunusa 1976: 18).¹⁷ They put medicines in the food and drink of slaves, and sometimes smoked the rooms in which new slaves were to sleep. Such measures reputedly confused the slaves so that they would not know which direction to follow should they try to escape. Slaves knew that these preventative measures were taken, but it is unclear to what extent slaves believed them to be effective.

Even concubines fled, although they were supposed to be treated better than most slaves because of the close relationship with their masters. Again proverbial wisdom draws attention to the problem: kuyanga, yi magana, ce ba ki kara kai taki bakin marmaro: "Female slave speak! Say that you will never take manure to the stones bordering the farm (i.e., escape)" (Merrick 1905: 27). Concubines who had given birth to children by their master had greater difficulty in fleeing than newly enslaved women, but they still left on occasion. Concubines were kept under close surveillance precisely because escape was a possibility.¹⁸

Sometimes slaves fled to nearby plantations, where they attempted to get other masters to intervene on their behalf. The owner tried to negotiate the return of a fugitive, but if the slave refused the two slave owners struck a bargain that involved compensation for the slave. Such an arrangement was known as taralaya. According to some traditions, slaves committed a criminal offence by escaping because they caused owners to lose property (Yunusa 1976: 41); escape was also considered proof of unbelief.¹⁹

Johnston's fictional saga of the fugitive slave mentioned above provides useful information on one strategy for escape; he recounts how the slave donned his master's clothing, pretending to be a Hausa merchant and feeling safe in his recent conversion to Islam. The account, apparently based on information Johnston (1889: 109-111) gathered in Calabar, reveals the difficulty of such disguises; the unfortunate fugitive was apprehended in Keffi because he could not speak Hausa properly, and the Fulfulde he knew betrayed the accent of a slave. His

new religion provided him little solace during this difficult time.

Oral accounts conflict on the frequency of discovery; some traditions insist that once a slave had escaped he was gone forever. As Baba of Karo claimed (Smith 1954: 43), "you would hunt and hunt for them, and then one day you would hear that someone had seen them in a far-away town. If anyone questioned him the slave would say he had been sent to do an errand for his master. You never caught them again." But Alhaji Mahumdu Dayyido recounts a procedure in Kano that was sometimes effective:

When slaves ran away, the owner could make an announcement and describe the slaves. So wherever they were found, they were taken back to the owner. There was a compound built in Kano where run away slaves were put when they were caught.²⁰

Imam Imoru (Ferguson 1973: 231) describes what happened when recaptured:

When a slave runs away, and is found, he is punished. He is not killed, but he is tied up and humiliated very much: no elder or important person will go to his aid because running away is a grave offense for a slave.

The timing of escapes not only related to punishment or threatened punishment, but also to the fear of sale and the inability of masters to maintain discipline and probably the agricultural cycle and other factors relating to work load. As Baba of Karo recounted, eighty of her grandfather's 130 slaves fled when he died. It may be that the anticipated division of the inheritance instilled some apprehension, since some slaves may well have had to have been sold to allow for equitable shares. It may well be, as Baba claimed (Smith 1954: 39), simply that "the slaves saw their chance and ran away" and that the distress in the family merely provided an opportunity. In Liptako, slaves sought refuge in Tera (a Songhay center to the east), Diagourou (the base of a renegade Muslim of the same name), and Koala (a Gurma town south of Liptako), among other places (Irwin 1981: 17). Although slaves ran away throughout the nineteenth century, the reign of Emir Sori Hama (1832/3-1860/1) is remembered in particular as a time when "many slaves deserted masters they thought too weak or too poor and attached themselves to raiders" (Irwin 1973: 146 fn).

Large-scale desertions also occurred as the result of political turmoil and probably because of famine and drought. In one case, which we know about thanks to the presence of Heinrich Barth shortly after a revolt against the caliphate in the late 1840s, the flight of slaves can be identified in

Dallol Fogha, the location of a salt-making industry in western Kebbi. The rebels, centered at the Dendi stronghold of Yelou, raided Dallol Fogha a number of times, concentrating their attacks in particular on the town of Kawara-Debe. As a result, according to Barth (1857-1859: vol. 3, 165), the local Fulani slave owners of the town "lost the whole of their slaves, who, under such circumstances, had run away in a body." The fate of these slaves is unknown. They may have joined Dendi resistance or they may simply have fled elsewhere. Their actions, nonetheless, demonstrate that slaves took advantages of opportunities to escape whenever feasible.

It was still possible to escape to the side of the caliphate after the jihad, if fugitives came from areas outside the caliphate. Several groups of slaves arrived in Liptako in the nineteenth century, for example. According to Paul Irwin (1981: 17-18),

The Mallebe of Malere, who ran from the Tuareg in the Oudalan, and the Bargarebe or Bargabe of Bargare, who fled from the Silube of Barga in northeast Mossi country, came to Liptako in this way. More numerous than either were the Bellabe, who had been Tuareg slaves. They came to Liptako from the Oudalan in many different groups and founded the villages of Kouri, Oulo, and Sounkoum, where they had their own leaders, and separate quarters of several Fulbe-ruled villages, including Dantchadi, Koria, and Malbo. Some say that their migration and their acceptance of Islam made the Bargarebe, the Mallebe, and the Bellabe free; others deny it. In any event they could not be bought and sold by the emirs, who were their protectors, or by anyone else.

As can be seen from the Liptako example, slaves ran both ways, crossing political frontiers to their advantage. This pattern probably reflected a long tradition in the northern savanna. Caliphate policy in encouraging its continuation was largely an extension of official attitudes towards slaves of belligerents during the jihad.

Despite their intermediate status as clients of the Liptako emir, the Bargarebe, Mallebe and Bellabe had severed the ties to their masters through flight and in the name of Islam. It is likely that a similar phenomenon occurred in other parts of the caliphate. Whole communities of former slaves were found in Katsina and Kano Emirates; these people - Agalawa and Tokarawa - trace their ancestry to Tuareg society, and while their traditions generally recount a peaceful resolution of their slave status, it is possible that many Agalawa and Tokarawa are descended from fugitives.²¹

Slave revolts and mass escapes were rare in the nineteenth century, if available evidence is to be believed. Because it was relatively easy for individual slaves to flee, conspiracies on a large scale were unnecessary, unless ethnic loyalties kept slaves together until group action could be instigated or, as in Oyo, revolt could be harnessed to the Jihad . Still there were at least two revolts after the middle of the nineteenth century. One such uprising occurred in Wase sometime in the 1850s or 1860s, when slaves rebelled against the emir (Aliyu 1974: 600-601, 707-708; Lovejoy 1981: 230, 239 fn).²² Apparently these slaves were primarily agricultural workers; their leader was entitled Sarkin Gandu, who was usually an overseer on a plantation. The slaves were part of the inheritance of Madaki Hassan, who left five thousand slaves when he died. Of these, one thousand went to the emir of Bauchi, the overlord of Wase, one thousand went to Hassan's sons, and the remaining three thousand went to the new emir of Wase, Sarkin Dutse Abdu.

According to Asalin Mutanen Yelwa Kasar Chandam, the written account of the revolt, the slaves rebelled three months after Abdu died and his son Hamman acceded to the emirship. The slaves - many of whom may have been Jarawa from the Dass area - sought the support of the local peasantry (the account does not state whether or not they received it), and they invited neighboring pagans to join them. Some - the Yergam and the Jukun of Wase Tofa - did, but Kanam and others refused. In the battle of Wase River, the leader of the rebellion, Sarkin Gandu Usmanu, was killed - it is claimed by the hand of Sarkin Wase Hamman himself. The rebellious slaves fled on the death of their leader and for a while lived among the Yergam, but they subsequently withdrew because the Yergam began to seize their children for sale. They then went to Shendam where they were warmly received by the Ankwe ruler. This alliance also collapsed, and from Shendam they moved on, founding their own town at Yelwa. As an independent center, Yelwa entered into local politics. For a time Shendam and Wase joined forces to wage war on Yelwa but were held off. Eventually Yelwa made peace with Wase and for a period assisted Wase in war. Yelwa then became involved in a Shendam succession dispute and appears to have backed the wrong side. One of the Shendam claimants called upon Wase for assistance, and in a battle the Yelwa people suffered severe casualties at the hands of Wase. Wase was pressing hard on Yelwa at the time the British arrived and ended the saga.

The Yelwa refugees had experienced quite a transformation; enslaved in Wase, they had successfully staged a revolt and entered into a series of alliances, including one with Wase itself. This saga tells us much about resistance to slavery, for the Yelwa community more closely approximates the maroon settlements of the Americas than most centers of refuge in Africa. Maroon settlements struggled to establish an

independence from the dominant slave society, even to the point of concluding alliances with the political authorities of that society to return fugitives; security was more important than fighting slavery as an institution. The Yelwa fugitives were also preoccupied with security, but their strategy differed from the maroons. They achieved a status impossible to attain in the Americas, and instead of cooperating with a slavocracy, they became involved in regional politics on the basis of equality. Slavery was no more threatened than in the Americas but for different reasons.

A second mass escape took place near Bauchi in about 1870, when "an establishment of 700 slaves of the serakuna [rulers] at Bauchi broke into open revolt and 350 of them found their way to Dugurie, which was under Kanna [Kanam], and settled there calling their village Yuli,"²³ located in southern Bauchi. The community had some difficulty maintaining its autonomy; its inhabitants were subject to kidnapping from the ruler of Duguri, just what the Wase refugees experienced among the Yergam. Because of these violations, the history of the village came to the attention of the British. The people of Yuli appealed for protection in 1902, shortly after the consolidation of British rule in Bauchi. It may be that common ethnicity had kept these slaves together, just as the revolt at Wase may have been based on a single contingent of related slaves. Both cases are exceptional only in the scale of activity, however. The aim of these revolts was identical to that of the individual fugitive - escape rather than hopeless confrontation with the slave regime. Flight, not rebellion, was the usual response of slaves who had been pushed too far.

Millennial Movements and Slave Resistance

In a society in which religion was a strong motivation, it is not surprising that slave resistance continued to be expressed in religious terms. The jihad associated religious appeal and resistance; Usman dan Fodio had summoned enslaved Muslims. Thereafter adherence to Islam became the principle justification for enslavement, and refusal to convert assumed political dimensions. Dissent in this context also sometimes wore a religious cloak. The religious message promised a better society, freed from corruption and oppression. In the best of times, political leaders often fail to deliver on such promises. The nineteenth century was hardly the best of times in the central Sudan. Usman dan Fodio and other caliphate leaders had to contain this sentiment of a purified world - not because they did not want it but because the real problems of political consolidation were too great. Popular expression of discontent added to the trouble because it assumed millennial dimensions in the form of Mahdism. Shehu Usman denied that he

was the expected Mahdi, even though there was widespread belief that the thirteenth century of the Muslim era would witness the appearance of such a figure, but his denial hardly ended speculation. Mahdism was to remain a potent force throughout the nineteenth century and indeed thereafter (Al-Hajj 1973). Even more extreme movements also developed; the most important being the Isawa sect, which, like Mahdism, promised a purge of the world, only in the name of Isa (Jesus) (Patton 1975, 1981; Linden 1975, 1982). Both Mahdists and the Isawa were persecuted, although the Isawa suffered more. While the Mahdists found some adherents among the aristocracy, the Isawa only appealed to non-Fulbe. Both movements found strong support among the slave population.

The Isawa were closely associated with resistance centered on the Ningi hills between Kano and Bauchi. Hamza, a popular Islamic mystic from Tsakuwa, gathered a local following in southeastern Kano Emirate in the 1840s which refused to pay taxes, other than the *zakka*, the religious tithe (Patton 1975: 126-179; Linden 1982: 79-98). In 1848 Hamza was forced to evacuate Tsakuwa and retreated to the hills, where he and his successors fashioned an alliance with local pagans against the caliphate. The Kano authorities continued to persecute the Isawa; the leader of the sect in Kano city, Malam Ibrahim, was impaled as a heretic in the market in about 1855, and the remaining Isawa dispersed to a number of places, including Tsakuwa (and ultimately Ningi) and a village near Zaria. Hamza, despite the fact that he was a slave owner himself, followed the now established tradition of appealing to slaves to escape in the name of Islam. Eduard Vogel, who was in Bauchi in 1855, learned that the Isawa-led alliance in the Ningi hills recruited fugitive slaves, a claim which certainly reflected the fears of Bauchi slave owners if not the actual situation in Ningi itself (Patton 1975: 185; Ritter 1856: 481; Wagner 1860: vol. 2, 279).²⁴ Paul Staudinger (1889: 283), a German agent who was in Zaria in the 1880s, learned that the current Ningi leader, Haruna,

had gathered some heathen tribes and escaped slaves under his flag and made his robberies from a place in the mountains only a few days journey from the capital. His robberies spread fear and horror among the farmers and traders. His gang grew more and more; fugitive criminals, escaped slaves were accepted by him and - as soon as they had stood the test of fighting - became members of the gang enjoying equal rights. In vain the king of Saria [Zaria] sent large armies against him.

Haruna ruled from 1870-1886, and he seems to have continued the precedent established by Hamza (Patton 1975: 210). People were seized in raids on the surrounding emirates or they were

attracted by the religious and political opposition to the caliphate. Fugitive slaves were not the only ones who joined the renegades, to be sure, but there must have been a sizable number among the 3,000-man army of Ningi (Patton 1975: 210).

In Liptako, too, opposition to the established government sometimes assumed religious proportions. Seeku Diagourou, a cleric mentioned earlier, attracted a following in the 1860s, although whether or not he cast his appeal in Mahdist terms is unknown. He split with the Liptako government over the interpretation of Islamic law, and perhaps his own political ambitions. When he was forced out of Liptako in 1869/70, he "promised slaves their freedom if they would join him." Many did. In 1876/77 Liptako had to mount a major attack on Diagourou's community - located near the Gurma town of Koala - in order to stop raids on the emirate (Irwin 1981: 159-160). Even then Seeku Diagourou retreated to Tera, another harbor for fugitive slaves. The Fulbe could not allow this challenge to central authority any more than Sokoto could tolerate Mahdism and the Isawa sect. And the flight of slaves had to be curtailed or at least impeded, although neither Koala nor Tera were eliminated as refuges.

Another center of resistance formed at Satiru, only 20 km from Sokoto. Several poor clerics began to spread Mahdist doctrines in the mid-1890s, and soon their community became a sanctuary for escaped slaves and disgruntled peasants (Mohammed 1983). Eventually, but only after the colonial conquest in 1903, the community swelled to a population of about 10,000. The Satiru clerics preached against the Sokoto government, encouraging followers not to pay taxes and urging slaves to escape from their masters. The growth of this community is fairly well documented because it revolted against British rule and the Sokoto aristocracy in 1906, but it is likely that other communities of similar persuasion were also founded in the nineteenth century.

Conclusion

Slaves struggled with their masters, despite popular belief that slavery was not a harsh system. Although individual slaves may have acquiesced in their status, most slaves fought in subtle and not so subtle ways to assert their rights - rights only grudgingly attained during the nineteenth century. The inherent contradiction in slavery between slaves as chattal and slaves as human beings provided the crack in the institutional edifice through which customary rights could seep; the ideology of the caliphate shaped the form of those rights. The status of concubines, acts of emancipation, public sentiments that opposed the sale of slaves born into servitude, and other limitations on the extent to which masters could

exploit their slaves conformed more or less to Islamic traditions, as interpreted locally. Most slave masters liked to think of themselves as pious Muslims, and because religion can motivate people to act in ways that are not always in their best interests materially, slaves were sometimes able to benefit from the sincerity of their masters. Individual devotion and close personal interaction could reinforce each other. Domestics, palace officials, concubines and other slaves thereby attained positions that were not unenviable, although there was always the risk that a master's temperament would change or that one favorite would be replaced by another.

The position of a slave in society was as important in determining the likely form and extent of resistance as the specific relationship between individual masters and slaves. Plantation slaves were more likely to attempt escape than domestic servants; palace slaves usually had good reasons to outlast temporary handicaps, for they might secure material rewards and achieve bureaucratic responsibilities that were beyond the hopes of most free people. Even though concubines had legal rights, individual women did not always accept their domination, and consequently abused concubines very well might run away.

Each category of slave had its own problems and opportunities, which is one reason why slaves did not act in concert as a class. Slave officials and other trusted slaves often had more in common with their masters than with the mass of the slave population. Personal ambitions conspired to undermine further the development of consciousness among slaves. The control of the slave population depended upon these divisions; struggle was more often than not reduced to a personal quest to obtain small favors and to avoid punishment. In the face of the absolute authority of a master, the individual slave could do little more than try to temper the master's power, thereby reducing the level of coercion to which he or she was subject as a slave and consequently increasing the margin of benefits he or she could attain as a human being.

NOTES

1. It should be noted that little is known about the plight of slaves and the possibility that many escaped in other parts of the central Sudan as the jihad spread to these areas. This is particularly the case for Bauchi, Gombe, Adamawa, Nassarawa, Say and many of the smaller emirates. In Borno, where the jihad lasted from 1806-1812, probably many slaves escaped. The capital district around Birni Ngazargamu was devastated and virtually deserted by the

- early 1820s, and the numerous slaves in this district were either re-enslaved or fled (Lovejoy 1986b: 232). Information on this important dimension of the jihad in Borno is circumstantial, but it seems reasonable to hypothesize that the pattern in Borno was similar to that elsewhere in the central Sudan.
2. Usman dan Fodio cited numerous Muslim authorities to support his ruling that fugitive slaves were free if they joined the jihad, and that free Muslims who had wrongly been enslaved could also claim their liberty.
 3. Neither Mahadi (1982) nor Sa'id (1978) addresses the problem for Kano; Usman (1981) ignores the question for Katsina; and there is at present no modern study of Zaria during the jihad.
 4. By contrast, Gbadamosi (1978: 11) argues that the role of Muslim slaves may have been less important than previously thought, but my reading of the literature supports Law's interpretation. See Danmole 1980: 41-45, 82, for example.
 5. It should be noted that Patterson (1982: 271, 274) is wrong in estimating the rate of manumission of slaves in the Sokoto Caliphate as "high" or "frequent." Manumission was certainly no more common than in the western Sudan, which he ranks as "infrequent." Such a comparison is inevitably relative, but the nature of the data is so poor as to render comparison difficult.
 6. Malam Sa'adu Dogari, Gogel (Kano Emirate), 23 June 1975, interviewed by Yusufu Yunusa. Unless otherwise noted, oral data refer to Yunusa's interviews, transcripts of which are on deposit at the Northern History Research Scheme, Ahmadu Bello University. The interviews were conducted under the supervision of J. S. Hogendorn and myself. Also see Yunusa 1976: 18-19, 60, 61 and Ferguson 1973: 230-231.
 7. For other accounts, see Sa'adu Dogari; Dunk 1983: 87.
 8. See, for example, the accounts of Alhaji Wada of Kano, 18 July 1975, and Malam Zubairu, Gandun Sawaina, Kano Emirate, 11 September 1975.
 9. Muhammadu Rabi'u, Fanisau (Kano Emirate), 13 July 1975.
 10. The Kano prison was known as Gidan Ma'ajin Watari.
 11. Hamidu Galadiman Shamaki, 3 April 1975. Hamidu was born around 1905. For a discussion of the plantation sector, see Lovejoy 1978, 1979 and Hogendorn 1977.
 12. C. L. Temple, Sokoto Report No. 33, 31 March 1907, SNP 7/8 137/1907 (unless otherwise noted, all archival references are to the Nigerian National Archive, Kaduna).
 13. Muhammadu Rabi'u.
 14. A similar pattern existed in Kano late in the century; Alhaji Isyaku of Kano city (born c. 1897), 8 May 1975; Malam Sa'adu Dogari of Gogel (Kano Emirate), 23 June 1975.

15. Also see the letter from the Emir of Gwandu Umaru to the Sultan of Sokoto requesting assistance on behalf of the bearer of the letter in capturing a fugitive (G.O.K. 1/25) and the letter from Sarkin Tambawel Haruna to Sultan Attahiru, who refused to see a member of a delegation sent from Sokoto because the man had been accused of being a fugitive slave (G.O.K. 1/2/48). One of the conditions of peace in settling a revolt in Zamfara in 1891 was that the town of Mafara should return all runaway slaves to Sokoto (Adeleye 1971: 96).
16. According to Mason (1970: 128, citing Crowther to Venn, 2 November 1841, CMS C A1/079), the model farm established by the Niger expedition at the confluence of the Niger and Benue Rivers in 1841 "serve[d] as a sanctuary and refuge for runaway slaves." The farm was short-lived, but it is probable that slaves went elsewhere and consequently disappeared from recorded history.
17. Alhaji Wada, 18 July 1975.
18. J. W. Webster, Nassarawa Province, Report for the month of December 1904, SNP 7/5 346/1904.
19. Abdurramaan Hamadu Hambarke, Liptako, 19 October 1971, and Maccudo Yigo Gela, Liptako, 17 December 1971 (both interviews by J. Paul Irwin, whom I wish to thank for sharing them with me).
20. Interviewed by me in Bakin Zuwo ward, Kano City, 14 July 1973. Hogendorn (1977: 376) thinks that escapes were usually unsuccessful, but of course it is difficult to reach a conclusion on this matter on the basis of present evidence.
21. In my earlier work, I identified Agalawa and Tokarawa as freed slaves, rather than escaped slaves. In light of Irwin's research among comparable groups in Liptako, however, it seems possible that fugitives were also involved. Certainly the traditions that I collected never mentioned this possibility, but then traditions serve to explain Agalawa and Tokarawa success as merchants. In the context of caliphate ideology, freed slaves were acceptable; fugitives were not. The question is in need of additional research (Lovejoy 1980: 75-81, 94-95; Baier and Lovejoy 1977: 406-407).
22. I am indebted to M. B. Duffill who examined the Hausa text of Asalin Mutanen Yelwa Kasar Chandam from the Edgar Collection in the Nigerian National Archive at Kaduna. The analysis here is a summary of Duffill's translation. I am indebted to Duffill for the probable identification of these slaves as Jarawa. It should be noted that Aliyu mistakenly cites the size of the rebellion at 30,000, not three thousand and I duplicate this error in Lovejoy 1981: 230.

23. Foulkes, Bornu Report, 1902, SNP 15/1 Acc 18. In fact Durguri was probably an ally of Kanam, not a tributary.
24. Adell Patton (1975: 185), the leading scholar of the Ningi resistance, doubts the accuracy of this accusation, but it seems logical in the light of additional information. Linden (1982: 82) does accept the role of escaped slaves, apparently basing his information on oral testimony.

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CHAPTER 11

EX-SLAVES, TRANSFRONTIERSMEN AND THE SLAVE TRADE: THE CHIKUNDA OF THE ZAMBESI VALLEY, 1850-1900

Allen Isaacman*

In the field of pre-colonial African economic history a handful of scholars have shaped the direction of research. Among these is Philip Curtin, whose contribution to the literature on the slave trade has been widely acclaimed. In Cross-Cultural Trade in World History, Curtin expands his focus from commerce in captives to the broader issue of commerce across cultural boundaries. He emphasizes the critical role played by trade diasporas in transcending ecological and cultural barriers and linking disconnected parts of the world. As part of this far-reaching study, Curtin (1984) identifies a cultural variant of trading diaspora communities - those merchants who married into the local population and underwent a process of acculturation - which he terms "transfrontiersmen."¹ This concept is important in three respects. First, it stands in sharp contrast to the work of many frontier historians whose narrow geographic and cultural perspective blinded them to the dynamics of change which occurred on both sides of the frontier. For them, the only relevant unit of analysis was that side of the frontier which they presumed to be advancing, dynamic and civilized. Second, the transfrontier phenomenon,

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recurring as it does over time and space, underscores the fallacy that culture change could be uni-directional. Although this "modernizing" bias is most pronounced in the literature on the expansion of Europe, it extends to other frontier situations as well.² Finally, the cultural category of transfrontiersmen provides an analytical alternative to such vacuous terms as "half-castes," "half-breeds" and "renegades" which appear with some frequency in the frontier literature and which connote racial inferiority and social degeneracy.

In addition, the use of the term "transfronteirsmen" reflects but does not examine the immobility of women in most pre-capitalist societies, an immobility which, as I shall show, had considerable impact on the social consequences of male migration. On the one hand, the absence of women created serious problems of social reproduction, by which I mean the perpetuation over time and on a sufficient scale of both the means of subsistence and of human beings. On the other, it facilitated the creation of marriage alliances which were the principal mechanism by which many strangers were incorporated into host communities.

Not all transfrontiersmen attached themselves to local societies. As Curtin noted, some forged new enclaves beyond the periphery. Transfrontier communities generally evolved in harsh geographic zones or in hostile political environments. In such settings, fugitives were not likely to survive alone or to be incorporated voluntarily into the indigenous society unless their presence provided real benefits to the rulers. The alternative was to create refugee communities.³

Transfrontiersmen: A Reinterpretation and Comparative Overview

This chapter proposes to flesh out and extend, both theoretically and comparatively, Curtin's definition and to place it within a somewhat different analytical framework. It shifts the focus of analysis from essentially a cultural definition to one which emphasizes the social origins of transfrontiersmen and the processes by which they develop a new sense of group and ethnic identity. It is my contention that the majority of transfrontiersmen were victims of class and/or race oppression. Their ranks typically included runaway slaves, deserters, criminals, and conscripts. For them, flight was both an act of defiance and an opportunity to renegotiate their future. Conceptualizing transfrontiersmen in such terms highlights the fact that frontiers are socially rather than geographically delineated.

Since the era of maritime expansion and the spread of merchant capitalism, probably the single largest source of transfrontiersmen was slaves who fled into the interior to avoid the cruelties of plantation life. Throughout the South

Atlantic system liberated slaves created transfrontier communities referred to, in the literature, as maroon societies. Of these, the most famous were Saramaka (Guyana), the Leeward and Westward communities located in Jamaica, and Palmares in the Brazilian hinterland, each of which survived for more than a century (Price 1973; Carneiro 1947; Ennes 1938; Herskovits and Herskovits 1934; Shafer 1973). Although fugitive slave communities are generally associated with the Americas, a number could be found in nineteenth century Africa as well. Slaves who fled the plantations of the Sokoto Caliphate in northern Nigeria and fugitives from the Zanzibar and Kenya clove estates adopted similar strategies of survival (Lovejoy 1986: 71-95; Cooper 1977: 206-210).

While their precarious position generally compelled runaway slaves to forge new communities, some became absorbed into the societies beyond the frontier. In the American South, slaves frequently took refuge with the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw and Chikasaw (Porter 1971; Giedings 1858). The best documented example of this interaction occurred in the Seminole community in Florida to which slaves from the Spanish colony fled in the eighteenth century. In time, a number of freedmen and their Afro-Indian offspring rose to such prominent positions within Seminole society as chiefs and war-captains. According to Porter (1971: 47), these Seminole blacks were "all thoroughly identified in customs and interests with the Indians." Their relationship, however, was not quite so unambiguous, since the Seminole also reenslaved a portion of the runaways. Further south in Guatemala, the Black Caribs arose out of the union between rebellious slaves and Indians (Taylor 1951; Coelho 1955). And interspersed throughout Chinese history are documented cases of slaves conscripted into the army who fled beyond the Great Wall to live among the "barbarians" (Lattimore 1959).

As the China example suggests, transfrontiersmen were also drawn from the ranks of those whom the state had forcibly interned. The two most common categories were criminals and military conscripts - both socially marginal types primarily of lower class background who were despised and feared by their natal society. The state's decision to banish many of these undesirables to the fringes of society or to station them along the frontiers facilitated their escape. In his recent study of seventeenth-century China, Wakeman (1985: 43-44) describes the recurring pattern of renegade soldiers "taking Manchu names and adopting tribal customs." He noted that "they crossed the boundaries of their own culture so that they eventually lost their identity as Chinese, seeming in manner, dialect, custom and physique to be more akin to the Manchus than to their former countrymen." Fugitives resided in the Amazon Basin during this same period:

The transfrontiersmen were a tough and unruly caste of men, with all the requisite skills for survival in the Amazon basin; most of them were illiterate, Paraenses born of Portuguese fathers and Indian mothers who had been raised speaking the lingua geral. . . . Among them were many deserters [forcibly conscripted] from the miserable military garrisons of Para and the river forts; others were civilian outlaws, refugees from a harsh system of justice (Sweet 1974).

They were not unique. Ming border guards swelled the ranks of the Jurchen in the fifteenth century; Spanish and mestizo deserters joined the Arucanos in Chile in the sixteenth century (Morner 1967: 28; Serruys 1959: 32-33). Conscripted mariners, for whom life at sea was like "being in a jail with a chance of being drowned" (quoted in Ritchie n.d.), often opted for unknown coastal shores. In the eighteenth century small settlements of such fugitive sailors with their Indian wives dotted the Central American coastline from the Yucatan peninsula to Honduras.

The recently dispossessed constituted yet another source of transfrontiersmen. Many of the ancestors of the Cossacks were originally runaway serfs who had lost access to the common lands. They fled from debt, taxation and cruel punishment in the hope of finding new land. Once beyond their familiar terrain, they intermingled with and partially adopted the culture of the steppe peoples and enjoyed a brief but precarious period of independence before they were re-absorbed by the expanding Russian state (Longworth 1970: 19; Lattimore 1959: 138; Hobsbawm 1981: 33). The ranks of the infamous buccaneers included landless bond servants and a mix of marginalized men who escaped from the French and British Caribbean islands to adjacent island which the Spanish had abandoned (Ritchie 1986; Lockhard and Schwartz 1983: 311).

The pirate community on the Grand Cayman Island, located between Cuba and Jamaica, is a case in point. Attracted by the secluded harbors surrounded by reefs and shoals which protected them from the British and French navies, a motley band of criminals, debtors and deserters of Irish, Scottish, British and Spanish descent took refuge on the island in the middle of the seventeenth century. They brought slaves to work their fields and to cut lumber for their ships. For almost a century, until the major mercantile powers suppressed their activity, they attacked the main trade routes which linked Central America, Cuba, Jamaica and Florida.⁴ Other buccaneer settlements could be found as far away as the Indian Ocean (Filliot 1971).

In addition to reconceptualizing the social origins of transfrontiersmen, this study examines the dynamics of social reproduction in the great beyond. Specifically, it focusses on

the process by which many transfrontiersmen forced and perpetuated new societies. Allowing for vast differences in time and space, these fugitive enclaves faced a number of common problems. Of immediate importance was the acquisition of legitimate rights to land and hence a territorial base; the acquisition of women for procreation, domestic labor and sexual gratification; the development of a secure economic structure; the construction of minimal systems of government and defense; and the creation of new bonds of kinship and culture.

Whatever path they pursued, transfrontiersmen tended to be a transitional category. In time, individual transfrontiersmen were either absorbed into the host community or were reincorporated into the society which they had fled when the frontier was annexed. To the extent that other fugitive enclaves became self-reproducing and developed a specific ethnic identity and culture, they ceased being transfrontier communities and were transformed into new social and political entities. The long and rich history of such maroon societies as Palmares, Saramaka, and Leeward are cases in point.

Both to illustrate this transfrontier phenomenon and to highlight the varied and, often, contradictory position of transfrontiersmen, this chapter examines the historical development of one such group: the Chikunda of the Zambesi Valley. The Chikunda were initially slaves on the prazos, or Portuguese crown estates. In the early nineteenth century, they rose up and escaped beyond the colonial frontier after the estate-holders tried to export them in direct contravention of historical practice. Once free, they pursued a number of different paths. Some lived as strangers attached to, but separate from, the indigenous population. Ultimately, many were absorbed into the societies of the periphery. Others re-grouped into mobile hunting bands. Eventually, they forged new inland communities. Still other ex-slaves formed the nucleus of new Chikunda slave raiding states. Many of their victims were incorporated as wives and laborers. Other were exported.

The predatory activity of the Chikunda and their use of bound labor suggests that they had internalized the attitudes of their ex-masters toward slavery. The case of the Chikunda is not unique. Although forged from the ranks of the socially oppressed, these new enclaves were hardly egalitarian. Gradations of power based on class, race, gender and age surfaced in all transfrontier communities - a phenomenon which falls beyond the scope of Curtin's cultural model.

Before examining the historical development of the Chikunda, it is necessary to identify the most salient characteristics which differentiate transfrontiersmen from other immigrant groups. This distinction rests on three interrelated factors: the illegal character of their migration; the intent of the fugitives to sever permanently their ties with their natal societies; and the absence of women.

Unlike other immigrants, the flight of transfrontiersmen was neither state-sponsored nor state-sanctioned. To the contrary, it was expressly prohibited and bitterly contested. State officials recognized that the population drain, if left unchecked, would pose serious consequences and, in the most extreme case, could challenge the very fabric of society. The loss of bound or cheap labor and tax revenue was of obvious concern. Transfrontiersmen could also pose a serious threat to the state trading monopoly and, in the case of the buccaneers, to metropolitan commerce in general. Finally, the inability to contain the transfrontiersmen carried serious political consequences. Their departure served both as a model for other oppressed classed and their enclaves often became a source of refuge. In some cases, such as the maroon communities, they posed such an immediate danger that the planter class and the state went to great lengths to destroy them.

The necessarily subterranean and outlaw character of the transfrontiersmen helps to explain why they severed all ties to the "home" societies and why they were unable or unwilling to bring their wives and family. It was this combination which further differentiates transfrontiersmen from other immigrant groups--both those who characteristically abandoned their natal society but brought their families (as the Scandinavians and Anglo-Saxons who settled in the United States), and those sojourners (including Slavs and southern Europeans) who left their families but had every intention of returning home.⁵ It was also this combination which produced a crisis of reproduction and a sense of radical homelessness. Detached from their natal societies and forced to flee to harsh backwater regions, the fugitives had only two "transfrontier options." They either had to attach themselves to the indigenous societies or to forge new ones. The latter alternative, however, merely deferred the reproduction crisis not to mention questions of sexual gratification. The continuous need to recruit women, often violently, reflected their fragile position and set off a social dynamics with their neighbors which was quite different from other immigrant groups. Such was the case of the Chikunda.

The Chikunda of Zumbo: The Creation and Transformation of a Transfrontier Community

The Chikunda were "created" by the Portuguese during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to fulfill a specific social need. As individual Portuguese settlers ventured forth from the Mozambican coast to stake out land claims (prazos) in the Zambesi Valley, they needed an armed force to secure territory, to extract surplus from the peasants whose land they had appropriated, and to defend the estates against external

threats. Prazeiros, therefore, recruited and armed slaves to maintain their preeminent, if often, precarious class position. The slaves were purchased from a variety of matrilineal groups north of the Zambesi River, although a few captives came from Shona-related peoples to the south.⁶ Individual prazos had as many as a few dozen to several hundred slaves. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was a total of 20,000-30,000 Chikunda. The term chikunda is derived from the Shona verb kukunda, to vanguard, an accurate indication of the function of the Chikunda in the Zambesi region.⁷

By this period the Chikunda, armed with European guns and protected with special medicines, were the most successful hunters in south central Africa. Under the direction of slave chiefs (makazambo and masambadzi), their hunting and trading expeditions had become an integral part of the Indian Ocean trading network. They were the point men for the penetration of merchant capitalism into the societies of the interior.

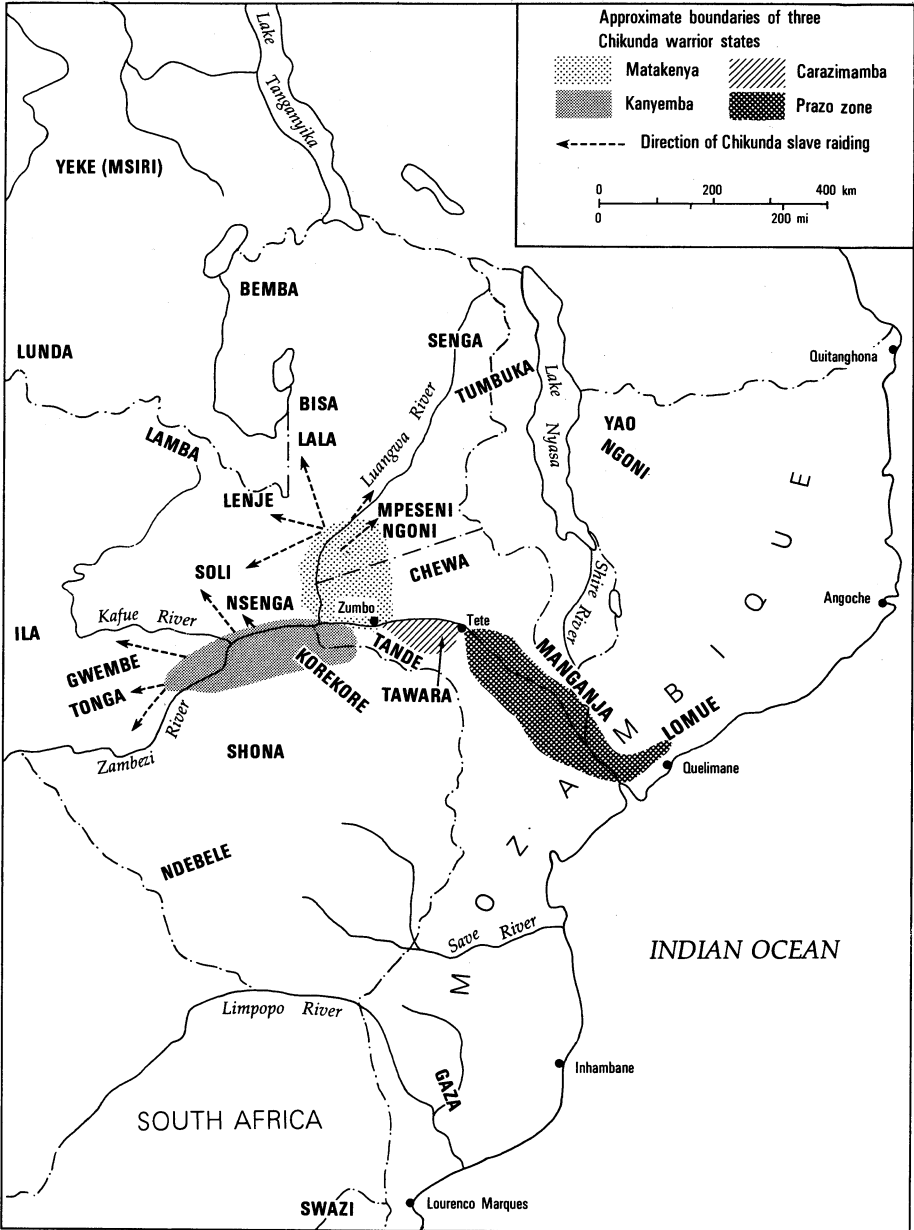
Despite their important political, military and economic role, the relationship of the Chikunda to the prazeiros was ambiguous and often contradictory. As slaves, they were unable to choose their own work or employer, to dispose of their property or to protect themselves or their families from physical abuse by their masters. Their slave status was also permanent and hereditary because the owners could not afford to manumit their slaves without undermining their own position and class privilege. On the other hand, the Chikunda enjoyed military power and had the mobility to manumit themselves through flight. Indeed, the annals of Zambesian history are replete with examples of Chikunda who fled beyond the sphere of the Portuguese or who rebelled against abusive estateholders (Isaacman 1972: 37-43; Newitt 1973: 201-202).

The level of conflict between the Chikunda and their masters increased substantially during the first half of the nineteenth century. Underlying the heightened tensions was the short-sighted decision by many prazeiros to export their Chikunda subjects in order to take advantage of the international demand for slaves. This decision provoked a violent reaction (Gamitto 1859: 369-373, 397-400). As Livingstone (1858: 630-631) noted in the 1850's,

When the slave trade began, it seemed to many of the merchants a more speedy mode of becoming rich, to sell off the slaves . . . , and they had continued to export them until they had neither hands nor labor to fight for them. It was just the story of the goose and the golden egg.

Drought and locust infestations sharply reduced agricultural production and left the remaining Chikunda, who were dependent on peasant output, to fend for themselves. By the middle of

Map 11.1 PEOPLES AND POLITICS OF SOUTH CENTRAL AFRICA 1880



the century only a handful of prazos were still operating - and most of those just barely (Isaacman 1972:123).

As the prazos disintegrated, thousands of slaves gained their freedom. To be without a master, however, was also to be without access to food, arms and a secure base of operation in the hostile world of the lower Zambesi. Many ex-slaves escaped to the "great beyond." Some remained as outsiders attached in a symbiotic relationship to the interior communities, while others regrouped and forged transfrontier communities.

Like runaway slaves before them, many Chikunda found it expedient to seek refuge with interior peoples. Chewa, Manganja, Twara, Gwembe Tonga, Korekore and Nsenga traditions are replete with accounts of how individuals or small wandering bands of Chikunda, primarily males, migrated up the Zambesi in search of new homelands. In exchange for the right to settle, the refugees provided a number of services to the land chiefs. Armed with guns, iron axes, and a variety of traps, the Chikunda lived up to their reputations as undaunted hunters. Their forays into the forests, rich with game, provided the land chiefs with ivory and game which was particularly important in times of famine.⁸ In a number of cases the Chikunda also spread new technology, teaching the local population how to manufacture iron hoes, other agricultural implements, and weapons.⁹

Their formidable military skills became increasingly important to the host communities, which, as the nineteenth century progressed, faced repeated attacks. By the 1860s, the Zambesi had become a zone of intense competition among Yao, Swahili, Ngoni and Afro-Goan slavers. In addition, the Ndebele from the south and Ovimbundu from the west made periodic raids into the region. Using the military skills they developed on the prazos, the Chikunda sometimes provided a shield against their predators.¹⁰ According to one of the attackers,

we went to raid other Chewa in the west. We fought against people of Dzoole, Chinzu and Chinganyama. But we failed to break through the stockades of Chinganyama and Chinzu because of the Chikunda presence there. We always feared their guns.¹¹

To the south, Chikunda musketeers helped repel Ndebele raids against the Gwembe Tonga and aided the Korekore against their Zezuru rivals (Matthews 1981: 29-32).¹²

To induce the ex-slaves to reside permanently in their villages, many local chiefs offered them land, hunting rights, captives and, most importantly, wives. Marriage alliances between the runaways and the local chiefs created a permanent bond between the strangers and the royal families and eased the absorption of some Chikunda into local societies at the same time as economic and military ties were consolidated.¹³

Through such nuptial agreements, the transfrontiersmen gained a network of kin and resolved the impending crisis of reproduction. Prosperous Chikunda hunters purchased slaves for additional wives.

Many Chikunda were not assimilated. Conflicts with the indigenous authorities and threats from slavers motivated these Chikunda to go their own way. Some temporarily attached themselves to new villages. Others became part of roving Chikunda bands. By the second half of the century, ex-slave bands appear to have reached as far inland as the Laungwa valley, but it was around Zumbo that the major Chikunda concentrations sprang up.

The Zumbo region had many advantages as a frontier location. Situated at the confluence of the Zambesi and Luangwa Rivers, it offered a terrain that was easily defensible. It also permitted its residents to control the flow of trade over two well-travelled waterways which extended deep into the Central African interior. For the Chikunda hunters the herds of elephants in the adjacent forests held an obvious appeal. And, despite its strategic location, the Zumbo region was relatively free space, falling beyond the frontier of the Portuguese colonial state and under only nominal control of the Mburuma Nsenga.¹⁴

The transfrontier communities that grew up around Zumbo were relatively heterogeneous. Besides the Chikunda, they attracted deserters from the Portuguese military garrison at Tete, fugitives from the Tete prison and other disgruntled elements, especially displaced descendants of some of the prazos and a few merchants of Goan ancestry, who were despised in Portuguese society as the "Jews of Asia." In reality most of these social outcasts were of mixed African, Portuguese and Asian parentage. Known collectively as "muzungu" they were viewed by colonial authorities as "cultural degenerates." "In costume and belief," reported the Governor of Zambesia in 1821, "there were no significant differences between the mulattos and the African population at large."¹⁵ Complained another official in 1844:

The Europeans who go to reside in East Africa, principally those who establish themselves in the interior, instead of divesting the kaffirs of their grossest superstitions, adopted these superstitions in an exaggerated form; with the result that the grandchildren of the Portuguese live absolutely like savages (Bordalo 1844: vol. 4, 53).

For their part, decades of cultural isolation from European and Asian socializing institutions and an increasing tendency to be raised by relatives of African descent had wrenched the "renegades" from colonial society. For them, in a very real sense,

the colonial frontier had already receded. The "great wild" was no longer so awesome, which was why some of these muzungu fled into the interior and became transfrontiersmen.

The history of the Chikunda followers of Chikwasha (d. 1868), one of the most important of the ex-slave communities in the Zumbo region, illustrates the general process by which transfrontier communities formed. In the 1850s, a band of Chikunda, perhaps numbering between 100-200 arrived at Zumbo. They were led by an Afro-Portuguese elephant hunter and trader named Emmanuel José Anselmo de Santanna, known more commonly by his African praise name, Chikwasha. Together with a few family members, Chikwasha pushed westward from the Tete hinterland where he had recruited a number of ex-slaves. Recalled one elder:

When the Achikunda came, Chikwasha was not their mambo [chief] but the employer of the Achikundu [Muzungu wachikunda]. He came with his people from Nyungwe [Tete]. They originally belonged to various tribes: the Tawara, Barue, Sena and Chewa.¹⁶

According to other traditions, many of the Chikunda who migrated with Chikwasha were runaway slaves.¹⁷ Throughout the next two decades, other ex-slaves and their descendants found refuge with Chikwasha. The British traveller Selous (1970:295) noted in 1874 that the community consisted of "freed slaves or runaway slaves of the Portuguese from the countries near the mouth of the Zambesi."

The ranks of Chikwasha's transfrontiersmen included several slaves, who were famous hunters, and three prominent blacksmiths. The hunters had been purchased from the Yao and Lomue and were subsequently manumitted. The smiths appear to have been free in origin and were hired to make hunting implements, firearms and other military wares.¹⁸ Chikwasha paid the smiths in calico cloth, arms and imported goods. In both these cases, recruitment varied from the usual pattern. In the first case, the hunters were acquired as slaves who were then freed, while in the second case, the smiths were already free people who were attracted to the community because of opportunities to earn a living. Nonetheless, the initial pattern of recruiting fugitives still predominated. This was a transfrontier community, despite the complexities of recruitment.

Chikwasha's band very soon exhibited signs of social differentiation among its members. Chikwasha's family, the former slave chiefs, the blacksmiths and senior hunters formed a privileged strata. They received a larger portion of the hunting and commercial bounties than their Chikunda subordinates.¹⁹ This differentiation reflected an important stage in the development of transfrontier communities, for it demonstrated that some degree of permanence had been achieved.

Chikwasha's following began to acquire some characteristics of an emerging community on the frontier, rather than a disconnected band of fugitives. A crucial dimension of this transition was the acquisition of permanent rights to land.

When Chikwasha's expedition first arrived in Zumbo, its position was somewhat precarious. It was highly dependent on the good graces of the local Chiponda chiefs and especially their Mburuma Nsenga overlords. Both had been subject to predatory Ngoni raids and had initially perceived the well-armed strangers as a threat.²⁰ Chikwasha and his Chikunda lieutenants took several steps to assuage the fear of the local rulers. From the outset they emphasized their hunting and commercial interests and disclaimed any territorial ambitions. They followed the custom of first obtaining permission from the resident chiefs, either the Nsenga ruler Mburuma or the Chiponda land chief, before hunting in their territories, and in exchange for the licence to hunt, they gave the tusk falling to the ground as tribute. Their agreement to construct only temporary hunting villages (*msasa*) and to locate them at sites selected by the Nsenga leadership further reduced suspicion.²¹ The Chikunda also acknowledged the ritual supremacy of the Nsenga rain priests and paid homage to the senior Chiponda ancestor spirit Kankule - the original owner of the land where Chikwasha's settlement at Feira was eventually founded.²²

Although profitting from ivory,²³ Chikwasha's Chikunda initially remained landless strangers confined to temporary hunting bases. A power struggle between insurgents seeking to overthrow Mburuma Nyanzokola and his supporters within a few years after the Chikunda arrived, provided an opportunity to transform their landless status and to enhance their power. According to Nsenga traditions, Nyankozola was a tyrannical ruler who had committed numerous atrocities against his subjects (William-Myers 1978: 246). While Nsenga and Chikunda accounts differ on specific details, they agree that a relative of the king, Chiungunduwi, plotted Nyankozola's assassination with the assistance of Chikwasha. During a festival organized by Chiungunduwi at the Mburuma's village, a Chikunda warrior shot Nyankozola while performing a hunting dance. Chirungunduwi became the new Mburuma and presented Chikwasha with a large tract of land at Feira, across the Luangwa river from Zumbo, and with a wife from the royal family.²⁴

The acquisition of a secure homeland helped to transform Chikwasha's Chikunda from a band of wandering ex-slaves to a powerful regional force with a recognizable social identity. The ex-Chikunda slaves were no longer guests of the Nsenga, but were now their neighbors with full rights of residency. Chikwasha became a land chief in his own right with the power to exact tribute in both food and labor from those living in his domain. According to Chikunda traditions, a number of Nsenga and Chiponda villages chose to remain under Chikwasha

rather than move back to the Mburuma's territory. To oversee the subject population, Chikwasha organized six Chikunda settlements at strategic locations.²⁵ Since most of the Chiponda and Nsenga were ultimately absorbed into Chikunda society, their decision to remain, whether inspired by choice or by coercion, served to expand the Chikunda enclave. The incorporation of these Chiponda and Nsenga settlements represented yet another departure in the form of recruitment to Chikunda society and further increased the heterogeneity of Chikwasha's enclave. Through this process of assimilation, the Chikunda were also changing their status as fugitives beyond the colonial frontier to a dynamic new society in the interstices of a region that had many frontiers.

The acquisition of land also enabled Chikwasha to incorporate additional strangers and social outcasts who sought sanctuary.²⁶ According to Chikunda traditions, Chikwasha encouraged his followers to intermarry and to take many wives. "In the Achikunda society," recalled several elders, "our ancestors were required to have more than one wife in order to have many children and increase the size of their families."²⁷ Intermarriage and the absorption of local women eased the crisis of social reproduction and fueled the growth of the Chikunda community.

With a secure territorial base, the ex-slaves were able to expand economically as well. Hunting remained the central activity. But now the Chikwasha Chikunda owned all the ivory and game killed within their territory or in the adjacent frontier region. They were also able to construct permanent stockades (aringas) to protect their hunters and safeguard the ivory. As the international price of ivory skyrocketed and competition from the Swahili, Ngoni, Yao and Portuguese intensified, hunting became an increasingly dangerous occupation (Weise 1983: 57). The aringas provided not only a degree of protection against brigandage but served as well-stocked warehouses from which Chikunda trading caravans fanned out to the Soli, Lenje, Bisa, Gwembe Tonga, Korekore, and Nsenga homelands. There they exchanged calico cloth, iron implements and guns for the ivory which the local land chiefs had accumulated.²⁸

Slave trading developed into a secondary but important activity. In 1860 Livingstone noted that Chikwasha's wealth derived primarily from hunting but that his followers "were driving a trade in slaves which was something new in this part of Africa" (Livingstone and Livingstone 1865: 340). Because the surrounding chiefs were anxious to buy cloth and guns, the Chikunda had no need to resort to slave raiding.²⁹ "All the slaves Chikwasha acquired from the local chieftaincies were obtained in exchange for cloth, beads, salt, jewels, guns, hoes, axes and many other products, which were brought from Nyungwe [Tete] to trade with the local population." Indeed,

the demand for these commodities was so great that Chikwasha established a slave and ivory market at Feira.³⁰ While the female slaves were incorporated, the males were employed as carriers who took the 60 lb. tusks to Tete, where some of these men were sold to the Portuguese, who in turn resold them on the coast. Those male slaves who were not sold were brought back to Feira, where they continued to serve as porters and were also assigned agricultural labor.³¹ By far the largest number of slaves belonged to Chikwasha and his Chikunda chiefs, although some captives were distributed among their followers.

Control over land and labor also enabled the Chikunda to overcome the perennial problem of food shortages. This problem, which stemmed from their disdain for agricultural labor, had beset the Chikunda since their days on the prazos. While Chikunda men continued to hunt and trade, their newly acquired wives and slaves worked in the fields (mphala) that were farmed in the rainy season.³² "The Chikunda never worked their fields by themselves," recalled one elder. "This work was done by slaves whom they bought from the local peoples for this purpose."³³ During the dry season most Chikunda households adopted the Chiponda practice of cultivating a second plot (dimba) on the banks of the Luangwa River.³⁴ Not surprisingly, Chikwasha and his principal lieutenants had the largest fields and supplemented slave labor with tributary labor from their Nsenga and Chiponda subjects. When necessary Chikunda hunters purchased additional labor from the local population in exchange for calico cloth.³⁵

Chikunda attempts to control their spiritual domain proceeded at a somewhat slower pace. As strangers they were disconnected from both their ancestor spirits (mizimu) and the Shona mhondoro (lion spirit) cult, both of which they had worshipped on the prazos to ensure divine protection from drought, famines, enemy attacks, and other hardships. To reduce their vulnerability, the Chikunda had propitiated Kankule, the senior Chiponda ancestor spirit, as well as the spirit of other deceased Chiponda and Nsenga land chiefs. The territorial gift from mambo Chirungunduwi, however, freed them from their ritual dependence on local religious authorities. By transferring land ownership, the Nsenga mambo had also transferred spiritual independence to Chikwasha. The Chikunda leader ordered his followers to bring seedlings of the sacred M'sika and Mutumbi trees from Tete, which had historically served as ancestral shrine centers, and to plant them around their homesteads and surrounding villages. As these trees matured, the Chikunda were again able to invoke the spirits of their ancestors. Consequently, they ceased paying homage to the spirits of local Nsenga and Chiponda land chiefs. Sometime before his death in 1868, Chikwasha obtained special royal medicines (makoma) from a senior Tande and Korekore mhondhoro Bena'm'baiwa. This potion, it was believed, would transform

Chikwasha into a mhondoro, thereby granting him indirect access to the Shona supreme diety, Mwari. At this point, ritual dependence on Kankule dramatically diminished. This act symbolized an important stage of a process, no doubt telescoped in the traditions, in which the Chikunda developed an autonomous religious system and spiritual hierarchy with which to cope with life crises.³⁶

These religious changes were part of the broader process of creating a distinct Chikunda identity unrelated to their previous slave status on the prazos. This new identity centered around the cult of the hunter. Chikunda mythology and dances (gorlombe) praised the daring exploits of the elephant hunters whose activities insured the well-being of the Chikunda community. Their prowess was also celebrated in song:

I have shot the elephant
There it is on the bank of the rivers
I have shot it, there follow the vultures
I have shot the man, there he is
I have shot him
There he is on the bank of the river
I have broken the world
There follow the vultures.³⁷

Hunters, caravans leaders and the warriors who protected expeditions were all accorded a special place in Chikunda lore. Special medicines were prepared and elaborate ceremonies organized to insure the safety of hunters. When they returned from a successful expedition they received a heroic welcome and precious goods from the warlord.

The cult of the warrior-hunter set the Chikunda off from both their slaves and their agricultural neighbors. A distinct set off three round facial marks (makazu) and the calico cloth (kapunga) which the hunters proudly wore around their waist highlighted their privileged position and social identity.³⁸ Over time, the Chikunda also developed their own distinct language which reflected the diverse background of the community (Doke 1967: 70, 98; Stefaniszyn and Santana 1960: 362).

When Chikwasha died in 1868, his band of ex-slaves had been in Zumbo slightly more than a decade. Chikunda chiefs, members of his family and the earthly spirit medium of the Chikwasha mhondoro subsequently selected his son Mphasu to succeed the deceased ruler. In little more than a decade the ex-slaves had begun to transform the very conditions of their existence. No longer were they uprooted runaways. They had acquired a permanent homeland, expanded their following, grafted an agricultural sector on to their original hunting base, and began to utilize slave labor. They also forged new bonds of kinship and culture embodied in the venerated spirit of Chikwasha. Indeed the community had transcended the

frontier and had established a niche for itself in the cultural and economic mosaic of south-central Africa.

Chikwasha's transfrontier community was not unique. A number of bands of runaway slaves similarly became the nucleus for autonomous Chikunda settlements scattered along the elephant frontier. In the decade surrounding Chikwasha's death, there was a proliferation of such communities extending beyond Zumbo as far west as the Kafue and up the Luangwa valley to the Bisa homelands in present day Zambia. The foundation of Chikwasha's community and its consolidation within its specific historical setting was replicated in many places, suggesting certain parallels with diaspora trade communities - a subject to which I will return in the conclusion.

Although the internal history of these other ex-slave communities remains fragmentary, they seem to have developed along lines similar to Chikwasha's Chikunda. Some were led by former slave chiefs or expert hunters, such as Nyakulungwe who organized a Chikunda enclave among the Nsenga of Petauke.³⁹

Kabendeza is one of the many hunters who . . . settled down in the presence of some chiefs; form with his consent a village and later a stockade, gather around themselves more hunters and other people; and finally sell to the Arabs the ivory they get from hunting . . . (Weise 1983: 258).

In other cases the Chikunda bands joined with muzungu who had originally migrated from Tete. One band in the company of Manoel Chaim'tando travelled several hundred miles up the Luangwa valley to the Lala-Lamba homelands in search of new hunting grounds.⁴⁰ Another group, in the service of the Afro-Portuguese Thome Kanvaliva, remained near Zumbo but diversified their activities and became accomplished boatmen and fisherman as well as hunters.⁴¹

The first wave of Chikunda transfrontiersmen, living as hunters and traders, had generally co-existed peacefully with the surrounding population and often entered into commercial and military alliances with the indigenous authorities. To be sure, there was some violence. The slaves whom the Chikunda purchased had often been victimized by chiefs anxious to acquire cloth, guns and other imported goods. Chikunda disputes with the Nsenga, Chewa, Soli and Chiponda chiefs over the relative value of a commodity or over the violation of a hunting or commercial agreement on occasion ended with the plundering of a village. Livingstone (1858: 211) noted that when a village loyal to the murdered Nsenga "declined to trade with him [Chikwasha], . . . he threatened to take the ivory by force if he would not sell it." The shortage of women may have precipitated some Chikunda slave raiding, and there was also the temptation to take captives for the Indian Ocean market.⁴²

But, because of the initial abundance of both slaves and ivory and because the economic ventures of the Chikunda depended on the goodwill of the host communities, commerce rather than conquest was the dominant mode of acquisition.

The Transformation of the Chikunda and the Expansion of the Central African Slave Trade, 1870-1900.

Within a decade of Chikwasha's death many, but certainly not all, of the surviving Chikunda communities had become large slave raiding entities supplying corvée laborers for the Indian Ocean plantation system and captives for the internal Central African trade. Their predatory activities were institutionalized in a number of autonomous Chikunda states governed by muzungu warlords. The three most important of these were Kanyemba (José do Rosario Andrade), Matakanya (José de Araujo Lobo), and Carazimamba (Ignácio de Jesus Xavier). Together with their hunters-turned-warriors, they dominated a vast belt encompassing parts of contemporary Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Zambia (see map). In the process, they eclipsed Chikwasha's Chikunda who, under the weak leadership of his successor Mphasu, were unable to compete in this increasingly hostile environment. Chikwasha's heirs lost control over most of their territory.

The explanation for this radical transformation lies in the changing political economy of Central Africa and the accompanying militarization of the region. During the second third of the century, the various Chikunda bands and inland communities dominated the ivory trade. As international demand increased and world prices rose, no less than five rival commercial groups, all of whom had access to European cloth and weapons began to compete for tusks. From the Indian Ocean coastal entrepôts of Kilwa, Angoche and Mozambique Island, Swahili and Yao caravans penetrated the Chewa homelands and the northern Luangwa valley. Ovimbundu merchants travelled east from Angola to buy ivory from the Soli and Lenje chieftiancies, and Griqua and Gwatu elephant hunters from the south began to operate in the Gwemba Tonga and Lozi homelands along the upper Zambesi River. In addition to these foreign traders, both the Bisa and Ngoni intensified their commercial activity, as did merchants from Tete (Alpers 1975: 209-253; 1969: 405-420; Matthews 1976: 359; Weise 1983: 57).⁴³

By the time of Chikwasha's death, the region stretching from Tete west to the Kafue and north up the Luangwa valley had become a zone of fierce economic rivalry. Competitors not only prevented the Chikunda from imposing a commercial monopoly and drove up prices for ivory, but they also began to deplete the elephant herds (Pacheco 1980: 18, 31). "Thousands of native hunters still leave Tete every year with their flintlocks and

spears and go very far afield in search of the much coveted animals," noted one British explorer in 1883. "Success in hunting," he continued "is slight and year by year the results are diminishing" (Kerr 1886: 47). This pressure required Chikunda communities to send their caravans further into the interior in search of new herds. Such ventures, even when moderately successful, were far more costly than previous trading activities and were vulnerable to attack from their competitors.

On occasions, the hunters are indeed robbed. The Arabs or Nhamacra caravans buy only when they cannot acquire ivory by stealing. . . . If the elephant is of value the hunt is for the hunter! Arabs are not only his enemies. There are numerous bands of Ngoni who continually roam the bush stealing and also other strong peoples with the same occupation, with the Ngoni always being blamed (Weise 1983: 57).

By the turn of the century, ivory exports from the Chikunda enclaves to Tete plummeted to an insignificant level (Weise 1983: 55; Silva 1909: 52).

The decline in ivory undercut the economic and social base of the ex-slaves and their descendants and threatened their very survival. While not abandoning ivory, most Chikunda enclaves reoriented their commercial activity to capitalize on the expanding Indian Ocean slave trade. The slave trade had always figured in Chikunda activities; by the 1870s it had become a major concern.

Although Lisbon had formally abolished the slave trade in 1836, this legislation had little impact. Indeed, during the next forty years, slave trading flourished at the inland Zambesi markets, the port of Quelimane and the adjacent coastal baracoons. One British naval officer (Barnard 1848: 37) in charge of an anti-slave patrol off the Mozambique coast noted in 1848 "that any number of slaves may be obtained and shipped to Quelimane itself within a few hours notice, and that the Governor had been in the habit of receiving fixed bribes from the slave dealers, whose launches are always ready to start the moment a ship makes her private signal." His observations were equally relevant in 1878, the year that slavery was formally abolished in Mozambique. Disguised as engagé laborers, captives were still covertly exported throughout the Indian Ocean basin. Some went to work on the French plantations of Réunion, Comoros, Mayotte and Nossi Bé (Livingstone and Livingstone 1865: 428; Vail and White 1980: 86). Others ended up in the service of French settlers in Madagascar, Mauritius and the Seychelles (Nwulia 1981; Filliot 1974). In the 1880s an irate British official bemoaned: "Slave trade abolished in the Portuguese territory! It was never as extensive as it is now"

(Sullivan 1968: 116). And even the Portuguese Governor General of Mozambique conceded that between 2,000-4,000 people were exported annually. His estimates were no doubt low (Vail and White 1980: 84).⁴⁴

If the opportunities to profit from the slave trade were substantial, so too was the competition. Here again, the Chikunda encountered their Yao, Swahili, Bisa, and Ovimbundu rivals. Moreover, both the Ndebele and Mpeseni viewed the region adjacent to Zumbo as a labor reserve from which to acquire additional slaves to meet their internal needs, and on occasion each of these groups came into conflict with Chikunda bands (see also Pacheco 1980).⁴⁵ Members of the local population who survived these raids often fled to the forests adjacent to the Luangwa and Zambesi rivers or built fortified villages to protect themselves. With their population depleted, even the chiefs were no longer willing to sell slaves to the Chikunda.⁴⁶

In response to this increased competition, many Chikunda communities intensified their slave raiding activities. As one Nsenga elder remembered:

At the beginning, Kanyemba and his followers crossed the Zambezi and travelled to the country of the Nsenga of Mbuluma, the Lala, Soli and the Tonga of the Gwembe Valley. They carried with them salt, cloth, beads, guns, and precious jewelry which they traded with the local people in exchange for ivory and slaves. Later, when they found they were not getting enough slaves for their own use and to trade to the Portuguese merchants they began to take the villages by force.⁴⁷

Another recalled how the Chikunda under Mphasu "started raiding the local people for slaves when they saw that the local chieftaincies would not sell slaves anymore to them due to the decrease in the number of people in their village."⁴⁸ Soli and Tawara accounts acknowledge that "when their villages were getting depopulated they stopped selling slaves for guns," fearing that "if the Chikunda see that we are getting fewer they will come and enslave us all."⁴⁹

Their fears were born out. The cumulative effects of slave raiding on the region were devastating. "Formally, the whole of the Loangwa Valley was thickly populated," reported a British official in 1890. "Now it is untenanted."⁵⁰ A trader from Tete echoed his words: "The Nsenga lands . . . [are] a desert where today the traveler finds only burnt-out settlements, skulls and bones" (Weise 1983: 60).

Slave raiding invariably led to Chikunda military domination and territorial control. In order to generate a regular supply of slaves, several of the more powerful Afro-Asian muzungu allied with previously autonomous Chikunda bands to

forge conquest states. In the highly competitive and increasingly violent world of the middle Zambesi, commercial survival depended increasingly on the exercise of political power.

Consider the rise of the legendary warlord Kanyemba. The son of a Tande chief (Chowufumbo) and a Goan mother, Kanyemba was brought up beyond the colonial frontier by his paternal relatives. Although raised as an African, he maintained contacts with his mother's family, several of whom were prominent inland traders. They, in turn, provided him and a group of his Tande followers with arms and trading goods which enabled Kanyemba to prosper from the ivory and slave trade. Kanyemba's ties to the Goan community gradually upset his Tande kin. When Kanyemba's father died, they demanded that he renounce his Goan heritage and reaffirm his Tande identity. Refusing to accept their conditions, Kanyemba was passed over as successor and, along with his followers, was cast out of Tande territory. Around 1868 he constructed a commercial and military base at Chipera, south of Zumbo, and began recruiting Chikunda bands as well as survivors of the increasing violence in the Zumbo area. As it became more difficult to purchase ivory and slaves, Kanyemba and his Chikunda followers turned to plunder, first conquering the small Tande and Korekore chieftaincies south and east of Zumbo and then subordinating a number of Gwemba Tonga villages further up the Zambesi. By the 1880s he had extended his control over much of the Nsenga territory.

Like Chikwasha, Kanyemba ruled with the aid of several prominent Chikunda chiefs and muzungu outcasts. Together they constituted the ruling strata within his emerging polity. He also adopted the most important ideological and ritual trappings of kingship which helped to legitimate his privileged position. At his death, for example, he too was believed to have become a lion spirit or mhondoro.⁵¹

The rise to power of the other major warlords, Matakenya and Carazimamba, followed the same broad outlines. Like Kanyemba, his father-in-law, Matakenya started out with a small group of Chikunda hunters and initially engaged in trade. The death of Chikwasha in 1868 created a vacuum which he quickly filled. Within two years his forces had conquered a number of Nsenga chieftaincies, fought several successful battles against the Mpeseni Ngoni, and extended his control up the Luangwa valley (Williams-Myers 1978: 270-271).⁵² A decade later Carazimamba and his Chikunda retinue defeated the Tawara nambo, Camputo, who controlled a large area west of Tete. Over the next four years they took advantage of the declining power of the Muenemutapa to conquer more than a dozen Tawara chieftaincies in the Chicoo region. By 1886 they had extended their hegemony to the borders of contemporary Zimbabwe.⁵³

The history of these three Chikunda conquest states is well documented and need not be treated here in detail (Isaacman and Rosenthal 1984: 639-670; Isaacman 1976: 22-24;

Newitt 1973: 295-312). Suffice it to say that their military might depended on a vast arsenal of modern weapons, a network of strategically placed armed fortresses, and above all else, a large retinue of Chikunda hunters turned warriors. Whereas all these warlords began with only a few hundred ex-Chikunda slaves in their service, by the 1880s estimates place the number of their respective Chikunda troops at several times that figure.⁵⁴ Warriors came from a variety of backgrounds, including: first, previously autonomous Chikunda communities which allied with the warlords in the face of increased military and commercial pressures from the Mpeseni Ngoni, Yao and Swahili; second, slaves who ran away from the Portuguese-controlled territories; and third, soldiers conscripted from the pool of war captives. To these contingents were added unattached survivors of the escalating warfare. Hungry, vulnerable and without resources, Nsenga, Chewa, Soli, Tande, and Tonga sought food and sanctuary in the Chikunda aringa.⁵⁵

The Chikunda played a pivotal role within these newly forged states; they upheld the military and political order and were the major producers of wealth. They protected the frontiers against external threat, quashed internal dissidence, enforced the ivory monopoly, and collected tribute. When one British traveller (Selous 1970: 281) asked the powerful Korkore ruler Rusambo "what would happen should Rusambo, or any other native chief in a similar position, refuse to pay up," he replied that Carazimamba "was able to enforce payment as he had a strong force of well armed men in his service." Rusambo went on to note that Carazimamba "would either get the corn and gold dust required, or in default take women and children." Nsenga elders made the same point:

In every village there was a Chikunda representative of Matakanya who was responsible for collecting tribute from the local people for Matakanya. [They resided] in all the Nsenga villages along the Luangwa river and those Nsenga of Mozambique under chiefs Mozombwe, Ntunda and many other subchiefs. These Chikunda organized trade in ivory, slaves and copper for their lord. Matakanya got them by force from the local people by threatening to shoot or enslave any villager and his family who sold these commodities without the consent of his local representatives.⁵⁶

The common expression that "it is better to die at the hands of the Ngoni than to live with the Chikunda" captures the dilemma of many Zambesian peoples.⁵⁷

As a warrior class, the Chikunda filled the coffers of their rulers by engaging in the production of slaves through state-sanctioned violence. Occasionally they took captives in payment of taxes. More commonly the warlords dispatched

Chikunda to raid for slaves and ivory well beyond the expanding frontiers of their empires. One elder recalled that "Kanyemba's style of trade was to be constantly making raids upon any people in the neighborhood who have anything to be taken" (Selous 1970: 298). Traditions from the Luangwa valley document the terror that Matakaanya's armies inspired as they extended the radius of their slave-raiding zones to the Lenje, Lala and Bisa homelands. To the south, Carazimamba's forces plundered smaller Tawara and Korekore chieftaincies and expanded their forays into present-day Zimbabwe.⁵⁸

Treating enslavement as a form of production recognizes that the predatory activities of the Chikunda had dehumanized their victims and transformed them into commodities. It also highlights the centrality of the gun-slave cycle for the reproduction of the Chikunda states. In the final analysis, weapons obtained from Tete merchants in exchange for slaves became the principal means of production without which neither the rulers of the conquest states nor the Chikunda warriors could have survived.

Despite the importance of the international trade in slaves, local pressures to replenish households and lineages whose members had been depleted by the violence of the period was probably more important in fueling the continued demand for slaves. The Chikunda not only provided some of the slaves for this internal market, but they also used slaves as a means of acquiring ivory. They exchanged slaves for ivory with such diverse groups as the Lala, Lenje and even the Mpeseni Ngoni (Weise 1983: 121, 190).⁵⁹ The principal market for captives, however, appears to have been the Shona-speaking peoples living in the sparsely populated regions south the Zambezi River. Tawara, Tande and Korekore villages had purchased captives and social outcasts from the Nsenga and Chewa in the past in order to increase the productive capacity of their households. "The shortage of labor felt in these two countries [Dande and Chedima]," observed a Portuguese official (Pacheco 1980: 50) in 1860, "makes them go and buy [slaves] at Nsenga and from the Maraves to use . . . in the cultivation of their fields."⁶⁰ Ngoni and Ndebele, as well as Chikunda, raids over the next quarter of a century intensified this demand. In 1874 a German explorer travelling through the Shona homelands noted that a "goodly number of girls . . . [were exchanged] for white ivory" (Burke 1969: 213; Beach 1977).

Other captives of the Chikunda became agricultural laborers commonly referred to as akutemba.⁶¹ Both Matakaanya and Kanyemba were reported to have raided specifically to acquire field hands. "When I asked a captain of the guerrillas [Chikunda] why he wages war upon Chief Chimane," wrote a Tete merchant (Weise 1983: 61), "he replied with ingenuity that he had received orders from his employer to provide people for the culima [fields]." Closely guarded and often chained, slaves,

generally females, cultivated large plantations to feed the warlords and their Chikunda regiments.

Each had an iron ring round her neck, and there was about five feet of iron chain between each; some of them were women with little babies on their backs, others young unmarried women. . . . Every morning they were sent over in a large canoe to the southern shore, to hoe in a corn-field all day in a row, all chained together (Selous 1970: 313).

Slaves were also used to construct aringas and to transport war booty.

At Matakanya, . . . I saw two gangs of slaves each consisting of a dozen women, most with little children on their backs, and all chained together by means of heavy leather chains attached to iron rings around their necks. They were being employed in portage between the stockade and the river (quoted in Duffy 1967: 131).

By the last decade of the century these Chikunda slave-raiding states had become the dominant force in a belt stretching from the Tete hinterland to the Kafue and northwards up the Luangwa valley. In a confidential report to his government, a senior British official concluded:

If the black Muzungu [Kanyemba and Matakanya] influence is to be considered as Portuguese influence then truly Portugal has the whole of Loangwa Valley and Ilala, Kafue, etc. completely under its control; but if it is not to be so considered, then Portugal has no influence whatever in the Loangwa Valley nor up the Zambesi beyond Zumbo. In any case, if these parts are to be included in the English portion of East Africa, if anything is to be done beyond coloring them red, very strong measures will have to be taken against these Zambesi scoundrels, especially as they are now making a great movement to Luapula.⁶²

Lisbon had come to the same conclusion after futile efforts to coopt the Chikunda warlords through land grants, arms, military titles, and even support for their slave-raiding activities. Colonial officials in Mozambique conceded that the personal power of the warlords and their Chikunda chiefs "constituted a source of instability and a roadblock to increased Portuguese prestige in the region" (Mesquita e Solla 1907: 366).

Given the territorial designs of the British and Portuguese, war was inevitable. Economic and political imperatives

set in motion an unavoidable conflict with the Chikunda. Anxious to blunt the British advances and to impose a system of peasant commodity production in the Zambesi hinterland, Lisbon launched a major military campaign in the early 1890s. In rapid succession the colonial army defeated the forces loyal to Matakanya, Kanyemba and Carazimamba. Other smaller autonomous Chikunda communities suffered a similar fate at the hands of the Portuguese or their English rivals.

At the very moment that Portuguese and British pressure intensified, however, the power of the Chikunda states had begun to unravel from other causes. Increased access to modern arms within the Zambesi region and a willingness to forge temporary alliances enabled a number of Zambesian chieftancies to blunt the Chikunda advances. The most dramatic turnabout occurred in 1887 when a well-armed Nsenga force, aided by several Soli chieftancies, expelled Kanyemba's army from parts of Nsenga territory. The decision of Muenemutapa Dudza and several Tawara chieftancies to challenge Carazimamba's hegemony was yet another effort of subjugated peoples to free themselves from Chikunda domination. So too was the rebellion of peasants within the core areas who were no longer willing to pay tribute in food and slaves to the alien warlords or to remain victims of Chikunda brigandage. More commonly, dissidents fled into the interior or sought sanctuary with the Mpeseni Ngoni, occasionally joining the latter in battle against the Chikunda forces (Isaacman and Rosenthal 1987; Williams-Myers 1978: 276-278; Matthews 1984: 39-40; Weise 1891: 410-412).⁶³

But the biggest setback for the Chikunda rulers was the defection of many of their warriors. According to Portuguese sources (Mesquita e Solla 1907: 348), fugitive Chikunda warriors played a critical role in the combined Mbruma Nsenga-Soli uprising against Kanyemba. Other warriors, under the direction of insurgent Chikunda chiefs broke away from the warlords and forged autonomous Chikunda entities deep in the Luangwa valley.⁶⁴ Still others rose up against the warlords. One such insurrection occurred in 1893, just as the Portuguese were preparing to launch a decisive attack against Matakanya's holdings (Mesquita e Solla 1907: 348).

These defections point to deep-seated antagonisms embedded in the relationship between the warlords and their Chikunda subordinates. Whereas the Chikunda chiefs enjoyed a privileged and powerful position and generally remained loyal to the warlords, the status of the warriors was far more ambiguous. In part, this ambiguity can be explained by the different positions they occupied at the moment when they became attached to the warlords. At one extreme were the individual ex-slaves and the autonomous Chikunda bands whose members had lived as free hunters since the demise of the prazos. For a variety of reasons they chose to align themselves with the warlords.

These freedmen initially constituted the core of the emerging conquest states. At the other extreme were those captives incorporated into the ranks of the Chikunda. The many victims of hunger and internal violence who sought sanctuary and were willing to exchange their labor for food and protection fell somewhere between. Since they had been incorporated as captives, refugees and even as autonomous bands of hunters, the status of the Chikunda as a whole was neither slave nor free. Their transformation from hunters to predators under the rule of the warlord-slavers further blurred the distinction between captives and freedmen. This ambiguity is clearly revealed in the common refrain that "no one in this country owns anything; everything belongs to Matekenya," that is the warlord himself.⁶⁵

Chikunda access to resources and power was similarly uneven. As part of the state apparatus, the Chikunda received a portion of the bounty which they collected, the slave-produced food, and imported goods. Thus, they clearly enjoyed a relatively privileged position vis-a-vis the tribute-paying peasantry and the agricultural slaves. But if, in one sense, the Chikunda were partners in exploitation, they were also victims of that exploitation. Having gone beyond the frontier to regain their freedom, they had lost control over the most vital decisions that affected their lives. The warlords determined where the Chikunda should reside, how scarce resources should be redistributed, and above all else, how labor should be utilized. They also organized the slave raiding and hunting expeditions and appropriated the ivory and slaves for which the Chikunda had toiled and risked their lives. Given the rapid depletion of the elephant herds, increased competition for slaves and the encroaching colonial frontier, all of which undercut the economic base of the conquest states, class tensions between the warlords and their subjects heightened.

These tensions were explicitly manifested in the competition over access to women. Since the Chikunda lived in segregated villages and intermarriage with the subject population was not common, they could only acquire wives either by covertly withholding some of the female slaves they captured in state operations or by engaging in unauthorized raids on peasants living within their domain. Both actions placed them at odds with the warlords. Control over the production and export of slaves underpinned the ruler's power and privileged class position. Their control was threatened by these unauthorized raids which, in turn, could heighten local opposition and threaten the continued reign of the warlords. Their control was threatened by these unauthorized raids which, in turn, could heighten local opposition and threaten the continued reign of the warlords. Limiting the ability of the Chikunda to acquire slaves, necessary for their social reproduction, further increased their dissatisfaction.

To contain this discontent, the warlords and loyalist chiefs came to rely on naked force. Fear became a powerful mechanism of social control.

Kanyemba castrated men who broke the rules of the country and warriors who never fought well in battle. He cut women's breasts off and sometimes those who offended him had their ears and eyes cut off. . . . Warriors were thrown into the Zambesi River tied to huge stones, at a place called Kabira near the preent boma or Feira.⁶⁶

Local traditions and contemporary European accounts note that Matakenya and Carazimamba perpetrated similiar acts of violence.⁶⁷ In short, the Chikunda were both agents of terror and victims of it in a region increasingly dominated by a culture of fear.⁶⁸

While many Chikunda ultimately defected, others fought under the warlords in opposition to the expanding colonial state. Fear of the warlords was obviously a factor. But ties of dependency and reciprocity should not be underestimated. For all the violence, the conquest states offered these strangers land, the opportunity to hunt and plunder, access to arms, scarce resources, and even divine protection. In short, to remain beyond the colonial frontier was critical if the Chikunda were to reproduce their way of life - a way of life that spawned a unique social identity.

Even after their defeat at the hands of the Portuguese forces, several Chikunda remnants refused to submit to colonial society. While many descendants of slaves blended into the local population, others fled beyond the Portuguese fronteirs into the backwater areas of Northern and Southern Rhodesia. There they regrouped into distinct Chikunda communities under the leadership of the heirs of Matekenya, Kanyemba and Chikwasha. Although ultimately "captured" by the British colonial state and forced to abandon hunting, some Chikunda communities retain their ethnic identity until this day.⁶⁹

Conclusion

This essay on the Chikunda offers an alternative formulation to Curtin's transfrontier model. Whereas he has treated transfrontiersmen as a cultural variant of trading diaspora communities, I have given analytical primacy to transfrontiersmen as victims of oppression. For them, the "great beyond" initially held out the possibility of freedom rather than profits - although as the Chikunda example demonstrates these two considerations were not mutually exclusive.

Viewed from this perspective, a comparison of transfrontiersmen over time and space suggests that they shared a set of common characteristics. Because the state defined their flight as an illegal act, transfrontiersmen had no alternative but to sever their ties to their former home societies. Traders, missionaries, sojourners, and other state-sanctioned immigrants who crossed cultural and political boundaries had the luxury of operating on both sides of the frontier. Runaway slaves and deserters did not. The covert and precarious nature of their flight explains why most transfrontiersmen, whether they were conscripted soldiers and sailors, criminals or slaves, were unwilling or unable to bring their wives and families with them. The absence of women, in turn, precipitated a reproduction crisis which could only be resolved by recruiting local women either peacefully or by force. Finally, despite variability in detail, transfrontiersmen had only two options for survival. Either they had to become attached to the local population or they had to forge new self-reproducing communities. Whatever the case they became a transitional category ultimately losing their transfrontier character.

As a case study, the history of the Chikunda is instructive in two important respects. Their history reveals the precarious and often ambiguous position of transfrontiersmen. It also provides an insight into the social process by which new ethnic groups are formed.

For these ex-slaves, escape guaranteed neither freedom nor security. Initially, the refugees experienced a sense of complete homelessness and vulnerability as they traversed backwater areas in search of sanctuary. The relatively fluid and unstable conditions within Zambesia meant that their newly acquired status as freedmen remained in jeopardy. Runaways faced the possibility of being recaptured by the prazeiros or state officials (many of whom were engaged in the slave trade), of being enslaved by Swahili or Yao traders, or of being taken prisoners by warlords. Moreover, even if they managed to attach themselves to a local community or to band together with other ex-slaves, there was no guarantee that they would not become victims of escalating slave raiding and warfare. While the runaways who voluntarily joined the conquest states were probably less vulnerable to external attack than isolated Chikunda, their position vis-a-vis the warlords remained precarious. Having gone beyond the frontier to secure their freedom, they were not really able to gain control over the most vital decisions that affected their daily lives. They were also subject to the capricious behavior of the rulers. Periodic uprisings and regular defections reflected this situation and were aimed at remedying it.

The experience of the Chikunda transfrontiersmen was by no means uniform. At different historical junctures and in different ways, a relatively small, although indeterminant

number, of Chikunda were able to turn regional instability and fluidity to their own advantage. Some fugitives prospered not only at the hands of the indigenous population but in relationships to their compatriots who fled with them. The disintegration of the prazos and the ivory boom offered a brief opportunity for skilled hunters and warriors to negotiate a privileged existence among the communities adjacent to the Zambesi. Some freedmen gained influential political positions, accumulated wealth and even acquired slaves. Similarly, the Chikunda chiefs who directed the runaway bands and who commanded the armies of the warlords had greater access to slave-labor, wealth, women, and power than did their subordinates. Skilled elephant hunters, expert traders and blacksmiths also received disproportionate access to these scarce resources - a good deal of which was extracted from the subjugated peasantry. That the ex-slaves and their descendants reproduced the same types of relations of oppression and patterns of differentiation found on the prazos, reflects their own ambiguous class position. Their predatory activity, use of bound labor and involvement in the regional and international slave trade suggests that they had internalized the attitudes of their ex-masters toward slavery.

The history of the Chikunda also demonstrates that ethnic identities are neither uniformly primordial nor immutable. They certainly cannot be neatly labelled on an unchanging ethnographic map. Ethnic identity emerges in a concrete social and historical setting and can disappear in a radically different setting. The term Chikunda, for example, carried a variety of different meanings over time. During the eighteenth century, the term referred to a specific category of slaves on the prazos who were themselves an amalgam of diverse peoples. Their nomenclature derived from their occupation as warrior-hunters. By the early nineteenth century, if not before, slaves living on specific estates and belonging to particular regiments developed a sense of group identity built upon their functional separateness both from the peasants whom they policed and the estateowners whom they served. Because the warrior-slaves on different estates, or even within the same prazo, interacted very little, it was not possible for a strong sense of common Chikunda identity to develop. Thus, with the disintegration of the prazos, many ex-Chikunda slaves simply blended into the local peasantry adopting the ethnic identity of the Tonga, Twara or Sena. Others, who worked as ivory hunters for the Portuguese, found it advantageous to refer to themselves as Chikunda because it denoted a type of occupational expertise.

A full blown Chikunda ethnic identity forged out of a sense of common origin, shared history and a unique culture only developed beyond the frontiers of the Portuguese colonial state. By the 1850s wandering bands of freedmen had acquired

land as well as wives and had become self-reproducing and self-conscious Chikunda communities. Some grew into large and powerful states assimilating many people of diverse origins. But this process of ethnic formation was not irreversible. Although several Chikunda communities survived the "scramble" and can be found today in relatively small numbers scattered in a region adjacent to Zumbo, the imposition of colonial rule and the curtailment of the ivory and slave trade motivated many Chikunda to shed their identity. This decision was no doubt linked to their loss of economic and political power as well as their desire to be free from the stigma of slave ancestry.

It seems appropriate in concluding to return to Cross Cultural Trade in World History to determine the extent to which transfrontier communities share common features with the commercial diasporas Curtin has described. Both transfrontier communities and diasporas forged new entities that were socially and culturally distinct from the societies among which they lived. Both created new political structures to institutionalize relations of power and insure stability and order within their respective communities. And while transfrontier enclaves, unlike most trade diasporas, did not maintain living ties to a homeland, they often retained a memory of such a common homeland. Indeed, it is not unreasonable to hypothesize that the shared sense of being slaves on the prazos provided an initial basis for group cohesion among the fugitives. Yet for all these similarities, I would contend, the class basis of the transfrontiersmen, their outlaw character and the absence of women set them off as a unique social dynamic beyond the frontier.

NOTES

1. Curtin (1984: 182) described the transfrontier phenomenon in the following terms: "On either side of the Plata River, well south of the bandieras, cattle from Europe escaped into the open grassland of the pampa. As they became 'wild' they were a free resource, to be hunted by anyone who cared to do so. Traders entered the region to commercialize the export of hides. . . . Unlike most European settlers in the Americas, the cattle killers crossed the frontier line in their way of life was well as their geographic location. They often mixed biologically as well as culturally with the sparse native american populations of the grasslands. Similar communities of 'Transfrontiersmen' developed not only in the Plata region, but also on some of the larger Caribbean islands as the 'cow-killers' or buccaners, in the Orinoco valley

- as the llaneros, and in the developing vaquero subculture of the northern Mexico." On other occasions Curtin has used this concept in a more general way to refer to "people who cross the frontier of their own culture area, often taking up a new way of life" (Personal Communication, February 27, 1973).
2. For a discussion of culture change beyond the Chinese frontier, see the classic work of Owen Lattimore 1959. This problem is treated in broader cross-cultural terms in Hollowell 1963: 519-531.
 3. In a very provocative paper focusing on the Americas, Ritchie (unpublished) has viewed this same process from the perspective of vagabonds and forest dwellers, whom he characterizes as marginal people located on the periphery of empire.
 4. Interview with Solomon Ebanks, December 23, 1985, in West Bay, Cayman Islands; also see Williams 1970.
 5. The question on intent is more complex than the discussion suggests. Some immigrants may move and plan to stay, others may move and plan to return home. For a variety of reasons the long term objectives of each group were often frustrated. Many sojourners were permanently detached from their natal societies, and disillusioned immigrants often returned to their home communities. For a provocative article on the plight of single male immigrants, see Harvey 1979: 29-47. See also Bonacich 1973: 583-594; Taylor 1971. Similarly this combination of factors distinguished transfrontiersmen from captives who were forcibly incorporated into the societies of the great beyond. For a discussion of the absorption of European captives into Native American society, see Hollowell 1963; Ackerknecht 1950: 522-548; Axtell 1985: 302-328.
 6. A.H.M., Códice 2-1167: "Registo dos Libertos do Districto da Villa de Tette," Livro, No. 1, fols. 1-58, unsigned 1856; interview with Tiyago Matega, February 18, 1974, in Chausa; group interview with Gwashelo Chibuya, Kalanga Yohani, Sipiliano Luo and Zyoze Malunga, July 21, 1974, in Feira.
 7. Arquivo Nacional de Torre do Tombo (A.N.T.T.), Ministério do Reino, Maço 604, "Memória sobre a Costa de África," António Pinto de Miranda, ca. 1760; Boas 1889: 8.
 8. Interview with Tiyago Matega; group interview with Gwashelo Chibuya *et al.*; group interview with Mbalame Mwale, Belu Mailosi Phiri and Levi Phiri, February 20, 1974, in Karonga; joint interview Zephaniya Mwale and Chatsalira Banda, September 26, 1975, in Dzoola.
 9. Interview with Tiyago Matega; interview with Kamancila on February 3, 1974, in Msyafumbi; joint interview with Zavedo Mwatigola and Damiiyuanno Mpuka, January 30, 1974, in Ntopa.

10. Interview with Tiyago Matega; interview with Kamancila; joint interview with Zavedo Mwatigola and Damiyuano Mpuka; group interview with Mgwezu Chikho Phiri, Daniel Chinkupiti Nthara and Kamachenjeza Mvula, March 22, 1974, in Chikho.
11. Group interview with Leonose Chikuse Mwale and Kafandiya Chipwata Nkhoma, April 16, 1974, in Chiwere.
12. Joint interview with Zavedo Mwatigola and Damiyuano Mpuka; interview with Luis Francisco Kaitano, September 22, 1972, in Guta; interview with Arumando December 10, 1972, in Guta.
13. Joint interview with Zephaniya Mwale and Chatsalira Banda; group interview with Yohane Banda, Tayesa Chinguwo and Lameck Banda, August 23, 1973, in Chilowamatambe.
14. For centuries Lisbon had maintained a nominal presence at Zumbo, but Portuguese officials had been forced to abandon the fair in 1836. Similarly, the Mburuma Nsenga, who had battled to prevent Portuguese domination of this strategic area, were unable to impose their hegemony over this region. Ngoni attacks and opposition from the local Chiponde revealed the limits of Nsenga power. (Group interview with Gwashelo Chibuya et al.; group interview with Nyakendenka Chabooka et al., July 26, 1974 in Feira; interview with Mwatigola, March 3, 1975, in Feira; group interview with Kanvalajama et al., March 3, 1974, in Kaliva.)
15. José Francisco Alves Barbosa, "Analyse estatística," December 30, 1821; Biblioteca Pública da Ajuda (Ajuda) 52-X-2, no. 3.
16. Interview with Tiyago Matoga.
17. Group interview with Gwashelo Chibuya, et al.; joint interview with Chiyende-yende and Zyoa Mbewe, July 31, 1974 in Chiyendeyende.
18. Interview with Tiyago Matega.
19. Group interview with Gwashelo Chibuya, et al.; joint interview with Chinyende-yende and Zyoa Mbewe; interview with Tiyago Matega.
20. Group interview with Gwashelo Chibuya, et al.
21. Joint interview with Mwandenga and Chief Mwanvi, March 26, 1974, in Kabulungu; interview with Kumbalesa, April 26, 1974 in Feira; group interview with Yapite et al., November 28, 1974, in Feira; group interview with Gwashelo Chibuya, et al.
22. Interview with Moses Mwatigola; interview with Tiyago Matega; group interview with Yapiti et al.; group interview with Gwashelo Chibuya, et al.
23. In 1860 Chikwasha told Livingstone that he had "already amassed 800 arrobas or 25,000 pounds of ivory. See Livingstone and Livingstone 1865: 345.
24. Interview with Moses Mwatigola.

25. Group interview with Moses Mwatigola, et al.; joint interview with Chinyende-yende and Zyoa Mbewe; group interview with Gwashelo Chibuya, et al.
26. Group interview with Moses Mwatigola, et al.
27. Interview with Azavedo, July 25, 1974, in Feira.
28. Joint interview with Chief Undaunda and Shapola, March 4, 1974, in Nyamanongo; joint interview with Mwandenga and Chief Mwanvi; group interview with Zavedo, et al., January 30, 1974, in Ntopa.
29. Group interview with Juli Mpuka, et al., December 13, 1973 in Zavendo; group interview with Zavedo, Mwatigola and Damiyano Mpuka, January 30, 1974 in Ntopa; interview with Tiyago Matego; joint interview with Chief Undaunda and Shapola; group interview with Gwashelo Chibuya, et al.; group interview with Mwatigola, et al.
30. Group interview with Juli Mpuka, et al.; group interview with Gwashelo Chibuya; interview with Tiyago Matega.
31. Group interview with Maliko Mpuka, et al., July 19, 1974 in Kamowa; interview with Mwandenga, July 26, 1974, in Kabulungu.
32. Interview with Mwandenga; group interview with Maliko Mpuka, et al.; group interview Nyakendeka Chabooka, et al.
33. Interview with Mwandenga.
34. Group interview with Juli Mpuka, et al.; interview with Moses Mwatigola.
35. Group interview with Zavedo, et al.
36. Interview with Tiyago Matega; group interview with Zavedo, et al.; interview with Mwatigola; group interview with Yapite et al.; group interview with Maliko Mpuka; interview with Maga, September 3, 1974, in Yapite; interview with Justan Tembo, October 21, 1985, in Feira.
37. Interview with Tiyago Matega.
38. Group interview with Maliko Mpuka, et al.; interview with White Mbuluma.
39. Group interview with Zavedo, et al.; group interview with Kanvalamanja March 9, 1974, in Kaliva.
40. Group interview with Zavedo; group interview with Sunda Mwanza, et al., February 8, 1974, in Feira; group interview with Jackson Kanyoka et al., August 20, 1974, in Kamowa.
41. Interview with Kanyaka Jackson Kanyoka September 8, 1974, in Kamowa.
42. Joint interview with Mwandenga and Chief Mwanvi; group interview with Kamowa, et al.
43. Interview with Francis Chupanga, June 23, 1974, in Feira; group interview with Kamowa, et al.; joint interview with Mwandenga and Chief Mwanvi.
44. Since large parts of the country including most of the northern coastal entrepots were outside the control of the colonial state, it would have been virtually impossible

- for the Governor to estimate the scale of contraband trade. Moreover, his figure does not include the large, but indeterminant, number of slaves exported from Mozambique as part of the internal Central African trade.
45. Interview with Francis Chupanga, June 23, 1974, in Feira; interview with Moses Mwatigola; joint interview with Kanvalamanja, et al.; interview with Moses Mwatigola.
 46. Interview with Shapola Muchandanchenga, March 3, 1974, in Feira; joint interview with Kamowa, et al.; interview with Tiyago Matega. For a description of these bush villages, see Weise 1983: 129.
 47. Joint interview with Maliko Mpuka, et al.
 48. Joint interview with Mwandenga and Chief Mwanvi.
 49. Interview with Kumbalesa.
 50. Alfred Sharpe to H. Johnson, March to July 1890, Public Records Office [P.R.O.], F.O. 413/144/CP6069.
 51. Interview with Tiyago Matega.
 52. Interview with Kamowa; group interview with Gwashelo Chimbuya, et al.; interview with Moses Mwatigola; Williams-Myers 1978: 270-271.
 53. Interview with Conrado Msussa Boroma, September 28, 1968, in Boroma; interview with João Alfai, July 26, 1968, in Chioco; Arquivo Histórico de Mocambique (A.H.M.), Fundo do Século XIX, Quelimane, Governo do Districto, Cx. 5: Francisco Maria de Macho to Governador de Quelimane, September 23, 1887; A.H.M. ad Fundo do Século XIX, Cx. 4-191: José Fermão de Carvalho to Estado Maior do Governo Geral, December 13, 1889; Júnior 1955: 26-27.
 54. Montagu-Kerr (1886: 46), a contemporary, estimated that Kanyemba had 15,000 men under arms. While undoubtedly an exaggeration, this estimate does suggest the substantial force which the Chikunda warlords could mobilize.
 55. Interview with Tiyago Matega; joint interview with Kanvalajama, et al.; interview with Kamowa.
 56. Interview with Moses Mwatigola.
 57. Interview with Moses Mwatigola; also see Weise 1891: 247.
 58. Group interview with Gwashelo Chimbayo, et al.; interview with Tiygao Matega; group interview with Maliko Mpuka, et al.; interview with Wachi Nyangu, November 3, 1985, in Feira; interview with Conrado Msussa Boroma; interview with João Alfai; A.H.M., Fundo do Século XIX, Cx. 4-175, M.2: G. Oliveira to Governador de Quelimane, April 4, 1897; Zimbabwe National Archives [Z.N.A.], RC3/7/3, HC 49, MacDonell to the Marques of Landsdowne, March 7, 1901; Selous 1970: 281.
 59. Interview with Mwantigola.
 60. A similar point is made in Livingstone and Livingstone 1960: 353, and confirmed in Shona traditions (interview with Conrado Msussa Boroma).

61. Group interview with Kanvalamanja, et al.; joint interview with Mwandenga and Chief Mwanvi; interview with Tiyago Matega.
62. Alfred Sharpe to H. Johnson, March to July 1890, P.R.O., F.O. 413/144/CP6069.
63. See also interview with Francis Chupanga; interview with Tiyago Matega; interview with Kumba Lele, October 10, 1974, in Mbuluma.
64. Group interview with Kanvalamanja, et al.; interview with Azavedo.
65. A. Sharpe to H. Johnson, March to July 1890, P.R.O., F.O. 413/144/CP6069.
66. Group interview with Maliko Mpuka, et al.
67. Interview with Maliko Mpuka; interview with Moses Mwatigola; interview with Kamowa; interview with Conrado Msussa Boroma; Alfred Sharpe to H. Johnson, March to July 1890, P.R.O., F.O. 413/144/CP6069; Weise 1983: 59-63.
68. For a discussion of the culture of fear, see Tuan 1979.
69. Interview with Juliyasi Chitema, October 7, 1985, in Feira; interview with Elizeo Shitima, October 20, 1985, in Feira; interview with Gideon Butia Phiri, November 1, 1985, in Feira.

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CHAPTER 12

SLAVES INTO SOLDIERS: SOCIAL ORIGINS OF THE TIRAILLEURS SENEGALAIS

Myron Echenberg

The origins of France's colonial army in West Africa are commonly dated from the creation of the Tirailleurs Sénégalais by Governor Louis Faidherbe in 1857 (Boisboissel 1956: 48). In fact the roots of the African Tirailleurs are much older. They can be traced back to the first years of company rule in seventeenth century Senegambia, when British and French military recruiters took on local Africans as soldiers and sailors in order to augment European units which formed the core of the small company detachments (Boisboissel 1956: 47-48).

During the course of the nineteenth century the Tirailleurs underwent several transformations, as Table 12.1 indicates. At the beginning of the post-Napoleonic era in 1820,

TABLE 12.1

GROWTH OF THE TIRAILLEURS, 1820-1914

<u>Year</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Size</u>
1820	23	1862	900	1900	8,400
1823	125	1867	1,000	1902	8,639
1827	200	1872	625	1904	9,000
1831	400	1882	1,200	1911	11,980
1839	150	1886	1,600	1912	12,920
1848	250	1888	2,000	1913	14,790
1852	350	1891	2,400	1914	17,356
1857	500	1893	5,087		
		1895	5,987	1920s	48,000

Sources: Abadie 1937: 210-216; A.N.S. 2G12/7 and 4D143/100.

Black African soldiers constituted only a small fraction of the 383 man Bataillon d'Afrique, as French forces in the small enclave of Senegal were then labelled. In 1823 the first all African company of 125 men was formed. There then followed very slow growth to mid century, a rise during Faidherbe's tenure in the 1850s, a decrease thereafter, until a rather sharp increase occurred in the conquest decades which ended the century. A dramatic growth then took place during the years of military occupation from 1900-1904, and especially after the introduction of civilian rule after 1904, until, by the beginning of 1914, the Tirailleurs had come to include almost 18,000 men organized in six regiments. While political decisions lay behind each of these shifts, it is also clear that recruitment methods and policies contributed dramatically to these changes. A brief examination of the Tirailleurs Army in its three phases before the First World War is in order.

Rachat: The System of the Early Years

Early recruitment occurred in the same random way that obtained for local labor generally (Davis 1970: 28-29). Much of it involved slaves, though the free mulatto sons of European and African unions sometimes found employment as well. The Wolof word for sailor, laptot, came in time to be generic in Senegambia for a military employee of the French, but the term had higher status when it was associated with local merchant marine employment (Boisboissel 1956: 48). Pure military labor, consisting largely of chore and fatigue duties, remained the preserve of the slaves and others of servile origin.

The first departure from this practice occurred in 1819 when the Ministry of Marine ordered the recruitment of "companies of colour" who would enlist in return for a signing-on bonus or premium.¹ These men were attached to the French units of Senegal. In fact, this premium was paid to their masters, and the men then were indentured to army service for a period of from twelve to fourteen years; instructions even specified that purchase prices should not exceed 300 francs.² This purchase system, called rachat, was to remain in place for most of the nineteenth century (Zuccarelli 1962: 420-461; Renault 1971: 5-80). Table 12.2 indicates the varying prices paid for indentured soldiers and the regions where they were obtained. As with the slave trade generally, the market rather than government edicts determined prices paid and sources tapped for such soldiers.

The steady demand for African soldiers can be explained in part by death rates for the European troops among whom they served. Thus, in 1815, within six months of the despatch of

TABLE 12.2

ORIGINS AND PRICES OF SLAVES PURCHASED FOR THE TIRAILLEURS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Details</u>
1820	Gorée	400 francs	30 garrison soldiers for duty at Gorée
1820	Galam	150 fr.	
1828	Bissagos	350 fr.	
1831	Bakel	325 fr.	bought by Galam Company
1833	Bakel	335 fr. or less	Galam Company paid less and turned profit.
1839	Bissao and Cacheo	300 fr.	bought by le Sieur Marbeau
1853	Casamance	200 fr.	

Sources: Faure 1920: 5-108; A.N.S. 2B5, 1B17, 2B15, 2B18.

seventy-five French military cadres to Senegal, some fifty-seven had died (Boisboissel 1956: 52). Colossal European death rates were partly a function of the poor quality of the soldiers as well as the hostile disease environment. For instance, the four hundred soldiers sent out to Senegal in 1819 were on penal duty, "ramassis d'ivrognes et de maraudeurs, d'hommes turbulents et profondément vicieux," wrote Colonel Schmaltz, commander in Senegal at that time. They were men who "se livrent à des excès de tout genre,"³ and, worse, men serving in Senegal without fixed terms. These men believed, perhaps correctly, that they would die in Senegal unless they could be sent home for medical reasons, and many tried deliberately to make themselves ill enough to be repatriated and still survive.

Soon the need for Africans to replace such unreliable troops was augmented by yet another novelty, the exporting of West African soldiers to fight wars of conquest and occupation in other corners of the expanding French empire. In 1827 some two hundred Wolof soldiers were sent to Madagascar, followed in 1831 by the despatching of 220 troops to Guiana.⁴

The practice of buying slaves to satisfy expedient needs for military labor was not without its difficulties. Apart from its cost, the rachat system was an embarrassment and a contradiction as Western Europe moved closer to abolitionist principles (Zuccarelli 1962: 438-439). The Marbeau affair in the early 1840s was particularly scandalous, since it implicated the highest levels of government. The governor of Senegal licensed Marbeau, a French trader, to purchase slaves

for the military in Portuguese regions of Guiné. The affair came to light when the British Anti-Slavery Squadron captured him en route to Bissao and confiscated his ship (A.N.S. 2B18, 1B31; Faure 1920: 82-83).

The emancipation of slaves as a result of the 1848 revolution further complicated French recruitment of African soldiers by means of rachat. The Emancipation Act explicitly prohibited the practice, and the military bravely stated its intention to rely upon volunteer soldiers from among the free population of Saint-Louis, if necessary through a formal conscription law modeled after the existing practice in France (Renault 1971: 23).

The immediate impact of emancipation was a recruiting crisis. In the three years following 1848, only three volunteers came forward, hardly enough to meet the two hundred minimum required to maintain garrison strength (A.N.S. 2B28). Free Africans of military age, in their twenties and thirties, were said to find military labor degrading, especially as the army was the preserve of slaves and ex-slaves and the pay poor in comparison with wages for laptots, for example (Faure 1920: 95). An inter-ministerial commission assigned in 1851 to study the future of the colony concluded that the tried method of rachat would have to be preserved, and to be used alongside the volunteer system, one requiring fourteen years of service and the other seven (Hargreaves 1960: 99-101). It was clear enough that rachats would have to provide the bulk of the recruits when, by 1854, the quota of African soldiers was raised to the then unprecedented figure of 750 men, two hundred of whom were to be despatched abroad to Mayotte, Madagascar, Martinique and Guiana. To raise such numbers, the French had to draw on slave purchases in Sedhiou in the Casamance and even Gabon. To avoid any repetition of incidents with the British, ministerial orders called for naval officers on war ships to bring back the indentured soldiers (Faure 1920: 98).

When Louis Faidherbe became Governor of Senegal in 1854 with ambitious plans to expand French territorial control in the Senegal valley and beyond, his first task was to address the crisis in military recruitment. Determined to conduct not one but two military campaigns a year against French opponents up-river, Faidherbe needed more soldiers, and, like his predecessors, he realized that the disease factor made the despatch of European troops too costly (Davis 1970: 40). Unlike previous governors, however, Faidherbe believed that African soldiers could become effective combat soldiers, not simply indentured military laborers ("captifs-hommes-de-corvée" was the evocative French phrase used) (Boisboissel 1956: 54). He therefore began a lengthy campaign to transform the status of the African soldier from indentured military laborer to fully fledged regular combat soldier.⁵

Faidherbe's efforts were rewarded when Napoleon III signed the decree of 21 July 1857 creating the famous Tirailleurs Sénégalais.⁶ The decree brought local troops in Senegal to battalion strength by doubling the existing companies from two to four, and by segregating the Africans into their own units, with their own distinctive uniforms. Apart from the formal separation of units, terms of service were to be virtually identical to those of European units. Rules and regulations of regular Navy Infantry regiments were to apply with regard to allowances and retirement pensions, and the battalion was to be headed by a Major, with officers and non-coms drawn from regular Navy Infantry regiments. One significant difference highlights the rationale for the entire reform. The pay of Tirailleur soldiers was to be excluded from normal Navy stipends and instead was to be determined locally by the Governor of Senegal and his officials. Faidherbe had shrewdly and accurately calculated that this economy would appeal to planners and politicians in Paris.

Faidherbe relied on a combination of measures to attract Africans to fill the expanded ranks.⁷ The new uniform was colorful and designed to lure young men. Degrading physical labor was to be severely limited; the men were to be infantry soldiers, their days taken up with training for this task. Most importantly, the regular stipend was to be raised from previous levels, and incentive bonuses were to be paid not only as lump sums to first time recruits as had been the system under rachat (the money going to the former master) but also to veterans who were encouraged to re-enlist for up to four year terms. Without completely excluding rachat, Faidherbe hoped in this fashion to move gradually to a volunteer professional army which attracted recruits through a combination of material and ideological incentives.

While we cannot be sure of which incentives proved the most effective, in combination Faidherbe's reforms certainly achieved their goal. By the beginning of 1858 he had his four companies at full strength; moreover only 160 of the five hundred men were holdovers from earlier days when rachat was virtually the exclusive technique used.⁸

One new incentive was implicit in the greatly expanded Tirailleurs, the promise of booty. Faidherbe personally took a rigorous moral line against taking spoils of war, but he was not able to eradicate this practice (Renault 1971: 21, 24). On the contrary, the prospects of being on the winning side and of taking booty were obvious to Africans who had the taste and skills for the military vocation. This phenomenon became especially apparent during the expansion of the Tirailleurs during the conquest decades at the end of the century. Nevertheless, rachat did not disappear immediately; on the contrary it remained the prime method of recruitment despite Faidherbe's distaste for it. After his departure, the number of Tirail-

leurs actually shrank for a time, and then remained constant for the next twenty-five years, during which time rachat was practiced regularly.

New Methods of Recruiting during the Conquest Era, 1886-1903

In a formal sense, the rachat system had ceased by 1882 as the French no longer purchased slaves on the open market for the Tirailleurs (Boutillier 1968: 515). In its place, three new forms of recruitment enabled the Tirailleurs to grow to the proportions necessary to carry out the conquest of West Africa. Two of these methods, the payment of an enlistment bonus to a slave's master, and the incorporation of prisoners-of-war, porters, and African peasants, were marked by at least as much coercion as the discredited technique of rachat. The third method, the exercise of a career choice by what might reasonably be called the first free mercenaries of the Tirailleurs, represented something new.

In 1868 Faidherbe's successor, Pinet-Laprade, inaugurated the first of these new practices, the transfer of enlistment bonuses to slave masters as a means of terminating their ownership over their human property (Renault 1971: 21-22). Enlistment bonuses rose from 100 fr for a seven-year contract in 1853 to 300 fr for the same term in 1894, before falling off slightly by 1905 (Table 12.3).

While this modified form of purchase resembled the old rachat system, Pinet-Laprade made it clear that it enabled the administration to avoid dealing directly with slave traders while offering the former slave the opportunity of formally

TABLE 12.3

ENLISTMENT BONUSSES, TIRAILLEURS 1853-1904

<u>Year</u>	<u>Bonus</u>	<u>Bonus per Year</u>
1853	100 fr for 7 year contract	14 fr
1868	200 fr for 7 year contract	29 fr
1880	240 fr for 6 year contract	40 fr
1881	300 fr for 7 year contract	43 fr
1894	300 fr for 7 year contract	43 fr
1905	120 fr for 4 year contract	30 fr

Sources: Boutillier 1968: 529; Faure 1920: 98, 104; A.N.S. 4D29, 4D30.

ending his dependence on his master, even if the army was to become his new patron:

La nouvelle combinaison n'est qu'un encouragement donné à se racheter; en effet la prime de 200 francs est la valeur la plus élevée d'un esclave mâle complètement formé et bien constitué. . . . Je vous autorise à avancer aux captifs qui voudront se racheter la somme nécessaire pourvu qu'elle n'excède pas 200 francs, et cela au moment où ils embarqueront sur le bateau à vapeur pour venir à Saint-Louis, afin qu'ils puissent indemniser leurs maîtres.⁹

As demand for soldiers outstripped supply, particularly in the active years of conquest in the 1890s, French commanders were given a wide degree of latitude in their recruitment methods. In the region of West-Volta, east of Sikasso in 1897, for example, the French commander Major Caudrelier, faced with the task of commanding and occupying a hugh region only recently devastated by Samori's forces, ordered each chef de poste to recruit soldiers into regular service to bring the Tirailleurs to battalion strength (six hundred men) (Marceau 1911: 13). One junior officer took the directive to justify the seizure of a caravan of porters of roughly three hundred men arriving with supplies. He locked the exits, brought out Tirailleurs uniforms, and after two months of drill, had two combat companies of former porters. Several men apparently adjusted well enough to have re-enlisted and were still in service in 1904 when they participated in the occupation of the Ivory Coast.

Royal slaves, who were also incorporated, are difficult to classify. Some of these slaves (called diomba in the various Mande states) were commanders of slave soldiers (sofa) who had become rich and powerful in the service of West African notables, much in the fashion that the Ottomans confided great power and wealth to their military slaves (Curtin 1975: vol. 1, 35-36; Bazin 1975: 135-181). Many owned slaves in their own right. One French eye-witness reported that the diomba and their sofa soldiers who were taken as prisoners steadfastly refused freedom and requested a privileged status with the French (Guillaumet 1895: 156). Presumably they hoped to preserve the same status within the French system as they had earlier achieved. During the conquest years, French practice gave them some reason to expect these favors. Initially at least, the diomba retained their weapons and continued to keep the wives, children, and even slaves they had acquired from their former masters. Emancipation would have also implied freedom for their dependents (Guillaumet 1895: 156).

The third technique, the incorporation of West African career soldiers, represented the inter-play of coercion and free will. Some African army leaders were no doubt attracted

by the superior weapons of the French, their winning record, and the promise of sharing in the spoils of war. This seems, for example, to have been the motive of Babato, a Zaberma slave raider in the Voltaic region (Duperray 1984: 63-66) and of the defeated remnant of the Maraka forces of Al-Kari of Boussé of the same region (Echenberg 1969: 531-561). Oral traditions indicate that many of these leaders brought their entire units into French service, and they were enlisted, no questions asked, by the manpower-short French commanders of Haut-Sénégal et Niger in 1898.¹⁰ Another case, this time with fewer options, was that of officers of Samori Touré. After his capture by the French in 1898, several of his sons and lesser commanders were incorporated into the Tirailleurs and sent to Saharan outposts as a test of their loyalty.¹¹ As leaders turned their coats inside out, many of their slave soldiers followed suit, no doubt with little or no consultation.

By these methods, the Tirailleurs were able to triple in size in the chaotic years of the conquest period. Nevertheless, in spite of the predominant coercion involved, a few Africans were beginning to exercise choices, opting for military service in preference to the alternative of tilling the soil or obtaining occasional wage labor. In this process a new phenomenon was emerging. Members of the traditional ruling families of West Africa were beginning to join the predominantly servile Tirailleurs, entering the ranks as non commissioned or even native officers.

Transition to Partial Conscription, 1904-1912

The size of the Tirailleurs continued to increase exponentially in the first years of civilian rule after 1904 (Table 12.1). By the beginning of 1914 the Tirailleurs consisted of 18,000 soldiers in six regiments, well before the enormous manpower needs of the First World War had even begun to be a factor. Four elements were at work in producing this growth. First, the conquest itself was by no means over by 1904, and effective occupation of much of the Ivory Coast had yet to be achieved. Second, occupation troops were needed over the vast regions of Haut-Sénégal et Niger, still under military administration in 1904, a sure indication that what the French termed "pacification," but what was in reality African resistance to conquest, was not yet over. Third, in regions conquered some time before, such as the Senegal and Niger valleys, occupation and police functions were still required. Dakar, the new federal capital, became a military center as well, with a permanent regimental garrison of three thousand men installed there (Abadie 1937: 47). In short, the French had discovered that it required more men to hold the huge territories encom-

passed within French West Africa than it had to conquer the area.

Fourth, as French colonial expansion proceeded apace elsewhere in Africa, the decision was taken at the highest levels in Paris to use the Tirailleurs as an expeditionary force outside West Africa (Michel 1982: 6-7). The despatch of African soldiers elsewhere had long been a secondary function to the primary task of maintaining order at home in West Africa. Now that West Africa was becoming secure, the use of the Tirailleurs as an expeditionary force to help create and then defend the empire abroad became a more important commitment. Indeed the Tirailleurs played an important and controversial role in the conquest of Morocco, the last venture of French expansion in Africa (Michel 1982: 15-39). Tirailleurs constituted between 9-15 percent of the entire French conquest army of Morocco, with dramatic increases occurring for the years 1912 and 1913 (Table 12.4).

TABLE 12.4

COMPOSITION OF THE FRENCH CONQUEST ARMY OF MOROCCO, 1908-1913

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Forces</u>	<u>European Troops</u>	<u>Algerian and Tunisian Troops</u>	<u>Black Africans (Tirail- leurs)</u>	<u>Percentage (Tirailleurs)</u>
1908	10,476	4,260	4,872	1,344	13
1909	7,325	3,681	2,532	1,112	15
1910	6,228	3,314	2,166	748	12
1911	17,819	10,094	5,945	1,780	10
1912	41,065	23,882	13,314	3,870	9
1913	61,692	35,867	17,573	8,252	13

Source: Ministère de la Guerre, 1922.

These increased manpower needs could not be met by the old rough-and-ready techniques of recruitment. The rachat method had effectively ended by the 1880s, and wholesale incorporation of defeated soldiers and prisoners became impractical once the major African armies had been defeated and dismantled. Perhaps a trickle of recruitments could be procured as owners put their remaining young slaves forward to tap the enlistment bonus. Perhaps also some refugees from the villages de liberté (settlements of ex-slaves and fugitives) and from the slave exodus at Banamba and elsewhere produced some new recruits as well (Bouche 1968: 108; Roberts and Klein 1981: 375-394). But

the period following the creation of the French West African federation in 1904 marked an unprecedented economic expansion, and demand for labor made a career in the Tirailleurs far less attractive than in the conquest era. Jobs opened up on the railways, in the towns and ports, and in capitalist agriculture (Roberts and Klein 1981: 393). In such circumstances the Tirailleur recruit's starting daily wage of 50 centimes, roughly half that of the daily laborer's wage, was hardly a strong attraction.

Signs of a recruiting crisis were evident after 1904. When the time came for Tirailleurs to be sent to Morocco, the army was forced to offer a special overseas bonus to meet its short term commitments there (Marceau 1911: 12). Despite assurances by advocates like Colonel Charles Mangin (1910: 81) that West Africa was "un reservoir intarissable" of military manpower, the shortage of men in 1912 prompted Governor Ponty to take an important and unprecedented step (Michel 1982: 30). With Mangin's support, Ponty enacted a law calling for partial conscription. Perhaps no one anticipated the significance that the First World War would give this legislation. On the basis of the 1912 law, close to 200,000 Africans served as Tirailleurs during the War (Michel 1982: 483). Thereafter, beginning in 1919 with a new peacetime conscription law, obligatory universal military service for African males became the dominant characteristic for most of the colonial period (Echenberg 1975: 171-192). In effect a small conquest army of slave mercenaries had been transformed into a mass army of draftees drawn from virtually all strata of West African society.

Geographic and Ethnic Origins

French recruitment in the nineteenth century not only guaranteed a predominance of slaves and other men of servile origin, but the methods of obtaining recruits also resulted in a regional concentration and the reliance on specific ethnic groups. In the early years of recruiting, cost and availability rather than regional or ethnic preferences dominated French practice. By the 1840s, Governor Bouet-Willaumez found it difficult to recruit in western Senegal (Faure 1920: 85-87). Recruits from the upper Senegal valley seemed as vulnerable to the unhealthy climate of the town of Saint-Louis as were Europeans, a circumstance which the governor blamed on malignant sea breezes. And former slaves from the Wolof states of Cayor and Walo deserted military service too easily. Consequently Bouet-Willaumez's regime turned to the Bambara states of the interior as a source of slaves. By mid century, Bambara recruits were singled out for their military "qualities":

Among others, those who belong to the Bambara race are, it may be said, as good as white soldiers, as they have the advantage over them of being immune to all the hardships of the climate.¹²

In the helter skelter recruiting of the conquest era no statistics on regional, let alone ethnic, origins of recruits were compiled. Nonetheless the French preference for Bambara is clear, although there were recruits from a wide variety of other ethnic groups, too. One experienced French officer, Captain Marceau, writing in 1911, indicated that two-thirds of all recruits were Bambara (Marceau 1911: 3). The Bambara Tirailleur, wrote Marceau was "un rude gaillard qui complètent toutes les fortes vertus guerrières, mais que n'éclaire malheureusement pas une très vive intelligence" - in short, a complaint, stolid peasant soldier obedient to his new French masters. In contrast, the Wolof soldier was spoiled by his long association with France and had become "snob de la caste" towards other Africans whom he regarded as "sauvages." "C'est un nègre des 'Droits de l'homme'; c'est un citoyen sans cité; c'est un électeur qui dédaigne nos uniformes: il n'est plus guère bon pour 'faire tirailleur.' Aussi, même au regiment de Saint Louis, trouve-t-on peu de Ouolofs." Marceau (1911: 2-3) believed that the best officers came from the ranks of the Tukolor: "C'est un guerrier d'essence. C'est un soldat de vocation qui ne se plie malheureusement pas toujours de bonne grace à notre discipline militaire." Apart from the obvious subjective basis, what is remarkable about such opinions is that they were so long lasting, in part no doubt because they were self-fulfilling. As late as the 1950s officers were repeating the homilies of Marceau and of Mangin regarding "warlike races" (Boisseson 1956). Mangin (1911: 1-37), for example, had doubted whether the people of the forest regions had the discipline and physical stamina to make good Tirailleurs. Mangin's strong influence on military policy, together with the fact that forest zones were the last to be occupied by the French, meant that only after 1919, when universal male conscription was systematically introduced, did forest peoples begin to form a modest minority in the Tirailleurs (Echenberg 1980: 430 et seq.).

As Bambara came to dominate the ranks and non-commissioned grades, the Bambara language became, alongside the "petit-nègre" French that the military insisted upon, the colonial army's vernacular language. New recruits from Bambara and related Mande-speaking regions of the savanna came to find the army a more hospitable institution than did, say, Agni speakers from southern Ivory Coast. Thus patterns established in the formative years were to hold sway decades later.

If we cannot be certain quantitatively of the ethnic composition of the early Tirailleurs, we can at least suggest

regions where recruiting was most intensive. These corresponded with areas of greatest population density, and often, where the percentages of slaves were also high. As the data on slavery compiled by the Federation in the years from 1903-1906 indicate, cercles with slave populations of at least 50 percent were also well represented in the army (Boutillier 1968; Roberts and Klein 1981). These included, in the Soudan, Bafoulabé, Kita, Bamako, Siguiri, Nioro, and Sikasso cercles; in Guinée, Odienné, Kankan and Dinguiray; in Ivory Coast, Kong; in Senegal, Bakel (Boutillier 1968: 518-520, 527-529).¹³ Though not an area of heavy slave concentration, the densely populated Mossi plateau in Upper Volta furnished its share of recruits as well, but only once conquest was completed after 1900.

Recruitment of Well-born

"Prince Anabia, il n'y a pas de différence entre vous et moi que du noir au blanc" (anon. 1964: 15). While such hyperbole from no less a personage than Louis XIV to one of his African officers was probably apocryphal, it helps us recognize that not all Africans who served in the French military were of servile origin. Various French governments from the Ancien Régime through the nineteenth century used Africans as officers. Here again, Faïdherbe's policies and the reform of 1848 departed from earlier practices. Faïdherbe, a believer in the Jacobin ideology of assimilation and of a democratic army, made his thinking clear in a speech he gave while awarding the rank of second lieutenant to one Alioun Sall, a Sénégalaise soldier who had distinguished himself in the Tirailleurs. Just as the army had been the vehicle of advancement for many French officers, Faïdherbe himself included, the Tirailleurs played a similar role for some Africans. Upward mobility through the army ranks was also a convenient solution to a personal problem. Faïdherbe's own illegitimate son, whose mother was a Khassonké concubine, eventually became a "native officer" in the French Army (anon. 1964: 15-23). In his public address, Faïdherbe observed:

Ce poste a été créé spécialement pour récompenser les nombreuses preuves de dévouement que M. Alioun Sall nous a données depuis le commencement de la guerre. Cette nomination a, en outre, une signification plus générale: elle montre que, même en ce qui concerne les positions élevées de notre hiérarchie sociale, la couleur n'est plus une cause d'exclusion et c'est dans ce sens que la population noire doit la comprendre....

La carrière sera ouverte à eux comme à tous les autres, et aux mêmes conditions. Les plus capables

arriveront seuls. Ceux qui s'obstinent à préférer l'ignorance à la civilisation resteront dans les rangs infimes de la société, comme cela a lieu dans tous les pays du monde (anon. 1964: 16).

If one source of officers for the Tirailleurs was the emerging African bourgeoisie, including illegitimate sons of French officials like Faidherbe and Duranton, it cannot be said that the army was a popular option for this group. Adekempi Thompson, the son of a merchant from Dahomey, was another exception; he made himself a respectable career in the army, but he was a rare representative of this emerging class (anon. 1964: 18). In reality, educated young men of the middle classes were not attracted to a career which was dominated by an overwhelming number of people of slave origin, leavened perhaps by a minority of native officers representing the old African nobility, but with French officers dominant at junior, intermediate and senior rank. As one administrator noted after 1918, heads of free families had been reluctant to see their sons serve and had availed themselves of opportunities to secure exemptions for them (Kersaint-Gilly 1924: 474). Instead, it was from among the chiefs, themselves often appointed rather than hereditary, that sons were sent as volunteers. This intake of sons of chiefs, whether old or new notables, was particularly strong after the so-called Diagne levy of 1917 (Michel 1982: 223-238). To that point the chiefs had kept their sons out, but the fear grew that in doing so, they were allowing power to pass to the sons of their former servants.

During the transitional years of conquest and after, one very important source of African officers came from among the ranks of the defeated African notables. Two sons of Samori Touré enlisted in the Tirailleurs at the outbreak of war in 1914 and brought with them many of their clients; one served as a Second Lieutenant, the other as a sergeant. Both were killed in 1915 and were replaced by two more brothers who volunteered. By war's end, approximately twenty of Samori's sons had served in the Tirailleurs.¹⁴ Similarly, Bouna, a son of the Wolof resistance figure Ali Bouré N'Diaye, volunteered for service in 1914 and was made an officer in the Legion of Honor soon afterward (Mademba 1930: 51). A son of Mamadu Lamine, the Senegalese rebel, also served, while the most distinguished military record of all was achieved by Captain Abdel Kader Mademba, a grandson of Al-Hajj Umar Tall and a Mangin protégé (Mademba 1930: 51).

Opposition to Recruitment

The Tirailleurs paid a price for such a dubious mixture of recruits. A collection of armed men consisting in large part

of royal slaves, war captives, and people largely of low social origins, led by sons of former warlords, aroused considerable unpopularity among the African population. Slave soldiers in traditional armies had been given to excess and were generally disliked in the Senegambian and Niger valleys (Curtin 1975: vol. 1, 35-36). Now, soldiers were not only "captifs de blancs," they were regarded by many as mercenary renegades (Frey 1888: 86; Bonnetain 1894: 67).

The low status of the Tirailleurs produced few volunteers from the higher strata of African society, a situation the French tried to rectify on occasion. One shortlived experiment in 1890 was the creation of a separate battalion of mounted men of free birth, to be named the Chasseurs Sénégalais.¹⁵ It was suggested at the time that the prestige of a cavalry unit, its confinement to well-born men, and the promise of booty were sufficient to induce recruitment and that no enlistment bonus was needed, another indication incidentally that the bonus was clearly recognized as a form of purchasing a slave soldier. Over the years, French recruiters listed a variety of reasons to explain the reluctance of the population to volunteer for military service. It was noted that Muslim leaders in particular discouraged their followers from military service because it meant exposure to the French and their Christian ways.¹⁶ Other reasons mentioned were the dislike of fatigue duties, of which there were too many, that young non-commissioned officers and African cadres were transferred too often, and, finally, that those Africans under French cultural influence simply did not find the military career attractive.¹⁷

Thirty years later, French authorities began to recognize economic disincentives as among the more fundamental factors. Thus, in 1907, the Lieutenant Governor of Guinée noted that while Muslim leaders in particular continued to be firmly opposed to military service, and held back their children and clients, a more important factor was the greater attractiveness of alternative employment.¹⁸ African youths were said particularly to dislike the long voyages and uncertainties of service abroad, whether in Congo or Madagascar, but most importantly, they wanted to stay in the colony and take on better paying jobs; he cited the case of railroad construction in regions such as Kouroussa, where labor was in short supply. In this cercle, of the fifteen recruits supplied in October 1907, most were in fact Bambara originating from Ségou, the inference being that they were probably slave-strangers. In a word, the Governor believed that economic changes had made the Tirailleurs economically unattractive:

On pourrait dire aussi que le metier de tirailleur n'a plus pour les noirs le même attrait qu'autrefois alors que les soldats qui revenaient de "faire colonne" rapportaient des captifs et du butin.¹⁹

Daily Life and Conditions of Service

Fragmentary evidence offers some picture of daily life and conditions of service in the Tirailleurs in the early years. It is possible to offer some indication of such variables as casualty rates from combat and disease, diet, family life and wages.

A fundamental reason for the expansion of the Tirailleurs had been the severity for European soldiers of the West African disease environment. While Africans enjoyed the benefits of inherited and acquired immunities over their European counterparts in the army, it also appears that they took better care of themselves. Faïdherbe, when planning his African army, had advised against issuing a daily wine ration to African soldiers. He urged that its value of 30 centimes daily be given in supplemental food rations instead. The African soldiers, whether Muslim or not, were not consumers of wine and would sell their wine rations to French soldiers, who "seront ivres du matin au soir et mourront de la dysenterie. L'ivrognerie est ici la cause de la mort de la moitié des soldats blancs. En outre, il n'y aura plus de discipline."²⁰

Of course, disease was a constant danger for Africans as well. One epidemic occurred in 1896, immediately prior to the despatch of soldiers to Madagascar. Cerebro-spinal meningitis attacked thirty-five recruits, of whom five died, while an unspecified number were hospitalized with pneumonia. The head of the Service de Santé feared that the epidemic might spread wherever soldiers served, but that proved not to be the case.²¹

As in most armies, in the Tirailleurs death from disease usually outpaced mortality from combat operations. Among the soldiers fighting in the conquest of Morocco in 1911-1912, there were 155 deaths from disease compared with sixty-two killed and seventy wounded in combat. The overall mortality rate for Africans in that year was approximately fifteen per one thousand, which compared favorably with the death rate of seventeen per one thousand for Europeans in the same military theatre.²² Neither overall casualty rate was particularly high.

In the conquest of West Africa itself, the considerable differences in military technology had much to do with combat casualties. In this respect, Africans serving in the Tirailleurs were much better off than their African opponents. A young French soldier, Orsat (in Descostes 1893: 25-34), in his letters home to his family in France, provided graphic testimony to the differing technologies. First, his description of the Gras repeating rifle, model 1884, which was standard issue by the 1890s:

Tu n'as pas idée de l'effet du fusil Gras: une balle dans la tête enlève tout le crâne, une balle dans la

poitrine fait dans le dos un trou de la grandeur d'une assiette, les membres sont hachés et les os brisés d'une façon lamentable (Orsat, in Descostes 1893: 32).

On the other hand, African arms caused Orsat little concern:

Heureusement que les blessures de leurs balles ne sont, en général, pas dangereuses; ils n'ont que des balles de fer martelé qui doivent être tirées de bien près pour produire un mauvais effet. (Orsat, in Descostes 1893: 34).²³

If the wounds inflicted in West African campaigns were not usually fatal, they were nevertheless real and cumulative. Orsat tells us that the section of the company he commanded consisted of forty men, no less than thirty-six of whom had been previously wounded in battle (Orsat, in Descostes 1893: 25). Other references to casualties indicate that certain French combats were worse than others. Frey, discussing various Senegal campaigns, rated the following as worst: Dialmath in 1855 cost 150 men killed or wounded; Guémou in 1859, 136 casualties; Sabouciré in 1878, sixty-seven casualties (Frey 1888: 58). The Dahomean campaigns in the early 1890s cost heavy losses of 251 killed and 371 wounded, though these figures may have included irregulars as well as regular forces. At the siege of Sikasso against Babemba, the French lost two officers and forty-two soldiers killed, and over one hundred wounded (Balesi 1978: 13, 18).

Soldiers' diets differed considerably from what West Africans customarily ate. From an early date, rice, not then a common food in the West African savanna, was the staple daily ration for soldiers. An early mention of rice occurs in 1827 for African troops serving in Madagascar.²⁴ By 1829, the staple was listed as either millet or rice, together with fresh meat, prepared by local Africans at 10 A.M. and a second meal at 4 P.M. (Faure 1920: 51). Service abroad could mean changes. Thus in Guiana, the staple became either 500 grams of rice or 750 grams of cassava, 250 grams of cod, salt beef, or fresh meat (Faure 1920: 60). During the 1880s, the French were importing rice from Indochina to feed their soldiers. To cut costs, the Tirailleurs began requisitioning millet from conquered territories, and after 1895, imports of rice dropped off. Total imports of goods to Soudan show a decline from 1,200 tons in 1894-1895 to half that amount in the following year (Gatelet 1901: 488-489). Millet warehouses were ordered built throughout the occupied regions. An official account in 1903 acknowledged that local millet requisitions were still going on, even though by that date the practice of "informal" requisitioning had been prohibited in favor of a systematic tax organized by civilian administrators (Gouvernement-Générale de

1'A.O.F. 1904: 3). By 1911, the daily ration was once again rice (500 grams), together with 400 grams of fresh meat, and small quantities of coffee, sugar, cooking oil, and salt. Firewood was also issued to individual soldiers and their families (Marceau 1911: 37).

In the early nineteenth century, African soldiers complained about being forced to live in barracks away from their families (Faure 1920: 86). By Faidherbe's day, soldiers were allowed to live off base with their wives, to go home for meals, and to come to camp only for daily drill and exercises.²⁵ In the garrison town of Saint-Louis, for example, home of the First Regiment of Tirailleurs Sénégalais, European officers and men lived in the barracks of the military camp N'Dar-Tonte, while Africans lived off base (Faure 1920: 90).

Even on campaign it was clear that Africans lived quite separately from their European officers. One account from Sousou country in Guinée indicates that African soldiers actually set up their living quarters outside the wall of the French fort (d'Octon 1890: 112). Orsat (in Descostes 1893: 29-30) gives a typically colorful description of the African soldier and his family on campaign:

Maintenant le camp est presque fini; c'est très drôle, les tirailleurs se fond des cases en paille, carrées, bien alignées, et là dedans vivent leurs femmes et leurs enfants, leurs captifs, tout un monde. En marche, tou ça suit de loin la colonne et arrive à l'étape pour piller le mil et faire le couscous du tirailleur.

Women clearly played an important if dependent role in the life of an African soldier in the Tirailleurs. They tended to the needs of their husbands or masters in numerous ways; as mothers for the soldiers' children, as cooks and accountants performing daily miracles on the meagre salaries and rations, and sometimes even as companions in battle. In the harsh conditions of desert combat at Adrar on one occasion, munitions carriers fled in panic and the women took up the munitions and supplied the decimated lines of their husbands with cartridges (Marceau 1911: 36). They were the hardest workers on campaign. As soon as the bivouac began, they were to be seen collecting firewood, lighting fires, carrying water and meals to the men on guard duty, and of course, cooking (Marceau 1911: 36; d'Octon 1890: 111). Their role as companions and entertainers was also recognized, through performances of music and dancing and through sexual favors. The French encouraged family life in the camps, seeing in women and children a force for stability, and a situation much to be preferred to the problems presented by prostitution and camp followers. Typically, the wife of a soldier was part of the convoy, cooking not only for

her husband but for his bachelor friends, in charge of and responsible for camp property. So militarized did women become that they acquired the status and prestige of their husbands, a trait perhaps common in many armies. One old Africa hand among French officers describes the case of a group of indignant army wives, one hundred strong and led by the wife of the African adjudant-chef, start off on a march to Bamako, some 300 kilometers away, "afin d'aller porter "clamaison" (reclamation) au colonel" over the abusive action of a young officer. The officer, totally contrite, was forced to back down rather than let this happen (Ferrandi 1930: 90).

Around the military camps in West Africa there quickly sprang up small centers of African civilians. These camp followers were sedentary artisans and even long distance kola and other merchants, all living from the needs of the barracks economy. In general the French found these activities salutary, but worried about "boys" and former cooks with bad records, as well as women of low morals, tending to congregate in these camp towns (Ferrandi 1930: 91-92).

Overseas service, of course, meant a break with the family, as dependents were not allowed to accompany the soldiers. By 1910 the French were offering a 30 franc a year increase in the enlistment bonus for volunteers, perhaps in an effort to make overseas service compensate for the absence of family (Marceau 1911: 12).

Soldiers' wages did not compare favorably with civilian rates in French West Africa. The first reference to a daily wage, in 1827, set pay at 5 centimes a day for rank-and-file soldiers.²⁶ Clearly this must have been a singularly unattractive rate because only eighteen months later the base pay had become 25 centimes a day (Faure 1920: 51). Not until the dust had settled from conquest, and the spoils of war that accompanied victories, did wages increase. In 1910 the base pay for soldiers in the Tirailleurs was 60 centimes a day, or 250 francs per annum, roughly half the pay of daily wage laborers and one quarter the wage earned by civilian policemen (Marceau 1911: 36). Still another potential disadvantage for soldiers was the French army's practice of withholding 25 percent of salary to be paid out as a lump sum upon discharge (Marceau 1911: 37).

On the other hand, two potential benefits were extended to the African military which day laborers did not enjoy. First, the soldier and his family were exempt from head taxes as long as he was in service (Lassalle-Séré 1929). The second perquisite was a pension plan, provided by the decree of 1889, but only to those Africans who served in the Tirailleurs for twenty-five years; only in 1904 did a second decree allow a proportional pension for those with fifteen years of service (anon. n.d.: 11, 15). While such stringent rules limited benefits to a small minority, in 1910 303 soldiers, or 3

percent of the 12,000 man Tirailleurs, had twelve years or more of seniority and were likely to qualify eventually for a proportional pension.²⁷

Conclusion

Even if relatively few soldiers qualified for the perquisites of army service, these benefits had ideological as much as economic significance. They marked the beginning of a process of social differentiation that characterized government service during the colonial period. The married, westernized veteran of fifteen years' military service could install himself and his family in a quarter of one of the new colonial towns springing up all over West Africa and live comfortably with his pension, augmented perhaps by some government employment reserved for veterans (Echenberg 1980: 445-446). Such an individual was a far cry from his slave soldier predecessor who watered gardens and tended goats in the old French forts of the coast and river.

To be sure, the social origins of most soldiers were rooted in slavery. As late as 1918 one astute colonial official, Kersaint-Gilly (1924: 474), estimated that the army was still 75 percent of slave origin, and he may very well have been correct. But there are two points that follow from this estimate that may not be obvious at first glance. First, it is worth stressing that one out of every four soldiers by 1918 was free born. We have seen that a minority of well born Africans had been a part of the Tirailleurs from its inception. But by 1918 new factors were at work to leaven the social mix of the force. Blaise Diagne's recruitment drive of 1917 had persuaded African notables to allow their sons to volunteer, or else risk a future in which their former slaves would out-rank them. In addition, universal conscription, even with its many loopholes, brought recruits into the army from acephalous populations where there had been fewer slaves.

More importantly, a focus on the social origins of soldiers begs the question of what these soldiers had become by 1918. Those soldiers who made the army a career were becoming a part of one of the biggest class transformations of the French colonial era, the creation of a petty bourgeois salariat. This transformation, moreover, was one that French authorities applauded. They saw the advantage in differentiating an African military from its peasant origins by extending to this class fraction inexpensive but symbolic rewards of status and privilege: uniforms and military discipline; exemptions from head taxes; medical care for themselves and their families; access to special schools for their children; proportional pensions; and low level jobs in the colonial bureaucracy. Such rewards helped French authorities maintain

social control by raising their loyal troops above the mass of West Africans, even as this policy exacerbated already existing social contradictions within African society.

NOTES

1. Schmaltz to Ministre de Marine, 4 September 1819, Archives Nationales du Sénégal (hereafter A.N.S.), 2B4.
2. Ministre de Marine Portal to Schmaltz, 22 March 1820, A.N.S. 2B5.
3. Schmaltz to Ministre de Marine, 27 March 1820, A.N.S. 2B5.
4. Ministre de Marine Comte de Chabrol to Gouverneur de Sénégal, 31 July 1827; and 1B17, Ministre de Marine Baron d'Haussez to Gouverneur de Sénégal, 5 March 1830, A.N.S. 1B14.
5. Faidherbe to Ministre de Marine, 16 December 1857, and same to same, 25 August 1858, A.N.S. 2B32.
6. Faidherbe to Ministre de Marine, 16 December 1857, A.N.S. 2B32.
7. Faidherbe to Ministre de Marine, 25 August 1858, A.N.S. 2B32.
8. Faidherbe to Ministre de Marine, 25 August 1858, A.N.S. 2B32.
9. Gouverneur Pinet-Laprade to commandants de poste at Dagana, Podor, Aéré, Soldé, Matam, Bakel, and Médine, 11 April 1868, A.N.S. 3B80.
10. Interviews with Adama Diara of Warou, Burkina Faso, 31 March and 5 April 1967, cited in Echenberg, 1969: 557.
11. Lt. Gov. Poirret to Gouverneur-Général of A.O.F., 7 February 1920; A.N.S. 17G43, this letter and others in the dossier recount the services to the French cause rendered by the family of Samori Touré.
12. Hargreaves 1969: 99; editor's translation from A.N.S.O.M. Senegal, XIII/3/c.
13. Lt. Gov. Guinea to Gouverneur-Général, A.O.F., 28 October 1907, A.N.S. 4D30.
14. Lt. Gov. Guinea to Gouverneur-Général A.O.F., 7 February 1920, A.N.S. 17G43.
15. Sous-secretaire d'état des colonies au Gouverneur du Sénégal, 4 July 1890, A.N.S.O.M. Senegal, XVI, 66a.
16. Projet de rapport sur le recrutement des Tirailleurs, Saint-Louis, 15 July 1882, A.N.S. 4D29.
17. Projet de rapport, A.N.S. 4D29.
18. Lt. Gov. Guinea to Gouverneur-Général A.O.F., 28 October 1907, A.N.S. 4D30.
19. Lt. Gov. Guinea to Gouverneur-Général A.O.F., 28 October 1907, A.N.S. 4D30.

20. Faidherbe to Ministre de Marine, 16 November 1857, A.N.S. 2B32.
21. Gouverneur-Général to Ministre de Marine, 2 May 1896, A.N.S.O.M. Senegal XVI, 36.
22. Rapports d'ensemble, Troupes de Groupe, 1912, 1913, A.N.S. 2G12/7.
23. Ironically, Orsat himself was killed in the Soudan in 1890 when he was shot in the heart at very close range.
24. Ministre de Marine Comte de Chabrol to Gouverneur Senegal, 31 July 1827, A.N.S. 1B14.
25. Faidherbe to Ministre de Marine, 16 December 1857, A.N.S. 2B32.
26. Ministre de Marine Comte de Chabrol to Gouverneur de Sénégal, 31 July 1827, A.N.S. 1B14.
27. Général Commandant Supérieur Caudrelier to Lt. Col. Mangin, Dakar, 6 July 1910, A.N.S. 149AP4.

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CHAPTER 13

WARLORDS AND ENSLAVEMENT: A SAMPLE OF SLAVE RAIDERS FROM EASTERN UBANGI-SHARI, 1870-1920

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Introduction

Although relatively peaceful at the outset, relations between the people of eastern Ubangi-Shari (today's Central African Republic or CAR) and the larger international economy became increasingly violent in the late nineteenth century (Cordell 1985c: 58-63). Intensified contact and increased demands for the region's resources brought the restructuring of local societies. In this part of Africa at this time, the international economy was represented by Muslim traders. To the east, the campaigns of Muhammad ^cAli in the Nile valley beginning in the 1820s had opened Sudan to international trade in a new way. And to the north about the same time, increased exchange between the Mediterranean littoral and such Muslim states in the sahel as Wadai and Dar Fur encouraged the extraction of resources from the non-Muslim hinterland to the south. In the west, the expansion of the Sokoto Caliphate into the region of central and southern Cameroon marked a similar phenomenon there.

Eastern Ubangi-Shari produced ivory and slaves for the international economy. Both were in demand in the Muslim world, while ivory also had a market in Europe. Increasing demands for both slaves and ivory, and increasing imbalances of power which favored Muslim agents and their local clients, undermined peaceful exchange. The slave-raiding frontier spread from the southwestern Sudan in the 1850s, westward for the remainder of the century. Although eastern Ubangi-Shari

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experienced regular raiding and trading in slaves by the 1870s, the production of slaves did not reach its apogee until the 1890s. Indeed in regions such as Dar al-Kuti the most intensive and extensive production of captives did not occur until after 1900! Throughout eastern Ubangi-Shari the unprecedented scale of slave-raiding and violence altered internal social relations and the external orientations of local African societies.

The relatively late spread of large-scale slave-raiding into eastern Ubangi-Shari presents a rare opportunity to document what Lovejoy has referred to as the "structure of enslavement" (Lovejoy, personal communication). Two sets of information make this possible: First, when I did fieldwork in Ubangi-Shari in the mid-1970s, I found informants who could recount much about the slave-raiding era. The first-hand observers tended to be former slaves, people taken captive as young children or adolescents. I learned about slave-raiders from their children or other next-generation relatives; slave-raiders who were young adults or older around the turn of the century had died long before.

The second set of information was provided by Europeans. French and Belgian expeditions reached eastern Ubangi-Shari by the late 1880s. Although the Belgians withdrew in 1894, they continued to follow events there from outposts in the Congo Independent State (the Belgian Congo after 1908) to the south. As for the French, confrontation with the British in 1898 at Fashoda dashed their hopes of an empire from the Niger to the Nile, leading them to redirect attention to eastern Ubangi-Shari and the Chad basin. Hence there were European observers in the region during the height of slave raiding. Their reports, memoirs, and travel accounts offer a unique overview of enslavement: many observed raids or at least the arrival of recently enslaved people in the settlements of warlords; a few, some perhaps unwittingly, some perhaps not, found themselves members of raiding expeditions; still others, particularly those in the region after 1900, tried to stop the raiding which made it impossible to stabilize the population, extract labor, and otherwise integrate eastern Ubangi-Shari into the French colonial economy (Cordell forthcoming).

The broad objective of this essay is to trace the spread of the enslavement frontier from the Nile and Chad basins into eastern Ubangi-Shari in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This movement combined several kinds of raiding by several types of warlords. The unique opportunity afforded by the historical sources on the region allows the identification of a significant sample of warlords who were active after 1880. It is possible to analyze the origins, career strategies, and the impact of those warlords.

Some warlords, like Rahma al-Zubayr, Rabiḥ Fadlallah, and Muhammad al-Sanusi, operated on a grand scale, raiding dozens

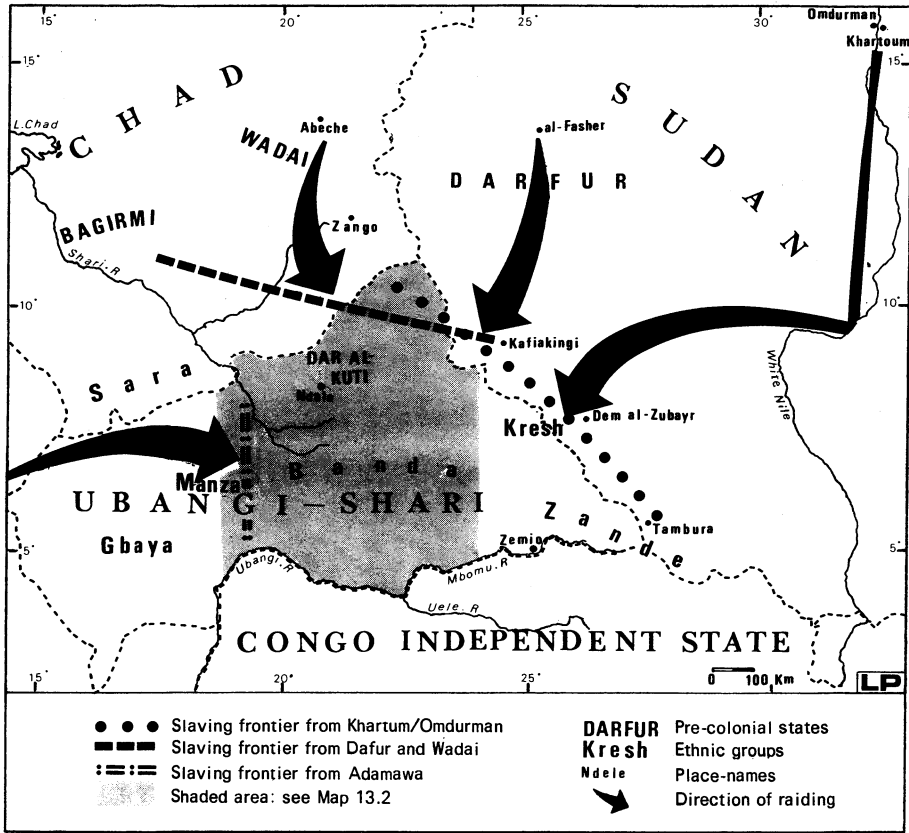
of societies, scattered over thousands of square kilometers, over several decades. A coherent overview of enslavement demands that these (in)famous raiders be included here, although their careers are treated elsewhere in the historical literature (El-Zubeir 1970; Gentil 1902; Dampierre 1983; Julien 1925, 1927, 1928, 1929; Cordell 1985a). Lesser warlords, who raided first among the Zande and Kresh of the Sudan/CAR border region and then farther west among the Banda, comprise the more interesting portion of the sample. Although they modeled themselves after the major raiders and probably shared their grandiose ambitions, they raided on a smaller scale, and their careers were more short-lived. These raiders are treated most prominently, in part because much less is known about them and in part because these little-known individuals may well have had a more profound impact on the peoples and societies of eastern Ubangi-Shari than their more notorious contemporaries. The lack of quantitative data - on the number of slave-raids and the number of slaves taken - makes it impossible to prove this hypothesis, but the qualitative evidence suggests as much. Before examining the warlords of eastern Ubangi-Shari more closely, however, the larger context of the advancing enslavement frontier has to be established.

The Enslavement Frontier

The enslavement frontier in North Central Africa in the late nineteenth century stretched through the sahel and savanna roughly in an east-west direction. From the Chad basin in the north, it followed the Shari River southeast to the present boundary between Chad and the CAR, then dipped south to the Bongo Massif that separates the Shari and Ubangi River watersheds. From there the zone extended east to the Bahr al-Ghazal region of the southwestern Sudan and on to the Nile. Neither stationary nor recent, this frontier was but the latest geographical manifestation of a broader, longer-term process - the incorporation of Saharan, sahelian, and Sudanic Africa into the international economy by way of the Muslim world.

The process had begun long before, with the expansion of Islam into North and Northeast Africa in the centuries after the death of Muhammad. Muslims captured labor from non-Muslim societies within and on the fringes of the Muslim world; with time Muslim immigration and local conversion Islamized raided regions, and the boundaries of the Muslim world expanded. The attention of raiders then shifted beyond the new frontier to non-Muslim societies previously protected by distance. By the nineteenth century the frontier had reached the upper Nile as well as the Lake Chad region; by the late nineteenth century, it reached North Central Africa (Lovejoy 1983: 15).

Map 13.1 EASTERN UBANGI-SHARI AND ENVIRONS



Two non-economic aspects of the frontier merit attention. First and most obviously, North Central Africa as elsewhere was divided along cultural-religious lines.¹ To the north, a very large part, if not the majority, of settled local peoples defined themselves as Muslims. To the south, Muslims were much less numerous, tending to be foreign traders or local people who had lived in close association with northern Muslim immigrants. In the southeast, established enclaves of Muslim culture were found in the Zande sultanates of Tambura, Zemio, and Rafai as well as the Bandia/Nzakara state with its capital at today's Bangassou (Evans-Pritchard 1971; Dampierre 1967). Otherwise the people in this region were not Muslims.

Second, the frontier had a military dimension, marking the meeting place of zones characterized by different weapons and differing patterns of military organization. In the north - in the Sudanic states of Wadai and Dar Fur, but particularly in Sudan - standing armies equipped with large numbers of European rifles fielding incorporated slave troops permitted military operations on a wider scale than in the south, where non-Muslim societies relied for protection on small, kin-based levies of warriors armed with traditional weapons and only a few guns (Cordell 1985a: 12-14).² Differential military power made it possible and profitable for northern Muslim states and their vassals in the south to extract slaves from local societies.

The chronology of the advancing enslavement frontier is particularly clear for the southwestern Sudan. In the late eighteenth century, Muslim itinerant traders (Arabic: jallaba) migrated into the region to trade with Zande, Kresh, Banda, and other non-Muslim peoples. Originally from lands on the Nile north of present-day Khartoum, these traders had earlier spread west and southwest, establishing a commercial diaspora that linked Muslim lands such as Kordofan, Dar Fur, and even Wadai to the Nile region (Collins 1962: 8-17; 1971: 160; Gray 1961: 65-66; Cordell 1985a: 14-72; Hayer 1972; Barth 1965: vol. 2, 488; Nachtigal 1971: 354).

At first relations between the jallaba and non-Muslims were pacific. These Muslims were not raiders. Lightly armed, they traveled in small groups with a few donkeys loaded with merchandise, depending on the good will of local leaders to supply them with ivory and slaves. During this time, Arabic became the lingua franca of the region, and non-Muslims adopted some aspects of Muslim culture (Collins 1971: 160).

But events gradually undermined peaceful relations between the Muslims and their non-Muslim hosts. The most important of these developments were the Egyptian campaigns in Sudan beginning in 1821 (Holt 1976: 22-50). The Egyptian conquests grew out of Muhammad ^CAli's drive to modernize Egypt. By purchasing European firearms and importing European mercenaries to train his troops in the latest European military techniques, the Egyptian leader built a force capable of overwhelming African

states to the south. The effectiveness of the Egyptian force was further enhanced by recruiting slaves, a common tactic in the Middle East before the technological revolution in Europe and one that Muhammad ^CAli retained (Pipes 1981). By 1879, as a result of his campaigns and those of his successors, Egypt controlled the whole of today's Sudan along with portions of Eritrea, northern Uganda, and northeastern Zaire (Holt 1976: 13-50).

Egyptian conquest and control of the Nile region brought increased trade to the south and southwest. Beginning in the 1840s, merchants of diverse nationalities established headquarters in Khartoum, and their agents joined the jallaba beyond the frontier. Known as the "Khartoumers," these traders collected ivory and raided for slaves on an unprecedented scale.

The Khartoumers dominated these areas by combining military power, political alliances, slave incorporation, and the judicious distribution of long-distance trade goods, a pattern of operation that Santandrea (1964: 18-19) calls the "zariba system." An Arabic word meaning "enclosure," zariba in the Sudanese context referred to the many small fortified trading settlements that the Khartoumers founded in the south (Ahmad 1985).

The Khartoumer companies expanded the enslavement frontier. They began by gaining control over regions surrounding their zaribas. Usually a merchant party concluded a pact with a local non-Muslim leader who agreed to supply the station with grain and other staples in return for trade goods and merchant support. Such an arrangement satisfied the needs of the outpost; it also provided local non-Muslims with external allies which they often used for their own aggrandizement (Santandrea 1964: 18-19; Modat 1912b: 222-224; Schweinfurth 1874: vol. 2, 410-432; Wilson and Felkin 1882: vol. 2, 162). Approaching leader after leader, the Khartoumers built zariba after zariba, so that when George Schweinfurth (1874: vol. 2, 410-432) visited the Bahr al-Ghazal in the 1860s, posts could be found every twenty miles. Each company controlled its own raiding area from a central zariba through a network of smaller stations manned by subordinates; they agreed not to take slaves or ivory in each other's concessions. Most local leaders and jallaba peddlers attached themselves to one of these trading organizations.

Two factors contributed to this shift of power in favor of the Muslim newcomers in southwestern Sudan. First, the Khartoumer companies were larger and wealthier with better access to greater quantities of long-distance imports than the earlier parties of jallaba (Schweinfurth 1874: vol. 1, 46-47, 175; vol. 2, 365-366, 410-432, 437; Gessi 1892: 50-55). The large scale of their operations attracted prospective non-Muslim clients. In addition, the Khartoumers possessed greater

military capabilities which enabled them to build independent bases of power by incorporating slave troops (Arabic: bazingir) into their armed bands much in the manner of Muhammad ^{Ali}. Bazingirs, as Lupton (1884: 246) later noted when he used them in his own forces, were inexpensive and quite effective:

But the great strength of the government lies in the Basengers [sic] or armed slaves who were formerly in the service of the slave-dealers. Their arms consist of double-barrelled guns, with which they are pretty good shots. They make faithful soldiers, and cost but little; a few handfuls of grain being all they require in the way of food, and clothes they consider quite unnecessary articles. Most of them are recruited from the Niam Niam [Zande] country. They do all the really hard work and fighting of the province.

As the demand for slaves grew, the Khartoumers expanded their raiding. This expansion, in turn, required more raiders, a need the traders met by attacking yet more distant non-Muslim settlements and by incorporating ever larger numbers of captured boys and young men. These young "recruits" usually converted to Islam and adopted a Muslim lifestyle. The Khartoumers settled them around their zaribas, and when they were old enough, supplied them with wives selected from the young non-Muslim women taken in ghazzias. Some became raiders themselves.

Although the Khartoumers reigned supreme in southwestern Sudan from the 1850s to the 1870s, their interests increasingly came into conflict with Egyptian imperial ambitions. Egypt sought to bring all of southern and southwestern Sudan under direct control, and Khedive Isma'il dispatched several expeditions to these regions. Billed as campaigns to suppress the slave trade in order to appease the British, their major aim was the extension of Egyptian suzerainty over the Khartoumers (Collins 1962: 14-15).

Egyptian rule in southwestern Sudan was short-lived. In 1881, the Mahdist revolt, an Islamic millennial movement, engulfed the Nile region, and soon thereafter the Mahdi's forces evicted the Egyptians (Collins 1962: 17-42). The withdrawal isolated Egyptian representatives in the south. At first, they resisted the sporadic Mahdist attacks, but eventually most escaped or surrendered. The years between the Egyptian withdrawal and the British defeat of the Mahdists in 1898 might well be termed an interregnum in southwestern Sudan. Although the Mahdists carried out two lengthy campaigns in the region, they never consolidated their control (Collins 1962; al-Hasan c. 1970). The extensive Khartoumer trading network did not survive the disruption of commercial connections with the Nile Valley.

Many slave raiders and local leaders who had formerly been part of the Khartoumer network remained in southwestern Sudan. Some had caches of firearms and were trained in their use, while most knew of the demand for ivory and slaves in the Muslim north. A few mounted their own raiding and trading operations in the 1880s and 1890s. At the same time, other aspiring "Khartoumers" moved their headquarters west beyond the crest dividing the Nile and Ubangi watersheds to escape the Mahdists.

A Slave-Raiding Diaspora: Warlords, Origins, and Connections

The warlords were a diverse lot in terms of class, ethnicity, and religion. Their operations also varied dramatically in scope, ranging from the activities of people like Rahma al-Zubayr, who was virtually a merchant-prince and even for a time a governor under the Egyptian regime, to the smaller operations of someone such as Ngono, a non-Muslim Banda raider who set up his headquarters at Jagara in northern Ubangi-Shari (Cordell 1985a: 67).

Despite this apparent diversity, the careers of many warlords were linked across space and through time. Indeed the ties between warlords were sufficiently regular that we can recognize a "slave-raiding diaspora." Further research is necessary to sustain this hypothesis, but what is now known suggests that the rise of the Khartoumers in southwestern Sudan initiated a process that continued through the end of the nineteenth century. The early Khartoumers began modestly, but within a decade or so, several had become major warlords, employing and training large numbers of local peoples as bazingirs (Holt 1976: 13-50; Lupton 1884: 246). Some were the children of local non-Muslim leaders, while others were slaves brought from farther afield. After service with a Khartoumer patron, many of these lesser figures sought to gain some autonomy, either by opening up a new raiding station for their warlords in a distant locale, or by setting up their own operations. Thus these people expanded the enslavement frontier; at the same time, the need to export their captives and to resupply themselves with arms and trade goods fostered continued ties with their former patrons.

The following series of biographical sketches begins with a portrait of a Khartoumer, Rahma al-Zubayr. Although his is the only Khartoumer sketch to be included here, he was not the only one. There were a half-dozen or so major Khartoumer warlords in southwestern Sudan in the 1860s and 1870s. I have chosen to focus on al-Zubayr because he probably was the most prominent of them and because his activities affected eastern Ubangi-Shari both directly and indirectly.

The Khartoumers: Rahma al-Zubayr

Like many Khartoumers, al-Zubayr came from the Nile region. He initially went to southwestern Sudan in 1856 in the employ of another trader. Over the next decade and a half, however, he built his own network of zaribas and by 1870 had become the most prominent warlord in the district. He built his settlements in the classic manner, by settling captives around his centers and integrating some into his armed forces. "He treated the prisoners whom he captured so well that thousands of other slaves flocked to him, to serve in his army, and to be enrolled under his banner" (El-Zubeir 1970: 111). Although most of his raids targeted populations in the Nile basin, his men occasionally raided farther afield. In 1877 or 1878, for example, his forces attacked a Muslim slave-raiding settlement at Kali on the Jangara River in northern Ubangi-Shari, several hundred kilometers west of the Nile-Ubangi divide (Cordell 1985a: 45, 203).

Al-Zubayr was an obstacle to the assertion of direct Egyptian control over southwestern Sudan. Lacking the resources to subdue him, the Khedive sought to coopt him by naming him governor. Shortly after taking office, however, al-Zubayr launched a series of campaigns against Dar Fur to the north, conquering the independent sultanate in 1874. This victory would have provided him with a trans-Saharan commercial outlet that bypassed the Nile and Egypt, perhaps setting the stage for a revolt against Egyptian authority. By means of a ruse, the Khedive enticed al-Zubayr to Cairo where he was placed under house arrest. Back in the southwestern Sudan, al-Zubayr's son Sulayman led a rebellion, but the Egyptians persuaded him to surrender, and then executed him (El-Zubeir 1970: 3-89; Modat 1912b: 188, 122; Collins 1962: 15-17; 1971: 163-164; O'Fahey and Spaulding 1974: 179-183). Although al-Zubayr tended to confine his raids to the Nile basin, he nonetheless had a major indirect impact on eastern Ubangi-Shari through his client Rabiḥ Fadlallah, who moved into the region in the late 1870s.

Khartoumer Clients and Westward Expansion: Rabiḥ Fadlallah

Rabiḥ's origins remain obscure. Arbab Djama Babikir, the son of one of his closest aides, wrote that Rabiḥ began his military career in the Egyptian army where he learned to ride and use firearms; he later served for a decade with al-Zubayr in southwestern Sudan (Hill 1951: 312-313). Arriving in Ubangi-Shari in 1876 or 1877 with only several hundred men, he used Egyptian/Khartoumer methods to enlarge his following. He raided local non-Muslim peoples, first the Kresh and Banda peoples living in the neighborhood of the Nile-Ubangi

watershed, and then the western Banda and Sara. Other campaigns took captives in adjacent regions, ranging from Dar Runga in the Chad basin to the north, to the borders of the Bahdia Nzakara state in the south (Cordell 1985a: 54-55). In true Khartoumer fashion, he selected some of these slaves for military training and service in his armed bands. New regiments were organized according to ethnic origins, each headed by officers from the same ethnic group. By 1889, the year before he marched west from Ubangi-Shari (he conquered Bagirmi in 1891 and ultimately Borno in 1894), he had assembled an army of more than ten thousand (Gentil 1902: 258; Babikir 1950: 7-9, 28-29, 62; Adeleye 1970: 225-227; Hallam 1968: 172).

The effects of Rabiḥ's sojourn cannot be measured quantitatively, but the qualitative evidence testifies to an enormous demographic impact. Although concentrated in north and north-central Ubangi-Shari, his raids affected virtually the whole region at one time or another. In many places, everyone disappeared. For example, his raids in the neighborhood of Ndele, the capital of Dar al-Kuti, prompted the flight of the local Banda people; others were killed or carried off. The legacy of this era is still visible today, a 200-kilometer wide band of deserted land around the city (Maistre 1893: 6; Chevalier 1907: 120; Modat 1912b: 230).

But ironically, his campaigns appear to have weighed much more heavily on Dar Runga, a Muslim state. Rabiḥ's raiders pillaged Runga in the early 1880s, again in the middle of the decade, and finally in 1890. Informants of Auguste Chevalier (1907: 356-366, 371) described Dar Runga as a fairly densely populated state in the early 1880s, with real power over Dar al-Kuti. The raids scattered the population. Many Runga fled south to Dar al-Kuti, while others were killed or captured and sold into slavery. Only a few were incorporated into Rabiḥ's army. The sultanate never regained its former population; Rabiḥ left it, like the area around Ndele, an "empty quarter."³

With the continuation of Rabiḥ's westward migration in 1890, it might be presumed that eastern Ubangi-Shari returned to normal, as indeed it had after the incursions of al-Zubayr's raiders in the 1870s. In fact, this did not happen. While al-Zubayr's raiders leapfrogged the enslavement frontier to attack Dar al-Kuti in 1877 or 1878, Rabiḥ's intense raiding in the 1880s marked the frontier's advance. He incorporated eastern Ubangi-Shari into the Muslim economy as a source of slaves. This process took several forms, all of which extended the zone and intensity of slave-raiding. First, as in south-western Sudan where al-Zubayr reigned supreme, some local leaders in Ubangi-Shari allied themselves with Rabiḥ, becoming his agents and raiding surrounding societies. Second, other leaders who initially armed themselves for self-defense found themselves raiding their neighbors in order to acquire the firearms and munitions necessary for their security. And

third, Rabiḥ singled out and supported a major client in the region to whom he entrusted his legacy and on whom he relied to act as an intermediary with the Nile region when he migrated farther west.

The Diaspora Becomes Indigenous: Muhammad al-Sanusi

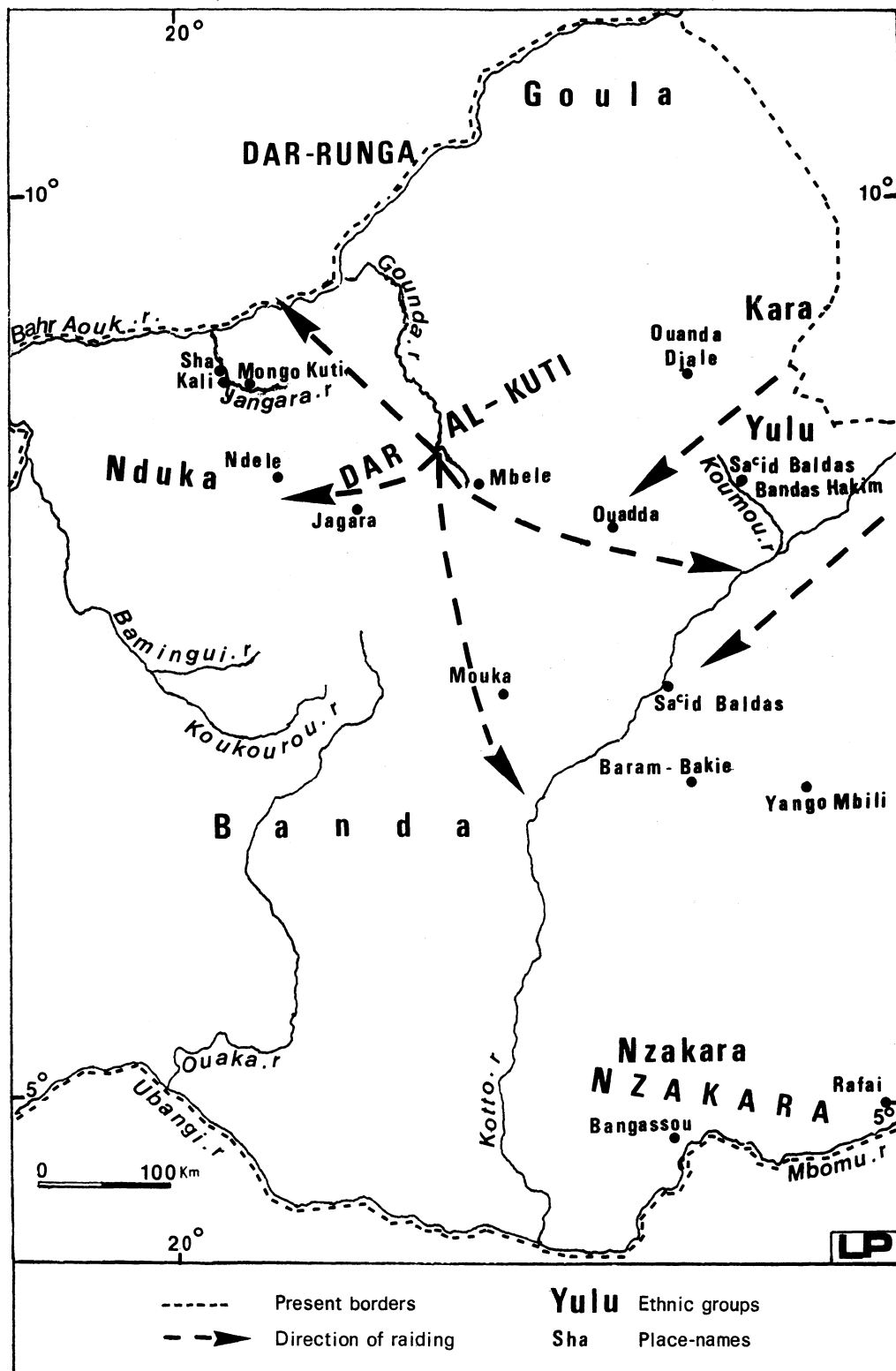
Muhammad al-Sanusi, a Muslim of Runga origins, was a slave raider and slave trader of some reknown in Dar al-Kuti in the 1880s. His father was a brother of Kobur, a Runga trader who was the leader of the major Muslim settlement in northern Ubangi-Shari. When Rabiḥ arrived in the area in the late 1870s, he searched for clients. Although an influential trader, Kobur's worldly ambitions were apparently restrained by a concern for things religious; he was a *faqih*. He must also have been appalled by Rabiḥ's raiding in Dar Runga, a nominally Muslim land whose inhabitants, according to Muslim law and custom, should have been spared. Whatever the precise set of reasons, Kobur spurned Rabiḥ's advances, leading the warlord to depose him in 1890 in favor of his nephew (Cordell 1985a: 59-60).

Before heading west, Rabiḥ made every effort to solidify al-Sanusi's base of power. First, by annexing Dar Runga in 1890, the Sudanese warlord sought to expand his new client's sphere of influence and to eliminate any challenge that might come from Kobur's supporters. Then he set out with al-Sanusi to translate these claims into reality. From Rabiḥ's camp in Dar al-Kuti they raided together, attacking Dar Runga in the north, Kresh and Goula settlements in the east, and Banda Ngao villages in the southwest. Rabiḥ also supplied al-Sanusi with a small cache of arms and munitions (Cordell 1985a: 60).

A detailed account of al-Sanusi's career, as well as an extensive list of his raids is found elsewhere (Cordell 1985a: Fig. 2, 105-108). It suffices to note here that even though he was not from Sudan, and thus had no direct grounding in slave-raiding operations there, he successfully replicated the Khartoumer experience in eastern Ubangi-Shari. His raids - more numerous, more frequent, and more extensive than those of his patron - assured that Rabiḥ's sojourn was not going to be, like that of al-Zubayr's raiders, as isolated episode (Cordell 1985b: 169-193).

Between 1891 and his assassination at the hands of the French in 1911, al-Sanusi expanded his operations using the same techniques as Muhammad ^cAli, al-Zubayr, and Rabiḥ. Beyond this, however, his local origins and familiarity with local societies allowed him to put his operations on a more solid base. In the Khartoumer tradition, he was, to be sure, an itinerant warlord. He lived in a camp at Sha in northern Ubangi-Shari until 1894, when it was destroyed by Wadaian raids

Map 13.2 DAR AL-KUTI AND ENVIRONS



from the north. He then wandered for two years until he founded a fortified settlement at Ndele. Although he remained in Ndele until his death, he made plans to leave on several occasions when the expanding French presence threatened. At the same time, the ruins at Ndele suggest a permanent capital, and traditions concerning his incorporation of local earth chiefs and non-Muslim rituals into city activities indicate efforts to institutionalize his rule (Cordell 1985a: 79-102, 151, 161-162).

From Ndele, al-Sanusi's raids redirected the expansion of the enslavement frontier. In the 1890s his bazingers tended to strike Banda and other non-Muslims south and east of Ndele. He refrained from ghazzias in the north and west, the homelands of Runga relatives and non-Muslim Nduka clients respectively. After 1900, his sphere of activities expanded to include Banda to the southeast and Kresh to the far southeast. Expeditions also hit Sara settlements to the northwest for the first time (Cordell 1985a: 105-108).

Hence his men not only continued the westward and southwestward expansion of the enslavement frontier; their raids also struck societies in the direction of Sudan which had escaped annihilation at the hands of al-Zubayr, Rabiḥ, and other warlords. The pattern of Banda migration in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is instructive here. From homelands in the Sudan-CAR border region in the 1860s, they slowly shifted south to avoid infrequent but devastating state-sponsored raids from Wadai and Dar Fur. Following the appearance of Khartoumer raiders in the 1870s, they migrated southwest. Rabiḥ's raiding in the following decade pushed them south again, into the Kotto and Duaka river valleys. The dimensions of these migrations are apparent from the markedly greater population densities noted for these regions in the colonial and contemporary eras.

Al-Sanusi's ghazzias intensified the process of displacement. Unable to flee farther west because of the presence of the Gbaya and Manza, many Banda groups disintegrated, fleeing in all directions, sometimes remaining together but more often splitting into smaller bands. The fractionalized pattern of Banda settlement recorded on maps from the early colonial period dates from this time (Cordell 1985a: 26-30; Pantobe 1984: 27-29).

Al-Sanusi's settlement policies also reproduced the Khartoumer zariḥa. Following the foundation of Ndele in 1896, he settled many captives in the environs of the city where they produced agricultural goods necessary to support the Muslim ruling class and the more prominent bazingirs (lesser warriors seem to have worked in the fields between raids) (Cordell 1985a: 82-86, 122-129). Then, with the expansion of his operations after 1900, the warlord founded at least two satellite settlements, one at Duadda on the Ippy River, 225

kilometers from Ndele and another at Mouka on the Zamba, 160 kilometers distant. Both supplied Ndele with foodstuffs, and both enabled bazingers to raid more intensively in regions distant from al-Sanusi's capital (Cordell 1985a: 129-130).

Although there is more data on Al-Sanusi than on Rabiḥ, it is still impossible to calculate the number of slaves that al-Sanusi exported. Published estimates are all based on one source. Julien (1904: 38; 1929: 69-70), French resident in Ndele in 1901, suggested that the sultan had taken, and then settled or sold, 40,000 people in the previous decade. He believed that an equal number had been killed, injured, or uprooted during the same period. Reducing the total by 20-25,000, the population of Ndele at this time, yields a total of 15-20,000 exports, or an average of 1,500-2,000 people annually. This calculation is very rough, and does not take into account birth and death rates among the Ndele population, the effects of epidemics which were frequent, and voluntary Muslim immigration from other regions.

There are no export totals at all for the final decade of raiding. Ndele remained the same size and the foreign slave-trader community remained intact. Modat, another French resident in the city, described vast tracts of devastated and deserted land encountered while travelling to Kafiakingi in southwestern Sudan in 1910, which suggests that raiding had not abated, and, in fact, may have expanded. Such a hypothesis is plausible, since al-Sanusi's bazingirs were both more numerous and better armed than earlier. In addition, greater numbers of raids are recorded for this period. It seems reasonable - and indeed a conservative estimate - to conclude that at least 40,000 more slaves were taken between 1901-1911. Given that Ndele did not expand in size, most of these captives were probably exported, yielding an average of four thousand (Kalck 1970: vol. 3, 74-75). Over the entire period, then, al-Sanusi probably exported somewhere between 30,000 people, based on a minimum of 15,000 for each decade, and 60,000 people, based on a maximum of two thousand per year for the first decade and four thousand per year for the second.

The Lesser Warlords: Apprentices to Violence

Not only does the paucity of figures make it difficult to estimate the quantitative impact of such notorious warlords as al-Zubayr, Rabiḥ, and al-Sanusi in eastern Ubangi-Shari, but another whole class of raiders existed about whom very little is known. If the three major warlords can be blamed for transferring the zariḥa system to eastern Ubangi-Shari, there were many lesser warlords in the region who duplicated the system on a local level. Their raids were perhaps more intensive; if so, they must have had a greater impact on eastern

Ubangi-Shari than their more well-known counterparts. The problem is, of course, that the lesser warlords are correspondingly less easy to document. Not only are statistics lacking on the numbers of people raided and traded, but information thus far collected on these individuals is scattered and limited, suggesting that still other raiders may have escaped the historical record entirely. Nonetheless, an account of the reproduction of the zariba system in eastern Ubangi-Shari is incomplete without a sample of them.

The lesser warlords of eastern Ubangi-Shari acquired experience and influence by serving al-Zubayr, Rabiḥ or al-Sanusi. Some were Muslims from the Sudan who entered the ranks of the Khartoumers as free individuals; others were non-Muslim slaves taken as children or adolescents, encouraged to convert to Islam, and given positions of responsibility which provided opportunities for independent action. These lesser raiders can be divided into Muslim apprentices or Zande, Kresh and Banda warlords, each of which will be considered in turn.

Muslim Apprentices

Nour Angaro, who raided among the Yulu of far northeastern CAR, is a good example of the Muslim apprentice. Like Rabiḥ Fadlallah, he had been a lieutenant of al-Zubayr. Following al-Zubayr's conquest of al-Fasher, the Dar Fur capital, in 1870-1871, his Yulu warriors kept their firearms and fled south to their homeland. Al-Zubayr sent Angaro after them, but by the time he reached them they were well ensconced at Niamba, a fortified village on a hill overlooking the Yata River. Anour lay siege to the village for what turned out to be fifteen months, taking it in 1873. By this time al-Zubayr was too preoccupied with the Egyptian threat to worry about his client. Anour built a zariba and settled there with his men and many of the Yulu who had been conquered. For the next several years he raided local Banda, Goulou, Kresh, and Kara groups. For reasons that are unclear, the new Egyptian authorities in Dar Fur eventually persuaded him to return to al-Fasher, at which point he dropped out of the history of eastern Ubangi-Shari.⁴

Zande Warlords

The warlords were not all Muslims from the Sudan. A second group were the sons of local non-Muslim chiefs who allied themselves with the Muslim Khartoumers. The sons were hostages as well as allies and sealed the alliances between their fathers and the warlords. Several hundred kilometers to

the southeast of Anour's theater of operations, the Zande warlords Rafai and Djabir began their careers in this fashion. Rafai's father Bayangi entrusted him to al-Zubayr, who raised him as a Muslim and enlisted him in his troops (Lotar 1946: 355; Bobichon 1931: 145-155). After al-Zubayr's detention in Cairo, Rafai entered the service of his patron's son Sulayman. An Egyptian force headed by the Italian Romolo Gessi pursued Sulayman, ultimately defeating him in battle. By this time, however, Rafai had thrown in his lot with Gessi, who in the 1880s placed him in control of the Zande lands in the far southeast (Collins 1962: 106; Gessi 1892: 348).

Following the Egyptian withdrawal, and faced with an advancing Mahdist force, Rafai abandoned the Nile basin in 1886 and relocated across the Nile-Ubangi River divide. There he set up camp near Djabir, another Zande warlord. With the arrival of the Congo Independent State in the region in the early 1890s, Rafai began to trade with the Europeans. Under the Belgians and then the French he expanded his power, wealth, and influence (Dampierre 1893: 101, 461-468). Noting that he possessed four or five hundred quality rifles, Liotard wrote in 1895 that "the authority of Rafai is that of an army commander, and his influence is considerable over the small sultanates which lie between him and Wadai and Dar Fur."⁵

Djabir's career resembled that of his neighbor. The son of a Zande chief, but not likely to inherit his father's authority, Djabir became an agent of the warlord ^cAli Kobbo in the mid-1870s. When his patron was recalled by Frank Lupton, another European working for the Egyptian authorities, Djabir began operating more independently, establishing ties with "Arab" traders. A decade later, in the 1890s, he, too, became an important agent of the Congo Independent State and French in turn, and like Rafai he used such external support to expand his own authority (Santandrea 1964: 289-290; Thuriaux-Hennebert 1962: 563-567; 577; Dampierre 1893: 460-461).

Kresh Warlords

A third contingent of warlords were individuals of Kresh origin, whose villages in today's CAR-Sudan border region were among the earliest Khartoumer targets. Several Kresh chiefs rose to prominence because they entered Khartoumer service either as captives or as local allies. Following the withdrawal of al-Zubayr and Gessi's victory over Sulayman, the Egyptian authorities allowed the black soldiers of the Khartoumers to return home with their weapons. As Junker (1891: 98) noted, many then became "swashbucklers," either freebooting or entering the service of other chiefs. In the 1890s several of the Kresh leaders founded zaribas in eastern Ubangi-Shari.

These warlords included Allewali, a former soldier of al-Zubayr, and Arenago and Mbele, who had served with al-Zubayr and Lupton (Lotar 1940: 87; Santandrea 1964: 66). In the late 1880s and early 1890s, they allied themselves with Rafai, assuring the passage of commerce from his headquarters on the river in the south to Wadai in the north. They were also closely associated with the Congo Independent State (Lotar 1940: 37-38). However, by the time the Belgian traveller Hanolet (1896: 272) met up with them in the following year, they had shifted their centers farther north, just into the Chad basin. There they lived in small settlements whose population totalled about two thousand people protected by bazingirs armed with a hundred Remingtons, 150 double-barrelled rifles, and seventy single shot weapons.

Mbele was the most prominent of these three Kresh warlords. Following the move to the Chad basin, he strengthened ties with Wadai. Indeed an official Wadaian representative resided at his center on the Gounda River (Hanolet 1896: 271; Grech 1924: 22-23). The settlement was quite large. Chevalier (1907: 177-178), a French visitor who visited the ruins of the city in early 1903, noted the remains of 200-300 mud brick houses; presumably there were many more dwellings of straw. Mbele's compound was a large square that the Frenchman estimated to be 100 meters on a side.⁶

Mbele's forces raided throughout the region, bringing people back to the zariba where some were settled and others sold. Along with slaves, Mbele and the merchants who gathered at his center also apparently traded in cattle. In 1897 the French representative on the Mbomu River to the south reported that traders from Mbele's center regularly appeared with cattle that they traded with Bangassou, ruler of the Bandia/Nzakara.⁷ He identified Mbele's zariba as one of the three great markets of eastern Ubangi-Shari and the Bahr al-Ghazal, along with Chekka (*sic*) in Dar Fur and Dem al-Zubayr.⁸ How many people lived in Mbele's zariba remains unclear, though Chevalier (1907: 177-178) estimated that it had had a population of 10,000.

Events surrounding Mbele's fall are also murky, although it is linked with the rise of al-Sanusi. Following Rabih's departure for points west, al-Sanusi realized that his success hinged on the completion of two tasks: first, he had to make peace with Wadai, which was accomplished by 1895; and, second, he had to attract trade from rival Kresh centers. His efforts were successful. In 1896 he built his fortified zariba at Ndele, and Julien (1925: 153) reported shortly after 1900 that merchants were abandoning Mbele for Ndele:

[T]he capital was becoming the only obligatory destination for traders in the region [états Senoussiens],

whereas [the zariba of] Mbele, slowly losing population to Ndele, was becoming a secondary stopping point.

But peaceful commercial competition was not the accepted way of dealing with rivals among warlords. The same year that he founded Ndele, al-Sanusi attacked Mbele's zariba, taking women and children captive. A merchant from the city reported, however, that he did not attack Mbele's fort - perhaps because he feared retribution from Wadai, whose sultan Yusuf had recently sent a shipment of arms to his Kresh ally.⁹ As noted above, traders from Mbele's zariba continued to make their way south in 1897, and Liotard recommended opening a French commercial post in the town the following year.¹⁰ The settlement finally succumbed to al-Sanusi's attacks sometime in 1897 or 1898, but al-Sanusi neither killed nor captured Mbele himself (Chevalier 1907: 177-178). Like many of his fellow Kresh, Mbele responded to al-Sanusi's increased raiding by shifting his headquarters back to the east, all the while launching guerilla attacks against his rival. Mbele definitely abandoned eastern Ubangi-Shari in the dry season of 1903-1904 (Santandrea 1964: 153-154, 219-223).¹¹ Alewali and Arenago, on the other hand, were taken prisoner and ultimately threw in their lots with al-Sanusi (Kalck 1970: vol. 2, 453).¹²

Other prominent Kresh warlords included Bandas Hakim, also called Sanjak Bandas, and Bandas Mjaou, who served as bazingir to al-Zubayr and Frank Lupton, Egypt's governor in the southwestern Sudan just before the Mahdist uprising in 1881.¹³ During the ensuing turmoil, Bandas Hakim gathered a mixed group of Kresh, Banda, and Arabs, migrated west to Ubangi-Shari, and set up a zariba. Armed with a small supply of firearms, and at the head of a following that included veterans of military service in southwestern Sudan, Bandas Hakim became a potent force among the small-scale, self-governing lineage societies of the Banda and Kresh who lived between the Zande states and Wadai.¹⁴

Bandas first settled near the northern borders of the Zande sultanates but received a hostile reception from Rafai, whose forces compelled him to flee farther north, where he founded a settlement on the Koumou River. The Kresh warlord located his center on a major north-south trade route with hopes of controlling commerce in the region. In the years that followed, Banda and Kresh living in the area joined him, much in the manner that non-Muslims had gathered around Khartoumer centers in the Sudan. His capital eventually grew to several thousand people, of "all nationalities."¹⁵

West of the Khartoumer trading system that had nurtured al-Zubayr, Bandas hitched his economic fortunes to Wadai's rising star. Early in the century a new caravan route to Libya had provided Wadai with its first direct link to the North African littoral, but this discovery only began to yield

economic benefits after 1850, when the Sanusiya brotherhood brought security to this part of the Sahara. European intervention in Egypt and the Maghrib, along with disruption along the trans-Saharan routes to the east and west, also diverted trade to Wadai (Cordell 1977: 21-36).

Bandas' relations with Wadai had political, economic, and religious significance. Wadaian traders dominated long-distance commerce in Bandas' capital on the Koumou. The Kresh warlord must have relied on Wadai for arms and ammunition, since the other northern routes were closed, and the Europeans and Zanzibaris, purveyors of weapons to adjacent areas of northeastern Congo later in the century, had not yet appeared. Ties of religion and perhaps kinship also linked Bandas to Wadai. He apparently had become a Muslim during his service in the zaribas of southwestern Sudan, passing his faith on to a son, Sa'id Baldas. Sa'id grew up in Abeche, the Wadaian capital, and Prins described him as the "frère du lait" of the future sultan Ibrahim of Wadai - intimating that Bandas' son and the Wadaian heir were nursed by the same woman.¹⁶

When Bandas Hakim died in 1899, Sa'id took control of his father's zariba and immediately faced threats on two fronts. In the west, al-Sanusi plotted against him, part of his larger scheme to make Dar al-Kuti and its capital at Ndele the major entrepot between Wadai and the southern states of Rafai, Zemlo, and Bangassou. In the east, Mahdist bands, isolated in southwestern Sudan following the British conquest of Omdurman in 1898, also menaced the Kresh settlement.¹⁷

Bandas sought security by reaffirming his ties with Wadai. In January 1901, he journeyed to the Wadaian capital to declare his loyalty to Sultan Ibrahim. Ibrahim pledged his support, supplying Baldas with a few horses and some rapid-fire weapons. He also ordered al-Sanusi, a sometime vassal, to refrain from attacking Baldus. In return, the Kresh chief agreed to pay an annual tribute of twenty female slaves accompanied by twenty heavy tusks of ivory. He also allowed Wadaian commercial agents and religious figures to direct trade and serve as scribes in his domains.¹⁸

When Prins (1925b: 137-141) visited the region in early 1901, the Kresh chief presided over a settlement of between 4,000-5,000 people who lived in and around a fortified core village. Built on a site protected by a stream and high cliffs, this central area was encircled by a clay wall five meters thick at the base and topped with bamboo spikes. To ensure still greater security, a wide and deep moat surrounded the complex. Sa'id Baldas, major chiefs, and his riflemen lived permanently within the walls, while the Wadaian merchant community and commoners lived outside. Extensive plantations of sorghum and finger millet lay around the city.

Baldas' settlement was as stratified socially as the earlier zariba communities of southwestern Sudan. A group of

foreign Muslims and local converts ruled the city. Beneath them were subservient groups with differing degrees of liberty, wealth, and power. At the bottom were slaves who worked fields for Baldas and his lieutenants as well as themselves. Prins reported that slaves could earn their freedom by converting to Islam and learning to write a few verses from the Qur'an. This policy made the settlement attractive to runaway slaves from other settlements. Similarly powerless, but free people, who were resettled refugees, also owed labor to the prominent groups in the city. The more privileged groups included Baldas' bazingirs, who, while subject to his command, possessed slaves themselves.¹⁹ Muslim Kresh chiefs commanding Bandas' warbands constituted another privileged class, as did the foreign Muslim residents.

Prins' arrival marked a new phase in Baldas' struggle to survive. Realizing that the growing French presence in the south constituted a closer source of assistance than distant Wadai, the Kresh leader sought to impress his French visitor with his importance, maintaining that he had 100,000 followers scattered over three degrees of latitude, figures that Julien thought were greatly exaggerated.²⁰ The bid for French support became even more crucial when news arrived of a coup d'état in Abeche that toppled Ibrahim. Moreover, a Mahdist force occupied the Salamat region just south of Wadai about the same time, thereby disrupting communications with the north.²¹

Prins responded to Baldas' overtures, signing a treaty of protection and trade on 14 March 1901. The Kresh leader assured Prins that agents of French commercial companies would be welcome. Prins replied by encouraging him to relocate his capital sixty kilometers farther south on the left bank of the Kotto where it would be better protected from al-Sanusi's raiders. But the treaty was never ratified. In late March, in the wake of the turmoil in Wadai, the French colonial government adopted a wait-and-see attitude in eastern Ubangi-Shari. Prins received instructions not to pursue political negotiations. In hopes of being able to aid Baldas eventually, Prins continued to urge resettlement farther south. In mid-April, a suitable site was located, and the Kresh moved. Prins left Baldas shortly thereafter.²²

Without assistance, the new Kresh settlement lasted just over a year. Perhaps encouraged by Wadai, which was annoyed with Baldas' flirtations with the Europeans, al-Sanusi raided eastern Ubangi-Shari in early 1902. His armed bands forced Baldas to surrender. Despite an agreement to pay tribute to Dar al-Kuti, conflict continued throughout the next year. Eventually, Sa'id Baldas fled east to southwestern Sudan, which had by now become the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, where he submitted to the British.²³ Abandoned by fortune and his following, he returned to the lands his father had left so many years earlier.

Banda Warlords

The career patterns of the Banda warlords resembled those of the non-Muslim groups mentioned above, although since they lived farther west, the zariba system reached them later. Most Banda raiders were taken into slavery as children or adolescents by other warlords, acquiring military experience as bazingirs. Some then struck out on their own.

The first Banda warlords were those roughly contemporary with Rabiḥ. These raiders operated west of the Nile-Ubangi divide, fully in the Ubangi-Shari basin. This area fell outside the districts controlled by the Khartoumers, and, although Rabiḥ's raids crossed the region, he never made a permanent camp there. These early Banda warlords hence found a niche between more powerful neighbors.

Ngono and Ara of the Banda Ngao were perhaps the most famous of these early warlords, although their origins are obscure. Some sources report that they gained their experience in the ranks of al-Zubayr or Rabiḥ (although it is sometimes difficult to distinguish truth from what must have become a cliché in the biographies of slave-raiders in the region). In any case, Ngono and Ara were major warlords by the 1870s when they attacked Kobur, al-Sanusi's predecessor, at Kali in Dar al-Kuti.²⁴

Oral accounts suggest that Ngono and Ara began raiding from zaribas in eastern Ubangi-Shari, shifting their operations farther and farther west. By the 1890s, Ngono's major settlement was at Jagara, a rock outcropping about fifty kilometers south of today's Ndele. Ara commanded several smaller centers. They sold ivory to the Bandia Nzakara sultanate of Bangassou in the south, obtaining firearms that ultimately came from the Belgians in return. From the north they received long-distance trade goods in exchange for slaves taken in raids against other Banda groups (Cordell 1985a: 211 fn).

Ngono and Ara raided throughout central Ubangi-Shari and rivaled both al-Sanusi and the Kresh warlord Mbele. As in the case of Mbele, al-Sanusi saw Ngono and Ara as competitors to be eliminated. He tried to convince them to join him, an invitation which implied that they should become his clients. The Banda raiders rejected his entreaties, leading al-Sanusi to attack and destroy Jagara and nearby villages in 1897. Ngono was killed in the melée, and the surviving Banda Ngao were removed to Ndele. Ara agreed to become a blood partner of al-Sanusi, a symbol of his acceptance of client status, and Ngono's son Ngouvela became a bazingir in the sultan's forces (Cordell 1979: 379-394).

A second group of Banda warlords appeared in northern Ubangi-Shari after 1890. Most of these made their fortune not

by opposing al-Sanusi but through service with his bazingirs. Allah Jabu was perhaps the most prominent of these raiders. Taken captive as a child, he was raised in al-Sanusi's household, attended Qur'anic school as a convert to Islam, and ultimately became his patron's major military commander (Cordell 1985a: 65, 112-113). Indeed when al-Sanusi was under pressure from the French in 1910, he sent Allah Jabu east to locate a suitable site for a new zariba between the zone of effective French control in eastern Ubangi-Shari and the Sudanese border. Allah Jabu found a site at Kaga Duanda-Djale, a rock outcropping on the caravan route to Sudan that was a perfect location for the continued export of slaves, but he had to dislodge the Yulu who lived there. Al-Sanusi was assassinated before he could flee, but Allah Jabu, others of al-Sanusi's commanders, and his son Kamoun relocated at Duanda-Djale, where they resisted French forces until 1912 (Cordell 1985a: 74-75, 213 fn).

At least one Banda warlord of the 1890s was not a subordinate of al-Sanusi. A report from Cairo in 1906, for example, includes information on Zango, at that time a Banda warlord whose zariba had become an important secondary commercial center on the southeastern fringes of Wadai (Oppenheim 1968: 134). Taken into slavery by Rafai in 1888, Zango first became one of the Zande chief's major raiders and then began operating on his own account in 1898. About the same time he reportedly allied himself with Hadj Mohammed el-Fellatta, a Fulani merchant then active in Wadai. Together they traded into Sudan and as far southeast as the Congo Independent State. Finally in 1903 al-Sanusi forced them both to flee to Sudan.

The third group of Banda warlords raided other Banda peoples south of Dar al-Kuti and north of the limits of Bandia-Nzakara control. They became active after c. 1900. Banda raiders such as Baram-Bakie and Yango Mbili set up small zaribas, raided neighboring Banda groups, and sold captives to traders in the Bandia Nzakara sultanate, Dar al-Kuti, or southwestern Sudan (Kalck 1974: 172-176, 178).

This group of warlords is particularly difficult to classify. They raided into the 1910s, and thus their careers overlapped with the onset of colonial rule. They also raided in lands that after 1898 were part of the territory of the Compagnie des Sultanats du Haute-Oubangui, a concessionary company that opposed their activities. Although the company professed concern about ending the slave trade, it was as much, if not more, worried because the raiders' connections with the Muslim world to the northeast which made it more difficult to integrate the region into the French colonial economy (Cordell forthcoming). While these warlords raided for slaves, and thereby represented a continuation of precolonial policies, they also were important as leaders of early Banda resistance to colonial rule.

Conclusion

The series of warlords discussed in the preceding pages is by no means complete. Oral traditions, colonial reports, the travel literature, and memories of the period include the names of several dozen other aspiring potentates. The biographies and career strategies for most of these individuals cannot be reconstructed from the limited information available. Despite these gaps, a clear picture emerges of the expanding enslavement frontier emanating from southwestern Sudan. The maps accompanying this chapter suggest steady expansion of the frontier from bases in southwestern Sudan in the 1860s and reaching eastern Ubangi-Shari in the 1870s. Quite another picture may be inferred from the career patterns of the warlords. This sample of biographies demonstrates that the expansion was, in fact, very irregular and decentralized. To be sure, there were a few major warlords, but they had to rely on associates who did much of the raiding. These people do not seem to have been particularly preoccupied with systematically expanding their patron's zones of enslavement (and influence). Their biographies suggest rather that they were constantly on the lookout for opportunities to break away and begin their own operations.

This pattern seems to be in marked contrast with the earlier systematic raiding sponsored by the northern Muslim states of Wadai and Dar Fur. Instead the pattern associated with the expanding enslavement frontier from Sudan eventually prevailed. Rabiḥ's sojourn in eastern Ubangi-Shari and his sponsorship of al-Sanusi seem to have seriously undermined Wadaian hegemony in the region. Although Wadai remained influential and continued systematic annual raiding in the Salamat in the southeastern Chad basin, there is only one known major expedition that penetrated Ubangi-Shari after 1890. This raid came when Wadaian forces devastated al-Sanusi's settlement at Kali-Sha in 1894 as punishment for his alliance with Rabiḥ (Cordell 1985a: 64-66). The enslavement frontier reached its greatest extent in eastern Ubangi-Shari in the first decade of the twentieth century, with the campaigns of al-Sanusi in the central Banda lands and with the raids of the Banda warlords among their own people.

During the late nineteenth century a rival enslavement frontier developed farther west, and by 1900 the two frontiers came in contact. From the perspective of Ubangi-Shari, this western frontier was a mirror image of the Sudanese one. Its origins lay in the Fulani conquest of Adamawa in the mid-nineteenth century, a part of Usman dan Fodio's jihād in the central Sudan which resulted in the consolidation of the Sokoto Caliphate. The conquest gave rise to the emirates of Banyo, Ngaundere, Tibati, Koncha, and Tiner. These new emirates made it possible to raid still farther southeast among peoples such

as the Gbaya who were beyond the Islamic frontier. By the later decades of the century, Fulani raided the Gbaya annually. They set out in the dry season, and once near target populations built fortified military camps (sangyeere) from whence they raided surrounding settlements for two or three months before returning home (Burnham 1980: 44, 52-53).

Although the Fulani never raided as far as central Ubangi-Shari, non-Muslim peoples fled before this expanding frontier. For example, Gbaya and Manza peoples living in northwestern Ubangi-Shari fled southeast where they clashed with Banda peoples fleeing raiders from the northeast (Cordell 1985a: 64-66). The resulting confusion and upheavals were ideal conditions for taking slaves, until the imposition of French rule in central Ubangi-Shari halted raiding from both directions in the 1910s.

Unfortunately, the Pax Gallica did not bring real peace. The economic reorientation of the region proved to be more difficult than the French had anticipated. While they worked to end slave-raiding and the export of people to the Muslim north and northeast, the Compagnie des Sultanats du Haut-Oubangui introduced forced collection of rubber, wax, and ivory in an effort to amass a supply of the only products from the area that were in demand on the international economy (Coquery-Vidrovitch 1972).

French policy produced its own violence and excesses as agents of the company abused the local population. Not only was the quantity of products that had to be gathered by each village increased over the two decades following 1910, but company agents often extorted multiple payments. When people resisted they raided their villages. Many were killed or held hostage until members of their families produced the requisite goods. In addition, people were required to furnish a specified number of days of labor to the company (and, later, the colonial administration). It is probable that in the 1910s the people of eastern Ubangi-Shari made little distinction between the settlements of policemen and conscripted laborers around company settlements and the earlier zaribas operated by the warlords.

Faced with what probably looked like a similar threat, people responded in a similar fashion. They fled, either to inaccessible places like the Koukourou River region south of Ndele, or, now, to neighboring colonies. The result was, of course, further depopulation (Cordell, Gregory and Piché forthcoming). A glance at a map reveals the dimensions of this set of catastrophes (Pantobe 1984: 27-29, maps). The part of Africa that remained blank on late nineteenth-century European maps because Europeans did not know who lived there became once again a white spot, this time because people no longer lived there. Even today the region is largely deserted, though large tracts of land are still leased to companies who bring in

heavily-armed people who carry off the inhabitants.²⁵ But these companies sponsor safaris not zaribas, and hunt animals, not people.

NOTES

1. For other studies of the Islamic frontier see Lovejoy and Baier 1975: 551-581; Smaldone 1971: 151-172; Baier and Lovejoy 1977: 391-444. Useful comparative studies are included in Thompson and Lamar 1984. On the relevance of frontier theory for the study of eastern Ubangi-Shari, see Cordell 1985a: 12-14.
2. On the firearms trade and links with the commerce in slaves in the eastern Sudan, see Fisher and Rowland 1971: 221-224, 233-239. The sultans of Dar Fur sent expeditions to the far south as early the mid-eighteenth century; see al-Tunisi 1851.
3. "Documents et études historiques sur le Salamat, réunis par Y. Merot: Rabah et Senoussi au Dar Rounga," W53.9, Archives nationales du Tchad (ANT). Also see Carbou 1912: vol. 2, 223; Modat 1912a: 196; 1912b: 228; 1912c: 271; Martine 1924: 23-24.
4. "Rapport du capitaine Tourencq," December 1912, W53.5, ANT.
5. "Renseignements sur la position des Mahdists," Rafai, 29 May 1895, 4(3)D4, Archives nationales françaises, section d'outre mer, Aix-en-Provence (ANF-SOM (Aix)).
6. Both Hanolet and Chevalier claim to have visited Mbele. The explorers reported different locations for the two sites of Mbele's zariba, which has led Dampierre to suggest recently that Chevalier has not led to Mbele, but rather to Jagara, the zariba of the Banda warlord Ngono; see Dampierre 1967. However, warlords frequently shifted the locations of their settlements, giving their names to a succession of settlements. It is conceivable that Mbele relocated his headquarters in the nine years between the visits of the two Europeans.
7. Liotard, Letter No. 129, 27 October 1897, ANF-SOM (Paris), Gabon-Congo I.
8. Report by Grech, 1897, ANF-SOM [Paris] Gabon Congo II, dossier 5.
9. Liotard, Letter No. 137, 1 November 1898, ANF-SOM [Paris], Gabon-Congo I, dossier 61a.
10. Ibid.
11. "Rapport de tournée . . . Dar-el-Kouti," 26 March 1914, ANF-SOM [Aix-en-Provence], 4[3]D21, Schmoll.

12. Oral Accounts 3.2 and 15.2/16.1, Yadjouma Pascal, Ndele, 16 May and 30 June 1974 (see Cordell 1985a: 247, 249, for further details regarding oral accounts).
13. Pierre Prins, "Rapport d'un voyage de Raphai à Saïd Baldas et de Saïd Baldas aux Djebels Mella et Guyamba du 3 février au 15 mai 1901," 13-14, ANF-SOM [Paris], Tchad I, dossier 3. Prins' published articles on eastern Ubangi-Shari do not include much biographical information on Saïd Baldas or his father; only this unpublished report provides such information. For a lengthy geographical report on the journey, see Prins 1925a: 109-117; 1925b: 117-170.
14. Prins, "Rapport d'un voyage," 13, ANF-SOM [Paris], Tchad I. Prins reported that the Kresh were very able bazingirs, forming the most effective combat detachments in the forces of al-Zubayr, Rabihi, Rafai, Zemio, and al-Sunusi. Modat and Santandrea agreed. See Prins 1907a: 167; Modat 1907c: 286; Santandrea 1964: 66, 193-199, 215.
15. Prins, "Rapport d'un voyage," 13, ANF-SOM [Paris], Tchad I, 67. For details, see Cordell 1977: 21-36.
16. Prins, "Rapport d'un voyage," 13-14, ANF-SOM [Paris], Tchad I; 1907a: 163; Bruel 1933: 265; Prins 1907b: 131.
17. Prins, "Rapport d'un voyage," 14, ANF-SOM [Paris], Tchad I.
18. Ibid., 14-15; Prins 1907a: 163-67; Julien 1928: 56-57.
19. Prins, "Rapport d'un voyage," 171, ANF-SOM [Paris], Tchad I. Prins 1907b: 131; 1907a: 168.
20. Prins, "Rapport d'un voyage," 17, ANF-SOM [Paris], Tchad I. Julien 1928: 92-93.
21. Prins, "Rapport d'un voyage," 18-19, 25, ANF-SOM [Paris], Tchad I; Prins 1907a: 166.
22. Prins (Administrateur du Cercle de Rafai), à M. le Délégué du Commissaire-Général dans le Ht-Oubangui, "Résumé du rapport sur l'inspection du Cercle de Rafai, sultanat de Saïd Baldas," 12 March 1901; ANF-SOM [Aix], 4[3]D8. Lieutenant-Gouverneur de l'Oubangui-Chari-Tchad, "Ancien groupement de Saïd Baldas," 25 June 1909 4[3]D15. Prins, "Rapport d'un voyage," 25-28, ANF-SOM [Paris], Tchad I, Prins 1907a: 156.
23. M. le Secrétaire-Général de la société antiesclavagiste de France au M. le Ministre des colonies, Paris, Letter, 20 June 1908; ANF-SOM [Paris], Gabon-Congo II, dossier 9. Lieutenant-Gouverneur de l'Oubangui-Chari-Chad, "Ancien groupement de Saïd Baldas," 25 June 1909; ANF-SOM [Aix] 4[3]D15, Julien 1928: 76, 82; 1929, 60; Modat 1907c: 286; Santandrea 1964: 220, 264, 278.
24. Almost all the information on Jagara comes from oral sources, but sparse written evidence corroborates a number of crucial details concerning Ngono and Ara. For a

- detailed listing of written and oral sources, see Cordell 1985a: 211, fn.
25. Eastern CAR north of the Mbomu River region is all but deserted, with population densities of less than 0.5 persons per square kilometer in the 1970s; see Pantobe 1984: 27.

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