

BRITISH SLAVES IN EARLY MODERN PORTUGAL

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In September of 1671, the Lisbon Inquisition “seized a Negro boy called John Adue of about the age of seventeen years, belonging to Richard Borthwick of London... upon the pretence that if he remained with his master he would make him a Heretick” (Maynard, “Consul Maynard’s Certificate”). Thus did Adue, a servant on a ship docked at Lisbon, become the first English black in Portugal to enter the historical record by name. He was not, however, the first to be so expropriated by the Inquisition. A year-and-a-half earlier the Inquisition had warned the English consul, Thomas Maynard, “not to suffer any Blacks, or Negros, to go out of this port, in English ships notwithstanding they belong to his Majesty’s subjects,” whereupon they had seized an unnamed shipboard black and refused to give him up. An irate Maynard complained to the Inquisition that “these Blacks were Merchandize and a Current Commodity in moste places of the world; and by the Treaty betwixt England and Portugall; it was lawful for any of the King’s subjects, to buy and Transport, any goods or merchandize whatsoever out of this Kingdom”. What was more, he claimed, “the negros which usually come in English ships, are born in his Majesty’s plantations, and initiated to the Church of England and consequently they are the King’s subjects” (“Maynard to Arlington” [1670]). As the subsequent case of Adue attests—along with later cases until

¹ Medellín, Colombia. The authors would like to thank Matthew Dixon for his generous assistance in researching this article.

1683—the Inquisition was unmoved by his protest.²

It is easy, of course, to doubt the purity of the Inquisition's motives for such seizures. The commercial treaty mentioned by Maynard, drafted in 1654 and ratified under duress by Dom João IV in 1656, was a thorn in the side of the Portuguese, having granted Englishmen considerable privileges in Portugal while offering little to the Portuguese in return (Shillington and Chapman 198-204; Shaw 8-9). The Inquisition, moreover, was particularly put out by the treaty's allowance for Protestant religious services aboard English ships and houses, and by the ensuing presence of an English chaplain in Lisbon (Shaw 49; Maynard, "Maynard to Arlington" [1670]).³ Black servants and sailors on English ships were, in short, undoubtedly pawns in the broader scheme of Anglo-Portuguese passive aggression.

Even so, Maynard's argument that blacks were both protected under the terms of the commercial treaty as "merchandize" and by virtue of being English subjects rings at least as perverse on contemporary ears as do the Inquisition's motives. If blacks were merchandize, how could they be afforded full protection as English subjects? Indeed, such protection and privilege afforded to all male English subjects in Portugal (again, by treaty) included the right to wear silk and swords, privileges only enjoyed by *fidalgos* among the Portuguese themselves. Maynard's logic, in any case, probably reflects the unsettled nature of English thinking in legal, commercial and spiritual terms about slavery. Although slavery did exist in early modern England, it was never

² See also Cornish, "Grievances of our English Nation"; Maynard, "Consul Maynard to Sir Leoline Jenkins". Notwithstanding Maynard's earlier claim that shipboard blacks were English subjects, he observed in this latter case that the black boy seized by the Inquisition had been "taken by Capt. Booth in his Majesty's ship the Adventure and of the Golden Lyon of Argier [Algiers] and that the Black was born in Barbary, not far from that place: and there is greate probability that it is so; being the Black is circumcised, and speaks Lingua franca... which the moors of Barbary usually speak". Unfortunately, we have not been able to locate either of these cases in the records of the Inquisition.

³ Article XVII of the 1642 Anglo-Portuguese treaty had merely stipulated that the King of Portugal "shall take care, and provide that [English subjects] shall not be molested or disturbed for the said case of conscience, so as they give not scandal unto others." The Corresponding article (XIV) of the 1654 Treaty (reaffirmed after the English Restoration in 1661) was more explicit, affirming the English right "to observe and profess their own religion in private houses, together with their families, within any of the Dominions of the said King of Portugal whatsoever; and the same to exercise on board their ships and vessels, as they shall think fit, without any trouble or hindrance; and finally, that a place be allotted them fit for the burial of their dead." See *The Privileges of an Englishman*.

legalized by either formal statute or settled precedent.⁴ George van Cleve argues that at least until the 1770s, the legal question of African slavery in Britain was treated with pragmatic distance, one designed to both preserve cherished notions of English liberty and do no structural harm to the profitable and politically powerful colonial plantation system. Hence, English law upheld a “cultural understanding of the disparity between English and non-English status, particularly for Africans, because it recognized ‘slavish servitude’ for slaves, usually blacks, who came to England, an intermediate ‘near slavery’ legal status between ‘classical chattel slavery’, on the one hand, and full ‘emancipation’ on the other” (603-604). The Portuguese, by contrast, had a longer experience with the institution of slavery than the English, having initiated the Atlantic slave trade in 1441 and, long before that, maintained Moorish slaves via the general process of the *Reconquista* and subsequent incursions into North Africa (Philips 35-36; Russell-Wood 16). Perhaps because of this tradition of slavery in Portugal (as well as the convenient ambiguity enabled by Britain’s common law system) the legality of slaveholding in Portugal was less fraught than in Britain. Notwithstanding such legal contrasts, however, England’s initial forays into both the African slave trade and domestic slaveholding were mediated partly through Portugal and the Portuguese.

The purpose of this article is, first, to explore the phenomenon of slavery among the British in Portugal in order to illuminate this dark aspect of the Anglo-Portuguese relationship. Second, the article seeks to analyze the phenomenon of British slaveholding in Portugal in the context of the British communities in Lisbon and Oporto themselves. Among the English in Portugal, slaveholding soon moved (at some point, that is, in the late seventeenth century) from the English ships docked at Lisbon and Oporto to the houses of English merchants those cities where blacks were employed as domestic servants. In a

⁴ Imtiaz Habib maintains that the text of “*Butts v. Penny*” (1577) does indeed represent a “formal legalization of English possession of Africans”. In that case the court found “by special Verdict” that while “no Property could be in Villans but by Compact or conquest... that Negroes being usually bought and sold among Merchants, and so Merchandise, and also being Infidels, there might be a Property in them sufficient to maintain Trover” (quoted in Habib 184). However, this case, applying the traditional Catholic doctrine sanctioning the enslavement of “Infidels”, was superseded by several cases around the turn of the eighteenth century where it was decided that that *trover* (an action to recover the value of stolen property) did not apply to black slaves, “because the common law did not recognize blacks as different to other people, and although blacks could be bought and sold as chattels in Barbados, that was not the case in England” (Kaufmann, “Common Law”).

sense, this should not be a surprising phenomenon, given that blacks are now well-understood to have occupied a multitude of occupations beyond the plantation complex on both sides of the early-modern Atlantic (Byrd; Cañizares-Esguerra et al; Gilroy; Kolchin; Philip Morgan). There are, however, distinct and interesting problems that emerge from the practice of British household slaveholding in Portugal. The fact that mainland Portugal was geographically distant from the nodal points of the “triangular” British slave circuit begs the fundamental question of why British merchants in Portugal chose to employ black slaves instead of Portuguese or British servants. Furthermore, the interstitial situation of the British merchant in Portugal, who enjoyed considerable *de jure* and *de facto* privilege without the full colonial prerogative of, say, the West Indian sugar baron or the East Indian nabob, complicated the practice of British slaveholding (as well as that of being a British slave), as the Inquisition’s interventions attest.

It must be noted that in considering such questions, we frequently find recourse in speculative and/or circumstantial arguments. Such methods follow necessarily from the nature of the documentary evidence at hand. In addition to the sort of diplomatic correspondence cited above, baptism and death records from both the Oporto and Lisbon Anglican chaplaincies attest to the presence of black slaves among the British communities of those cities, as do a limited number of *processos* from the Portuguese Inquisition at Lisbon and Coimbra. A few blacks were also remembered in the wills of British merchants. Finally, black slaves are mentioned in the letters of at least one British traveler in Portugal. Such evidence, while illuminating in many ways, does leave many questions unanswered. It is impossible to know, for instance, how many black slaves there were in British households in Portugal at any given time, nor precisely when the practice began or ended. In most cases, it is also impossible to know exactly where most of these slaves came from or the specific circumstances under which they came. Most troublingly, we do not know much about the lives led by the British slaves in Portugal. Did they form a coherent community? To what extent were they integrated into Afro-Portuguese society? Were these slaves typically manumitted after a period of service? If so, did they tend to remain in Portugal after gaining their freedom? Little more than tantalizing clues exist to such questions. That said, the case of slavery among the British in Portugal offers a fascinating window into the peculiarities of the African diaspora, the complex nature of Anglo-Portuguese relations, and into British society in Portugal.

1. Portugal and the Emergence of Atlantic Slavery

The Atlantic slave trade is generally accepted to have begun when a 1441 Portuguese voyage to the Rio de Oro on the west coast of Africa just south of Cape Bojador brought back several Idzagen Berbers as captives. On the face of it, there was nothing new in this. Iberian Christians had been taking Moorish captives as slaves or for ransom for centuries (just as Muslims had long been taking Christian captives). In this respect, the early stages of the Atlantic slave trade must indeed be placed in the broader context of the medieval *Reconquista*: a context reinforced by a 1452 Papal Bull, *Dum Diversas*, which granted the Portuguese crown the right to reduce to “perpetual slavery” all “Saracens and pagans and other infidels and enemies of Christ” (Sweet “Spanish and Portuguese Influences” 6). Nonetheless, the voyage of 1441 was novel for the fact that the Portuguese took back with them not only the Idzagens, but a black woman who was the Idzagen’s slave; she in turn became the first sub-Saharan African trafficked into European slavery. Three years later, a much larger expedition mounted against the Idzagens returned 235 captives (including more sub-Saharan blacks) all of whom were auctioned as slaves at Lagos (Saunders 5). Wise to the potential profits of such trade, the Portuguese founded their first *feitoria* in 1449 on the island of Arguim in what is now Mauritania to serve as a trading post for black African slaves, gold dust, and the goods of the Trans-Saharan caravan trade (Disney 45). Such blending of traditional enslavement of Muslims with that of sub-Saharan slaves is furthermore reflected in the Papal Bulls that succeeded *Dum Diversas*: *Romanus Pontifex* (1455) and *Inter Caetera* (1456), which “represented, in effect, divine approval for the conquest and enslavement of sub-Saharan Africans as a mission for Christ” (Sweet, “Iberian Roots” 157). The creation in 1486 of the *Casa dos Escravos de Lisboa* to oversee the Guinea slave trade demonstrates the extent to which African slavery was entrenched in Portugal even before the discovery of the New World (Vogt 1). Indeed, the Portuguese deployed African slaves in the production of sugar at Madeira and São Tomé well before the discovery of Brazil and more than a century before that colony would become both the largest production site of sugar—and the largest recipient of African slaves—in the world.⁵

⁵ On the emergence of sugar and slavery in fifteenth century Madeira, see Greenfield; Moore; Vieira. On São Tomé see Seibert.

In Portugal itself, blacks became a fairly sizable component of sixteenth-century Portuguese society, comprising perhaps seven percent of the total population and at least ten percent of Lisbon's (Philips 10). By the eighteenth century, when the English in Portugal were themselves involved in the practice of slavery, Lisbon contained, out of a population approaching 200,000, around 10,000 black slaves and another 20,000 free-men. Between 1725 and 1735, close to two thousand people were brought expressly to Lisbon from Africa to serve as slaves. These slaves conducted a range of jobs in urban Portugal: men serving as haulers of wood to shipyards, in the carrying sedan chairs and the cleaning of sewers; women carrying fresh water and emptying waste buckets, laundering clothes and cooking. The neighborhood of Motombo (in the present-day parish of Santa Catarina) was home to the largest concentration of free-men and runaways, many of whom labored along the riverfront. Motombo was also the center of a rich spiritual syncretism mixing Catholic, West African, and Afro-Brazilian traditions (Sweet, "Hidden Histories" 236-238). One French traveler to Lisbon in 1730 claimed that "the majority of servants are composed of negro slaves, particularly in the houses of those Portuguese wealthy enough to buy them. They prefer them to white servants because they are more docile, cowed by the fear of being sold to work in the mines" (*Ibid* 238). African slaves thus served as both a status symbol among wealthy households and as a source of the most menial and undesirable labor (Green 233).

2. The Iberian Influence on Slavery in Britain

The English slave trade and slaveholding developed in close conjunction with the Iberian slave trade, which had begun more than a century before Thomas Wyndham's exploratory English voyage—undertaken at the urging of a Portuguese captain, Anthony Anes Pinteado—in 1553. John Hawkins's subsequent voyages of 1562-3 are regarded as the first systematic attempts of a British trader to profit from the slave trade (Dixon 173). Hawkins undertook his first slaving ventures with advice from his Spanish partners who told him "that Negroes were very good merchandise in Hispaniola, and that store of Negroes might easily be had upon the coast of Guinea" (Sweet, "Spanish and Portuguese Influences" 16). After hiring a Spanish pilot he acquired 300 slaves from the Guinea coast and sold them to the Spanish for "£10,000 worth of pearls, hides, sugar, and ginger" (Dixon 173). Some time after his second voyage he attacked "the

town of Bymba on the advice of some 'Portugals' who informed him 'hee might gette an hundreth slaves'" (Sweet, "Spanish and Portuguese Influences" 16).⁶ Even before Hawkins's commercial interest in the slave trade, however, there was a black presence in England.

Among the first of such blacks (as many as 150) came among the retinue of Catherine of Aragon when she arrived in Britain as the bride of Arthur, Prince of Wales, in 1501. Other Iberian residents in London would bring their African slaves with them in subsequent years. One late sixteenth-century burial record, for instance, denotes the demise of "Katharin the negar, dwelling with the Prince of Portingall", the "prince" in question being one Dom Antonio, a Portuguese pretender to the throne (Habib 83-84). A small percentage of the slaves in the nascent English trade (which, before the advent of English plantation colonies, trafficked to the Spanish Caribbean) began to enter England as curiosities or "surplus goods" to be redeployed as domestic servants (*Ibid* 67). Other Africans were introduced to England to learn the language and be reshipped to Africa as translators for slave traders (Dixon 173). During the second half of the seventeenth century when Britain's own colonial system was well-established, Britain entered the forefront of the Atlantic slave trade, sending close to 400,000 black Africans to its expanding Caribbean and North American plantations (Estimates). Occasionally, slaves were expressly ordered to be brought to London from Africa instead of being sold in America. One 1651 order from the directors of the Guinea Company to its ship captains commanded, for instance, that "you buy 15 or 20 lusty Negers of about 15 yeares of age [and] bring them home with you for London" (Habib 125).

Certainly there was a sizable enough population of blacks in England by the turn of the seventeenth century to inspire the bizarre commercial venture of one Caspar Van Senden, a

⁶ Hawkins' newly-won expertise in the slave trade was a cause of some concern to the Spanish envoy in London, who wrote to King Philip in February of 1566 that "the trade of capturing negroes in Guinea and taking them to the Indies is considered very profitable, and may be undertaken by any man who understands the voyage. It seems advisable to get this man [Hawkins] out of the country, so that he may not teach others, for they have good ships and are greedy folk with more freedom than is good for them. This Hawkins has now eight (ships). When he arrived I wrote that I was informed that he had taken a Spaniard with him. This was not the case, but he took one on his first voyage who piloted him so well that Hawkins became well acquainted with the navigation himself. The foundation for the statement that he had a Spaniard with him was that he captured a negro in Guinea who had been brought up in Portugal and used him as an interpreter, bringing him to England with him" (Guzman de Silva 522-3).

German merchant who in exchange for gaining the release of English prisoners in Spain and Portugal and bringing them back to England was granted a royal patent in 1601 to round up an equal number of “negars and blackamoors” in England and sell them as slaves in Lisbon. If there was an impressive symmetry to Van Senden’s projected circuit—inbound for freedom and outbound with chattel—the scheme ultimately foundered on a key detail. For though Van Senden had apparently requested authority to “carry away into Spain and Portugal all and any the Blackamoors that he shall finde in any place or places within this your Majestie’s Realme of England, without the lett or interruption of their masters or any other persons”, his official charter stipulated that blacks were only to be transported “with the consent of their masters”. Rather unsurprisingly, said masters declined the invitation to be quitted of their property, patriotic inducements notwithstanding (Kaufmann, “Caspar Van Senden” 367-369). While the granting of a royal patent for Van Senden’s project is often interpreted as a social cleansing project on the part of the queen to “expel” all blacks from England, Kaufmann’s work suggests that it was rather “just one of the many scandalous proposals made by merchants and courtiers in the later part of her reign with an eye (if a somewhat short-sighted one) for profit” (*Ibid* 371).

That such a venture would be both conceivable and obviously bound to fail may well be indicative, furthermore, of what Imtiaz Habib calls the “shadowy terrain” of English early modern slavery, “denied in contemporary accounts, contradictorily treated in legal rulings of the time, and, in consequence, uncertainly regarded in current historical scholarship” (54). Although late sixteenth-century England was home to a small number of African slaves, the practice of slaveholding was, as previously mentioned, fundamentally at odds with incipient notions of English “liberty” as some unique and glorious component of the national identity. A 1569 legal case against a man who claimed the right to beat his slave decided that “the air of England is too pure an air for slaves to breathe in” (Kaufmann, “Common Law”)⁷ while in 1577 William Harrison had declared,

⁷ Or so it was claimed by the defense of the Somerset case of 1772: “one Cartwright brought a slave from Russia and would scourge him; for which he was questioned; and it was resolved, that England was too pure an air for a slave to breathe in”. However, the original transcripts of the 1569 case are lost, the only reportage of it being in the summary of a 1649 case in which it is cited; this citation, however, contains no such language (Vallance 18).

“As for slaves and bondmen we have none, naie such is the privilege of our contrie by the especiall grace of God, and bountie of our princes, that if anie come hither from other realms, so soone as they set foot on land they become so free of condition as their masters, whereby all note of servile bondage is utterlie removed from them” (quoted in Sweet, “Spanish and Portuguese Influence” 11). While such notions conflicted with the practical reality of English slavery—or of “near slavery”, or whatever contemporaries may have wished to call it—there was, again, scant legal justification for this reality. Such would later be the reasoning of Lord Mansfield in his famous judgment in the Somerset Case of 1772. Mansfield held that the question of slavery’s legality in England had “never been solemnly determined”, and accordingly ruled that the defendant, a black slave named James Somerset, could not be forcibly removed from England by his erstwhile master and transported for resale in a Jamaican slave mart, for “so high an act of dominion and power must derive its Authority from the Law of the Country” (Rabin 14, 19).

The questionable legal status of slavery in England was, moreover, compounded by the question of religion. In Portugal, though Muslims had historically been enslavable as “infidels”, Non-Muslim African blacks were, paradoxically, considered “gentiles” and therefore convertible to Christianity. Being, however, also considered barbaric and “bestial”, they were thought eminently enslavable (Sweet, “Spanish and Portuguese Influence” 4). The question of enslavement and Christianity was less clear in England and its empire, where it was popularly held that baptism conferred automatic freedom to the slave (Paley *et al* 259). Hence, Consul Maynard’s argument to the Inquisition that John Adué was a baptized Christian and therefore a subject of the King would have made more intuitive sense in Portugal than in England. Indeed, there must be some question as to whether Adué really was a baptized Anglican, given that many late-seventeenth century slaves remained unconverted. Between 1664 and 1706, six British American colonies passed legislation stipulating the baptism did not confer manumission, while the Bishop of London proclaimed in 1727 that baptism did not confer “the least Alteration in Civil Property”. At the same time, colonial governors were frequently instructed by the crown to encourage the baptism of African slaves. Nonetheless, many slave-owners resisted such pressures, fearing that Christianity would promote a sense of religious equality and incite rebellion, and perhaps situate the negro within the continuum (however near its beginning) of vaunted English liberty. As late as 1761, a missionary in North Carolina claimed that most of the slaves

in his parish were heathens (Jernegan 506-520). This notion is also corroborated by the more than thirty baptisms of blacks—at least some of whom, as we shall see in the following section, came from the American colonies—that were recorded at Lisbon and Oporto between 1737 and 1768 (Lisbon Factory Register; Lisbon Factory Marriages, Baptisms & Burials; Oporto Factory Chaplain's Memoranda).

3. Slaves of the British in Portugal

By the turn of the eighteenth century, the British communities in both Lisbon and Oporto were well established. Much of the gold extracted from Minas Gerais and transported to Lisbon was already finding its way onto British packet boats and naval vessels, where it terminated in British coffers or was redeployed to the Eastern trade (Boxer, "Brazilian Gold" 467). Such transfers of bullion and specie, though technically illegal, were a necessary consequence of Britain's burgeoning trade surplus with Portugal, itself partly caused by the influx of English textiles into the country following the signing of the third Methuen Treaty of 1703. It was the merchants of the British Factory at Lisbon who oversaw the bulk of this immensely valuable exchange between the Portuguese and English Atlantic economies. Indeed the British, with their superior capital and access to credit, were essential to the operation of Brazil trade as a whole (Fisher 36-38; Maxwell 47). The Oporto British Factory, meanwhile, dominated the export trade in port wine—which amounted to almost the same thing as dominating the industry as a whole, given that the vast majority of port wine was exported to Britain (Large 75-91). Both communities prospered, and by the 1740s the British envoy estimated the population of his compatriots in Lisbon at one thousand, at Oporto, around half that number ("Tyrawly to Newcastle" [1743]). The Portugal trade was the source of many a sizable family fortune, and though it is impossible to know if the above estimate of the British population included blacks, certainly the upper echelons of British society in both Lisbon and Oporto were sufficiently rich to employ large household staffs.

The first concrete reference to blacks serving as household servants of the English is in the 1703 letter of a young English merchant newly-arrived in Oporto named Thomas Woodmass. Having recounted a harrowing overland journey from Viana do Castelo to Oporto, Woodmass concludes his letter with the incongruous observation that "of the langwidge I know but little, the servants being mostly blacks from America who speak English"

(quoted in Sellers 22).⁸ Woodmass's remark is interesting for at least four reasons. First, it suggests that household slaveholding by the British in Portugal began at some point in the late seventeenth century, as his claim that such servants were "mostly" blacks implies a well-established practice (the fact that the diplomatic records from the 1670s and early 1680s only describe slaves being taken from ships by the Inquisition also suggests that the practice began at some point thereafter). Second, Woodmass describes these slaves as being from America, in accordance with Maynard's claim thirty-three years before that "the negros which usually come in English ships, are born in his Majesty's plantations". Third, Woodmass's phrasing would suggest that these black servants spoke English as a result of being from America, implying in turn that they were born in or at least spent substantial time in the colonies before coming to Portugal. Finally, it is worth noting that Woodmass does not refer to these blacks as slaves but as servants. This is in keeping with the usage usually deployed by Englishmen outside the plantation colonies. Even so, the possibility that these blacks from America were not slaves must at least be entertained.

First, however, it is worth considering the second and third observations pertaining to Woodmass's letter in somewhat greater detail. The notion that that blacks came to Portugal from the American colonies is corroborated by three entries in the Oporto chaplaincy register from 1752, when "Eleanor," "Henry," and "Katherine Philis" were all baptized. Each of these is described as "a black from Carolina" (Oporto Factory Chaplain's Memoranda 15).⁹ Carolina was certainly a logical point of origin for these slaves, given that a substantial market existed in Portugal for indigo and (especially) rice from that colony. A direct trade was well-established by the late seventeenth century. In 1704, however, rice was made an enumerated commodity

⁸ Woodmass's letters were reproduced in a book about the port wine trade and the British in Oporto, *Oporto Old and New*, by Charles Sellers, himself an Anglo-Portuguese wine merchant, in 1899. Despite being quoted in several other books—one of which lists them among "published sources"—there is no indication that these letters were ever independently published, and the originals have almost certainly disappeared. They must accordingly be treated with a note of caution. Certainly if Woodmass's were the only evidence of English slaveholding in Portugal, it would be far from sufficient.

⁹ There are only five baptisms of blacks recorded at Oporto, three of which indicate the Carolinian provenance of the inductees. The Lisbon records are more extensive, documenting 22 such baptisms. Only one of these entries, however, indicates the origin of the slave in question, that being the September 1737 baptism of "George Coffee, an English black" (Lisbon Factory Register).

within the British Navigation Acts, meaning that it could only legally travel between colonial sites of production and Britain, whence (after being taxed) it might then be re-exported (Lydon 6). Even so, a substantial illegal direct trade between South Carolina and Portugal continued, as the British state papers attest (Lloyd; “Oporto Merchants”). This illegal trade was particularly well-developed between Charleston and Oporto, with shipments of rice from the former returning port wine from the latter.¹⁰ In 1731, however, the direct rice trade between South Carolina and Southern Europe was re-legalized and flourished from then until the Revolutionary War (Lydon 139; Fisher 70-71; Shepherd 14-21). If it is reasonable to surmise that slaves may have been ancillary to this commerce, what remains unclear is the manner in which slaves from South Carolina (or other American colonies) would have been sold to British merchants in Portugal. Most British merchants in Portugal acted as commission agents in the American grain trade (selling, that is, grain shipments financed by American merchants on consignment). Occasionally, however, they formed partnerships or “triangular” arrangements with American merchants, and accordingly developed strong relationships. The published papers of Henry Laurens, a prominent South Carolina merchant attest, for instance, to his long-standing relationship with the Newman partnerships at Oporto.¹¹ Yet nowhere in the

¹⁰ In January of 1709, for instance, a Mr. Lloyd of the Council of Trade and Plantations reported to the Earl of Sunderland (Sir Charles Spencer, the Secretary of State for the Southern Department) “on the illegal trade between Carolina and Portugal. This trade being contrary to the Act of Parliament *for granting a further subsidy on wines, etc.*, by which rice is declared one of the enumerated commodities, and therefore not to be exported from the Plantations to any place in Europe but to Great Britain or Ireland”, Lloyd affirmed that offenders must be prosecuted; finding them would, however, require the Consul being granted powers to search all incoming ships for offending articles, “for the merchants at Oporto being themselves concerned, are unwilling to give the necessary information therein” (Lloyd 193). Lloyd was apparently unaware that the British Consul himself, by long-established tradition, was an interested member of the Oporto Factory and thus highly unlikely to carry out spot searches implicating his fellows. On March 9, 1715, “Mr. Bradley, Mr. Brailsford and another gentleman concern’d in the British trade at Oporto” attended the session of the Board of Trade. When asked about the volume of the trade in rice carried directly into Portugal, they “answer’d that they believ’d about 6,000 barrils, which would be worth about four pounds a barril there, and they were of opinion that trade might be a considerable benefit to Great Britain, and his Majesty no loser in his duties by their being paid in Carolina” (“Oporto Merchants”). See also Lydon, 157-175.

¹¹ This extensive correspondence is recorded in the letter books of the Newman partnerships (or Hunt Roope, as they are there identified) at the Arquivo Histórico Casa Ferreirinha, Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal. Many are also published in the multi-volume *Letters of Henry Laurens* published by the South Carolina Historical Society. See

correspondence between these two parties is there any mention of African slaves sent to Portugal. For his part, Charles Sellers, a late-nineteenth-century Oporto merchant, suggested (on what authority, he does not say) that such transactions, at least in the earliest period, were informal affairs:

before these [English] factors established themselves in the North of Portugal vessels trading between England and her possessions in North America used to call at Vianna on the way home, and the supercargoes, who were the travelling clerks of important firms holding very often ships and large estates in America, would barter a nigger for a pipe or two of wine, and it is on record that these slaves were held by the English merchants in Oporto and Vianna (20).

By whatever means these slaves arrived in Portugal, the fact that we have been able to find no record of the purchase of black slaves among the papers of Oporto merchants suggests that such transactions were likely both informal and conducted on an individual basis, well clear, that is, of the formal commercial ventures of merchant partnerships.¹²

While it is probable, as Woodmass seems to suggest, that slaves were purchased by the English from the Americas because they spoke English, and that the majority of the slaves in English households were consequently of American provenance, at least some of these slaves hailed from other locations. Among the several references to English slaves in the *processos* of the Inquisition, two give the origins of the slave in question. Carlos, a slave of Charles Compton, the British Consul at Lisbon, hailed from Guinea, while Tomas, a slave of one Henrique Sinson (Henry Simpson?) came from Cape Verde (Processo de Carlos; Processo de Tomas).¹³ As has already been discussed, slaves came to

especially volumes 3-6, covering the years 1759-1769.

¹² This search has admittedly not been exhaustive, but the papers of the Offley and Newman firms have been consulted in detail. It is, we think, unlikely that a search though the extant books of the other port shippers (of which there are in fact very few from before the late eighteenth century) would yield any evidence of purchasing blacks, as slaves were not employed in trade but in household work and manual labor.

¹³ The British were also periodically accused of operating illegal slave trades from Portuguese territories, including Cape Verde. In 1724 the governor of Antigua reported that "two negroe men swam a quarter of a mile, tho' chain'd by the leggs to each other, from on board the sloop *Two Brothers*, Peter Rouse master, to the *Hector* then at anchor in the harbour of St. Johns, and inform'd Capt. Orme they were subjects to the King of Portugal, and inhabitants of the Cape de Verde Islands, and were clandestinely taken away by the said Rouze, with intention to sell them as slaves in the West Indies; and

Portugal directly from Africa during the eighteenth century. Furthermore, there was substantial movement of slaves between Portugal and Brazil. In another *processo* from Oporto, for instance, one Luis de Lima, himself a native African who had formerly resided in Brazil, was charged with witchcraft for manufacturing and distributing amulets known as *bolsas de mandinga*. He divulged to the Inquisition 26 other slaves active as *mandingueiros* in and around Oporto, including 18 who had formerly lived in Brazil and two who were slaves of British merchants (Sweet, "Slaves, Convicts and Exiles" 194-5). British merchants, in short, would have had little trouble acquiring slaves from within the Portuguese empire as well as from the British colonies, and some clearly did own Portuguese slaves. Thus, while English-speaking slaves may have been preferred to those who did not speak English, prior knowledge of the language in itself is clearly not a sufficient explanation as to why English merchants owned slaves in the first place.

Why then did British merchants in Portugal own black slaves? Here we can only speculate. In Britain itself, by the early eighteenth-century slaveholding was "an elite practice that had little real economic basis and was often tied to high fashion." The figure of the liveried black slave became "a 'hallmark' of eighteenth-century English urban life, a sought-after possession and a motif in contemporary paintings, textiles, prints, porcelain, and poetry," even as, conversely, some free blacks were "touted as examples of the civilizing capacity of English culture" (Molineux 497-498). Thus, while there existed a certain aversion the abasement of British "liberty" via overt use of the word, "slave", there was no strong social aversion to the actual practice of slavery. Indeed, for most of the eighteenth century there was little public recognition of the connection between the burgeoning consumer culture centered around products such as sugar and tobacco and the slave labor that produced these commodities (Blackburn 16-17). Only in the 1780s, especially after the public hue and cry surrounding the case of the slave ship *Zong*—when at least 131 slaves were thrown overboard in order to collect insurance money—did the incipient

that there were 25 more free negroes under the same circumstances" ("Governor Hart to the Council of Trade and Plantations"). Three years later, the governor of Cape Verde was brought to Lisbon to answer the charge of allowing 50 blacks to be sold as slaves at Barbadoes, but was considered "likely to be acquitted as he was told they were being sent to the Azores" (Burnett). In 1752, George Crowle, Consul at Lisbon, informed the Secretary of state of a possible "clandestine British slave-trade" on the island of Principe (Crowle).

abolitionist movement gain traction and the public perception of black servitude accordingly suffer (Webster; Kenneth Morgan 156-157). Thereafter, the West Indian sugar baron became a gauche figure of provincial excess and moral debauchery in the public eye. While the practice of slaveholding itself was naturally the main target of abolitionists' attacks, also condemned were the West Indian planter's "irreligion, concubinage, drunkenness, gluttony, and conspicuous displays of wealth as common ingredients in a colonial cocktail of vice and sin" (Petley 98). Although the effects of the Somerset case in 1772, which many contemporaries interpreted (incorrectly) as legally abolishing slavery in Britain¹⁴ clearly had a substantial effect on slaveholding there, it was only in the 1780s that the practice became publicly reviled (Burnard 187).

Such trends may provide clues regarding the practice of slaveholding among the British merchants of Lisbon and Oporto. While the British in Portugal did not as a rule live as ostentatiously as the West Indian sugar barons, the lifestyles of the wealthiest among them were clearly grand enough. Such wealth, combined with their special privileges and quasi-colonial comportment, incurred no small degree of resentment on the part of the Portuguese.¹⁵ Indeed, the very fact that the British merchants had chosen to call their commercial associations "factories"—a term derived from the Portuguese *feitorias* of Africa and Asia—irritated none other than the Marquis of Pombal (whose feeling toward the English was notoriously ambivalent): "factory" was, he declared, "a very indecorous name in Europe and [should be] used properly only along the coasts of the Orient" (quoted in Schneider 176). More surprisingly, the manners and lifestyle of the British merchants at Lisbon also drew the ire of Lord Tyrawly, British envoy to the court at Lisbon from 1728 to 1741 (and later a special diplomatic representative at Lisbon in 1752 and Ambassador to Portugal in 1762). "A great body of his Majesty's subjects reside at Lisbon," wrote Tyrawly in 1752,

¹⁴ Mansfield's ruling in the Somerset case determined that there was no legal principle enabling a master to forcibly remove his slave from England and carry him back to the colonies, in other words, that no "positive law" or parliamentary statute expressly denied black slaves access to *habeas corpus*. It was, as such—for both political reasons and those of Mansfield's own temperament—a much narrower ruling than its historical legacy would suggest (Kaufmann, "Common Law"; Kenneth Morgan 156; Paley 662-3).

¹⁵ For scathing examples of such resentment, albeit from the following century, see José Duarte Ramalho Ortigão's, *John Bull*, or Camillo Castello Branco's *O Vinho do Porto: Processo d'uma Bestialidade Ingleza*. For a summary of Portuguese literary depictions of the British in Oporto, see Gonçalves, 157-171.

“rich, opulent, and every day increasing their fortunes and enlarging their dealings” (“Tyrawly to Newcastle” [1752], quoted in Lodge 225). The opulence of lifestyle in Lisbon had indeed been a source of concern to the indebted Tyrawly from the outset, he having observed in 1728 that “Nobody of any rank or quality appears in the Lisbon streets with less than six horses, if it is to go but to the next door; six footmen behind and a gentleman servant on horseback is the least anybody goes abroad with” (quoted in Boxer, “Tyrawly” 792). Such fashion may well have been partly inherited from the baroque pomp of the Portuguese court and high society. But as time passed in Lisbon Trawly became increasingly sympathetic to the Portuguese and increasingly scathing toward the British merchants of the Factory. In 1739 he declared the factory a collection of “Fops, Beaux, drunkards, gamesters.... Our merchants here make estates and live in much greater expense than becomes them” (*Ibid* 793). For our purposes, Tyrawly’s comments serve to demonstrate that the British merchants in Portugal were hardly averse to conspicuous consumption, and that, particularly in Lisbon, keeping up appearances demanded a sizable contingent of domestic servants. While the British practice of using black slaves as servants was not at odds with fashion in Britain itself, in truth the merchants need not have taken their cue from so far, given the much higher volume of blacks in Portugal than in Britain (where blacks comprised only a fraction of one percent of society [Paley 663]) as well as Portugal’s longer-established tradition of elite household slaveholding.

The same might be said for the end of British slaveholding in Portugal. While such practice waned in England partly as a result of the Somerset and Zong cases, Portuguese slavery also declined during this period via a series of legislations enacted by Pombal. In 1761, the first of these decrees banned the importation of slaves into Portugal but did not affect the status of those already in the country. The second law, passed in 1773, decreed that all fourth-generation slaves (that is, those whose great-grandmothers were slaves) were free, as were all subsequent children born of slaves. Neither of these cases ended metropolitan slavery altogether, but they did allow for its gradual withering away, while ensuring that the entire energy of the slave-trading enterprise was directed toward the New World (Nogueira da Silva and Grinberg 433-434). Unlike in Britain, however, neither of these statutes gave rise to or resulted from a popular abolitionist movement. Rather, these were top-down initiatives responding to the perceived social problems ensuing from domestic slavery (*Ibid* 434). While the Somerset and Zong

cases in Britain may have had an indirect effect on the practice of British slaveholding in Britain, the effects of Pombal's statutes would have obviously been direct. Notwithstanding their special privileges (including access to a special *juiz conservador* who oversaw most legal cases pertaining to the British community) the British would certainly have been subject to the legislations of 1761 and 1773. Six baptisms of blacks were recorded in Lisbon after 1761; although some of these could conceivably have been administered to blacks who entered the country before that date, it would seem likely that at least some of them were new arrivals and hence either freemen or illegal slaves (Lisbon Factory Register). Even so, British slaveholding in Portugal was clearly in decline by the following decade (in fact, there are no recorded baptisms of blacks after 1768). By the 1780s, Lisbon merchants were importing East Indian servants in place of Africans and Afro-Americans (Lisbon Factory Register; Lisbon Factory Marriages, Baptisms & Burials).¹⁶ The last reference to a black slave (or emancipated servant) of a British subject that we have located is that of one Maria Antonia, "a faithful black" who Sarah Warden left a residual from her estate in gratitude for "having served me many years" (Warden).

It is impossible to know, furthermore, what percentage of eighteenth-century British household servants were Black. Certainly it would not appear true, at least by the late eighteenth century, that "most" were "Blacks from America," as Thomas Woodmass indicated of the servants in Oporto households in 1703. Among the 57 wills of British merchants of Lisbon and Oporto we surveyed, Portuguese names appear much more frequently than English names among those identified as servants. In only three cases (William Leyborne, John Page, Sarah Warden) were "black servants" (or, in the case of Page's will, a "black slave") specifically identified. Even so, some of the Portuguese servants named could have been black without being identified as such, as, naturally, could those with English names. One "Catherine Jones," for instance, was identified simply as "our housekeeper" and left two milreis in the will of Thomas Sturton in 1777. Could this be the same person as the

¹⁶ There are no records of Indian servants among the Oporto merchants, but among the Lisbon factory registers are three baptisms of Indian children: that of "Edward Pembroke, an Indian servant of the Reverend Westmore Hulse, aged seventeen years," March 6, 1786; of "Juliana, an Indian aged about twelve years," February 21, 1789; and of "Francis John, an Indian servant of Mr Thomas Brown, about nine years of age," October 15, 1790.

“Catharine Jones” (see below) who was baptized in 1757 and died in 1779 in the employ of “Mister Maigs”?

Again, it must be noted that even when the records provide some indication of ownership, they almost never use the word slave. In the baptism and burial records from Lisbon and Oporto, blacks are referred to as “belonging to” a particular owner on seventeen occasions (e.g. the May 10, 1740 baptism of “Cleopatra, a black belonging to Thomas Brooks”). On three other occasions, the preposition “of” is used, as in, “Mark, a negro of Mr Edward Taylor”; “Black Jack, servant of Mr G Allen”; “Catharine Jones, a black servant of Mister Maigs”. These are all among the latest of the Lisbon records, dated between 1765 and 1779. Two of these later records, those of Black Jack (1766) and Catharine Jones (1779) are death records. Another one of these later records (September 1768, the last baptism of a black in the Lisbon register) describes “Elizabeth” as “a black *consigned* to Mister Thomas Mayne”. Finally, four of the records do not provide any indication of ownership or service: the aforementioned “George Coffee, an English black”, baptized in 1737; the 1756 baptism of “Catharine Jones, a black”, whose death is also recorded in 1779; the burial of “John Hall, a negroe” in 1784; and the burial of “John Faithful, a black”, in 1785. Hence, most of the records where some description other than “belonging to” is used come at the end of the period in which blacks are recorded. Of the four burials on record, all were between 1766 and 1785. It is possible that these later cases were not (or were no longer) slaves.

In any case, it is worth noting that on only two occasions in the British historical records is the term “slave” directly used in reference to a black person in the service of an Englishman in Portugal. The first is in the will of John Page (noted above) who upon dying in 1771 left “to my black slave Francisca (if at any time my executor shall dismiss her of his service, and she should not remain with any of my children), 24 mil reis per annum during her natural life, to be pay’d in half-yearly payt’s in regard to the tender care she took of most of ‘em during the time of their infancy” (Page). The other is in a 1773 missive from the British consul at Lisbon to the Secretary of State enclosing a letter (which very unfortunately has not been preserved) “from a black man addressed to his former master at Lisbon. This man claims he was kidnapped aboard an American whaler in the Azores and sold as a slave at Boston” (Hutchinson). While it is very likely that most of the blacks appearing in the baptism and burial records were slaves, the aversion to the use of the word “slave” makes it difficult to make any sort of clear estimate as to

what percentage of blacks may have been freemen, or even what percentage of servants were black.

Beyond this fundamental problem of status, there is, furthermore, very little known about the lives led by the blacks—be they slaves or freemen—in the employ of British households in Portugal. The records of the Inquisition do, however, contain some interesting details about a pair of slaves who fell foul of the Inquisition via the charge of *angicanismo*. Although no longer claiming jurisdiction over all blacks as they had done in the 1670s, during the eighteenth century the Inquisition continued to work against the heresy of Anglicanism partly through hearing the complaints of English slaves. James Sweet has provided a detailed account taken from the Inquisitional records of the aforementioned slave Carlos who served Charles Compton, the British Consul at Lisbon. Carlos was a sixteen-year-old boy when he came to the attention of the Inquisition in 1734. He told his interrogators that he had been kidnapped and sold into slavery from his home in Cacheu, Guinea as a child and passed through Cape Verde and the Azores before ending up in Lisbon. There he was purchased by Compton and worked for him for a year and a half before being baptized an Anglican.¹⁷ Though Carlos harbored Catholic sympathies, he had seen the consul beating other slaves for adhering to Catholic dietary practices. Still, Carlos followed the Catholic faith in secret until he was denounced by an Anglican page who had seen him wearing rosary beads. He was then beaten, whipped, and locked up for four days in an attempt to make him divulge the names of other crypto-Catholics in the consul's employ. Finally, Carlos escaped through an open window and made his way to the Convento do Corpo Santo, where he declared his desire to become a Catholic. The Portuguese Holy Office granted his request and the consul was forced to relinquish him without compensation, whereupon Carlos was left the consul's house a free man (Sweet, *Recreating Africa* 97-98). Another slave, eighteen-year-old Cesário, was taken to London from Angola as a young child, then sold to a Portuguese in Oporto and baptized a Catholic, before returning to London with his master. There, as Cesário recounted to the

¹⁷ No record exists for a plausible baptism of a "Carlos" or a "Charles" in Lisbon for this period, though a Charles, son of Charles Compton himself, was baptized on December 29, 1732 (Lisbon Marriages, Baptisms & Deaths). In fact, in both Lisbon and Oporto, the earliest baptisms on record—or indeed any documentation in the chaplaincy registers expressly pertaining to blacks—are from the year 1737. Carlos's case suggests that, for whatever reason, baptisms of blacks were simply not recorded until that year.

Inquisition in 1737, a man convinced him to undergo Anglican baptism with the promise that it would immediately free him from slavery. The following day, upon discovering what he had done, Cesário's master put him on the next boat for Oporto, where he was found guilty of heresy by the inquisition. On account of his age and ignorance of the ways of the world, however, the Holy office let him off with only an order to "undergo instruction in Catholic doctrine and the mysteries of the faith" (*Ibid* 99).

4. Britons Never shall be Slaves?

Charles Compton was, like the British envoy Lord Tyrawly, a vehement anti-Catholic, and the loss of his slave probably did not improve his mood on that score. Not long thereafter he wrote of his "self-satisfaction at being Protestant in a bigotedly Catholic country, [a sentiment] shared by the whole Factory" ("Compton to Newcastle").¹⁸ The religious question was indeed never far from the subject of British slaveholding in Portugal, insofar as slavery formed part of the larger fabric of Anglo-Portuguese relations and their attendant tensions. So too, as we have seen, religion had been central to the logic of enslavement in Portugal since the Middle Ages. In fact, a longer and thematically-broader essay than this one may have systematically placed the subject of British slaveholding within a larger canvass concerning not only religion, but questions of race, identity, and sovereignty. In 1671, for instance, while Consul Maynard was dealing with the seizure of John Adué, the Portuguese crown expelled the New Christians from Portugal ("Maynard to Arlington" [1671]). Though that particular order was soon rescinded, the subject of crypto-Jews and New Christians would become another subplot within the Anglo-Portuguese relationship, British ships incurring the wrath of Portuguese authorities for harboring Jews and taking them to Britain (Parry; Boxer, "Second Thoughts" 26). Such sanctuary, Lord Trawly observed with typical bluntness, was offered by British captains "whenever a purse of gold

¹⁸ Compton was probably not incorrect in speaking for the "whole Factory", for unlike the Oporto Factory, the Lisbon Factory strictly prohibited the membership of British and Irish Catholics, an exclusion that was a long-running source of bitter dispute within the British community at Lisbon, being only resolved in 1792 when the Foreign Office ruled that the Factory could produce no charter identifying itself as an exclusive and private institution and therefore must allow the admission of Catholics (Walpole).

shall be offered them, which has always been and will continue to be the motive for these practices" ("Tyrawly to Newcastle" [1732]). On the other side of that coin, António Saraiva argues that although it was framed in terms of caste or "race", the Inquisition's long-running persecution of Marranos was really a latent class dispute, wherein "Jews" represented the parvenue merchant bourgeoisie. Their expulsion thus had less to do with the mooted "purification" of Catholicism than with a desire to cleanse Portuguese society of an unwanted mercantile class (19-30).¹⁹

There is, in any case, a certain overlap between the habitual practice of British captains regarding Jews and New Christians and the more anomalous (and apparently more noble) behavior of one Captain Stepney, commander of the H.M.S. *Litchfield*, who was arrested in 1749 for giving sanctuary to Portuguese runaway slaves. The incident provoked outrage on the part of the Factory and the British government, though not (unsurprisingly) for humanitarian reasons. Rather, at issue was the fact that British warships and packet boats were legally immune from the type of summary search—hence their usefulness in illicitly-transporting gold—that had occasioned Stepney's arrest. So too, British subjects were immune from arrest by Portuguese authorities except in extremely serious cases or when caught "red handed" in the commission of a crime (which, naturally, the Portuguese maintained was the case here). The failure of the British community's judge conservator to intervene on Stepney's behalf produced demands from the Factory and for his immediate dismissal, as well as to his being branded an "unscrupulous and ambitious man of low birth" by the British envoy (Castres). Whitehall's position, meanwhile, was that such an affront to British sovereignty was not to be endured; naturally, however, any and all "atrocious malefactors" who sought sanctuary in British ships would be surrendered to the Portuguese "upon proper and decent application" (Bedford).

So too, the regional politics of slavery were a complicated affair. While the Portuguese practice of enslaving North African Muslims had declined (though not ended) with the ascendance of the Sub-Saharan Atlantic slave trade, North African Muslims continued to take Christians from captured European ships whom, depending on the captive's means, they ransomed

¹⁹ On the English relationship with New Christians and crypto-Jews in their Atlantic commercial system (which was generally more tolerant, but hardly benevolent) see Snyder.

or kept as slaves in houses or on galleys (Galenson; Colley). The British State Papers for Portugal are full of correspondence regarding negotiations for the release of British captives and slaves from the North African "Sally Corsairs", as well as discussions with the Portuguese regarding the repatriation of recovered slaves from one nation or the other. In the context of such "white slavery", the question of racial politics and identity vis-à-vis African slaveholding emerges as another fascinating potential line of inquiry. This essay has not expressly attempted to tackle the extremely complex and controversial question of race in the era of the early-modern slave trade. Sweet, for his part, argues that the Portuguese, in pioneering the European Atlantic slave trade, absorbed and redeployed racist ideas of black Africans from the Islamic world (Iberian Roots). In turn, he argues, the Portuguese and Spanish exchanged "ideas about race and slavery with their English counterparts in the Atlantic world, ultimately creating broadly conceived 'European' or even 'white' identities" (Spanish and Portuguese Influences 1-2). William Philips, on the other hand, takes a more cautious line, noting that simply posing apparently straightforward questions about racism in medieval and early modern Iberia "gives rise to many others, and we risk falling into the abysses of anachronism if we apply contemporary definitions of racism to the distant past" (150). For our part, it seems evident that, pitfalls of anachronism notwithstanding, an implicit hierarchy based on a loose matrix of skin color, origin, and religion existed among the British in early modern Portugal. One need only read British diplomats complaining of being made to suffer "all the consequences of arbitrary government that the King of Portugal's own subjects do, who are greater slaves than the Moors" ("Tyrawly to Newcastle" [1730]) or of the Portuguese religious authorities treating British subjects "as if they were Negro slaves" (Worsley) to suspect that a deeper and more static concept of hierarchy existed among Britons abroad than, say, the mere internationalization of the British class system as proposed by David Cannadine (3-10).

Even so, and by way of conclusion, we should acknowledge the other chief implication of Tyrawly's comment above: that within the British continuum of liberty and natural rights, the Portuguese resided well below the British themselves (though we will assume a characteristic hyperbole on Tyrawly's part in placing them below the Moors). Samuel Johnson once asked, "how is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty from the drivers of Negroes?" (quoted in Kolchin 553). The comment was directed at the North American revolutionaries, but it certainly

applies to the British in Portugal. Their correspondence with the British state from the mid-seventeenth to the early-nineteenth centuries comprises an almost uninterrupted litany of complaint against perceived insults to their cherished “privileges” and liberties. Yet such liberties, when backed by the leverage of the British state, in fact placed them comfortably atop a quasi-imperial mound, a situation Charles Boxer has aptly compared to “that enjoyed by the Western powers in the Treaty Ports of China between 1840 and 1900” (Second Thoughts 24). Within Britain’s broader commercial system, the merchants of the Portugal trade were, furthermore, proud of being among the first to break free of the once-ubiquitous chartered monopolies by pushing legislation through parliament in 1605 that effectively destroyed the Spanish Company and opened Iberia up to a “free trade” (Croft). Such traditions of liberty, and the jealousy with which they were guarded, were no doubt what Benjamin Keene, envoy at Lisbon in the 1740s, had in mind when he called the British commercial establishment at Lisbon a “jolly free Factory” (quoted in Lodge 211). The rarified airs emitted by the early modern Anglo-Portuguese factories were, to be sure, altogether too lofty to countenance the word slavery; they were not, however, at all above its practice.

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