SOCIAL NETWORKS AND THE FORMATION OF AN AFRICAN ATLANTIC: THE UPPER GUINEA COAST, CAPE VERDE, AND THE SPANISH CARIBBEAN, 1450 - 1600

By

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Introduction

In 1579, Ysabel Flandes, a free Black woman, applied for a license to travel from southern Spain to the Spanish colony of Peru. She intended to go as a *criada* (domestic servant) for a man named Juan de Muesas. On January 2nd of that year, the town's *licenciado* (lawyer) Diego Medina de Garfias interrogated Ysabel as part of the application process, while Francisco Diaz Garfias, the public notary, documented her responses. That the lawyer and public notary shared a last name was probably not a coincidence, more than likely they belonged to the same family or family network in the town. Ysabel was born in Lepe, a small town in the south of Spain. Her parents, Anton and Beatriz, were both "negros de Guinea" (Black Africans from south of the Sahara), but they were Christian. In response to the *licenciado*'s questions, Ysabel stated that she had never been imprisoned or punished for any crime, nor was she Jewish, Muslim, or a recent convert to Christianity. Ysabel was thirty-five years of age and unmarried with no children.[1]

Following Ysabel's responses to his questions, the lawyer Medina de Garfias told her to call for witnesses that could corroborate the details of her life and her family's history. The first person to testify for Ysabel was Melchior de Garfias, the priest of Lepe, and probably a member

[1] Archivo General de Indias, Contratación 5227, N.2, R.35, Seville, 1579, folios 1r-1v. Henceforth Archivo General de Indias will be referred as the AGI. The Holy Office of the Inquisition (*santo oficio de la inquisición)* was a religious body particularly concerned about *conversos* (recent converts to Christianity). The questions about her religious and racial backgrounds were rooted in Spanish authorities' attempts to regulate non-Christian or other undesirable elements moving to Spain's New World colonies. For an overview of the Spanish Inquisition see Henry Kamen, *Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* (New Haven, United States: Yale University Press, 2014); In addition, one other historian provides a brief discussion of Ysabel Flandes in his history of Lepe. See, Bibiano Torres Ramírez, "Lepe Y Las Indias," in *Historia de Lepe. Una Proyección Hacia El Futuro*, ed. Juana Otero Prieto, 3rd ed. (Lepe: Ayuntamiento de Lepe, 2001), 249–65.

of the Garfias clan. The priest told the *licenciado* that he had known Ysabel for over thirty years, since she was a child. According to Melchior, Ysabel had been born and raised in Lepe. He knew her parents and described a relationship that sounded quite close after having "many conversations" with them. Melchior spent a lot of time with both Ysabel and her parents and confirmed that they had been born in Africa ("*negros de guinea naturales"*). He also knew that Ysabel was a free woman, had never been imprisoned or punished for a crime and was Christian. Melchior also described her physical appearance. According to him, she had a "good" body ("*buen cuerpo*"), which perhaps implied that she appeared healthy and able-bodied. Melchior also stated that she did not appear to have mixed heritage, had a large mouth ("boca grande"), and had the markings of a small wound on her left wrist.

After Melchior, Ysabel called forth another witness to speak on her behalf, Cristobal de Flandes Garfias. Cristobal was a resident (*vecino*) of Lepe. In response to the same questions, Cristobal gave similar answers as Melchior before him, describing a lengthy relationship with Ysabel and her parents and replying negatively to any questions that might damage her or her family's character. Juana Martin stepped forth to provide testimony after Cristobal. A woman of fifty-five years, Juana gave the same answers as the others. She had known Ysabel and her parents for many years and vouched for their character and good Christian practices. Following Juana's responses, another woman was questioned. Like the others, Martina de Algava, aged seventy and widowed after the death of her husband Nicolás Martin, reiterated similar facts about Ysabel's character, place of birth, and religious and social history.[2] Ultimately Ysabel was

[2] AGI, Contratación 5227, N.2, R.35, folios 1r-6v.

able to travel from Spain to Peru because of the community of supporters who vouched for her good character.

This dissertation opens with Ysabel's request for a license to travel to Peru, a fairly common practice in the sixteenth century, because her story highlights the important role of relationships in shaping the experiences of free and enslaved Blacks in the Atlantic world. The questions that the *licenciado* asked Ysabel did more than just reveal her racial, religious, and law-abiding background. Her responses to the questions and the witnesses that she called to provide testimony provide a glimpse into her social network. By social network, I am referring to the structure of relationships linking individuals.[3] In this case, Ysabel's witnesses made up a few of the individuals within her personal social network. This also included her parents and potentially many other unnamed people. The bonds in a social network carry information, affection, support, and other resources.[4] The supportive relationships that Ysabel developed in her social network helped her acquire a license for travel and convey details about her life as a free Black woman in Spain.

This study offers social network analysis as a unique means of analyzing the social and commercial lives of free and enslaved Blacks in sixteenth century West Africa, Cape Verde, and the Spanish Caribbean. Through an analysis of the some of the earliest surviving records on Black Africans in the Atlantic, my dissertation explores how Black Africans helped to construct

[3] Brea L. Perry, Bernice A. Pescolido, and Stephen P. Borgatti, *Egocentric Network Analysis: Foundations, Methods, and Models* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 3; Peter V. Marsden, "Social Networks," in *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, ed. Edgar F. Borgotta and Rhonda J. Montgomery, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: MacMillan Reference USA, 2000), 2727–35.

[4] Charles Wetherell, "Historical Social Network Analysis," *International Review of Social History* 43, no. S6 (December 1998): 126–27, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859000115123.

the social and commercial networks that linked Europe, Africa, and Americas. My work further examines how their social relationships impacted their lived experiences by creating social and physical mobility, as well as providing novel information, support, and resources. My work falls in line with scholarship that has recently begun to examine the social and commercial histories that linked West Africa and the Spanish Caribbean in the sixteenth century more thoroughly, paying close attention to the role of ethnicity in forming social bonds and shaping early colonial societies.[5]

The social historical approach has become a central method for studying Black life in colonial Latin America and the Atlantic world more broadly.[6] While historians do analyze the social networks of free and enslaved blacks, they seldom engage with the field of social network analysis itself, which has its own methodologies and unique approaches to studying human behavior. This dissertation merges historical research with social network scholarship to generate

[5] David Wheat, *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean, 1570 - 1640* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 2016); Toby Green, *The Rise of Transatlantic Slave Trade in Africa: 1300 - 1589* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Toby Green, "Building Slavery in the Atlantic World: Atlanitc Connections and the Changing Institution of Slavery in Cabo Verde, Fifteenth-Sixteenth Centuries," *Slavery & Abolition* 32, no. 2 (2011); Chloe Ireton, "'They Are Blacks of the Caste of Black Christians': Old Christian Black Blood in the Sixteenth- and Early Seventeenth-Century Iberian Atlantic," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 97, no. 4 (November 1, 2017): 579–612, https://doi.org/10.1215/00182168-4214303.

[6] Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Ira Berlin, "From Creole to African: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African-American Society in Mainland North America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (1996): 251–88; Herman L. Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570-1640* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/vand/detail.action?docID=153385; Alejandro De la Fuente, *Havana and the Atlantic in the Sixteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Linda M Heywood and John K. Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundations of the Americas, 1585–1660.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

new insights about black people and their descendants in the Atlantic world. Some scholars have adopted this method, most recently with an analysis on Juan Latino, a famed literary figure among scholars of slavery and literature in early modern Spain.[7] Most other historical social network analyses have been focused on communities of a particular place or elite groups.[8] For example, John F. Padgett and Christopher K. Ansell wrote a signature article explaining the rise of the Medici family in Italy by analyzing their social networks. They argued that the Medici structured their relationships to prevent overlap between different groups of followers. Some they linked through marriage, binding that group to them through family ties and reciprocity. The other groups they engaged with economically, but never mixed the two. The social architecture of their relationships ensured that the Medici were the only group linking the others together and placed them in a position to control the flow of resources between them.[9]

Ysabel de Flandes was deeply embedded in the community of Lepe, perhaps even taking the name of one of her witnesses, Cristobal de Flandes Garfias, due to their relationship. Through her link to Cristobal, Ysabel may have become a part of a larger Belgian or Northern European network, as the surname 'Flandes' implies Dutch heritage. Moreover, that each of her witnesses

[7] Magdalena Díaz Hernández, "'Y Florecieron En Este Pontificado…' Empoderamiento y Redes Sociales de Los Esclavos Negros En La Granada Del Siglo XVI," *EHumanista*, Juan Latino. Perspectivas críticas de estudio, 39, no. II (2018): 231–47.

[8] For an important article on how the Spanish elite managed their social networks through marriage and acts of reciprocity see José María Imízcoz, "Las Relaciones de Patronazgo y Clientelismo. Declinaciones de La Desigualdad Social," in *Patronazgo y Clientelismo En La Monarquía Hispánica (Siglos XVI-XIX) (Historia Medieval y Moderna)*, 1st ed. (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 2016).

[9] John F. Padgett and Christopher K. Ansell, "Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400-1434," *American Journal of Sociology* 98, no. 6 (May 1993): 1281–86, https://doi.org/10.1086/230190.

knew her parents well, suggests a series of overlapping relationships, where resources, information, and support of various kinds were shared. There is also a good chance that Ysabel knew the town lawyer and public notary personally prior to her application for a license to travel. And if she did not, their shared last name with two of her witnesses, Melchior de Garfias and Cristobal de Flandes Garfias, likely placed them in the same social network. The nature of social networks is such that individuals who have a strong bond with one another frequently share relationships with the same people.[10] If there were any salacious information about Ysabel or her parents Anton and Beatriz, it would have reached their ears through their shared social connections.

Social networks are comprised of both strong and weak ties, that is, durable relationships versus transient or less-intense ones. Strong ties typically provide more support and are often longer lasting than weak ties and given the duration and apparent depth of her relationship with the witnesses, Ysabel likely had strong relationships with them. In addition, the people in her social network offered their support through their testimony, that she could rely on them for such a matter is illustrative of their relationship. As this dissertation will demonstrate, free and enslaved Africans and their descendants benefitted from having both strong and weak ties. Weak ties are often more numerous and give access to resources that a dense group of strong ties may not, like new skills or experiences. Weak connections also operate as bridges between social groups, helping to facilitate social mobility.[11]

[10] Mark S. Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 6 (1973): 1360–62; Perry, Pescolido, and Borgatti, *Egocentric Network Analysis: Foundations, Methods, and Models*, 180.
[11] Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," 1370, 1373–76.

Like many Atlantic Africans in this period, Ysabel Flandes relied on her relationships with several members of Lepe's community to support her application for a license to travel to Peru. Examining Black Atlantic history relationally allows historians to consider how social interactions affected the rational choices that free and enslaved Black people made about their lives – including acts of rebellion and flight. Researching the social structure of their lives demonstrates an important insight: the choices that an individual makes are embedded in the social network that they are part of, where the collective group influences the kinds of choices that are preferable, socially acceptable, and most likely to solve a particular problem.[12]

Historical and social forces determined how certain groups built and structured their relationships. Black Africans had been integrated into Iberian communities for centuries prior to the transatlantic slave trade.[13] Iberian concepts of family, race, and status affected how Africans formed communities and group membership both among themselves and with Iberians. For example, by the sixteenth century enslaved Africans were a common presence in Spanish and Portuguese households. They performed a variety of tasks that ranged from domestic work to

[12] Bernice A. Pescosolido, "Beyond Rational Choice: The Social Dynamics of How People Seek Help," *American Journal of Sociology* 97, no. 4 (1992): 1104.

[13] The history of Black Africans in Iberia is much more thoroughly covered in Spain than in Portugal, seeVicenta Cortés Alonso, *La esclavitud en Valencia durante el reinado de los Reyes Católicos (1479-1516).* (Valencia: Excmo. Ayuntamiento, 1964); Ruth Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders: Sevillian Society in the Sixteenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972); A.C.De C.M. Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves and Freedmen in Portugal, 1441-1555* (New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Antonio Dominguez Ortiz, *La esclavitud en Castilla en la Edad moderna y otros estudios de marginados* (Granada: Comares, 2004); Alfonso Franco Silva, *La Esclavitud En Andalucia, 1450 - 1550* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1992); Alfonso Franco Silva, *Los Esclavos de Sevilla* (Sevilla: Diputación Provincial de Sevilla, 1980).

fighting others on behalf of their enslaver's honor.[14] Gendered labor practices influenced how African men and women experienced their captivity but may have also informed the structure of their relationships and types of people that comprised their social network. African women made up most of the black captives in most regions of Iberia, such as Granada, for example, thus the formation of African social networks in parts of Spain was probably mediated by African women[15]

Africans of course had their own identities and ways of structuring community that they carried to their new spaces with them. In Mexico, for example, when enslaved Africans sought to marry, they procured witnesses based on a series of factors, which included a particular ethnicity and skin color. The role that person played in the community, however, was the most important factor.[16] In addition, the Catholic Church in Iberia allowed Africans to form religious communities among themselves, called Catholic brotherhoods or *cofradías*.[17] This practice continued in the New World. In 1586, for example, two groups of West Africans with different

[14] William D. Phillips Jr., *Slavery in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 80–98; Debra Blumenthal, *Enemies and Familiars: Slavery and Mastery in Fifteenth-Century Valencia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, n.d.), 163–70.

[15] Aurelia Martín Casares, *La Esclavitud En La Granada Del Siglo XVI :Género, Raza y Religión* (Granada :, 2000), http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015049675658.

[16] Herman L. Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570 - 1640* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 88–91; For marriage partners, enslaved Africans in Havana, seemed to prefer others from the same region De la Fuente, *Havana and the Atlantic in the Sixteenth Century*, 166–67.

[17] For the long history and development black confraternities in Spain, for example, see Isidoro Moreno Navarro, *La Antigua Hermandad de Los Negros de Sevilla : Etnicidad, Poder y Sociedad En 600 Años de Historia / Isidoro Moreno ; Con La Colaboración de Antonio Burgos ... [et Al.].*, vol. 1a (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 1997).

ethnicities (Mandinga and Biafara), formed a Catholic brotherhood in the metropolitan church of Santo Domingo in the Spanish colony of Hispaniola.[18] This was a means by which Africans linked social networks through religious observance, and allowed individuals to be tied into a larger community for support.[19]

As historians David Wheat and Marc Eagle argued most recently, the early Atlantic operated as an extension of Iberian slaving practices, which included groups from Eastern Europe, North Africa, and West Africa.[20] But the early Atlantic was also an extension of the unique social practices that occurred between the peoples of Iberia and West Africa. Nowhere is this phenomenon more apparent than among the Portuguese Atlantic islands such as Cape Verde and the West African region of the Upper Guinea coast. The Upper Guinea coast extended from the Senegal River in the north to Cape Mount in the south and it encompassed a wide variety of groups.[21] The people along the Upper Guinea coast interacted the earliest and more intensely with Europeans, especially the Portuguese, than any of the other regions of West and West

[18] Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570 - 1640*, 88–91; José Luis Sáez, *La Iglesia y El Negro Esclavo En Santo Domingo: Una Historia de Tres Siglos* (Santo Domingo: Patronato de la Ciudad Colonial de Santo Domingo, 1994), 52.

[19] João José Reis, "African Nations in Nineteenth-Century Salvador, Bahia," in *The Black Urban Atlantic in the Age of the Slave Trade (The Early Modern Americas)* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 65–72.

[20] Marc Eagle and David Wheat, "The Early Iberian Slave Trade to the Spanish Caribbean, 1500 - 1580," in *From the Galleons to the Highlands: Slave Trade Routes in the Spanish Americas*, ed. Alex Borucki, David Eltis, and David Wheat (New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 2020), 46–50.

[21] Walter Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast: 1545-1800* (New York, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), 6–7.

Central Africa. Thus, studies on how Africans formed relationships there have proven insightful in our understanding the development of the early Atlantic world.

Foundational texts such as Walter Rodney's *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast*, explored the social, commercial, and political history of the Upper Guinea coast through Portuguese records.[22] Scholarly interest in the Portuguese ties to the Upper Guinea coast has given rise to numerous studies concerning their roles as cultural brokers, intermediaries, and Atlantic creoles. Much of this scholarship remains indebted to Antonio Carreira's seminal study, *Cabo Verde: Formacão e Extincão de Uma Sociedade Escravocrata* (1460-1878).[23] In his study, Carreira details the rise of a slave society in Cape Verde, while paying significant attention to the networks of trade and commerce between the archipelago and the coastal peoples of West Africa. Carreira shows that Cape Verde, a Portuguese settlement, developed a creole society at the beginning of the sixteenth century and that cultural exchange between Portuguese merchants (often *conversos* or recent converts to Christianity, normally Jewish-converts*)* and Africans was significant enough to lead to the growth of mixed-race unions, and thus the rise of Luso-Africans, on the coast and in Cape Verde. The Portuguese men who went to live among the Africans were called *lançados*, and they were able to incorporate themselves into trade networks through their unions with local African women. Many of these men were Jewish converts who played a notable role in the creolization of Cape Verde and the Upper Guinea. Jewish merchants, like Africans, also acted as middlemen throughout the Atlantic, and they were seminal in tying

[22] Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast*.

[23] Antonio Carreira, *Cabo Verde: Formacão e Extincão de Uma Sociedade Escravocrata (1460 - 1878)* (Praia: Instituto Caboverdeano do Livro, 1983).

the coastal African communities into larger, Atlantic trade networks through their unions to indigenous African woman.[24]

More recent scholarship has complicated our understanding of the relationships that existed between Cape Verde, the Upper Guinea coast and the broader Atlantic world by examining the development of new social identities and trade networks from the perspective of the Africans themselves.[25] Historians have shown that the social and political structure of West African societies determined how Portuguese merchants were integrated into their communities. For example, the societies of Senegambia (the northernmost zone of the Upper Guinea Coast) allowed Portuguese merchants to marry African women with little or no status, preventing them and their offspring from penetrating their elite kinship networks, but acephalous communities in

[24] Peter Mark, *"Portuguese" Style and Luso-African Identity: Precolonial Senegambia, Sixteenth-Nineteenth Centuries* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); For the Jewish/converso diaspora to West Africa and the development of transatlantic networks, see Peter Mark and José da Silva Horta, *The Forgotten Diaspora: Jewish Communities in West Africa and the Making of the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); For Jewish networks in the broader Atlantic world, see Richard L. Kagan, ed., *Atlantic Diasporas: Jews, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews in the Age of Mercantilism, 1500–1800*, 1st edition (Baltimore: JHUP, 2009); Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation upon the Ocean Sea: Portugal's Atlantic Diaspora and the Crisis of the Spanish Empire, 1492-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Also see, David Wheat, "Nharas and Morenas Horras: A Luso-African Model for the Social History of the Spanish Caribbean, c. 1570–1640," *Journal of Early Modern History* 14, no. 1–2 (2010): 119–50. David Wheat, "Tangomãos En Tenerife y Sierra Leona A Mediados Del Siglo XVI," *Cliocanarias*, no. 2 (2020): 545–69; Carlos Esteban Deive, *Tangomangos: Contrabando y Piratería En Santo Domingo, 1522–1606* (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1996).

[25] José da Silva Horta, "Evidence for a Luso African Identity in "Portuguese" Accounts on "Guinea of Cape Verde" (Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries)," *History in Africa*, 27 (2000) http://www.jstor.org/stable/3172109; Toby Green, *The Rise of Transatlantic Slave Trade in Africa: 1300-1589* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); George E. Brooks, *Landlords and Strangers: Ecology, Society and Trade in Western Africa, 1000-1630* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993); Walter Hawthorne, *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves: Transformations along the Guinea-Bissau Coast, 1400-1900* (Portsmouth, Heinemann, 2003).

Guinea-Bissau further down the coast allowed Portuguese *lançados* to integrate into their elite social networks and become part of ruling lineages more fully. The deep integration of Luso-Africans into the communities of the Upper Guinea expanded the trade in captives from the region.[26]

Philip J. Havik noted that African women in framing and sustaining relationships with the Portuguese *lançados*, were also able to benefit themselves. Women among the coastal communities consolidated and even extended their own personal autonomy through their relationships with Portuguese men. The development of a Creole society in Upper Guinea resulted from the active participation of African women and their relationships with white men rather than a simple absence of white women. This reconceptualization of this history provides a more nuanced view of interactions on the coast and portrays African women as conveyors of African heritage in the Atlantic.[27]

Recent scholarship has continued to emphasize the depth of the connections between West Africa, Cape Verde, and the Spanish Caribbean during the sixteenth century. Up until the 1580s, most of the captives purchased in West Africa passed through Cape Verde first before being brought to the Spanish Caribbean.[28] In addition, there were strong connections between

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[26] George E. Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003), 49–63; Green, *The Rise of Transatlantic Slave Trade in Africa: 1300 - 1589*, 241–56; Wheat, "Nharas and Morenas Horras: A Luso-African Model for the Social History of the Spanish Caribbean, c. 1570–1640."

[27] Philip J. Havik, "Mary and Misogyny Revisited: Gendering the Afro-Atlantic Connection," in *Creole Societies in the Portuguese Colonial Empire*, eds. Philip J. Havik, Malyn Newitt (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 40-45.

[28] Eagle and Wheat, "The Early Iberian Slave Trade to the Spanish Caribbean, 1500 - 1580," 58–59.

Caribbean communities and those on the Cape Verde islands in this period, indicating an early rise in what Toby Green called "intercontinental mobility." Green also argued that "voluntary mobility among Africans and Luso-African trading communities provided a regular links to the Americas" by the middle of the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth century.[29]

Building on this scholarship, this dissertation documents the creation of social networks between Africans and Europeans in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, alongside how Africans were affected by their relationships and the various ways they utilized them as free and enslaved people in the Atlantic world. Chapter one, "The Creation of Social Networks in Atlantic Africa," examines how Africans in Senegambia and the Upper Guinea coast folded Europeans into their social networks. The first part of the chapter analyzes both Portuguese and Spanish records to argue that African elites carefully constructed relationships with Portuguese monarchs and their subordinates to gain political, economic, and military advantages over their rivals. This was part of a long-standing practice in West Africa that had its roots in the rise (and fall) of the Mali Empire and the spread of Islam. Through a focus on African monarchs and lords, Chapter one argues that Africans had as capacious a view of themselves and their political interests as European monarchs.

The second section of this chapter complicates the literature on Portuguese and West African relationships by demonstrating how imperative the structure of social networks was in developing and expanding trade relationships in the Upper Guinea coast. It argues that the Portuguese men who lived on the coast in conjunction with their African wives, were successful

[29] Toby Green, "Beyond an Imperial Atlantic: Trajectories of Africans from Upper Guinea and West-Central Africa in the Early Atlantic World," in *Past & Present* 230 (2016):93, 102; David Wheat, *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean, 1570-1640* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016)

traders because of how they bridged disparate social networks. These men, otherwise known as *lançados,* took advantage of missing links between communities to facilitate trade between them. Their positionality within the social network structure of the coast allowed them to outcompete other Europeans and exert commercial control over aspects of the West African coastal trade in commodities.[30]

Chapter two, "The Different Lives of Rodrigo Lopez," considers how social relationships affected the lived experiences of free and enslaved Blacks living under Spanish and Portuguese rule in the sixteenth century. This chapter argues that social relationships governed the experiences of the enslaved and that they could live many kinds of lives based on their social bonds and the kinds of resources and opportunities that flowed to them. It focuses on the life of a Luso-African man named Rodrigo Lopez, the slave of a wealthy nobleman in Portugal to a freed man in Cape Verde. It adopts an egocentric lens to focus on his particular social network and pays attention to the number of social relationships that he had, how each person in his social network was connected to another, and the kinds of people that his social network was composed of.

By focusing on a single individual, this chapter shows how Black Africans were integrated into the family structures of their enslavers and the benefits that enslaved people could derive from connections to elite enslavers. The second chapter also details the complexity and power dynamics inherent in free and enslaved social networks through Rodrigo's relationship with his enslaver and other Portuguese men. It argues that the precarity that free and enslaved Blacks experienced in the Iberian Atlantic was not just the result of legal and commercial

[30]What I am describing here is essentially what Ronald Burt called a "structural hole" Ronald S Burt, *Structural Holes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 1–18.)

systems, but a social outcome based on the kinds of relationships they cultivated with individuals within their social network. It examines one particularly powerful example in which Rodrigo Lopez is illegally re-enslaved while working as a free man in the islands of Cape Verde.

Chapter three, "Rodrigo in the Caribbean," continues its analysis of Rodrigo's social network by tracing his movement from the Cape Verde islands to the Spanish Caribbean where he contested his enslavement. This chapter demonstrates how a single negative relationship with a Portuguese man was enough to completely upend Rodrigo Lopez's life and send him back into slavery. This chapter contrasts the generally positive and socially beneficial relationships that Rodrigo maintained in Portugal and Cape Verde with the negative and harmful new relationships that he developed in the Caribbean to show how different kinds of relationships influenced the lives of the enslaved. In addition, while the Spanish legal system provided Rodrigo with the infrastructure to appeal and contest his illegal enslavement, this chapter demonstrates how his social network, which included people from multiple colonies across two empires, became the vehicle for his freedom. Without numerous supportive bonds, Rodrigo Lopez might have remained enslaved. Lastly, chapter three situates Rodrigo's captivity and transatlantic journey within the broader context of the African diaspora to show the early linkages between the Cape Verde, the Upper Guinea coast and the Spanish Caribbean. His arrival in the Caribbean in the 1520s occurred during ongoing demographic change in Spanish territories, as Africans were brought into the Caribbean in increasingly larger numbers.

Chapter four, "Rebellion and Social Networks," extends the dissertation's application of social network analysis to the history of Atlantic slavery in order to complicate present understandings of the causes of rebellion. It utilizes two incidences of rebellion to demonstrate how the enslaved structured their relationships to foment rebellion. It argues that social networks

were the vehicles for revolt. The first section examines one of the earliest documented slave ship rebellions in the early modern era. In 1564, a rebellion erupted upon a slave ship as captive Africans freed themselves, stormed the decks and attacked the crew. A close reading of the documentation on the slave revolt reveals that differences between ethnic groups may have impacted the direction of the revolt before it even began. This section considers how ethnicity played a role in structuring relationships within the confines of a ship and the number and types of relationships necessary to launch a revolt at sea.

The second section of Chapter 4 explores how social networks influenced sustained rebellion in the Spanish colony of Panama. By the second half of the sixteenth century, Spanish officials in Panama were writing back to Spain about the numerous communities of escaped slaves that lived in the forests outside of the towns and villages. These *cimarrones* (maroons) had freed themselves and gone to build communities in the colony's interior. Yet they were never far from Spanish settlements, often attacking towns and robbing the mule trains that carried Spanish silver on the roads. This section considers how the Panama maroons utilized their social connections in the Spanish towns for information and resources to sustain themselves in the jungle. In addition, this section demonstrates how the Panama maroons built linkages with Spanish adversaries to exact vengeance against Spanish settlers and authorities.

In his most recent research on early interactions between West Africans and Portuguese merchants, Herman Bennett offered a critique of how Africans had been historicized. He wrote, "Africa and Africans figured as objects but occasionally also emerge as historical subjects."[31] By closely examining documents that link West Africa, Europe and the Americas, this research

[31] Bennett, 15.

uses social network analysis to generate new insights about the experiences of Africans in the early modern Atlantic by bringing their social connections to the forefront. It reveals how their networks were constructed, and how these networks affected them—fundamentally shaping their experiences with slavery in the earliest phases of Iberian colonization in the Americas.

Chapter 1

The Creation of Social Networks in Atlantic Africa

In October 1488, Bumi Jeleen left his homeland of Senegal and journeyed to Lisbon to speak to Dom João II, the king of Portugal, in person. Jeleen had been deposed in his home kingdom of Jolof in Senegambia, where he was the de-facto ruler. He brought with him a royal retinue, including men and women of royal blood. Jeleen's loss of his throne was the reason he visited Dom João II: he needed arms to help him reclaim power. He came to Portugal to discuss a military and commercial alliance.[32] What transpired between the two monarchs, one from an African Islamic state and the other of a European Catholic monarchy, was an incredibly significant moment in the history of the early Atlantic world. This was the first example of an African leader personally visiting Europe, and it reflected the deepening bonds between sub-Saharan Africa and Portugal. This chapter explores these deepening bonds and focuses on the ways that West Africans cultivated and utilized their relationships with Portuguese merchants and the Portuguese crown in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Bumi Jeleen's arrival in Portugal exemplifies how elite Africans utilized their status and resources to strategically construct relationships with potential allies to gain advantages over their rivals.[33] The trans-Saharan and Atlantic contexts of Senegambia help to explain how

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[32] See Rui de Pina's "Chronica d'el Rey D. João II" in António Brásio, ed., *Monumenta Missionaria Africana. Africa Ocidental. Coligida e Anotada Pelo António Brásio.*, vol. 1 (Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar, Divisão de Publicaøcões e Biblioteca, 1958).

[33] In different documentary and scholarly writings, 'Bumi Jeleen' is written differently. In Rui de Pina's account, he is referred as 'Bemoim', a lusophication of his Wolof title '*Bumi*', which loosely meant heir apparent, see Philip D. Curtin, *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa: Senegambia in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, n.d.), 9; In his account of the Jolof, Cape Verdean trader André Álvares de Almada, referred to Jeleen as

Jeleen's relationship with the king of Portugal developed out of an extensive history of West Africans who tactfully cultivated personal relationships with foreigners for social, commercial, or political power. The second section of this chapter examines the relationships between the African communities in the Upper Guinea coast and Portuguese traders that lived among them. As will be shown, Portuguese men and their African wives took advantage of what scholar Ronald Burt called 'structural holes' or breaks in the chain of relationships linking Africans in the interior to other Europeans merchants.[34] By bridging different social networks, they were able to outcompete other Europeans and exert commercial control over aspects of the West African coastal trade in slaves and commodities. Portuguese men, the African women that married them, and their offspring were thus in a socially advantageous position because of their ability to facilitate the flow of certain resources between the two groups. This new social network structure, not just the mere existence of a relationship with Portuguese men, conferred unique benefits to African women that increased their social and commercial autonomy.

"Bemoim Guilem". André Álvares de Almada, *Tratado breve dos rios de Guiné do Cabo Verde: dês do rio de Sanagá até os baixos de Santa Ana : de todas as nações de negros que há na dita costa e de seus costumes, armas, trajos, juramentos, guerras : feito pelo capitão André Álvares d'Almada natural da Ilha de San, ...*, ed. António Brásio (Lisboa: Ed. L.I.A.M, 1964), 7; In addition, Bumi Jeleen appears in A. Teixeira da Mota, *D. João Bemoim e a expedição portuguesa ao Senegal em 1489: André Alvares de Almada e André Dornelas* (Junta de Investigaçòes do Ultramar, 1971); Prior to Bumi Jeleen's arrival in Portugal, African royalty from Ethiopia had established diplomatic relationships with Catholic monarchs in Spain and Italy. Northrup also provides an analysis of Bumi Jeleen, see David Northrup, *Africa's Discovery of Europe: 1450 - 1850*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 3–4, 25–26.

[34] Burt, *Structural Holes*.

The Genesis of an African Atlantic

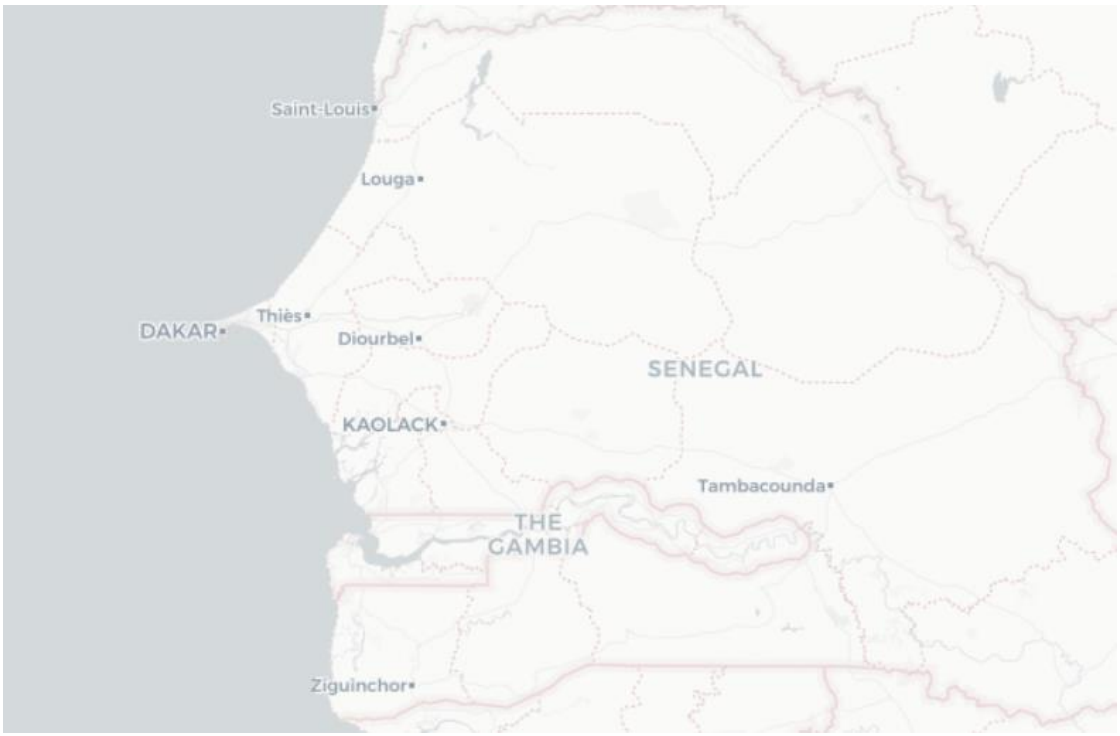
Bumi Jeleen had formerly presided over the Jolof Empire, an empire comprised of vassal states that controlled the northern reaches of Senegambia, a geographic region that was bounded by the Senegal River in the north and the forests of Guinea in the south. Jolof control extended from the Futa Jallon foothills to the east, which was controlled by the waning Mali Empire, to the mouth of the Senegal River on the Atlantic coast.[35] By the time that Jeleen arrived in Portugal, some of the vassal states had begun to exert more autonomy, such as Cayor, Waalo, Bawol, and Siin.[36] The geographic location of Senegambia facilitated regular commerce between West Africans and the people of the desert, as it sat astride the Sahel, a semi-arid band of grasslands that marked the geographic barrier between the sands of the Sahara and sub-Saharan Africa (see Figure 1).[37]

[35] Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*, African Studies Series 92 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 11; Martin Klein, "Servitude Among the Wolof and Sereer of Senegambia," in *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 335–64.

[36] Curtin, *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa*, 9.

[37] Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*, 11.

Figure 1: Map of Senegambia



Bumi Jeleen's arrival in Portugal did not come about by chance. In fact, it was the long history of religious and trade connections linking West Africa and Europe that allowed Jeleen to envisage the king of Portugal as a potential ally and trade partner in the first place. Indeed, West African elites like Jeleen had capacious views of themselves and the world that they inhabited. They lived in a world in which their political, social, and commercial interests were oriented north and east, facing the great (decayed and decaying) empires of Ghana and Mali and the trade, learning and religious networks of Dar al Islam (the Islamic world). Their social and religious networks tied them to the people, culture, goods and ideas of the Near East and as far away as Central and East Asia. The world that Iberians sought to penetrate or circumvent through Atlantic trade had long been at their doorstep. Perhaps the most demonstrative example of this is the Malian Emperor Mansa Musa's famed *hajj* to Mecca, where he spent so much gold dust, he

allegedly deflated the price of gold in the eastern Mediterranean.[38] Thus, West African elites like Jeleen had been a part of this complex world for centuries and they had become skilled in building relationships to benefit them.

For example, when Bumi Jeleen spoke to Dom João II in person, he revealed to his fellow monarch that the Jolof had converted to Islam through trade relations with a desert people known as the "Azenegue."[39] The process of building relationships with religious-trade diasporas was a commonly employed tactic in West Africa going back hundreds of years. The Portuguese had heard of the Azenegue before through previous explorations of the Venetian explorer, Alvise Cadamosto. During his time among the Jolof in 1455, Cadamosto noted how the 'Azanagi', a people whom he described as "brown" from north of the Senegal River, traded with the Jolof. Those same people linked the Jolof Empire to trading centers such as Timbuktu, carrying gold and other valuable goods overland using camels.[40] In addition, the Azenegue and Berber groups had been trading with the Portuguese at their settlement of Arguim in modern-day Mauritania since the 1440s, facilitating a trade in Black captives from Senegal before they began to trade directly with the Jolof.[41]

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[38] Michael Gomez, *African Dominion: A New History of Empire in Early and Medieval West Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 104–23.

[39] "Chronica d'el Rey D. João II" in Brásio, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana. Africa Ocidental. Coligida e Anotada Pelo António Brásio.*, 1958, 1:540.

[40] G.R. Crone, *The Voyages of Cadamosto and Other Documents on Western Africa in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century*, 1st Edition, Hakluyt Society, 2nd Series (Farnham: Routledge, 2016), 17.

[41] Eagle and Wheat, "The Early Iberian Slave Trade to the Spanish Caribbean, 1500 - 1580," 50–51; Crone, *The Voyages of Cadamosto and Other Documents on Western Africa in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century*, 17–30; Franciso Freire complicates understandings Arab commercial control over southwestern Mauritania by showing the central, rather than peripheral, role that non-Arab desert groups such as the Narziguas (which include the Azenegues) played as political and commercial agents Francisco Freire, "The 'Narziguas', Forgotten Protagonists of

As both Jeleen and Cadamosto's accounts demonstrate, the Jolof and sub-Saharan Africans were plugged into an Islamic world through contact with merchant communities. However, it is important to stress that the binary between sub-Saharan Africa (i.e., "Black" Africa) and the Sahara is a false one. The economy of the Sahara was sustained by the movement of people between the desert and the savanna.[42] The Sahara was a bridge both into and out of West Africa.[43] Moreover, Black Africans lived as far north as southern Morocco prior to the Arab conquests of the Sahara.[44] In addition, linkages between sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa even predated the rise of the Islam in the Sahara. At the end of the third century, West Africa was fully integrated into trans-Saharan routes thanks to the introduction of the camel as a beast of burden (100 BCE – 100 CE) by the Romans in North Africa. Once established, the trade between peoples grew over the following centuries.[45]

By the seventh and eighth centuries, Muslims began coming down from North Africa to trade with West Africans. The city of Gao, located south of the Sahara in modern-day Niger, was an important trading center by the ninth century and hosted Muslim residents and merchants.[46]

Saharan History," *Islamic Africa* 2, no. 1 (May 13, 2011): 36–37, 53, 58, https://doi.org/10.5192/21540993020135.

[42] Paul Lovejoy, *Jihad in West Africa during the Age of Revolutions*, 1st edition (Ohio University Press, 2016), 16.

[43] Amy McDougall, "On Being Saharan," in *Saharan Frontiers: Space and Mobility in Northwest Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 39–43.

[44] Chouki El Hamel, *Black Morocco: A History of Slavery, Race, and Islam*, African Studies Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 110–13.

[45] Gomez, *African Dominion: A New History of Empire in Early and Medieval West Africa*, 17; El Hamel, *Black Morocco: A History of Slavery, Race, and Islam*, 111.

[46] Bruce S. Hall, *A History of Race in Muslim West Africa, 1600–1960* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 30–31.

The trans-Saharan trade expanded rapidly afterwards, tying the gold fields of Western Africa to the products and people of the Mediterranean via caravan routes.[47] Powerful West African empires like Ghana grew rich off this new trade with the Arab-Berber tribes that traversed the desert. The kings of Ghana adopted Islam by the eleventh century. And when Ghana's power waned, the Mali Empire took its place, controlling the trans Saharan trade in salt, horses, textiles, gold, and slaves. Its leaders, too, eventually converted to Islam, allowing the Mandinka, the core ethnic group of the Mali Empire to build personal, religious bonds with communities of Muslim merchants and clerics that came to live in places such as Timbuktu. At its peak in the fourteenth century, Mali extended its control over an area that stretched as far west as Senegambia on the Atlantic coast to Goa on the Niger river. The monarchical and hierarchical structure of Mali initiated the political transition of Jolof states, like Bumi Jeleen's, into monarchies.[48]

Islam came to West Africa largely through trade and, perhaps more significantly, through the diaspora of Muslim clerics. Attempts at conquest by Arab states were almost entirely unsuccessful during Islam's rise in the Sahara. By the time the Jolof Empire emerged in the thirteenth century, the Jolof were fully linked into the web of religious and social networks of Islamic school and Muslim identity.[49] Moreover, the Jolof and other groups in Senegambia had become familiar with hosting the members of trade diasporas and forging long-distance

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[47] Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, 2.
[48] Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*, 6.

[49] Rudolph T. Ware and Rudolph T Ware III, *The Walking Qur'an: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa* (Chapel Hill, United States: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 78, 93–95.

relationships with communities – this also extended to the states and polities south of the Gambia, where Muslim clerics and Mandinka traders were hosted by African rulers.

Trade relations with Arabs north of the Sahara also brought goods and people into the Iberian world. Black soldiers appeared in the Arab conquests of Iberia as early as the ninth century, alongside north Africans, and Slavs as enslaved soldiers.[50] Enslaved Black soldiers figured prominently in the Almoravid contests against the Catholic kings in the north of Iberia. Arabic texts from the period indicate that there were four-thousand enslaved Black men fighting alongside the Almoravids during their war against the Alfonso VI of Castile in the eleventh century. Europe and sub-Saharan Africa were thus connected via the Islamic world, and ideas about West Africa and its vast sums of gold reached Europe via those same routes, leading to the now-famous Catalan Atlas, which depicted the Emperor of Mali, Mansa Musa, famed for his fourteenth century *hajj* to Mecca, holding a large golden nugget and a gold staff affixed by a fleur de Lys.[51]

With its ties to Africa and the Islamic world, Iberians were deeply interested in intervening in the trade in gold and spices that crossed the Sahara. The Portuguese kings saw exploration not just as a means of acquiring wealth, but also as a means of leading crusades against the Islamic states in Northern Africa and building alliances with the Christian Ethiopian

[50] Phillips, *Slavery in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, 57–58; El Hamel, *Black Morocco: A History of Slavery, Race, and Islam,* 122–121.

[51] Scholars have called The Catalan Atlas the most beautiful piece of cartographic material produced during the Middle Ages. The atlas has been attributed to two Jewish cartographers from Majorca, Abraham Cresques and Yehuda Cresques, see François-Xavier Fauvelle and Troy Tice, *The Golden Rhinoceros: Histories of the African Middle Ages* (Princeton University Press, 2018), 190–99.

kings in East Africa as part of a larger pattern of religious war against Islam.[52] Thus, Portuguese rulers initially perceived Africa through a religious lens. Their first entry into Africa came through their conquest of Ceuta, a trading and military stronghold controlled by North African Moors in 1415.[53] From Ceuta, Portuguese expansion into the Atlantic took place over several stages beginning with the Atlantic islands of Madeira, the Azores, the Canaries and Cape Verde, as they pushed further south and east.[54]

With the support of the Portuguese prince, Henry the Navigator (*Dom Henrique*), the Portuguese began a period of exploration and trade with the Atlantic in the fifteenth century, establishing contact with the Jolof Empire by the 1440s. Bumi Jelen's predecessors were among the first to become involved in the Atlantic slave trade, and the Senegambian zone quickly became a major exporter of enslaved Africans, acting as a lynchpin for European exploration and enterprise beginning in the second half of the fifteenth century.[55] The Portuguese were not initially peaceful, however. Merchant ships used force to enslave Africans in the communities that hugged the coast, raiding towns and fleeing with captives back to their ships. However, African communities defended themselves. The Jolof of the Siin and Saluum states skillfully attacked the Portuguese raiders at sea. This quickly curbed Portugal's enthusiasm for acquiring

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[52] Charles R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415–1825* (London: Carcanet, 1991), 18.

[53] Josiah Blackmore, *Moorings: Portuguese Expansion and the Writing of Africa* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), xiii–xvi.

[54]David Birmingham, *Trade and Empire in the Atlantic, 1400-1600* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 2.

[55] Klein, "Servitude Among the Wolof and Sereer of Senegambia," 335; Donald R. Wright, *The World and a Very Small Place in Africa: A History of Globalization in Niumi, The Gambia*, 2nd ed. (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 71.

enslaved people by force. Rather, the Portuguese monarchy and its merchant communities established a practice of trading for captives, which they found the Jolof and others much more amenable to do.[56]

According to the sixteenth century royal chronicler, João de Barros, Bumi Jeleen was quite savvy. He quickly became aware of the benefits of hosting Portuguese merchants. Jeleen saw that the Portuguese could provide him with horses and help him to secure and maintain his power. Horses were essential for the Jolof Empire and its military dominance in the region. Like Portugal and other European Kingdoms, the Jolof were expansionist and fielded large, mounted armies. Access to long distance trade with Muslims north of the Sahara provided the Jolof with horses for war and gave them an advantage over their animist rivals in the Sereer.[57] In the Portuguese, Jeleen saw an opportunity to expand his access to horses and the military advantages they offered on the field of battle.[58]

Through Portuguese merchants, Jeleen cultivated a relationship with João II and sent the king of Portugal gifts. By building a bond with João II, Jeleen hoped that their relationship would deepen the commercial ties between Portugal and the Jolof. For his part, João II appeared fond of Jeleen and wanted to convert him to Christianity, something that Jeleen refused to accept, but

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[56] Herman Bennett, *African Kings and Black Slaves : Sovereignty and Dispossession in the Early Modern Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 60; John K. Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa, 1500-1800*, 1st edition (London ; New York: Routledge, 2000), 23.

[57] João de Barros, "Decadas Da India," in *Voyages of Cadamosto and Other Documents on Western Africa in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. G.R. Crone, Hakluyt Society, 2nd Series (Taylor and Francis, 2017), 130. Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa, 1500-1800*.

[58] James L. A. Webb Jr, "The Horse and Slave Trade between the Western Sahara and Senegambia," *The Journal of African History* 34, no. 2 (n.d.): 223–24; For the long history on the trade in horses and their impact on West Africa, see Robin Law, *Horse in West African History* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); Ivana Elbl, "The Horse in Fifteenth-Century Senegambia," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 24, no. 1 (1991): 99–110.

"always gave hope of it."[59] An outright refusal to convert to Christianity might have soured his relationship with the Portuguese king, thus Jeleen played coy in the hopes of continuing to reap the benefits of trade.

Unfortunately for Jeleen, the political environment of the Jolof Empire quickly deteriorated. Jeleen was the de-facto ruler among the Jolof, but his half-brother, Biraam, was the rightful heir to the throne. Biraam was the son of the king before him and was chosen to lead.[60] Jeleen and Biraam shared a mother. Biraam had two other half-brothers on his father's side – Cybitah and Camba. When Biraam assumed the thrown he showed favor to Jeleen who was not a rival claimant to his seat because of their matrilineal connection. Biraam's other half-brothers were, however. In apparent contempt of his half-brothers, Biraam abdicated the throne and handed the reins of power over to Jeleen to pursue a life of pleasure. However, Cybitah and Camba plotted a coup and killed Biraam before launching military campaigns against Jeleen. In need of aid, Jeleen sent his nephew aboard a merchant ship as an ambassador to Portugal to request horses, arms, and men.[61]

In response, João II expressed his desire to help Jeleen, but would only do so if he were baptized. Only then, João II assured Jeleen, could he "help him as a brother by law and Faith, and as a friend who rendered him service." The language that João II expressed in reference to Jeleen demonstrated that he saw Jeleen as a peer. It also reflected the personal relationship that had developed between the two men. Although Jeleen had successfully folded João II into his

[59] de Barros, "Decadas Da India," 130.

[60] de Barros, 129.

[61] de Barros, 130.

personal social network through cultivating their relationship via gifts, letters and personal meetings with his ambassador, the support that a "brother by law and Faith" would owe him was absent without converting to Christianity.[62]

Unfortunately, for Jeleen, he would not have much of a choice. A Portuguese merchant named Gonçalo Coelho was trading in Portugal and sold him horses. Jeleen purchased more than he could pay for at the time. He cleverly used the delay in pay to Coelho and his men to get them to assist him in his war efforts. This worked for Jeleen for more than a year before Coelho and his men decided to return to Portugal. As they prepared to leave, Jeleen paid his debts to them and gave Coelho a letter with another request for military aid. To soften the request, Jeleen also sent gifts, including 100 enslaved boys (*moços*) and a thick bracelet made of gold ("*uma grossa manilha de ouro"*). Jeleen again sent his nephew to act as an ambassador in the king's court. It is not immediately apparent who wrote the letter on Jeleen's behalf, but in it, Jeleen requested trade and military assistance. He wanted ships and arms as part of his plan to retake his kingdom. In his initial response to Jeleen's request, Dom João II refused. Jeleen and the Wolof were Muslims. Dom João II's reasoning was based on the possibility of excommunication. He could not sell arms or provide military assistance to Muslims, whom the Catholic monarchs in Spain and Portugal had waged war against for centuries (in Spain's case the war to take Muslim territories was still ongoing).[63]

Shortly thereafter, Jeleen was defeated in battle and abandoned by his men. He and a group of his most loyal followers left Senegal for the Portuguese trading post of Arguim, perhaps

[62] de Barros, 130.

[63] Brásio, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana. Africa Ocidental. Coligida e Anotada Pelo António Brásio.*, 1958, 1:536–37.

relying on his relationships with Portuguese merchants or the Azenegue tribes to guide him along the seashore until he reached his destination. Once there, he took a ship to Lisbon and sought refuge in the king's court. As Philip Curtin noted, this was a part of Senegambian politics, where deposed rulers sought shelter in a friend's court and asked for military assistance.[64] João II received Jeleen and his followers with all the "pomp and circumstance" befitting a fellow monarch. Amidst the festivities, Jeleen and his men were given gifts and mingled with nobility from across the kingdom. Finally face-to-face, Jeleen and João II had several conversations, during which they discussed matters of theology – through a translator, undoubtedly.

Jeleen, being Muslim, had some knowledge of the Bible. However, João II brought theologians and scholars to inform Jeleen about the Christian faith. They agreed that he should listen to the king deliver mass in the *igreja de Santa Maria* on All Saints Day. Two days later, on November 3rd, 1489, Jeleen was baptized alongside six of his men at two o'clock in the queen's chambers. Through baptism, Jeleen formed new relationships with Portuguese royalty and religious authority. The king and queen became his godparents, and so did the prince, the Duke of Beja, a commissary of the Pope and the bishops of Tangier and Ceuta. Bumi Jeleen became Dom João II and entered a religious, familial, and political relationship with the king of Portugal – he became his vassal.[65] Through a bond defined by his and Dom João's II ambitions, Bumi Jeleen gained the necessary resources to regain power.

João II supplied Jeleen with a fleet of twenty ships and three hundred men. In exchange, João II planned to construct a fort at the mouth of the Senegal River and priests would be able to

[64] Curtin, *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa*, 9.

[65] Brásio, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana. Africa Ocidental. Coligida e Anotada Pelo António Brásio.*, 1958, 1:537–40.

proselytize among the Jolof. The number of ships that set sail for Senegal indicated the depth of João II's investment in the success of this new venture and Jeleen's savvy. On the part of Jeleen, none of this was possible without purposefully crafting a personal relationship with João II first. Jeleen probably did not foresee getting deposed from power following the assassination of his half-brother, the king. But he had seen the benefits of strategically building personal networks with diverse groups for the purposes of sustaining power. The Jolof Empire's regional dominance was built on its integration into Islamic networks and through them access to horses, just like the Mali Empire.

Moreover, the relationship between Bumi Jeleen and Dom João II was mutually beneficial. Jeleen's conversion opened the possibility of deeper trade relations between the Jolof Empire and Portugal through the king's request to build a fort on the Senegal River. In addition, the Portuguese crown saw this as an opportunity to expand Christianity's influence in Africa. In 1443, the Vatican issued a papal bull that granted the Portuguese exclusive rights to trade and conquest in West Africa. The bull was only enforceable if the Portuguese were able to convert sub-Saharan Africa's people. Thus, in Dom João II's eyes, West Africa fell under his religious suzerainty, although he exerted no control on the region's affairs or its people. Jeleen's presence in Portugal, particularly under the guise of converting to Christianity, helped to buttress the Portuguese monarch's claims to West Africa by showing the successful conversion of an African monarch.[66]

[66] P.E. Russell, "White Kings on Black Kings: Rui de Pina and the Problem of Black African Sovereignty," in *The Expansion of Latin Europe, 1000 - 1500: Spain, Portugal and the Atlantic Frontier of Medieval Europe*, vol. 8 (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 159.

However, Bumi Jeleen's story ended before he could be restored to power. The commander of the twenty-ship fleet, Pedro Vaz da Cunha, alleged that Bumi Jeleen and his followers had plotted to betray the king's men. During the construction of the fort, da Cunha killed Bumi Jeleen. The commander's crimes amounted to regicide, a crime most severe in a society that revered noble blood and birth. Dom João II was angered by this, but in a strange twist he decided not to punish Pedro da Cunha. Perhaps Dom João II's decision to stay his hand may have been influenced by a desire to avoid any further embarrassment for what amounted to a massive failure. The Portuguese retreated from Senegal after the commander of the fleet killed Bumi Jeleen, leaving behind a partially constructed fort near the mouth of the Senegal River.[67]

Although Bumi Jeleen and Dom João II's partnership at that time was unprecedented, blending different communities into groups was a common practice in West African history. By growing out their social networks, African leaders sought to gain access to valuable resources, protect themselves and their lineages, and expand their power. But they did not always succeed. Bumi Jeleen's attempt to retake his royal seat through his relationship with the crown may have failed, but it was remarkably ambitious attempt and illustrates the scope of West African rulers' visions for themselves in the Atlantic world. Despite Bumi Jeleen's tragic tale, African leaders continued to fold Portuguese monarchs into their social networks into the sixteenth century.

Approximately forty years after Bumi Jeleen was killed by his would-be allies, another Jolof nobleman utilized his relationship with Portuguese royalty as a resource to construct a fort in his lands. In 1529, Gudumel, the Lord of Bezeguiche (a Portuguese name for the bay in modern day Dakar, Senegal) wrote a letter to Dom João III. He formally requested that he be

[67] W. Raymond Wood, "An Archaeological Appraisal of Early European Settlements in the Senegamba," *The Journal of African History* 8, no. 1 (1967): 43–44.

given masons and stone workers to help build a fortress in Bezeguiche. Gudumel told the king that he sent an ambassador "seven or eight years ago" to the previous king, his father, Dom Manuel, but his request had not been fulfilled. This occurred even though Gudumel "loved" Dom Manuel "very much" and that he had been "faithful to him and all of the white men, his vassals, that entered my lands."[68]

By the time that Gudumel wrote to Dom João III, the Jolof of Bezeguiche had been trading with the Portuguese for nearly eighty years. After 1450, Bezeguiche served as an important waypoint for Portuguese armadas to acquire water before long journeys. Because of its location relative to Iberia, the size of bay, and access to fresh water for ships, Bezeguiche received more Portuguese fleets than other important Atlantic ports such as Ribeira Grande on Cape Verde during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries (see Figure 2). The Cape Verde archipelago was at the center of Portuguese traffic to and from West Africa during this time. That Bezeguiche received more Portuguese armadas than Cape Verde demonstrates its importance to early Portuguese exploration and commerce.[69] Gudumel had thus come to power in an era that was increasingly shaped by interactions with the Atlantic world.

[68] António Brásio, ed., *Monumenta Missionaria Africana. Africa Ocidental. Coligida e Anotada Pelo António Brásio.*, vol. 2 (Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, Divisão de Publicaøcões e Biblioteca, 1958), 214–15.

[69] Avelino Teixeira da Mota, "Ilha de Santiago e Angra de Bezeguiche, escalas da Carreira da Índia," *Do Tempo e da História* II (1968): 141–49.

Figure 2: Bezeguiche

In addition, this new period marked a transformation in the structure of the relationships between the West African elites and the Portuguese crown. For example, unlike his father, João III had grown up in a Portuguese royal house with direct ties to Senegambia and the Upper Guinea coast. His father, Manuel I, had been Bumi Jeleen's godparent and attended his baptism as the Duke of Beja. And Dom João II, from whom he drew his name, began a relationship with Jeleen and supported his attempt to retake power in Senegambia. According to João de Barros, although the mission to re-instate Jeleen had been a failure, the local lords in Senegambia saw the Portuguese fleet and, just as Jeleen had done, actively began to cultivate relationships with João II in the hopes of building a powerful new ally.[70]

[70] de Barros, "Decadas Da India," 142–43.

Gudumel was among several West African elites to exchange letters and gifts with Portuguese monarchs since Jeleen's time. One letter revealed that in 1508, Gudumel's ambassador to Dom Manuel's court was given clothes as a gift to deliver to Gudumel.[71] Although only a few letters Gudumel's remain, documentation from other West African elites, like those in the Kingdom of Oere in Western Nigeria, in the sixteenth century survived.[72] Further, through the limited correspondence between the Lord of Bezeguiche's and Dom João III, we can catch a glimpse of the ways that West African elites interacted with Portuguese monarchs to take advantage of what the Atlantic world had to offer them and how they positioned themselves within it. Gudumel was not fighting a civil war like Bumi Jeleen, but he was living in a changing political climate that saw the political stability of the Jolof Empire deteriorating. The Sereer, a closely-related group that that the Jolof Empire had once dominated, were ascending in power (aided by trade in horses with the Portuguese) and selling Jolof as slaves.[73] Perhaps it was in light of these new changes that in the message that Gudumel sent to Dom João III he wrote "in my old age, I would enjoy retreating from my adversaries in this castle." For Gudumel, the fort meant both trade and security, and maybe even an opportunity to flaunt his elite status and power.[74] Gudumel and Bumi Jeleen's lives illustrate the ways that elite

[71] Brásio, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana. Africa Ocidental. Coligida e Anotada Pelo António Brásio.*, 1958, 2:44.

[72] Jorge Fonseca, "Portugal e o Reino de Oere Nos Séculos XVI e XVII. Missionação, Escravatura e Intercâmbios Culturais," *Anais de História de Além-Mar* 17 (2016): 123–46.

[73] Green, *The Rise of Transatlantic Slave Trade in Africa: 1300 - 1589*, 80–83; Curtin, *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa*, 9–10.

[74] Brásio, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana. Africa Ocidental. Coligida e Anotada Pelo António Brásio.*, 1958, 2:215.

Africans in Senegambia were able to utilize their social stations and resources to formulate relationships with the Portuguese crown.

Trade Diasporas and the Upper Guinea Coast

Along the Upper Guinea coast, local leaders allowed Portuguese men to live among them as traders. Some of these men adopted African cultural norms and "threw" themselves among their West African host societies – beginning in the fifteenth century, they became known as *lançados* a term derived from the verb *lançar (*"to throw").[75] How they were integrated into West African societies was dependent on the social structure of the communities. Although they were welcome as traders, the political structure among the Wolof and Sereer states of Senegambia prevented *lançados* from incorporating themselves into elite social networks and power associations, thus limiting some elements of their social mobility and control. Further south, however, *lançados* were able to intermarry and successfully integrate into elite family networks in the societies of the Upper Guinea coast more thoroughly.[76]

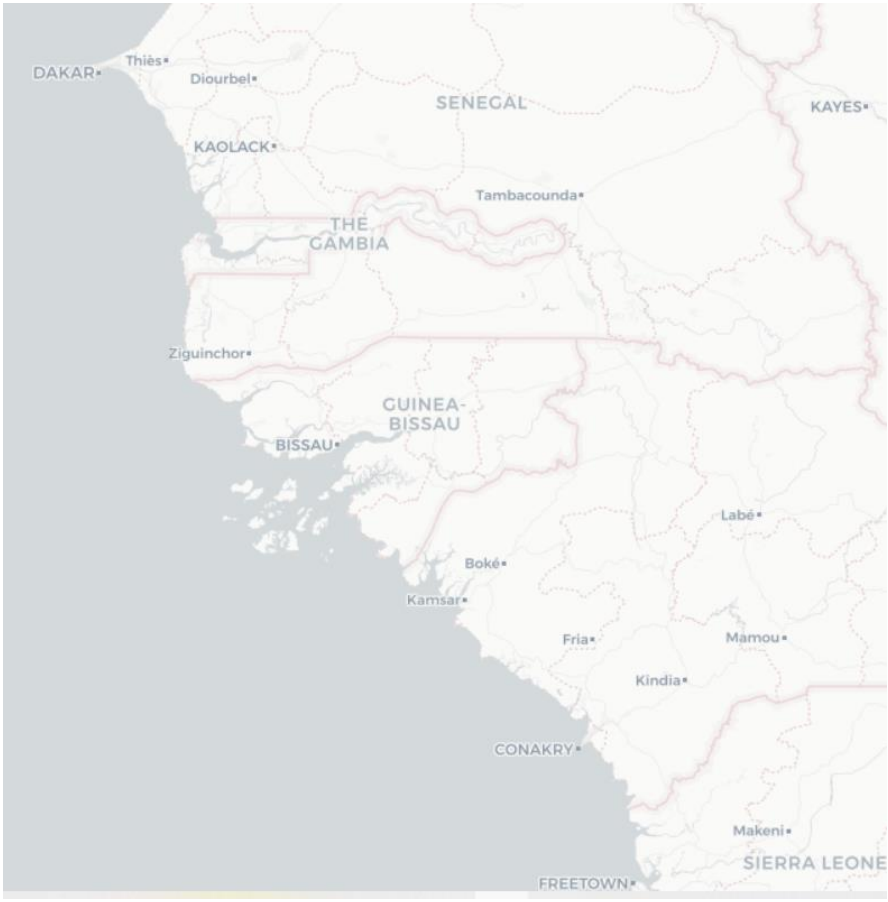
Lançados, their African wives and their Luso-African children played an important role in shaping the history of the Upper Guinea coast because they helped to facilitate trade and access to the Atlantic via their extended web of social relationships. Among the acephalous or decentralized communities in Guinea Bissau, *lançados* were able to exert much more control through their social ties, marrying into important lineage groups which helped them to infiltrate

[75] Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast*, 71–94.

[76] Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, 51–53.

elite social strata. This new social network configuration by the *lançados* was particularly advantageous because they often had linkages to the broader Atlantic world via familial, religious, and commercial ties to Cape Verde and Europe and to the African social and commercial world through their wives.[77] Where there were gaps in the social ties between African communities and European merchants, *lançados* were at a particular advantage. By being able to bridge relationships between separate groups in the Upper Guinea coast, *lançados* were able to gather information and resources from both groups, while also acting as a distributor to either of them.

Figure 3: The Upper Guinea Coast



[77] Walter Hawthorne, *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves: Transformations along the Guinea-Bissau,1400 - 1900* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003), 56–60.

Portuguese *lançados* first made their way to the Upper Guinea Coast from the Portuguese islands of Cape Verde. The Cape Verde archipelago was first discovered in the 1460s, just as the Portuguese were pushing further south and east in the Atlantic. The Portuguese discovery of Cape Verde coincided with their expansion of trade with Senegambia and the Upper Guinea coast.[78] The trade between the settlers of Cape Verde and the West African coast was bolstered by support from the Portuguese crown. The Portuguese king Afonso V had this expansion of commercial networks along the coast of Africa in mind when he issued his royal decree of 1466 to the settlers of Cape Verde. The king granted settlers of Cape Verde exclusive and indefinite "*pera sempre*" trade rights with the coast of Guinea, except for the island of Arguin, which had been monopolized by the crown. Settlers were given dominion over the "moors, blacks and whites" on the islands, and they could trade in all merchandise except for iron bars, guns, and ships. Cape Verde settlers were also freed from paying import duties on goods that they brought into Portugal from Cape Verde including goods from their "estates and homesteads." Additionally, merchants were not required to pay tithes on goods that they traded throughout the Portuguese realm from the Atlantic islands such as the Canaries, Madeira, and the Azores.[79]

[78] See Carreira, *Cabo Verde: Formacão e Extincão de Uma Sociedade Escravocrata (1460 - 1878).*

[79] Brásio, *Monumenta Missionaria,* vol. 1, document. 64, p. 431-434.

Figure 4: Cape Verde and the Upper Guinea Coast

The trading zones in Upper Guinea and Senegambia were already well-established before the Portugues settled Cape Verde. Linked by coastal and riverine routes, as well as overland caravan routes, the peoples of Senegambia and Upper Guinea brought goods to and from the markets along the Senegal and Niger rivers. Guinea-Bissau, which made up the lands between the Gambia River and the Futa Jallon highlands was the central point of commercialism for Biafara-Sapi, Banyun-Bak and Mande people. These groups and their social and commercial networks were especially important for the transatlantic slave trade, as the Portuguese traded extensively with them.[80] For example, the Biafara and Sape conducted coastwise and riverine trade with one another intensively before and during the era of the transatlantic slave trade. Biafara traders came south to trade with Sape-speaking groups. This helped to develop commercial and social relationships between them and disseminated Sape as a trade language. In addition, the Papel (a Bran-speaking group) often acted as intermediaries between the Biafara-

[80] Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*, 1–8; Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, 10–13, 37.

Sape networks and other ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau, suggesting that they shared a common tongue.[81]

Frequent interactions between the Portuguese and the people of Upper Guinea facilitated changes in both Cape Verde and the coast. The entry of merchants from Santiago, Cape Verde into African trade networks created a marked shift in the tone of regional trade in Upper Guinea. The demand for captives pushed trading networks towards slavery and away from the trade in commodities. This emphasis on slavery was a significant change in the commercial and social practices of Upper Guinea. The societies of Senegambia on the other hand, such as those dominated by the Mandinka and Wolof, would have already had long established traditions of slavery. The influence of Islam in the region had exposed societies there to slavery before the Portuguese arrived on their shores. [82] In the case of trade with Senegambia, the Portuguese simply helped to redirect the flow of slaves to the Atlantic.

Most of the enslaved people that populated Cape Verde coming from regions controlled by the Jolof Empire and the Mandinka and Banyun states of Senegambia and Upper Guinea.[83] Despite access to the markets of the Upper Guinea coast and Senegambia, the European populations in Cape Verde grew little until the turn of the sixteenth century. [84] As a result, the

[81] Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, 39–44.

[82] Green, *Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade*, 99-102.

[83] Brooks, *Landlords and Strangers*, 140-41.

[84] Christiano José de Senna Barcellos, *Subsidios para a história de Cabo Verde e Guiné*, vol. 1 of *Documentos* (Praia: Instituto da Biblioteca Nacional e do Livro, 2003), 75.

two main islands of Cape Verde, Santiago and Fogo, were largely populated by Africans.[85] Despite initial ordinances that favored the settlers of Cape Verde, the Portuguese crown issued regulations that choked trade between Cape Verde, the other Atlantic Islands and the Upper Guinea coast beginning the late 1460s. Dom Manuel issued additional regulations at the end of the fifteenth century, passing increasingly restrictive laws on trade and rolling back privileges that his predecessor had granted the settlers decades earlier in what became known as the Manueline Ordinations.[86] This retraction of the rights and privileges for the settlers of Cape Verde also affected their trade with the other Atlantic islands. The new controls limited the prospects of the Cape Verde residents and helped contribute to an emigration of Portuguese to the coast of Africa.[87]

The existence of *lançados* can be understood as a result of two interacting systems: a top-down legal regime that limited the prospects of residents in Santiago and a commercial system that necessitated interactions between new cultural elements along the coast of West Africa and promoted intercultural exchange. Tighter restrictions on trade beginning in the 1470s were among the principal causes in the growth in the number of *lançados* and *tangomãos* defecting and living on the coast. The more taxing restrictions became, the more Cape Verdeans were prompted to seek their fortunes elsewhere. The changes that the new trade laws engendered, as

[85] Maoria João Soares and Maria Manuel Torrão, "The Mande Through and In the Cape Verde Islands," in *Mande Studies 9,* eds. Peter Mark, José ds Silva Horta (Madison: University of Wisconsin African Studies Program: 2007), 137-138.

[86] Brásio, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana. Africa Ocidental. Coligida e Anotada Pelo António Brásio.,* 1958, 1:579–81.

[87] Carreira, *Cabo Verde: Formacão e Extincão de Uma Sociedade Escravocrata (1460 - 1878),* 54–55.

well as the king providing licenses to trade in Upper Guinea indiscriminately, actively worked against contractors in Cape Verde, but benefitted *lançados* and foreigners looking to trade with them on the coast.[88] There settlers could treat with foreigners and local lords without being under the watchful eye of the crown and could act as go-betweens.

The proximity of Cape Verdeans to the coast and their integration into West African cultural practices soon became a threat to Portuguese monopoly of the slave trade. Their closeness to the people of Senegambia and the Upper Guinea coast allowed them to move fluidly between the coast and Cape Verde. Moreover, this new group of people had access to markets that were inaccessible to outsiders. Many of the first *lançados* were new Christians. Fears of crypto-Jewry permeated the Spanish and Portuguese worlds. While trade along the rivers of Guinea were largely motivated by the Portuguese desire to acquire slaves and gold, religious ideology still colored Portuguese interactions. To the Portuguese, *lançados* were godless and threatened both trade and faith.[89] In spite of intimidation and threats of excommunication from the Catholic Church, however, the number of *lançados* continued to increase in the sixteenth century.[90]

Part of the distrust around *lançados* had to do with their ability to participate in unofficial networks of trade with Africans and competitors from Europe. They were operating outside of highly regulated trade rules, and this not only undermined the authority of the Portuguese Crown, but also threatened the monopoly that the Crown was hoping to sustain in its trade with the coast.

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[88] Hawthorne, *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves: Transformations along the Guinea-Bissau,1400 - 1900,* 39.

[89] Hawthorne, *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves,* 58.

[90] Carreira, *Cabo Verde,* 49, 70.

In efforts to maintain control, King Manuel issued more restrictions at the turn of the century. A letter to João de Castro Burgales, a merchant presumably from Santiago, from the year 1500 illustrates this change. The letter grants Burgales property valued at 50,000 *reis*. This is, however, after the property had been seized from Gonçalo de Paiva, another Cape Verde-based merchant, for trading iron with the Mandinga in exchange for enslaved people. Paiva had violated trade laws established decades earlier but that had been re-codified by King Manuel. Burgales was only required to pay a tenth of the property's value to the crown in exchange for Castro's titles to his land.[91] The process of stripping away land from a merchant who had been found guilty of trading illegally with the coast continued into the sixteenth century.

In 1514, the crown prohibited the sale of certain goods such as iron, arms, brown shells, cloth from India and cloths with red and yellow dyes. This new ordination explicitly prohibited settlers from "*Cape Verde ou Fogo*" from trading in certain beads (*matamugos)*, cloaks from Chaul, tin shackles, brocades from Flanders and silk shirts among other things, under penalty of the local court taking half of the accused's property, with the other half going to the accuser. This was in addition to the accused losing all his merchandise and being "degraded" for a period of two years.[92] These restrictions were part of a general trend in which the crown sought to

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[91] António Brásio, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana: Africa Ocidental (1500-1569),* vol. 2 (Lisbon: Agencia-Geral do Ultramar, 1956) document 1, pp. 3-4.

[92] Brásio, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana* vol. 2, document 26 (pp. 72-73). This document mentions cloaks, *"capas,"* from Chaul. It is important to note, that Chaul is, at this time, a Portuguese trading outpost in India. The fact that the document mentions "*panos de India*" and "*capas de Chaul*" separately suggests that not only were Africans interested in cloth from India, but that they were willing to trade for cloths that had already been woven into a particular style. This one document allows historians to get a glimpse at the variety of goods that one could expect to be traded along the coast in exchange for gold or slaves. Thornton demonstrates the various ways that Africans dictated the terms of trade and the items that were acceptable: John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

exercise greater control over the trade in enslaved people between Cape Verde and the coast of Africa, and these new laws also impacted trade with the Atlantic islands.

Another law of 1514 documents this phenomenon. In the first few passages, the new law further regulates the behavior of Cape Verdeans in Upper Guinea. "From here and now on," it read "no one of any quality or condition [can] be cast (*lançar*) among the Blacks in any part of Guinea: nor stay with said Blacks for any reason." The document went on to state that those who did so would lose their property. The associates of the *lançados* that were deemed complicit in their behavior would also "incur the same penalty." This new ordination went on to further legislate the trade in enslaved people between Cape Verde, the Azores and Madeira. Those trading in enslaved people without a license to "Santiago and the other islands of Cape Verde, and the island Terceira and Madeira and in any other islands," would lose their salaries as well as incur additional penalties.[93]

Through intermarriage, African women were able to link their African lineages and social networks with those of their Portuguese husbands. By doing this, African women helped to bridge separate social groups and extend their own social network into the Atlantic world. Because of these new connections and the control that some *lançados* were able to exert through their social connections with people in the interior and at sea, more enslaved Africans were taken from Guinea-Bissau than any other region in Upper Guinea. Their embeddedness into the communities their allowed them to exert levels of control over local trade. This, when paired with their social relations and familiarity with Portuguese merchants through their European forebears, gave them an advantage.

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[93] Brasio, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana,* document 28, p. 89-91.

Their access to both transatlantic commercial networks *and* local African social and commercial networks, initially through their wives or mother's family ties, gave them a privileged position, African women were an essential part in framing and sustaining relationships with the Portuguese *lançados*. These relationships also benefitted them. Women among the coastal communities consolidated and even extended their own personal autonomy through their relationships with Portuguese men. At times, these women traders were called *nharas* or *senhoras*. Historians have previously explored their role among the Portuguese and in the later periods other European traders such as the Dutch and English.[94] Moreover, re-thinking the development of a Creole society in Upper Guinea as the result of active participation of African women shaping their own relationships (culturally, sexually, and commercially) with white men rather than the simple absence of white women provides a more nuanced view of interactions on the coast. It also emphasizes African women's roles as conveyors of African heritage in the Atlantic.[95]

Despite intimidation and threats of excommunication from the Catholic Church, the number of *lançados* continued to increase in the sixteenth century.[96] No longer bound by the

[94]See For nharas in both a Luso-African and Spanish Atlantic context see, Wheat, *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean, 1570 - 1640*, chap. 4; In addition, some African women's social and commercial lives in the Spanish Caribbean mirrored the roles those of African women in the Upper Guinea coast, see Wheat, "Nharas and Morenas Horras: A Luso-African Model for the Social History of the Spanish Caribbean, c. 1570–1640."

[95] Philip J. Havik, "Mary and Misogyny Revisited: Gendering the Afro-Atlantic Connection," in *Creole Societies in the Portuguese Colonial Empire*, eds. Philip J. Havik, Malyn Newitt (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 40-45.

[96] Carreira, *Cabo Verde: Formacão e Extincão de Uma Sociedade Escravocrata (1460 - 1878)*, 49,70; Maria Manuel Ferraz Torrão, "Actividade Comercial Externa de Cabo Verde : Organização, Funcionamento, Evolução," in *História Geral de Cabo Verde*, vol. I (Lisboa: Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical, 1991), 250.

trade regulations that the Portuguese had put in place, *lançados* were free to trade with anyone, which included other Europeans. Their activities caused so much concern that port authorities were ordered to check returning ships for the correct number of white men. Ship owners could even be fined if one of their crewmen fled the ship.[97] If someone had been identified as fleeing to live among the societies on the coast, their property could be seized by the crown and resold to other residents in Cape Verde.[98] An ordinance from 1517 also barred free black residents going to live on the coast The punishment for which would be to have their property seized – indicating that a propertied group of free blacks had developed in Cape Verde. There is little mention of free or enslaved Black people fleeing to the coast, but the ordinance from 1517 suggests that some probably did flee.

While trade along the rivers of Guinea were largely motivated by the Portuguese desire to acquire enslaved people and gold, religious ideology still colored Portuguese interactions with, and conceptions of, the people there. To the Portuguese, *lançados* threatened both trade and faith.[99] Around the turn of the century, ordinations passed by King Manuel I banned the commercial activities of the *lançados* under penalty of death.[100] In another attempt to limit the flow of *novos cristãos* to the lands of West Africa, King Manuel I passed yet another ordination in 1515, effectively restricting their migration to Cape Verde. This same decree banned the

[97] Brásio, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana. Africa Ocidental. Coligida e Anotada Pelo António Brásio.*, 1958, 2:139–41.

[98] Brásio, 2:89–91.

[99] Hawthorne, *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves*, 58

[100] Arlindo M. Caldeira, *Escravos e Traficantes no Império Português* (Lisboa: A Esfera dos Livros, 2013), 58.

movement of noblemen, *fidalgos,* to the island of Santiago.[101] Authorities issued another decree in 1517 that required that ships returning from the nearby coast were searched to make sure that the crews had the same number of white men as when they left. Those that did not faced penalties, including seizure of their property.[102]

However, the merchants in Cape Verde did not share the same concerns of the authorities in Lisbon. L*ançados,* though seen as enemies of Portugal, formed 'tactical alliances' with the shipowners in Cape Verde.[103] Their social networks gave them access to resources and information that helped facilitate the trade in goods and enslaved Africans. Moreover, they were free from the policing of the Portuguese crown on the coast and so they could trade with non-Portuguese merchants when they came Upper Guinea coast. The Cape Verdean trader André Alvares de Almada remarked on this with clear displeasure. According to him, *lançados* enjoyed trading with the "enemies" (the English) and threw banquets that included musical instruments when they received payment. Because of their preference for the English, "all trade" on the coast from Cape Verde to the Gambia was lost.[104] In his disdain for the English-*lancado* camaraderie that he observed, André Alvares de Almada revealed the importance of social network structure in shaping the trade on in Senegambia and the Upper Guinea coast. As intermediaries between

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[101] Brásio, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana. Africa Ocidental. Coligida e Anotada Pelo António Brásio.*, 1958, 2:99–100.

[102] Brásio, 2:139–41.

[103] Ferraz Torrão, "Actividade Comercial Externa de Cabo Verde : Organização, Funcionamento, Evolução," 252.

[104] Almada, *Tratado breve dos rios de Guiné do Cabo Verde*, 23–24; English entry into West African trading zones was sporadic until the middle of the sixteenth century P.E.H Hair, "The Experience of the Sixteenth-Century English Voyages to Guinea," *The Mariner's Mirro* 83, no. 1 (1997): 3–13.

two different communities, that is the English and Senegambians/Upper Guineans, *lançados* were able to take advantage of structural holes that existed between them. Thus, Almada's disdain appeared to be borne out of the fact that the English were operating in 'Portuguese' trading zones *and* that *lançados* were in a socially advantageous position to help them.

The social and commercial webs of the *lancados* and Luso-Africans also tied them to Jewish merchant communities throughout the Atlantic. Peter Mark and Jose da Silva Horta have shown how the Jewish Atlantic diaspora included the coasts of West Africa, through a focus on the Petite Côte in Senegal. Jewish merchants built communities there and helped to facilitate the trade in bladed weapons.[105] In addition, some of Lsuo-Africans and *lancados* operated on Spanish ships coming from the Canary Islands to trade.[106] Their knowledge of the Upper Guinea coast and the cultural customs of its communities not only helped to facilitate trade but also likely helped to assuage feelings of distrust, which could quickly develop into violence.[107] The development of new Luso-African identities along the coasts of West Africa tied local African women and Portuguese men into kinship and trade networks that extended into the African interior and out into the Atlantic.[108]

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[105] Mark and Horta, *The Forgotten Diaspora*, 21–49, 53–89, 106–18; To see how the Jewish diaspora constituted a in important of the Portuguese diaspora, see Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation upon the Ocean Sea*.

[106] Wheat, "Tangomãos En Tenerife y Sierra Leona A Mediados Del Siglo XVI," 547–58.

[107] José Lingna Nafafe, "Lançados, Culture and Identity: Prelude to Creole Societies on the Rivers of Guinea and Cape Verde," in *Creole Societies in the Portuguese Colonial Empire* (Newcastle upon Tyne, England: Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2015), 63–64.

[108] Philip J. Havik and Malyn Newitt, "Introduction," in *Creole Societies*, 8-10.

Ultimately, this chapter showcases the ways that changes in the Atlantic world fomented the development of new social relationships for Africans in Senegambia and the Upper Guinea coast, initiating major changes in their lives. Bumi Jeleen and others exemplify how Africans strategized to build relationships with Europeans during the era of the early Atlantic slave trade. The West African elite were able to actively build relationships that favored them because of their status and the resources available to them. Although Bumi Jeleen suffered a tragic end, the details behind how he navigated his new Portuguese network revealed his tremendous forethought to see a potential ally in the Portuguese king in order to achieve his political and commercial aims. This chapter also examined the social mechanisms that allowed African women on the coast to extend their agency through their unions to Portuguese and the social structure of their relationships. The following chapter assess how social networks impacted the lives of enslaved Africans in Iberia

Chapter 2

The Different Lives of Rodrigo Lopez: Iberia and Cape Verde

"The story of slavery is the story of slaves, who could live any of a variety of lives depending on the circumstances in which they found themselves" – William D. Philips, *Slavery in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*[109]

Enslaved people lived a multitude of different lives in the Atlantic world. Depending on the conditions, they lived as freed men and women and sometimes as soldiers, servants, overseers, explorers, sailors, artisans, innkeepers, or mistresses among many other things. One of the defining features of the Atlantic world was mobility, the movement of people, things, and ideas.[110] Identities could be as fluid as the ocean itself. In one place with one set of

[109] Phillips, *Slavery in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, 9.

[110]See Berlin's classic article regarding Atlantic Creoles Berlin, "From Creole to African: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African-American Society in Mainland North America"; For a longer treatment of Atlantic Creoles in the North American context, see Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998); Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundations of the Americas, 1585–1660.*; Jane Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); For original theorizations on black Atlantic traditions Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); For the Black Urban Atlantic in an Iberian colonial context also see Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, Matt D. Childs, and James Sidbury, *The Black Urban Atlantic in the Age of the Slave Trade* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Wheat, *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean, 1570 - 1640*; James Sweet, *Domingos Alvares: African Healing and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Lisa A Lindsay and John Wood Sweet, *Biography and the Black Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014); Pablo Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean: Creating Knowledge and Healing in the Early Modern Atlantic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

circumstances, an enslaved man might be one thing, and in a different place under different circumstances, he might become another. Perhaps the most famous example of this is Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, an enslaved man that became an abolitionist, author, and sailor.[111] However, circumstances were often generated by people. And as this chapter will argue, the ways that enslaved people experienced their captivity were less dependent upon circumstance than on their social bonds within their community.

Relationships were of critical importance in framing the lives of the enslaved. Positive or negative relationships could completely change the circumstances around an enslaved person. For example, in 1526, Rodrigo Lopez was forced aboard a slave ship docked at the Portuguese island of Santiago, Cape Verde by a vengeful relative. Despite cries that he was a free man, he was chained beneath the decks and ferried across the Atlantic Ocean to the Spanish Caribbean where he was sold as a slave. Although he had been freed previously, Rodrigo spent many years trying to prove his freedom before Spanish authorities.[112] This chapter investigates Rodrigo's life circumstances leading up to his illegal enslavement. It considers how he lived as a the (likely) enslaved son of a wealthy man in both Portugal and the Cape Verde islands before being freed. Most importantly, it emphasizes the kinds of relationships that Rodrigo developed during his time in both places to explain his experiences. In addition, I argue that negative relationships,

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[111] Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself* (London: Printed by the Author, 1789); On methodological techniques for assessing identity, see James Sweet, "Mistaken Identities? Olaudah Equiano, Domingos Alvares, and the Methodological Challenges of Studying the African Diaspora.," *American Historical Review*, 2009, 279–306; Also see Paul Lovejoy, "Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa – What's in a Name?," *Atlantic Studies: Literary* 9 (2012): 164–84, https://doi.org/10.1080/14788810.2012.664957.

[112] Archivo General de Indias, Justicia 11, num. 4, "Rodrigo de Leon mercader con Rui Lopez de color negro," Seville, 1532. Henceforth Archivo General de Indias will be referred as the AGI.

that is individuals or groups of people that had a bad or harmful relationship with a free or enslaved person, were among the most significant factors behind the precarity that free people experienced as colonial subjects.

To explain Rodrigo's circumstances, I analyze the linked histories of slavery in Iberia and in the Cape Verde islands and his lives in both. This chapter also relies upon historical social network analysis to better flesh out the various types of relationships that Rodrigo had, what benefits they conferred to him, and how the structure of his relationships affected how he lived in Portugal and Cape Verde. My research takes into consideration how Rodrigo lived and investigates the communities that surrounded him in each place to show the growth and development of his transatlantic community. I add crucial context to Rodrigo's experiences through the people and places around him and treats the *linkages* between him and the people with whom he interacted as important units of analysis themselves. And while my analysis is largely focused on a single individual, I offer historical social network analysis as a means of interpreting free and enslaved Africans' experiences more generally. I argue that the size, structure, and composition of their networks were significant factors in determining their avenues for freedom or re-enslavement, as well as their physical and social mobility.

In addition, this chapter argues that Rodrigo operated at the forefront of an emergent transatlantic economy in Cape Verde through his social connections. His relationship with his enslaver and father, Rui Lopez, granted him access to enormous wealth and privilege. In addition, his time as an overseer and his eventual role as the executor of the Lopez estate shows that free and enslaved black people were significant actors in shaping the early Atlantic economy. My analysis provides new insight into the social and commercial structure of the

Atlantic world by revealing the bonds that connected free and enslaved Africans to larger systems of trade.

Rodrigo's Life in Lisbon

Rodrigo was born to an enslaved woman in Lisbon, Portugal sometime in the early sixteenth century. His mother worked in the household of Rui Lopez – a knight of the Order of Santiago, one of the three military orders governed by the royal family of Portugal.[113] Rodrigo also had a sister, Catalina. Rodrigo, his sister, and his mother were among thousands of other Africanand Afro-descended people living in Portugal during the sixteenth century. By the 1510s, Portuguese slave merchants had already transported tens of thousands of captive Africans to Portuguese cities and other Atlantic slave markets. Most of the captives during this time had been taken from Senegambia and the Upper Guinea coast.[114] Lisbon in had a vibrant African presence by the turn of the sixteenth century. African washerwomen could often be seen fetching water from its copious fountains for the homes of their enslavers, Black litter bearers carried

[113] Francis A. Dutra, "Evolution of the Portuguese Order of Santiago, 1492-1600," *Mediterranean Studies* 4 (1994): 63–72; Iva María Cabral, *A Primeira Elite Colonial Atlântica : Dos "Homens Honrados Brancos" de Santiago à "Nobreza Da Terra" : Finais Do Séc. XV - Início Do Séc. XVII*, 1a. ed (Praia, Cabo Verde: Pedro Cardoso, Livraria, 2015), 82-83.; AGI, Justicia 11, n. 4, fols 7r, 20v.

[114] Ivana Elbl, "The Volume of the Early Atlantic Slave Trade, 1450-1521," *The Journal of African History* 38, no. 1 (1997): 31–75; Antonio de Almeida Mendes, "Portugal e o Tráfico de Escravos Na Primeira Metade Do Séc. XVI," *Africana Studia* 7 (2004): 26 Mendes shows that between 2,000 and 3,000 Africans arrived in Portugal each year after 1510. Elbl's data suggests that 156,000 African captives were sold to European markets between 1450 and 1521, an annual average of just over 2,000 enslaved people; Wheat, *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean, 1570 - 1640*, 21.

their owners through the streets, and enslaved domestics were a common sight as they ran errands about the city.[115]

Lisbon was also home to a significant population of free Blacks and mulattoes. They sold goods at markets and on doorsteps, worked the docks, and contributed to the city's culture and trade. They even established a black confraternity, *Nossa Senhora de Rosario dos Pretos*.[116] Lisbon even hosted a confraternity that allowed blacks and whites to join. And black dances had been a part of Lisbon's festive life since the middle of the fifteenth century.[117] Due to the increasing volume of the slave trade, roughly 10% of Lisbon's population was Black by around 1550.[118] The city's demographic transformation was vividly portrayed in a now famous sixteenth-century oil painting called *The King's Fountain* (Chafariz d'El-Rey in Portuguese). In the painting, the artist depicts a large crowd surrounding the titular fountain, and more than a third of the crowd is black or Afro-descendant. Near the center of the painting is a Black man atop a horse with the sigil of the Order of Santiago bright red on his cloak. His name was João de Sá Panasco, a court jester. He had been made a knight by Dom João III and inducted into the same military order as Rui Lopez.[119] João de Sá's elevation was a direct result of his service to

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[115] John L. Vogt, "The Lisbon Slave House and African Trade, 1486-1521," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 117, no. 1 (1973): 1; Isabel Castro Henriques, *A herança Africana em Portugal* (Portugal: CTT, 2009).

[116] Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves and Freedmen in Portugal, 1441-1555*, 78; Jorge Fonseca, "Black Africans in Portugal during Cleynaert's Visit," in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010b), 115.

[117] Phillips, *Slavery in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, 94–96.

[118] Saunders, 1982

[119] The painting titled *The King's Fountain* was originally produced in 1570. Annemarie Jordan, "Slaves in the Lisbon Court of Catherine of Austria," in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 159–61.

and bond with the king. This shows that free blacks could hold status in Portuguese society and that they participated in its institutions. [120]

After Lisbon, Seville represented the second largest market for captives in Iberia. [121]Beginning in the fifteenth century, the trade in Black Africans rapidly changed the racial demographics of and enslaved populations there. By the 1480s, Black Africans made up the majority of the enslaved.[122] By 1565, Seville had a population of 85,538 but a significant portion of its people were of African origin, with 6,327 enslaved people in the city (both sub-Saharan and North African) and perhaps double that number of free people of African descent.[123] And as in Portugal, free and enslaved blacks in Spanish cities found ways to build community through religious brotherhoods and festivities.[124] Blacks in Granada celebrated Corpus Christi through traditional dances from Africa in parades there.[125] Across all the major ports and cities in Iberia,

[120] A.C. de C.M. Saunders, "The life and humour of João de Sá Panasco, o negro, former slave, court jester and gentleman of the Portuguese royal household (fl. 1524-1567)" in F.W. Hodcroft *et al.*, eds., *Medieval and Renaissance Studies on Spain and Portugal in Honour of P.E. Russell* (Oxford, 1981)

[121] Dominguez Ortiz, *La esclavitud en Castilla en la Edad moderna y otros estudios de marginados*, 5.

[122] Manuel Fernandez Chaves and Rafael M. Perez García, "Sevilla y La Trata Negrera Atlántica: Envíos de Esclavos Desde Cabo Verde A La América Española," in *Estudios de Historia Moderna En Homenaje al Professor Antonio García-Baquero*, ed. León Carlos Álvarez Santaló (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2009), 603.

[123] Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves and Freedmen in Portugal, 1441-1555*; Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders: Sevillian Society in the Sixteenth Century*, 172; Leo Garofalo, "The Shape of the Diaspora," in *Africans to Spanish America: Expanding the Diaspora* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012).

[124] Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, 7–9.

[125] Phillips, *Slavery in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, 96.

Black Africans like Rodrigo, his mother, and his sister were increasingly visible in Iberian social and economic life.[126]

Like most of the enslaved in Lisbon, Rodrigo lived in his enslaver's home. He probably grew up watching his mother clean, cook, do laundry, and fetch water for bathing and drinking, although domestic work was not strictly enslaved women's work in sixteenth century Lisbon. Only a wealthy minority of Lisbon's residents could afford to own slaves. Rui Lopez, Rodrigo's likely father and enslaver, was a member of the nobility and had the means and wherewithal to maintain at least three enslaved people in his household.[127] Because enslavers exercised so much authority over the enslaved, Rodrigo's life experiences as a captive during this time were shaped by his relationship with Rui Lopez.

Rodrigo's connection with Rui Lopez conferred several benefits to him. The first was his education. In 1512, Rui Lopez was granted the title of royal auditor of the Cape Verde Islands.[128] Prior to his departure, Rui Lopez placed both Rodrigo and his mother in the guardianship of the *Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Conceição* church in Lisbon.[129] There, Rui Lopez entrusted Rodrigo to Juan Hernandez, vicar of the church. Hernandez then placed him

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[126] Aurelia Martín Casares, *La Esclavitud En La Granada Del Siglo XVI :Género, Raza y Religión /* (Granada :, 2000), http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015049675658; Blumenthal, *Enemies and Familiars*; Cortés Alonso, *La esclavitud en Valencia durante el reinado de los Reyes Católicos (1479-1516).*

[127] Fonseca, "Black Africans in Portugal during Cleynaert's Visit," 116–18.

[128] AGI, Justicia 11, n. 4, fols 7R, 20V. Iva Cabral also notes his appointment in *A Primeira Elite Colonial Atlântica,* page 83.

[129] It is not immediately clear when his sister Catalina was born, but Rodrigo does not note her being present in the church alongside him and his mother during his testimony.

under the tutelage of Martin Alfonso, who taught him how to read and write.[130] Although Rodrigo's relationships with Juan Hernandez and Martin Alfonso were entirely mediated by Rui Lopez, literacy ultimately benefitted him. Further, just as social networks confer resources, they can also carry information between groups of individuals over long distances. Rui Lopez had left Lisbon for Cape Verde, but he corresponded with Juan Hernandez to determine if Rodrigo had learned to read and write satisfactorily.[131] Although Rui Lopez checking in with Juan Hernandez to learn if Rodrigo had learned his letters can reasonably be considered as form of care, individuals within a shared network can also use those ties to monitor others.[132] It would be remiss not to consider for a moment how slave owners like Rui Lopez utilized shared bonds with their slaves to monitor their behavior.

The explicit desire of Rui Lopez to have Rodrigo educated suggests that their relationship was not just one of master-slave, but also one of father-son. An slave owner's dedicated interest in the education of one of their enslaved laborers was unusual, suggesting a more complex relationship. Even if we were to consider how Rodrigo's literary skills served a specific, valuable function for Rui Lopez, it was still uncommon. A much more common practice was to lease an enslaved person to a craftsman like a blacksmith or carpenter to learn valuable skills.[133] In this way, enslaved laborers could be used to make additional money for their captors. Skilled labor of

[130] AGI, Justicia 11, n. 4, fol. 20v

[131] AGI, Justicia, 11, n.4, fols 20v, 25v

[132] Perry, Pescolido, and Borgatti, *Egocentric Network Analysis: Foundations, Methods, and Models*, 13; Also see Leonard Pearlin and Carol Aneshensel, "Coping and Social Supports: Their Functions and Applications," in *Applications of Social Science to Clnical Medicine & Health Policy* (Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, n.d.), 417–37.

[133] Blumenthal, *Enemies and Familiars*, 143–44.

this sort was typically reserved for enslaved men. Enslaved women were also leased to people outside the enslaver's household as a form of additional income. However, their labor typically took the form of domestic work.[134] It is unclear whether Catalina, Rodrigo's sister, was similarly educated, as there is no mention of her learnedness in his testimony.

While it was unusual for enslaved people to learn to read at all in sixteenth-century Lisbon, witness testimony from Rodrigo's trial indicates that literacy among free people in the Iberian Atlantic world was less than universal, as several of the men who testified on Rodrigo's behalf were unable to write themselves. On more than one occasion, witnesses mentioned that Rodrigo could not only read and write, but that he could also read Latin.[135] The mention of his ability to read Latin by witnesses supported his bid for freedom (slaves were not supposed to be literate) and it highlighted his status, even relative to theirs. Latin was the language of the religious and social elite. The Catholic Church used Latin as the linguistic vehicle of religious doctrine and authority. The papal bull that granted the Portuguese Crown exclusive rights to trade with West Africa was drafted in Latin, for example.[136] Lay persons, even if literate, were likely unable to read Latin or understand it outside of what was preached to them during mass.

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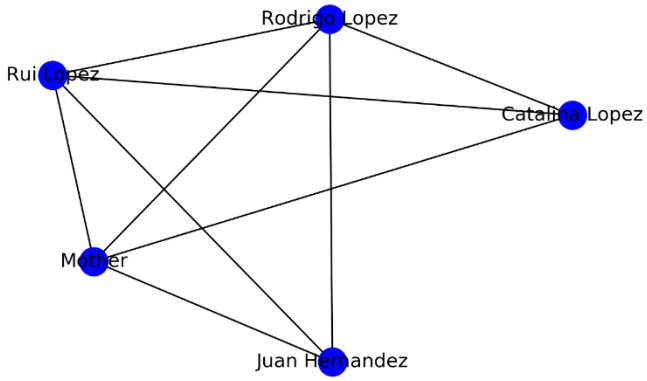
[134] James H. Sweet, "The Hidden Histories of African Lisbon," in *The Black Urban Atlantic in the Age of the Slave Trade (The Early Modern Americas)* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 240.

[135] AGI, Justicia, 11, n.4, fols 9r-10v, 25v. Several witnesses testified but could not sign because they did not know how to write. Following one witness testimony, it reads, "*no lo firmo por que dijo que no sabia escribir*." "He did not sign because he said he did not know how to write."

[136] António Brásio, ed., *Monumenta Missionaria Africana. Africa Ocidental. Coligida e Anotada Pelo António Brásio*, vol. 1, 2 (Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar, Divisão de Publicaøcões e Biblioteca, 1958), 489–502.

Finally, in 1519, Rui Lopez appeared satisfied that Rodrigo had learned to read and write under Juan Hernandez. His education now complete, Rui Lopez sent for Rodrigo, his mother and his sister to join him in Cape Verde, a full seven years after his initial departure in 1512.[137] The figure below shows a rendition of Rodrigo's social network in Lisbon based on his documented relationships there before he joined Rui Lopez in Cape Verde. His relationships were doubtlessly more diverse and varied than the records suggest. Indeed, the circumstances under which enslave people lived, paired with their religious connections and the kinds of labor they were forced to do, shaped how they formed social networks in Iberia. As a result of these factors, enslaved people often interacted with a wide circle people outside of their enslaver's household.[138] This suggests that enslaved people had much more diverse and numerous social networks than what typically appear in documents about them.

Figure 5: Theoretical Rendition of Rodrigo's Lisbon Network



[137] AGI, Justicia, 11, n.4, fols 20v, 25v

[138] Phillips, *Slavery in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, 84.

Rodrigo as a Slave Trader

Although Rodrigo officially joined Rui Lopez in Cape Verde in 1519, records suggest that he may have come to Cape Verde as a trader four years prior. On December 27th, 1515 the slave ship *Santiago* arrived in the city of Ribeira Grande on Santiago, Cabo Verde from West Africa. The ship's cargo included one-hundred-and-one enslaved Africans and thirty-nine bushels of corn. Eighty-eight of the captives belonged to the crew, and thirteen of them had been acquired for delivery, or *encomenda*, to various residents of the islands. The fifteen-man crew mostly consisted of free Portuguese men, but an enslaved man named Rodrigo was listed among them. He brought two captives for his enslaver, Rui Lopez, the royal auditor of the Cape Verde islands. Two other enslaved men, Bastym and Fernando, transported four Africans on behalf of their captor and the ship's outfitter, Antonio Vaaz.[139]

Free and enslaved men from Cape Verde regularly crewed the ships between the islands and the West African coast. In 1515, the same year that Rodrigo delivered slaves to Cape Verde on his behalf, Rui Lopez received 13 other captives from West Africa. At least two of them were delivered to Rui Lopez by another man that he held captive named Alvaro.[140] Other enslavers used their captives similarly. For example, in 1515 the slave ship named *Santa Catarina* pulled into Praia Santa Maria in Cape Verde with eight enslaved traders on board. Each enslaved trader had acquired two or more captive Africans, with their prices ranging from 3,000 to 7,000 *reis*.

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[139] Trevor Hall, trans., *Before the Middle Passage: Translated Portuguese Manuscripts of Atlantic Slave Trading from West Africa to Iberian Territories, 1513-26* (New York, New York: Routledge, 2016), *173 - 176*.

[140] Cabral, *A Primeira Elite Colonial Atlântica : Dos "Homens Honrados Brancos" de Santiago à "Nobreza Da Terra" : Finais Do Séc. XV - Início Do Séc. XVII*, 83, 243.

Four of the enslaved men, Carasco, Pero Bica, Antonio, and Fernando were the property of the ship's outfitter, Manuel Diaz. Two of the other three enslaved traders, Duarte and Editor, belonged to the ship's captain, Joham Vaaz.[141] The captain and the outfitter each used their captives as auxiliary labor aboard the ship.

Even though Rodrigo was based in Lisbon and not Cape Verde in 1515, it was common for free and enslaved Black men to work the ships plying the waters between Lisbon and Africa, too. They were frequently among the crew on smaller vessels on the rivers and coasts of Portugal as well.[142] As early as 1502, for example, Bartolome de Pinos, a Black seaman, used his relationship with another Black mariner, João Gonçalves, to collect the debts that were owed to him for his previous work aboard ships that had gone to West Africa.[143] Though brief, the document shows the early prevalence of Afro-descendants trading along the coast of Africa. Seafaring also allowed Afro-descendants to construct relationships that crossed national boundaries. Bartolome de Pinos was a *vecino* in Seville, Spain and João Gonçalves was a resident in Lisbon.

The physical mobility that seafaring required gave both men the ability to expand their personal relationships beyond the communities in their respective cities. There appears to have been a positive correlation between physical movement and network size. Bartolome and João were unlikely to have met one another were it not for their ability to move freely. They also

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[141] Hall, *Before the Middle Passage: Translated Portuguese Manuscripts of Atlantic Slave Trading from West Africa to Iberian Territories, 1513-26*, 173–76.

[142] Saunders, *Black Slaves and Freedmen in Portugal*, 71

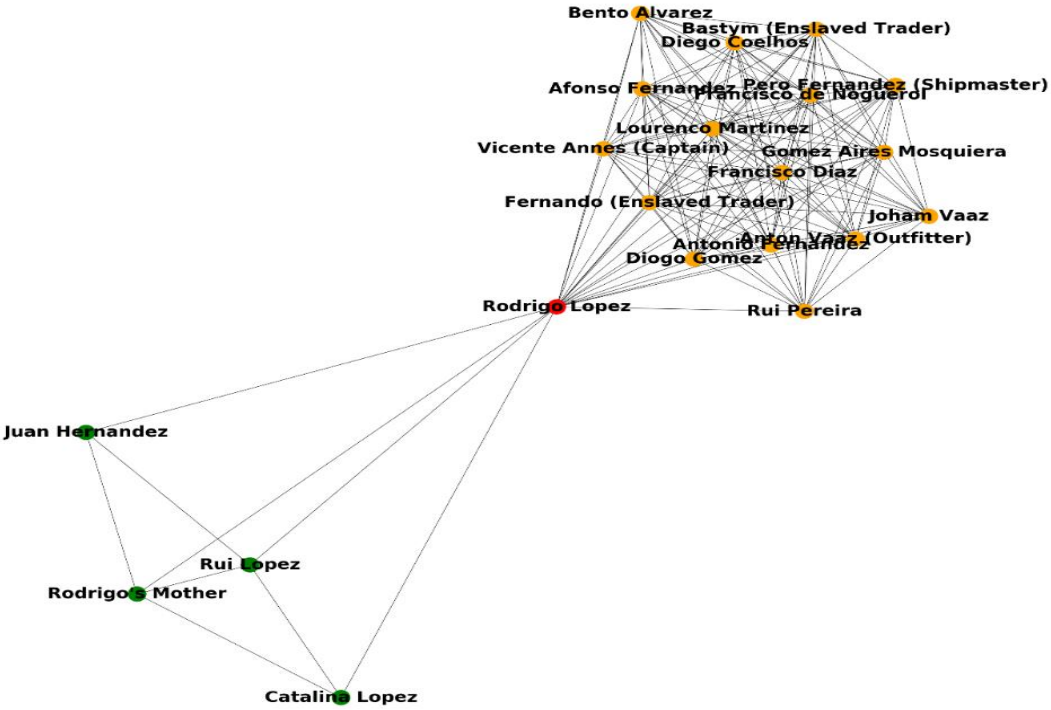
[143]Maria Luísa. Esteves et al., *Portugaliae Monumenta Africana*, vol. 3, Mare Liberum (Lisboa: Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Decobrimentos Portugueses: Impr. Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 1993), 202, Doc. 177.

made other connections at sea and at different ports as sailors, as evidenced by Bartolome's demand for payment. It is fair to say that the size of their networks grew because of their travels. By contrast, a reduced capacity to move freely would have probably limited the diversity and number of new relationships in their social networks, though his remains to be seen.

Moreover, a greater number of connections provides individuals access to novel and various forms of support. In the case of Bartolome, he relied upon his relationship with João to help him to get paid what he was owed. Although the document does not reveal how the matter was resolved, it helps illustrate one of the ways that free Blacks and Afro-descendants leveraged their connections for their own benefit. This brief exchange also provides a glimpse into the function some of their relationships, that is, the kinds of services, support and exchanges that might be available through their ties.[144] However, we have but limited information about the relationships that Bartolome and João formed and can glean only so much information from such a brief document. Fortunately, there is significantly more information on Rodrigo's social network. Rodrigo's introduction to the slave trade expanded his social network, just as it did for Bartolome and João. Unlike those two, however, we have more documentation about the people around Rodrigo during his tenure at sea (see Figure 6).

[144] Perry, Pescolido, and Borgatti, *Egocentric Network Analysis: Foundations, Methods, and Models,* 114.

Figure 6: Representation of Rodrigo's Relationships circa 1515



The above graph illustrates new ties to Rodrigo's personal network by the year 1515.[145] While the above graph is still an incomplete rendition of his network, it provides some insight into the size, structure, and composition of his social bonds. From a structural perspective, Rodrigo's network now included ties that he had formed on the ship and they were separate from his previous group in Lisbon.[146] A significant compositional change occurred once he went to

[145] Figure 2 only contains connections between Rodrigo and the other crewmen aboard the *Santiago.* The enslaved taken captive aboard the ship are not visible in this visualization.
[146] Although it is fair to say that given Rui Lopez's status as the Auditor of the Cape Verde Islands, he likely knew some of the men on the ship

sea: his new bonds were almost exclusively male. Maritime labor at this time was a masculine endeavor and as a result, Rodrigo's expanded social network included more men – more White men in particular. Rodrigo's gender conferred benefits to him, such as an extraordinary education and the ability to work at sea.[147] In addition, his work at sea expanded the kinds of people with whom he could interact, and thus opened up new types of information and resources. Physical mobility and network size, at least in the case of Rodrigo, appear to have been linked.

The maritime ties that Rodrigo formed also opened a world of new experiences. He gained naval and commercial skills aboard the *Santiago* and traveled to new lands. West Africa's coast was a far cry from Lisbon with its varied climates, people, cultures, and political geographies. Lisbon's status as a major slave trading port had already enabled Rodrigo to be influenced by West Africa, as captives continued to transform the city's demographic landscape and culture. But his journey there both as enslaved person and slave trader would have been transformative in ways that we can only surmise. For example, in his journey to the West African coast, Rodrigo returned to Cape Verde with two captives in tow. Their names are not mentioned in the records, only their gender. They were both men.[148] This is the first documented case of Rodrigo having other enslaved people under his control, though it would not be the last.[149]

Rodrigo's experience as a slave trader raises important questions about how he procured his captives. Since he was aboard a ship trading at Cape Verde, it is likely that Rodrigo went to

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[147] This is not to romanticize maritime labor, as David Wheat highlighted, the dichotomy betwen mobile men and rooted port women is a false one Wheat, "Nharas and Morenas Horras: A Luso-African Model for the Social History of the Spanish Caribbean, c. 1570–1640."

[148] Hall, *Before the Middle Passage: Translated Portuguese Manuscripts of Atlantic Slave Trading from West Africa to Iberian Territories, 1513-26,* 173.

[149] AGI, Justicia, 11, n.4, fol 2v.

the Upper Guinea coast. The two main islands of Cape Verde, Santiago and Fogo, had been the seat of the Portuguese trade in slaves from the Upper Guinea coast area since their original settlement in 1466. Ships from various ports of Portugal, Castile and the other Atlantic islands such as Madeira and the Canaries regularly came to Santiago for slaves during this period. In addition, the trade in slaves from the Upper Guinea coast had been increasing in volume leading up to Rodrigo's tenure as an enslaved trader – between the years 1510 and 1515, Ivana Elbl estimates that nearly 2,000 enslaved Africans arrived in Cape Verde annually. [150]

Figures from a 1511 receipt book in Cape Verde suggest that most of the captive Africans brought to the islands had been taken from the Guinea Rivers region – that is, modern day Guinea Bissau. Senegambia, for example, had been more significant in the decades prior to the Guinea Rivers prevalence in the trade.[151] However, political transformations, particularly among the Jolof, would precipitate another expansion in the trade in slaves from the region in the coming decades before declining again later in the sixteenth century.[152] More than likely, then, Rodrigo purchased his captives from the Guinea Rivers region. This region was the central point of commerce for the Biafara, Sape, Banyun and Mande. The Portuguese conducted extensive trade with each of them, relying on the networks that had been established long before men like

[150] Elbl, "The Volume of the Early Atlantic Slave Trade, 1450-1521," 49–50, 69. Also see T. Bentley Duncan, *Atlantic Islands; Madeira, the Azores, and the Cape Verdes in the Seventeenth-Century Commerce and Navigation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), for how the Cape Verde was situated in the early Atlantic commercial system linking the Atlantic islands and Africa.

[151] Wright, *The World and a Very Small Place in Africa: A History of Globalization in Niumi, The Gambia*, 71.

[152] Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*, 30–40; Green, *The Rise of Transatlantic Slave Trade in Africa: 1300 - 1589*, 90.

Rodrigo arrived. The Biafara-Sape network was particularly important, as it bridged the varying commercial systems of the Upper Guinea coast. Sape became a preeminent trade-language along the Grande, Geba and Corubal rivers because of the significance the Sape as traders. The Banyun-Bak network was also important, connecting systems of commerce on the banks of the Cacheu River northward to the Casamance and Gambia rivers. [153]

Rodrigo's journey to the coast came at great risk. When he boarded the *Santiago* ship, he was exposed to an entire new world with new physical and biological threats. The coast could be dangerous. Disease often killed Portuguese slavers, who were forced to rely upon local African women are treatment and medicine.[154] Among the one-hundred-one captives on the *Santiago*, two belonged to a man who had been killed trading in Upper Guinea. The exact details of his death were omitted in the customs report, but the available information gestures toward the risks associated with trading for slaves.[155] Violence underpinned the trade in human captives and by the time that Rodrigo arrived at the Upper Guinea coast, it was already starting to have a transformative impact on the societies that traded with the Portuguese.[156] While physical violence and disease threatened the lives of the enslaved and merchants alike, the sea itself also

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[153] Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, 10–13, 37, 39–44.

[154] Philip J. Havik, "Hybridising Medicine: Illness, Healing and the Dynamics of Reciprocal Exchange on the Upper Guinea Coast (West Africa)," *Medical History* 60, no. 2 (2016): 181–205, https://doi.org/10.1017/mdh.2016.3.

[155] Hall, *Before the Middle Passage: Translated Portuguese Manuscripts of Atlantic Slave Trading from West Africa to Iberian Territories, 1513-26*, 173–76.

[156] Lingna Nafafe, "Lançados, Culture and Identity: Prelude to Creole Societies on the Rivers of Guinea and Cape Verde," 63–69; Green, *The Rise of Transatlantic Slave Trade in Africa: 1300 - 1589*, 80–94; Hawthorne, *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves: Transformations along the Guinea-Bissau,1400 - 1900*, 56–60.

posed a risk. Despite working at sea, many sailors probably were not adept swimmers leading to drowning deaths at sea. In one incident, twenty men died from drowning on the way back from the Upper Guinea coast.[157] At one point Rodrigo learned how to swim, something that another sailor noted in his testimony during Rodrigo's freedom trial.[158] When he learned to swim remains unclear, but it was a pivotal skill, and it would have served him as an enslaved sailor.

Rodrigo was not the only enslaved man working on the ship. Two enslaved men named Bastym and Fernando also worked onboard. They were responsible for human captives as well, four in total. Their enslaver, the ship's outfitter, was onboard the ship with them. Like Rodrigo, they had acquired useful skills working as sailors and slave traders. Bastym and Fernando also had an incentive to work as enslaved traders. One of the pathways to freedom for enslaved people in Cape Verde was through participating in the capture of other Africans.[159] Much of Cape Verde's population at this time was enslaved, thus creating a mechanism through which captives could be freed provided some stability. Enslavers adopted *alforías*, amendments in their wills to free enslaved laborers for good behavior as a means of sustaining order. Through this mechanism, well-behaved captives could potentially obtain their freedom within their lifetime. The cost of freedom for one free slave was four enslaved Africans. Though how the enslaved were freed via this legal mechanism remains unclear.[160] In Rodrigo's case, he was freed for *buen*

[157] AGI, Contratacion,487,N.1.R.2, 1592

[158] Justicia, 11, n.4, fol 10r.

[159] Toby Green, *The Rise of Transatlantic Slave Trade in Africa: 1300 - 1589* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).114-15.

[160] Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves and Freedmen in Portugal, 1441-1555*, 12.

servicio (good service) in his Rui Lopez's will, which probably included his purchase of two West Africans in 1515.[161]

Free and enslaved sailors also had the opportunity to move up in rank from ordinary seamen (*grumetes*) to able seamen (*marinheiros).* [162] Within the Spanish mercantile realm enslaved men were used as able seamen as well.[163] There is at least one instance of a free Black man working as a ship captain during this period. On April 10th, 1514 Captain Antonio Fernandez and the *Santa Clara* stopped at Ribeira Grande and made customs payments on the human cargo he had acquired from West Africa. For his part, Fernandez paid customs duties on four enslaved people, using one as payment for both the *quarto,* a twenty-five percent tax, and the *vintena*, a five percent tax.[164] Fernandez was the only Black captain to appear among the available customs duties records for Cape Verde, though given the limited period of time that these documents cover, it is possible that there were others.

Just three years later, for example, a 1517 law forbade Black captains in Cape Verde from trading on the coast "although they were free".[165] This passage from the ruling suggests that Antonio Fernandez was not alone in his rise to captaincy. There are few details about what lead to the law's passage, but it suggests that officials among the islands were concerned about Black

[161] AGI, Justicia, 11, N.4, fólios 35v-35r

[162] Saunders, *Black Slaves and Freedmen in Portugal*, 11

[163] AGI Indiferente,1963,L.9,f.228v

[164] Hall, *Before the Middle Passage: Translated Portuguese Manuscripts of Atlantic Slave Trading from West Africa to Iberian Territories, 1513-26,* 87–89.Hall, *Before Middle Passage*, 87-89.

[165] Brásio, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana. Africa Ocidental. Coligida e Anotada Pelo António Brásio.*, 1958, 2:142–43.

captains and adopted a racialized stance to limit their trade. Perhaps official concerns over white men fleeing to the coast to live extended to free black captains as well. The ruling was one part of a law that reflected the crown's anxieties concerning trade between the islands of Santiago and Fogo and Upper Guinea.

Free Black women also participated as in the commercial systems linking Cape Verde and the Atlantic. On December 15, 1515, a black woman named Caterina Goncallvez coming from the Canary Islands, controlled by Spain, paid 7 quintais in customs duties for the import of seventy-three "paez de Canaries" or sugar loafs.[166] Goncallez's trade at Ribeira Grande raises additional questions about the demographics of the settlements. The customs lists for Cape Verde from that same period also document other free Blacks trading there. Two years before Caterina Goncallez brought her goods to Cape Verde, Antonio Luis from the ship *Santa Maria Da Gracia* brought two African captives to Ribeira Grande for Antonio Rodriguez. The slaves were valued at 7,000 *reis*. He was listed as "Antonio Luis, *preto*." In May of 1514, Johane "*homem preto"* brought two captive Africans valued at 12,000 *reis* aboard the ship of *Santa Margarida* to the port of Ribeira Grande.[167] These few examples all within one or two years of each other, help to demonstrate that free blacks, like their enslaved counterparts, were actively engaged within the merchant systems that had been established during that period

Many of the free Black traders mentioned here were similar to Rodrigo. They all bore Portuguese or Spanish names, likely were Spanish or Portuguese-speaking (or possibly both

[166] Hall, *Before the Middle Passage: Translated Portuguese Manuscripts of Atlantic Slave Trading from West Africa to Iberian Territories, 1513-26*, 222–23.Hall, *Before Middle Passage,* 222-23.

[167] Hall, *Before Middle Passage,* 46-47.

both) and were socially and physically mobile. We have significantly less information on them than we do Rodrigo, but some elements of his life appear to be generalizable and relatable to theirs. One important factor are the areas in which they appear: port cities. As was previously mentioned, port cities functioned as important highways for information and resources. The potential for free and enslaved Blacks have a large, diverse set of relationships at a port was quite high, higher than in a remote location away from the centers of commerce. Port cities created important cultural milieus that gave marginalized people space to interact more freely than elsewhere. The abundance of new information and potentially beneficial ties would have been hard to replicate anywhere else – not to mention the possibility of building relationships that extended over vast distances.

Rodrigo as a *mayordomo*

When Rodrigo officially joined Rui Lopez in Cape Verde in 1519, he commenced working for him as a *mayordomo* (overseer) on his estate – an estate that spanned the two main islands of Cape Verde: Santiago and Fogo. By 1523, the Lopez estate held 585 enslaved Africans captive.[168] Rui Lopez had utilized his position as *contador* of the Cape Verde islands to enrich himself like many of the archipelago's elite.[169] The Portuguese crown favored men like him, often granting special trading rights and privileges to wealthy men. As early as the fifteenth century, for example, the crown allowed wealthy contractors to lease the right to trade on certain

[168] AGI, Justicia, 11, n.4, fols 20-21v, 25-26r

[169] Cabral, *A Primeira Elite Colonial Atlântica : Dos "Homens Honrados Brancos" de Santiago à "Nobreza Da Terra" : Finais Do Séc. XV - Início Do Séc. XVII*, 73–86.

parts of the West African coast exclusively, much to the chagrin of the other residents of Cape Verde.[170]

The crown also leased the islands of the archipelago themselves, as well as access to the commercial goods produced there. Several documents over the decades after Cape Verde's settlement attest to this. In 1504 for instance, the crown leased the island of Maio to the Coelho brothers, Egas and João, under the condition that they pay a tenth of all cows and goats to the state over their lifetime. A year later Pedro Correia was granted rights to all the cattle on the island of Boavista.[171] In 1510, Antonio Rodrigues Mascarenhas purchased the lease of Santiago and Maio for 1,033,000 *reis*. His agreement with the crown would allow him, among other things, to conduct trade with Madeira without having to pay royalties.[172] Leasing lands and granting privileges to noblemen was one way in which the crown managed to draw incomes from potentially unproductive lands at minimal costs, but it, alongside restrictive trade laws, had the effect of marginalizing the other settlers of the islands and creating a local elite who controlled the archipelago.

In the first few decades of its settlement, slaves brought into the Cape Verde archipelago were mostly imported to work on Santiago or Fogo. Unlike the burgeoning slave system that was developing in the Spanish Caribbean, Cape Verde did not have an industrial plantation system. African captives performed similar roles as their enslaved counterparts in Portugal. In port cities

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[170] Brásio, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana. Africa Ocidental. Coligida e Anotada Pelo António Brásio.*, 1958, 1:446–49.Cite 1472 passage on trade in MMA Vol II

[171] Brásio, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana. Africa Ocidental. Coligida e Anotada Pelo António Brásio.*, 1958, 2:10–12, 15–16.

[172] Christiano José de Senna Barcellos and Academia das Ciências de Lisboa, *Subsidios para a historia de Cabo Verde e Guiné* (Lisboa: Por ordem e na typographia da Academia real das sciencias, 1899), 70.

on Santiago such as Ribeira Grande and Alcatrazes, the enslaved often worked domestically in the homes of their captors, Rodrigo's mother had in Lisbon. For instance, much of the slave labor was relegated to urban centers where many of the enslaved worked in weaving shops that made the *panos di terra* (dyed cotton textiles) that African lords were increasingly fond of in exchange for captives.[173] They dried the dyes used to give the textiles their famed colors and premium price on the market in West Africa.[174] On the other islands, which were largely unpopulated, slaves also raised cattle and exported salt.[175]

On the interior of the Santiago and Fogo, captives cultivated cash crops such as sugar, cotton, indigo, and tobacco.[176] In sixteenth century, cotton was enormously important in the economy of the islands, as it was a central item in the trade for slaves. Regular attacks on ships carrying cotton from the islands to Guinea illustrate just how pivotal it was in the trade in trading for slaves.[177] The trade in cotton was so important that the crown stipulated where and to whom

[173] Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, 62–63; Green, "Building Slavery in the Atlantic World: Atlanitc Connections and the Changing Institution of Slavery in Cabo Verde, Fifteenth-Sixteenth Centuries," 235.

[174] Hawthorne, *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves: Transformations along the Guinea-Bissau,1400 - 1900*, 57.

[175]Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, 59–60.

[176] Brásio, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana. Africa Ocidental. Coligida e Anotada Pelo António Brásio.*, 1958, 2:210–11.

[177]António Carreira, *Panaria caboverdeana-guineense: (aspectos históricos e sócio-económicos).* (Lisboa: Instituto Cabo-Verdeano do Livro, 1983), 26–29.

it could be sold shortly after Cape Verde was settled.[178] There is good reason to believe Rui Lopez's estate cultivated cotton and that Rodrigo oversaw hundreds of enslaved people farming the valuable commodity. First, the number of captives that Rodrigo oversaw was conducive to the largescale production. Secondly, Rodrigo was gifted a significant amount of cotton from the island of Fogo in Rui Lopez's testament. Among other gifts, Rodrigo received 25 quintals of cotton, which roughly converts to more than 5,500 pounds.[179] The significant value of Rodrigo's gifts, which included 15,000 maravedis in conjunction with his position as *mayordomo* indicate the value of his labor and his significance to the function of the estate and Rui Lopez himself. It is no mistake then, that Rodrigo's prior experiences and his familial bond with Rui Lopez contributed to him being in a position of authority. His work aboard the slave ship exposed him to the workings of the slave trade, and it also aided him in developing a large and diverse web of relationships.

In 1523, Rui Lopez died. In his testament, he freed Rodrigo, his mother, his sister and two other enslaved Africans, Roque and Elena. Rodrigo's freedom was conditional, however. He was left as the executor (*albacea*) of Rui Lopez's estate and was tasked with running it for three years until the debts were paid and then selling it to 'live as a free man.' Rodrigo faithfully ran the estate of 585 slaves across two islands for approximately 2 years and 5 months. While it was not uncommon for enslaved people to be given responsibilities, even property after the death of a former owner, Rodrigo's station as a the executor of an enormous estate at the end of Rui

[178] Luís de Albuquerque et al., *Portugaliae monumenta Africana. Volume I Volume I* (Lisboa: Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Decobrimentos Portugueses : Impr. Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 1993).

[179] AGI, Justicia, 11, n.4, fol 38v.

Lopez's life aids additional evidence Rodrigo's relationship with Rui was familial. He had been placed into the hands of the church in Lisbon where he learned to read, even becoming literate in Latin. Following his schooling (and it would seem his experience as a slaver), Rodrigo Lopez was sent for by his father to help run his estate. From all the available evidence, it appears that Rodrigo had been *groomed* to lead his father, Rui Lopez's, estate.[180]

While Rodrigo may not have been recognized as Rui Lopez's legitimate son, he retained many of the benefits of a familial relationship. Indeed, the bond between Rodrigo and his father was multiplex. As Rui Lopez was not only his enslaver, but also his father. Multiplex bonds have been shown to be stronger and more supportive than unidimensional bonds, and generally associated with positive outcomes for those that have them.[181] Though there is scant evidence to demonstrate any kind of loving relationship between Rui Lopez and Rodrigo, we do have evidence of a supportive bond through Rodrigo's education, his grooming to manage an incredibly wealthy estate, and ultimately him being freed and left as the estate's executor. Thus, the relationship that Rui established with Rodrigo could be categorized as positive, as it led to a beneficial outcome.

Arguably, most of the ties that made up Rodrigo's social network in Cape Verde appeared to have been beneficial to him. Some of this could be attributed to his status the illegitimate son and former slave of a wealthy man. Unfortunately, for Rodrigo, negative ties often have an even greater impact on individuals than positive ones.[182] With the death of Rui

[180] AGI, Justicia, 11, n.4, fol 26r

[181] Brea L. Perry, Bernice A. Pescolido, and Stephen P. Borgatti, *Egocentric Network Analysis: Foundations, Methods, and Models* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018),161 -162.

[182] Perry, Pescolido, and Borgatti, 115.

Lopez, Rodrigo, though free, was still vulnerable to re-enslavement. In previous segments, this chapter covered how Rui Lopez's shared connections with Rodrigo likely enabled Rui Lopez to monitor him even at great distances. And while demonstrative of the gross power dynamics that existed between an enslaved man and his enslaver, it also provided a level of protection. The centrality that Rui Lopez probably Rodrigo's network structure ensured that his freedom would be recognized by everyone within it, but his death placed Rodrigo's already conditional freedom in peril.

More than two years after Rodrigo inherited the estate, Rui Lopez's nephew, Cristobal Gonzalez, arrived in Cape Verde. Gonzalez attempted to sell several enslaved people, intending to profit off them for himself. Rodrigo was responsible for the enslaved as his subordinates and the property of the estate, and he stopped Gonzalez. Rodrigo wrote to his late father's relatives in Lisbon expressing his concern about Gonzalez's behavior. But one night, perhaps in the spirit of vengeance, Gonzalez dragged Rodrigo where he was stationed on the island of Fogo and forced him aboard a slave ship that had called to port in Ribeira Grande on the neighboring island of Santiago. Gonzalez initially sold Rodrigo to two slave trading merchants from Spain named Juan Sombrero and Rodrigo Gallego. [183] But Juan Sombrero appeared to have doubts about the validity of Gonzalez's claims regarding Rodrigo's slave status. Juan Sombrero returned Rodrigo to Gonzalez who then sold him to a man named Bartolome Corral, a shipmaster for another merchant ship trading for slaves at the port.

Throughout this harrowing experience, Rodrigo insisted that he was a free man, something the ship master Bartolome Corral was overheard discussing with other crewmen. In one instance, a local artisan informed a member of the crew that he knew Rodrigo to be free.

[183] AGI, Justicia, 11, n.4, fols 2v-3r, 5r, 7-8v, 21

And in yet another, a barber told a sailor that Rodrigo and his sister had been made free by Rui Lopez. Several others could have provided evidence of his freedom as well, including his sister, who was still on the island of Fogo, and of, course the man that had drafted his father's testament, Juan Cordero. Cristobal Gonzalez knew this, because just as a person's slave status was socially validated, so was freedom. When he spoke to Rodrigo's new captors, he informed them "not to let [Rodrigo] free in the kingdom of Portugal". Indicating that Gonzalez was aware of his crimes but also aware of the fact that Rodrigo had not only been legally freed and that there was a corpus of people that could speak to his freedom. Indeed, Rodrigo had developed a large and diverse social network that spanned the two islands of Cape Verde and included people in Lisbon and probably Spain. Many people could attest to his status as a free man in addition to the legal records that supported his claims.

The status of free Blacks in the Atlantic world was fragile. Freedom required more than just legal acknowledgment but affirmation by the communities in which they were a part. For example, several years earlier, a Black confraternity in Lisbon, *Nossa Senora de Rosario dos Pretos,* wrote to the king of Portugal requesting that he protect the newly freed slaves from being re-enslaved by their previous captor's descendants. In a similar case to Rodrigo, they explicitly mentioned enslaved people who had been freed in the wills of their former enslavers. And just like Rodrigo, though they were free, the unequal power relations within the communities of free and enslaved Blacks placed them in a tenuous position.[184] However, they relied upon their religious networks through the Black Catholic Brotherhood and requested assistance from the crown. That Gonzalez even attempted to re-enslave Rodrigo demonstrates this point. He was

[184] Brásio, *Monumenta Missionaria Africana. Africa Ocidental. Coligida e Anotada Pelo António Brásio.*, 1958, 2:151–52.Cite MMA Vol II documento on confraternity

well aware of Rodrigo's position as a freed man, but also highly attuned to the fact that he was a freed man with a significant social network. Separating Rodrigo from his supportive ties all but ensured that he would remain enslaved. Rodrigo's relationship with Gonzalez was illustrative of how impactful negative relationships could be for free Blacks in the Atlantic world. Because of the power imbalances inherent to their networks, a negative relationship could wreak havoc on their lives. In Rodrigo's case, a single negative relationship resulted in him being chained beneath the decks of a slave ship headed for the Spanish Caribbean.[185]

[185] AGI, Justicia, 11, n.4, fols 2v-3r, 5r, 7-8v, 21

Chapter 3

The Different Lives of Rodrigo, The Spanish Caribbean

When Rodrigo Lopez came to the Spanish Caribbean in 1526 shackled below the decks of Sancho de Urrutia's ship, he arrived at a critical moment in its history. The people, culture, and history of the Upper Guinea coast were beginning to have an impact on the New World via the transatlantic slave trade. Just like Rodrigo, many of the captives entered the Spanish Caribbean via Cape Verde. Between the years 1525 and 1550, 94% of the ships that were legally registered embarked from the Cape Verde islands before crossing the Atlantic to the Caribbean. Of the ships that listed the region where their captives originated, 97% had listed the Upper Guinea coast.[186] Scholars have recently re-assessed the number of enslaved Africans traded to the Caribbean during the sixteenth century. For the period before 1581 (and the union of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns), 84,900 enslaved Africans disembarked in Caribbean ports. Recent reassessments on the number of enslaved Africans disembarked in the Caribbean place the number of people at 84,900 for pre-1581 period.[187]

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[186] These figures were taken from the most recent data tables in the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database, currently available at www.slavevoyages.org. The database uses the term 'Senegambia and Offshore Atlantic', I interpreted this to mean the Upper Guinea coast more broadly. The records for this period often referred to one of the major areas from which they purchased captives as the 'Rivers of Guinea', an area today largely encapsulated by Guinea-Bissau

[187] Alex Borucki, David Eltis, and David Wheat, "The Size and Direction of the Slave Trade to the Spanish Americas," in *From the Galleons to the Highlands: Slave Trade Routes in the Spanish Americas* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2020), 21, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/vand/detail.action?docID=6152258; The numbers in Borucki, Eltis and Wheat's work revise previously accepted numbers, see António de Almeida Mendes, "The Foundations of the System: A Reassessment of the Slave Trade to the Spanish Americas in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *Extending the Frontiers*, ed. David Eltis and David Richardson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 63–94.

Prior to being taken to the Caribbean, Rodrigo was already familiar with the waves of the slave trade. For several years, he sat at the nexus of the early Atlantic economy in the islands of Cape Verde, or what historian David Birmingham called the "heart of the Atlantic world."[188] He worked as the wealthy, illegitimate son (and former captive) of a deceased royal auditor, running an estate of nearly 600 captives. The estate he managed spanned, Santiago and Fogo, two of the main islands of Cape Verde, and his network of connections linked him to Spain, Portugal, and West Africa. Despite his large and varied social network, his social standing and apparent wealth, Rodrigo's status as a freed Black man placed him in a precarious social and legal space. His re-enslavement was demonstrative of this. A single negative relationship with his cousin, a white Portuguese man, led to him being forced aboard a slave ship and sold to the Caribbean. Despite all the prestige that a man of Rodrigo's stature had gained, the asymmetric power dynamics inherent in the social networks of both free and enslaved blacks ultimately worked against him.

The previous chapter covered Rodrigo's lives in Cape Verde and Portugal. It argued that Rodrigo's life circumstances were shaped by the connections around him, demonstrating how his early social network largely benefited him, conferring unique skills, resources and information that placed him in a position to be freed and to hold authority over hundreds of enslaved people. His social ties thrust Rodrigo to the forefront of Cape Verdean society. The size, structure, and composition of Rodrigo's social network significantly shaped those outcomes. However, Rodrigo's illegal re-enslavement in the Caribbean stripped all that away from him. Removed from the social infrastructure in Cape Verde that had once been largely positive, Rodrigo was

[188] Birmingham, *Trade and Empire in the Atlantic, 1400-1600,* 20.

thrust into a dangerous world. Captive again, Rodrigo would begin the long fight for his freedom.

This chapter extends the points addressed in Chapter 2 to explain Rodrigo's circumstances upon his arrival to the Caribbean. In analyzing the court case concerning Rodrigo's fight for liberty, this chapter further nuances how important relationships were in shaping the social outcomes of enslaved people. Specifically, Rodrigo's life circumstances were not only the result of his new social and legal status in the Caribbean, but also because of how his relationships changed. The men who purchased Rodrigo had a vested interest in his continued captivity and relied on their own social ties and prestige to limit his chances at getting free. The social standing of his captors, most of whom were elite slave trading men, paired with their own series of connections increased the likelihood of a particular outcome, Rodrigo's continued enslavement.

While in Cape Verde, Rodrigo had managed to avoid many of the cruel realities of slavery. Rodrigo's prior life in Cape Verde was remarkable even by standards of free men. He was among an elite group of men in Cape Verde that would, by the second half of the sixteenth century, be increasingly composed of by the illegitimate sons of wealthy enslavers like his father.[189] Through his status and the prominence of his father, Rodrigo established a transatlantic network of individuals that knew him to be a free man. As a captive, those linkages extended beyond his ties in the Caribbean and included sailors of various nationalities, free people of color, family, and officials in Cape Verde. Collectively, the people in his large, overlapping web

[189]Cabral, *A Primeira Elite Colonial Atlântica : Dos "Homens Honrados Brancos" de Santiago à "Nobreza Da Terra" : Finais Do Séc. XV - Início Do Séc. XVII*.

of relationships ultimately helped to liberate him. This chapter argues that without them, it is unlikely that Rodrigo would have been freed. Previous research has demonstrated individuals with larger, more diverse networks often have greater social mobility and generally more positive social outcomes.[190] This carries through regarding Rodrigo and his social network, but it can also explain some social outcomes for enslaved people more broadly during this period.

There have been at least two published articles on Rodrigo and his trials in the Caribbean, though neither of the authors considers the importance and structure of the relationships that bound Rodrigo and helped to free him. Both articles are largely focused on the legal context surrounding Rodrigo's captivity and eventual liberation. Vicenta Cortes, in her article "La Liberación Del Esclavo", provides a thorough examination of the trial itself, replete with an analysis on the motivations of some the men that held Rodrigo captive and some historical background for Spanish slave law and the slave trade.[191] Richard E. Turit's more recent article situates Rodrigo's trial more squarely within the legal and socio-historical context of the Spanish Caribbean and paints a detailed picture of how slave law and society operated in sixteenth-century Hispaniola.[192]

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[190] Karen E. Campbell, Peter V. Marsden, and Jeanne S. Hurlbert, "Social Resources and Socioeconomic Status," *Social Networks* 8, no. 1 (March 1986): 97–117, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-8733(86)80017-X; Peter V. Marsden and Jeanne S. Hurlbert, "Social Resources and Mobility Outcomes: A Replication and Extension," *Social Forces* 66, no. 4 (1988): 1038–59, https://doi.org/10.2307/2579435.

[191] Vicenta Cortes, "La Liberación Del Esclavo," *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 22 (1965): 533–68.

[192] Richard Turits, "Slavery and the Pursuit of Freedom in 16th-Century Santo Domingo," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History*, 2019.

The author of this chapter does not contend with the conclusions that the abovementioned scholars drew from their analysis of Rodrigo Lopez's trial. Rather, this chapter adds nuance and depth to our understanding of Rodrigo's time in the Caribbean by paying more attention to the relationships that affected him the most. It shows that social networks are a fundamental, yet underutilized, frame to understand the social experiences of Blacks in the sixteenth Atlantic world. Further, this chapter treats free and enslaved networks as consequential to understanding the social fabric of colonial societies. In both cases Rodrigo's freedom is seen as an outcome demonstrative of the Spanish respect for due process and the ability of enslaved people to successfully be liberated. In his article, Turits asserts Rodrigo's eventual freedom was not altogether surprising given that lawsuits to secure one's freedom were a part of Spanish law and custom. Captives of all types had successfully sued for their liberty in Spain in the fifteenth century.[193] Iberian custom allowed for captives to be manumitted and gave them a legal personhood which even slaveowners were expected to respect.[194]

But what gets lost in both Turits' and Cortes's analyses on Rodrigo's case is the importance of the relationships that made Rodrigo's freedom possible. What ultimately brought Rodrigo the necessary evidence to secure his freedom were the connections that he had built. Without them, the legal framework that allowed enslaved men and women to sue for their freedom would have been insufficient. Indeed, his legal claims were buttressed by his large and varied social network. The Spanish colonial legal system was a judicial scaffolding upon which Rodrigo could build his claims to liberty, what delivered his freedom, however, was the diverse

[193] Turits, 8.

[194] Lyle N. McAlister, *Spain and Portugal in the New World, 1492-1700*, NED-New edition, vol. 3 (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 24–26; Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders: Sevillian Society in the Sixteenth Century*, 170–92.

relationships he formed in Cape Verde, Portugal, and the Caribbean. By placing more attention on the relations between free and enslaved people, we can get a better glimpse at how they responded to their status. Further, without a deeper analysis of the relationships that governed early colonial societies, we run the risk of treating certain outcomes, like Rodrigo's legal pursuit for freedom, as being mechanistic rather than the chaotic, harrowing, and uncertain processes that they were. In emphasizing the type, kind, and structure of social relationships, this chapter nuances our current understanding of how enslaved people experienced their captivity and responded to upheavals in their lives.

Transformations in the Caribbean

Rodrigo arrived in the Caribbean after decades of violent upheaval and social change. With the decline of the indigenous population in Hispaniola, Spanish settlers sought enslaved Africans to replace them, fearing the threat that a drastic reduction in population posed to the future of the colony.[195] Even in the beginning stages of the trade in slaves from Spain to the New World, the Cape Verde archipelago was a key place. Most of the captives would have likely been taken from the Upper Guinea coast and sold in Lisbon before arriving in markets in Seville.[196] The early trade in captives remained quite small, however. Between 1504 and 1518, less than

[195]Carlos Esteban Deive, *La Esclavitud Del Negro En Santo Domingo* (Santo Domingo: Museo del Hombre Dominicano, 1980), 46–50. Sáez, *La Iglesia y El Negro Esclavo En Santo Domingo: Una Historia de Tres Siglos*, 30; For research on the earliest indigenous slave trade in the Spanish Caribbean, see Erin Woodruff Stone, *Captives of Conquest: Slavery in the Early Modern Spanish Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021).

[196] Chaves and García, "Sevilla y La Trata Negrera Atlántica: Envíos de Esclavos Desde Cabo Verde A La América Española," 604–5.

2,000 enslaved Africans arrived in Hispaniola, most of whom were meant to work as domestic slaves in the homes of their owners or in the gold mines around the island.[197]

Although, many of the enslaved were brought to work in Hispaniola's gold mines at the beginning of the sixteenth century, Spanish settlers nearly depleted the island's mineral wealth within two decades. Even before Rodrigo Lopez was taken to the Caribbean in 1526, Hispaniola had already undergone a significant economic transformation. While mineral extraction would not wane entirely, sugar quickly became the dominant economic activity, at least among the island's elite.[198] The shift from gold mining to sugar cultivation also led to a change in the demographic composition of the island, both among its free residents and the enslaved. The collapse of the gold mining venture coincided with a rapid decline in the population of the Taino, for example.[199] Sugar cultivation expanded just as more enslaved Africans were being imported into the Caribbean. Africans began being systematically imported for the first time to Hispaniola (and the Greater Caribbean) after the Spanish crown granted 4,000 licenses to Luarent de Gouvenot to import Africans in 1518.[200]

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[197] Lynne Guitar, "Boiling It Down: Slavery on the First Commercial Sugarcane Ingenios in the Americas (Hispaniola, 1530–45)," in *Slaves Subjects and Subversives: Blacks in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Jane Landers and Barry Robinson (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), 41.

[198] Deive, *La Esclavitud Del Negro En Santo Domingo*, 71–80.

[199] Genaro Rodríguez Morel, "Tropical Babylons: Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450–1680," in *The Sugar Economy of Española in the Sixteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 96.

[200] Marc Eagle, "Early Slave Trade", 141. Laurent de Gouvenot subsequently sold those licenses to other traders.

Based on the most recent data form the Slave Voyages Database for the years 1526 - 1550, nearly all the ships that brought enslaved Africans directly from Africa embarked from Cape Verde, drawing on captives from the Upper Guinea coast.[201] Some other vessels sailed to the Caribbean from São Tomé y Principe over that same time period. They carried captives from Lower Guinea (Ghana, Nigeria) and West Central Africa, though enslaved Africans from these regions were much less represented.[202] The Spanish crown also allowed merchants to ship enslaved *berberiscos* (Berbers), *moros* (Moors or Muslims) and *blancos* to their New World colonies, but enslaved Africans made up the bulk of the enslaved shipped overseas.[203]

As the trade in slaves expanded, settlers in Hispaniola also distributed captives to other parts of the Caribbean for labor including pearl fishing along the northern Venezuelan coastline and the islands of Margarita, Coche, and Cubagua – otherwise known as the Pearl Islands. Cubagua, and what would be dubbed the 'Pearl Coast' (northern Venezuela) had been mapped out by explorers from the islands of Hispaniola and Cuba in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Columbus first encountered the islands in 1498 during his third voyage to the Caribbean.[204] Pearls had a tremendous market value, particularly in Western Europe. The numerous pearl beds were untapped potential that quickly captured the economic and material

[201] These figures were taken from the most recent data tables in the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database, currently available at www.slavevoyages.org.

[202]Borucki, Eltis, and Wheat, "The Size and Direction of the Slave Trade to the Spanish Americas," 25–26.

[203] Eagle and Wheat, "The Early Iberian Slave Trade to the Spanish Caribbean, 1500 - 1580," 50.

[204] Molly Warsh, "Enslaved Pearl Divers in the Sixteenth Century Caribbean," *Slavery and Abolition* 31 (2010): 345–62, https://doi.org/10.1080/0144039X.2010.504540.

imaginations of Spain's New World colonists.[205] By 1512 the crown allowed private pearl-trading voyages to Cubagua for the first time and began to receive payments in the form of the *quinto,* a tax on one-fifth of the total pearls fished out of the waters.[206]

Merchants and *conquistadors* capitalized on established patterns of violence and trade to quickly develop systems for extracting pearls. The pearl-fishing operations that developed in Cubagua and Margarita, and later settlements such as Santa Marta and Rio Hacha, were developmental extensions of the conquests and slave-raids that preceded them, they even featured some of the same men.[207] Originally the Spanish traded with the indigenous for pearls but eventually began to take them as slaves, principally the Guaquerí from Margarita and later the Lucayans from the Bahamas. As indigenous numbers depleted, the Spanish raided further to take slaves from Tierra Firme (namely northern Venezuela) and other parts of the Caribbean.[208]. Although African captives were being shipped trans-colonially from Hispaniola to Cubagua and the other Pearl Islands and the Venezuelan coast, residents of Cubagua did not import Africans in

[205]Tardieu Jean-pierre, "Perlas y Piel de Azabache. El Negro En Las Pesquerías de Las Indias Occidentales," *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 65 (December 30, 2008): 91–99, https://doi.org/10.3989/aeamer.2008.v65.i2.115; Molly A. Warsh, *American Baroque: Pearls and the Nature of Empire, 1492-1700*, Illustrated edition (Omohundro Institute and University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 12–30.

[206] Warsh, *American Baroque*, 34–35.

[207] Rodrigo de Bastidas, for example, was a *conquistador* who had previously explored the coast. He was granted captaincy of Santa Marta in 1525. The residents were granted pearl fishing rights, Ernesto Restrepo Tirado, *Historia de la Provincia de Santa Marta.* (Bogota: Ministerio de Educación Nacional, Ediciones de la Revista Bolívar, 1953), 19–22.

[208] Warsh, "Enslaved Pearl Divers in the Sixteenth Century Caribbean," 346–50; Also see Michael Perri, "'Ruined and Lost': Spanish Destruction of the Pearl Coast in the Early Sixteenth Century," *Environment and History* 15, no. 2 (2009): 129–61.

number to the island until 1526, as the first licenses were granted to traders between 1526 and 1536.[209]

Pearl diving was brutal. And Cubagua was unforgiving. Men were frequently shackled to one another in small *bohios* or huts by the water, isolated from the other captives. They left in canoes during the dawn and returned only at night after having hauled in enough pearls to meet their quotas. Men frequently drowned in the waters offshore and many were attacked by sharks and killed. Indigenous and African slaves dove to depths of three to four fathoms or 18 to 24 feet to gather pearls from their beds. They sometimes returned to the canoes bleeding from their mouths due to pressure on their chests.[210]

The Spanish crown attempted to place limits on the number of feet that enslaved workers could be forced to dive, but this was met with pushback from the locals in Cubagua.[211] The Spanish crown's attempt to regulate the pearl fisheries and their treatment of the enslaved had little to do with the condition of the workers themselves than it did the preservation of profit. In the 1520s, gangs of enslaved divers were extracting more pearls than ever before. Within a span of a few years, the crown saw its payments in the *quinto* double and then triple.[212] The boom in pearls in Cubagua would not last long, however. Such profits came at human and environmental cost. Just like the Spanish over-extraction of gold from Hispaniola, *rancheros* enacted a ruthless

[209] Javier Laviña and Michael Zeuske, "Failures of Atlantization: First Slaveries in Venezuela and Nueva Granada," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 31, no. 3 (2008): 300–301.

[210] Warsh, *American Baroque*, 42–43.

[211] Enrique Otte, *Las Perlas Del Caribe: Nueva Cádiz de Cubagua* (Caracas, Venezuela: Fundación John Boulton, 1977), 34.

[212] Warsh, *American Baroque*, 44–46.

regime of extraction in Cubagua all at the expense of their indigenous and African captives. By 1528, there were signs that the pearl beds were being exhausted due to over-fishing.[213]

In 1537, the *cabildo* wrote to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V to inform him that the pearl beds would soon be completely exhausted. By 1538, they began to seek out new pearl banks in Cabo de la Vela. In 1540, they abandoned fishing in Cubagua. This coincided with a second wave of licenses to import enslaved Africans to work the pearl banks of Cabo de la Vela and the gold mines of Buria on the Venezuelan mainland from 1536 to 1560. As before, nearly all the captives came from the Upper Guinea coast by way of Cape Verde.[214] The search for new pearl beds to exploit led settlers to Nuestra Senora de los Remedios del Rio de la Hacha.[215]

On Trial in Cubagua

Rodrigo arrived in Cubagua as it was approaching its peak in terms of pearl-fishing.[216] The island had become an important part of the Spanish imperial project through an abundance of pearl beds. Such was the wealth and economic importance of its port, that the small fishing village of Nueva Cadiz was granted the title of *ciudad* (city).[217] Rodrigo was among the first

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[213] Otte, *Las Perlas Del Caribe: Nueva Cádiz de Cubagua*, 34; Perri, "'Ruined and Lost.'"

[214] Laviña and Zeuske, "Failures of Atlantization," 301.

[215] Otte, *Las Perlas Del Caribe: Nueva Cádiz de Cubagua*, 35; Trinidad Miranda Vázquez, *La gobernación de Santa Marta (1570-1670)*, 1. ed., Publicaciones de la Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos de Sevilla 232 (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos, 1976), 61–70; María Cristina Navarrete, "La Granjería* De Las Perlas Del Rio De La Hacha: Rebelión y Resistencia Esclava (1570-1615)," *Historia Caribe* 3, no. 8 (2003).

[216] Otte, *Las Perlas Del Caribe: Nueva Cádiz de Cubagua*, 51–54. See graph on page 53 for graphical representation of peak pearl output from Cubagua in 1526

[217] Perri, "'Ruined and Lost,'" 125–26.

wave of enslaved Blacks to arrive on the island as part of the transatlantic slave trade in 1526. Once in Nueva Cadiz, Rodrigo was sold to a merchant named Anton Lopez. Lopez and Sancho de Urrutia appear to have been partners, as he was among the men on the ship that originally brought Rodrigo to the Caribbean. In addition, Lopez was one of several prominent merchants residing in Cubagua.[218] Almost immediately after his arrival, Rodrigo went the *alcalde mayor,* Pedro de Herrera, to plead his case that he was a free man.[219]

Rodrigo must have understood that there were similar legal customs in Spanish colonies as in the Portuguese territories. The trade between the Spanish Caribbean colonies and the Portuguese islands of Cape Verde had been growing for several years at this point. Records indicate that enslaved Africans were transported to the Caribbean directly from the archipelago at least as early as 1519, though there is reason to believe that the slave merchants had been trafficking captives to the Caribbean even before that date. By the 1520s, Cape Verde had become the lynchpin of the Castilian traffic in slaves in the New World.[220] Merchants from the Portuguese archipelago dominated the early slave trade to Spain's territories in the Caribbean and South and Central America, thus giving it tremendous influence as an economic and cultural crossroads.[221] Moreover, as the executor of an estate with hundreds of captives, Rodrigo would have become familiar with the currents of trade that linked Cape Verde, West Africa, Iberia and

[218] Enrique Otte, "Los mercaderes transatlánticos bajo Carlos V," *Anuario de estudios americanos*, no. 47 (1990): 96–101.

[219] AGI, Justicia, 11, n.4 folio 2v

[220] García and Chaves, "Sevilla y la Trata Negrera Atlántica," 604-607.

[221] Toby Green, "Building Creole Identity in the African Atlantic: Boundaries of Race and Religion in Seventeenth-Century Cabo Verde," *History in Africa*, 36 (2009): 103-105, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40864518

the Caribbean. The similarities would certainly not have been lost on Rodrigo, who had been heavily steeped in the Portuguese world.

Further, in both Spanish and Portuguese imperial realms, the legal practice of slavery was regulated by the same Roman law. Enslaved people had a legal personality and limited rights, as slavery was an "unnatural" condition. In addition, the corporate structure of Iberian communities ensured that Rodrigo would at least be heard.[222] Afterall, he had been purchased illegally, as he was a free man at the time that Cristobal Gonzalez forced him aboard a slave ship. With this awareness, Rodrigo plead before Pedro de Herrera to free him. Unfortunately, Rodrigo was no longer in Cape Verde where his communal ties reflected his standing in the community. As the previous chapter demonstrated, despite Rodrigo's enslavement, his relationships in Cape Verde and Lisbon had largely been beneficial to him. But his transferal to the Caribbean distanced him from his previous social network and made him lose many of the benefits and security that network had conferred. His status as an enslaved man meant that this new change exposed him to the brutalities of slave labor and retaliation.

In effort to silence Rodrigo, Alonso Lopez took him outside of Nueva Cadiz after his initial appeal to the *alcalde mayor* and punished him. During his trial in 1528, Rodrigo admitted that Lopez gave him "more than 1,000 lashes" for his "complaints."[223] He had been beaten so badly that Rodrigo was left to recover on a "cama de heridas" (sick bed) somewhere in town. While Rodrigo was recovering, another merchant by name of Juan de la Barrera stopped by his

[222] William D. Phillips, *Slavery from Roman Times to the Early Transatlantic Trade*, First edition (Minneapolis: Univ of Minnesota Pr, 1985), 154–70.

[223] AGI, Justica,11 n.4, fólios 2v, 21r

bedside. Barrera tried to persuade Rodrigo not to pursue his case further. He told Rodrigo that Lopez saw him as a son and that he wanted to take Rodrigo to "Castilla" with him. Alonso Lopez, Barrera asserted, cared for Rodrigo and because "he did not have any heirs," and he wanted Rodrigo to help him run his estate.[224]

This revelation is striking in several different ways. Firstly, Barrera alleged that Lopez cared for Rodrigo like a son. It is hard to imagine this being a convincing tactic to dissuade Rodrigo from pursuing his freedom. At the time of their conversation, Rodrigo was recovering from wounds that Lopez had given him in vicious retaliation for seeking his freedom. However, bonds between enslavers and their slaves could be complicated. Rodrigo himself was no stranger to this. He had been owned by his father. Both Spanish and Portuguese men regularly sired children with enslaved Black and indigenous women – though it was often through rape. Even in instances in which enslaved men or women were not the direct descendants of their enslavers, they remained a part of their household and may have developed close relationships with them.[225] Sometimes, just as in the case of Rodrigo, they were left property or valuable goods at the end of their enslaver's lives.[226]

[224] AGI, Justicia 11, n.4 folio 21r

[225] The relationships between the enslaved and their enslavers during this period was part of a complex articulation of power, patronage, and dependency in Spanish society. For example, enslaved people like Rodrigo Lopez often expressed the "language of lineage" by adopting the last names of their enslavers, see: Bianca Premo, "Familiar: Thinking beyond Lineage and across Race in Spanish Atlantic Family History," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (2013): 298, https://doi.org/10.5309/willmaryquar.70.2.0295.

[226] Blumenthal, *Enemies and Familiars*, 150–53.

Indeed, the kinds of relationships that the enslaved had with their enslavers could inform the kinds of opportunities that became available to them.[227] In 1502, for example, a Sevillian merchant sent an enslaved man alongside two other agents to sell merchandise for him in Hispaniola. In 1509, Juan de Zafra, an enslaved Black man was sent to the New World to sell goods on behalf of his enslaver, the Sevillian doctor Diego Alvarez Chanca. Remarkably, Zafra continued to live in Spain's New World territories until his death in 1515.[228] It is reasonable to assume that the abovementioned men that were sent to the New World had some kind of trustworthy relationship with their enslaver, which, in addition to their valuable skills, would explain why they were sent to the New World in the first place.

However, enslaved men also took the opportunity of being in the New World, far away from the eyes of their enslaver to flee or seek better situations for themselves. For example, Francisco Galdames, a resident of Seville, had purchased an unnamed enslaved man from a Portuguese merchant before sending him aboard a ship to the Indies in 1542. Once there, the man claimed that he was free. Unfortunately, he was detained in Cabo de la Vela (northern Venezuela). Perhaps the man had been illegally enslaved, or potentially had been sold against his will. He may have resented being sent to the Indies from Spain. Whatever the case, he was placed under the stewardship of a resident of Santo Domingo and pled for his freedom before the audiencia of Santo Domingo. In their ruling, the judges determined that he had not proven

[227] Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida,* 7–28.

[228] *Documentos Americanos Del Archivo de Protocolos de Sevilla :Siglo XVI /* (Madrid :, 1935), 12, 108, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/txu.059173017939560; Originally seen in Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders: Sevillian Society in the Sixteenth Century*, 184–85.

himself to be free. However, the man requested that his case be heard before the *Casa de la Contratación* (House of Trade) in Spain.[229] How his trial was ultimately resolved is not clear.

The value and use of Rodrigo points to another important revelation in his conversation with Juan de la Barrera. Alonso Lopez wanted him to help run his estate because he did not have any heirs. It is difficult to ascertain the veracity of Barrera's claims about Lopez's heirs. While there is a great deal of documentation on merchants in the sixteenth century, including Barrera himself, the data are still incomplete.[230] Moreover, we do not know what kind of relationship developed between Rodrigo and Alonso Lopez outside one of enslaver-slave. And there is no such evidence that any close or kin-like relationship of the sort existed between them. Rodrigo's case only allows us to have a limited perspective on interactions with Alonso Lopez, who does not provide any testimony. Barrera's suggestion that Lopez wanted Rodrigo to work on his estate could very well have been true. Rodrigo had experience working as a slave trader and running an estate. It is within the realm of possibility that Alonso Lopez saw a use for Rodrigo as an overseer – just not as a free man. Given that context, perhaps it is most appropriate to read Barrera's words to Rodrigo as a form of psychological manipulation where physical punishment had previously been unsuccessful.

Juan de la Barrera's conversation with Rodrigo reveals but one element of the psychological terrain that enslaved people were forced to navigate in addition to the other forms of violence and manipulation they faced. Rodrigo would have been in a particularly vulnerable state recovering from his wounds, not to mention he may have been afraid of additional

[229] AGI, Santo Domingo, 868, L.2 folio 231

[230] Otte, "Los mercaderes transatlánticos bajo Carlos V."

punishment. It is difficult to measure the psychological impact that enslavement had on the enslaved and how it impacted their responses to captivity. Corporal punishment was common in the sixteenth century Atlantic world. Perhaps Rodrigo was angry at his abuse. Barrera's attempt at psychological manipulation may have worked to stiffen resolve.

In the trial that began in 1527, it was Juan de la Barrera, not Alonso Lopez, who made claims negating Rodrigo's status as a free man. During the trial, Rodrigo told the court that Lopez had sold him to Barrera some four months after he first brought his plea to the *alcalde mayor*. Within that timeframe, Rodrigo plead his case before the highest official in Cubagua, was beaten in retaliation, bedridden and sold.[231] Through Barrera's conversation with Rodrigo, Lopez leveraged psychological manipulation was well as his personal relationships to try to keep Rodrigo in captivity. Perhaps he thought Barrera might be more persuasive or that a stranger's words might be more trustworthy than his own. In either case, Lopez and Barrera conspired to find a way to prevent Rodrigo from freeing himself, regardless of the credibility of his claims.

It is worthwhile to explore the relationship between Alonso Lopez and Juan de la Barrera. Why Alonso Lopez chose another slave trader to speak to Rodrigo is unclear, but it would appear as though the two men had first developed a relationship through trade intermediaries that eventually lasted for decades. Firstly, Juan de la Barrera was the principal pearl merchant in Cubagua. He first came to the Caribbean in 1518. Based in San Juan, Puerto Rico, it only took Barrera a year before he established himself as one of the most prominent merchants selling goods from the pearl coast in the province of Venezuela. By 1520, Barrera had received a *rancheria* in Cubagua. In 1526, Juan de la Barrera established the most powerful

[231] AGI, Justicia 11, n.4, folios 2v - 21r

trading company in Nueva Cadiz with another merchant, Rodrigo de Gibraleon. Together they became Cubagua's leading pearl exporters.[232]

Previous research on Juan de la Barrera and Alonso Lopez suggested that they did not know each other prior to the year 1537. In Enrique Otte's important article on transatlantic merchants, he lists the two men as only having an indirect link to one another before then. That indirect link was another important merchant named Francisco Ruiz. Like Barrera, Ruiz had become successful trafficking in enslaved people and other goods among the Caribbean islands, principally Puerto Rico. Ruiz also had connections with Barrera's close associate, Rodrigo de Gibraleon, even developing a business society with him. Forming a society or company with other merchants was a common tactic for traders at the time. Barrera himself had been the guarantor for a business sold to Francisco Ruiz.[233] Otte's article shows that by 1537, Alonso Lopez and Juan de la Barrera had extensive business relations, establishing trade factors in Tierra Firme, Peru, Honduras, and Cuba. There were remissions from Nombre de Dios in Panama to Barrera and Anton Lopez for the years 1535 to 1546.[234]

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[232] María Angeles Eugenio Martínez, "Una empresa de perlas: los Barrera en el Caribe," in *Huelva y América : actas de las XI Jornadas de Andalucia y América, Universidad de Santa María de la Rábida, marzo-1992, Vol. 2, 1993, ISBN 84-86842-88-3, págs. 9-38* (Huelva y América : actas de las XI Jornadas de Andalucia y América, Universidad de Santa María de la Rábida, marzo-1992, Diputación Provincial de Huelva, 1993), 9–12, https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=935328; Otte, "Los mercaderes transatlánticos bajo Carlos V."

[233] Otte, "Los mercaderes transatlánticos bajo Carlos V," 96–100; Martínez, "Una empresa de perlas," 15.

[234] Otte, "Los mercaderes transatlánticos bajo Carlos V," 100–103.

According to Rodrigo's testimony, Lopez and Barrera's relationship went back at least a decade earlier to 1527 and may have been closer than previous records reveal. Perhaps Lopez had sent Barrera to console Rodrigo because he was a trusted fellow merchant, a man of standing both in Cubagua and the Spanish mercantile community at large. Barrera was also listed as the second constructor of the only stone house on the island, located in the village of Santiago.[235] He would have certainly exercised some social and political power in the early colony. Or maybe Barrera, sensing an opportunity, offered to take a troublesome slave off Lopez's hands. Whatever the case may have been, it is probably not coincidental that Barrera was sent to speak to Rodrigo and then subsequently purchased him. This relatively small detail in Rodrigo's case shows that by analyzing the relationships that governed the lives of the enslaved we can gain additional insights into the early social networks of their enslavers as well.

To protect him from potential violent retaliation, Rodrigo and his representative, Francisco Hernandez, requested of the *alcalde mayor* that as long as the case was being litigated that Juan de la Barrera treat Rodrigo well and refrain from violence otherwise they would take Rodrigo out of his power and place him under the stewardship of another resident of the island.[236] His desire to be protected from harm was based not just on his previous experience with Alonso Lopez, but with Juan de la Barrera as well. Barrera had also whipped Rodrigo for daring to pursue his freedom claims.[237]

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[235] Ibid., 101

[236] AGI, Justicia 11, n.4, folio. 3r

[237] AGI, Justicia 11, n.4, folio 21r

Juan de la Barrera leveraged Rodrigo's former status against him. In February of 1527, Barrera and his *procurador* argued that Rodrigo had been born a slave and had remained so. If he had not been a slave, they argued, then Cristobal Gonzalez would not have been able to sell him first to Juan Sombrero and then to Bartolome Corral for ten thousand *maravedis*.[238] In 1528 when the trial resumed, Francisco Hernandez countered Juan de la Barrera's claims, asserting that neither he nor his *procurador* could prove that Rodrigo was a captive. As the trial continued in October of that year, the *alcalde mayor* requested that Rodrigo produce his *carta de horro* (writ of freedom). Rodrigo responded by telling him that he did not have his *carta de horro* nor the testament in which Rui Lopez, his father and former enslaver, had drafted it. Rodrigo proclaimed that because it was known that he lived freely in Cape Verde, there were witnesses that could speak on his behalf. He called a man named Juan Gago as a witness.

Juan Gago had gone to Cape Verde several years prior with Diego Mendez, *alguacil mayor* of the island of Hispaniola – again demonstrating the early social and commercial ties between Cape Verde the Spanish Caribbean. From Cape Verde, the two men returned aboard Anton Lopez and Sancho de Urrutia's ship – the same ship that carried Rodrigo and others as captives to Cubagua. During that trip, Juan Gago heard from several sailors, in particular a man named Juan Diaz, that Rodrigo was free and could read. Further, Juan Gago learned that Rodrigo had been freed by Rui Lopez and that Lopez's nephew, Cristobal Gonzalez, came to the islands of Cape Verde and forced Rodrigo aboard slave ships out of anger because of Rodrigo's control over the Lopez estate. Juan Gago also revealed that Rodrigo had been in correspondence with his father's family in Lisbon prior to Gonzalez's arrival.[239]

[238] Ibid., fols 5r-5v
[239] AGI Justicia 11, n.4, fol. 8r

Other witnesses were called to provide additional testimony on Rodrigo's behalf. Two men, Manuel Hernandez and Gomez Rascon provided testimony. Hernandez said that he had seen Rodrigo on the island of Santiago, Cape Verde. While there, Rodrigo was well-dressed and had worn a tunic and a cape. He had also been carrying paper and other writing materials – indicating his literacy. In addition, Hernandez heard from several others in Cape Verde that had gone aboard a Portuguese ship that not only was Rodrigo too well-dressed to have been a slave but that he was also too well-treated.[240] Other members of the community also provided evidence of Rodrigo's freedom and status. Hernandez stated that Juan Fernandez, a *zapatero* (shoemaker) in Santiago told him Rodrigo had been freed. He testified that Rodrigo knew how to read and write and that he did not walk like an enslaved man but a free one. Hernandez noted this because "slaves do not have a place to learn to read nor write nor [do they] walk so well". Interestingly, Hernandez did not sign his name because he himself did not know how to write.[241]

Following Manuel's testimony, Gomez Rascon spoke before the *alcalde mayor*. He asserted that he had lived in Santiago, Cape Verde for around 2 years and had seen Rodrigo go aboard a Portuguese ship well dressed in good clothes (*buenos vestidos*). He also knew that Rodrigo could read and write and questioned if he were a slave. Rascon had heard some of the men aboard the ship say that Rodrigo had been freed by his owner. The men seemed to know that he had been sold back into enslavement by Cristobal Gonzalez out of an act of vengeance. Rascon claimed that Rodrigo had first been sold to Juan Sombrero and Rodrigo Gallego, two

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[240] AGI Justicia,11, n.4, fol 8v

[241] AGI Justicia, 11, n.4, fol 8v

Spaniards from Palos, who then sold him to a ship master (whose name he did not know) before Rodrigo came to Cubagua.[242]

A Portuguese sailor, Martin Mendez, also spoke on Rodrigo's behalf. He had arrived on the island about two years ago as a sailor on Sancho de Urrutia and Anton Lopez's ship. On the ship, he heard another Portuguese sailor say that Rodrigo was a free man. He also heard several other sailors say the same and that not only was Rodrigo free, but he could read and write Latin and was *buen Cristiano* (a good Christian). Mendez must have believed this to be true, as he stated that "slaves do not learn to read or write."[243] A man named Bartolome Benitez testified following Mendez and provided additional details about Rodrigo. Benitez had lived on Santiago for a few years and had also been on the boat that brought Rodrigo to the Caribbean. According to his testimony, he had seen Rodrigo aboard Juan Sombrero's ship and knew that he had been sold by a Portuguese resident of the island. What was more, Rodrigo had been sold under the condition that he was not left in lands belonging to the kingdom of Portugal. Juan Sombrero, according to Benitez, accepted this condition but had suspicions that Rodrigo was a free man because of his literacy, something that he relayed to the master of his ship, Cristobal Sanchez.

Benitez heard similar information from "many" people in Ribeira Grande, the principal port of Santiago. Two or three *"hombres honrados"* knew Rodrigo was no longer enslaved as well. Indeed, Benitez revealed that Rodrigo's relatives in Lisbon wanted the estate that he managed. In anger, Cristobal Gonzalez sold off Rodrigo even though others in town knew him to be free. Benitez admitted that Rodrigo could read, write and swim – a valuable skill for pearl

[242] Ibid., fol 9r

[243] AGI Justicia, 11 n.4, fol 9v

divers in Cubagua. Moreover, the master of the ship, Cristobal Sanchez, said that he suspected Rodrigo was free. Benitez even heard from a barber in Ribeira Grande that Rodrigo was a free man and that they should expect a plea regarding his liberty. Interestingly, Benitez, like Manuel Hernandez who testified before him, did not sign his name because he could not write.[244]

Francisco de Reyna, Juan de la Barrera's representative, cross-examined the witnesses. He adopted a strategy to paint Rodrigo as a liar. He asked the why Rodrigo had not gone to the justices in Cape Verde and claimed his freedom. Or why, despite being on a ship full of men with opportunities to communicate, Rodrigo did not anything about his freedom while he was aboard the ship for ten days before it departed? Moreover, Reyna argued, Rodrigo had not been harmed during his time on the ship.[245] Francisco de Reyna must have based this line of questioning on testimony from several witnesses that had testified on behalf of Juan de la Barrera. One of whom alleged that Rodrigo had been aboard Sancho de Urrutia's ship "eight or ten days" yet had said nothing about being free. But another sailor countered those claims, as he mentioned having heard a Black woman in Ribeira Grande say that Rodrigo was in fact a free man. Another witness offered additional support for Rodrigo's claims. Juan Gallego, a twenty-year-old *grumete* (cabin boy/ordinary seaman), alleged that he heard Juan Sombrero say that Rodrigo was free even as he gave him to Cristobal Sanchez who then sold him to Bartolome Corral, the shipmaster of Sancho de Urrutia's ship.[246]

[244] AGI Justicia, 11 n.4, fols. 9V – 10V

[245] AGI, Justicia 11, fols. 11R

[246] AGI, Justicia 11, fols 16R

By the end of the year in 1528, after so many witnesses had provided testimony in favor of Rodrigo, it was markedly clear that he was not a slave. The witnesses painted a picture of a man of high social status in Cape Verdean society. He was literate, could read multiple languages, dressed noticeably well, did not "speak, walk, or talk like a slave", and was treated respectfully by the members of his community. The people of Cape Verde knew that he had been freed by Rui Lopez, the former royal auditor of the islands. He had been illegally re-enslaved and sold by a vengeful cousin as part of a plot to seize his late father's estate. Yet despite all the witnesses that had supported Rodrigo's claim to be a free man, the alcalde mayor determined that Rodrigo had not proven that he was free, and that Juan de la Barrera's case was more substantive. On December 5, 1528, Pedro de Herrera ruled that Rodrigo was to remain in captivity.[247]

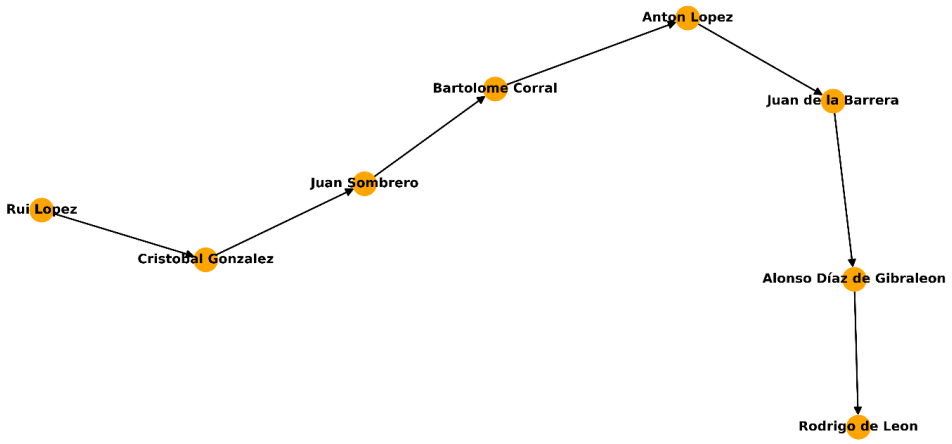
Trial in Hispaniola

In 1530, Rodrigo tried to obtain his freedom yet again. This time he plead his case before the *Audiencia de Santo Domingo*, the highest court among Spain's New World colonies located on the island of Hispaniola. In the time between his last trial in 1528 and the new trial, Rodrigo had been sold twice. Juan de la Barrera sold him to a man named Alonso de Gibraleon, a resident in Cubagua and *factor* for the royal auditor of Hispaniola, Diego Caballero. Alonso Díaz de Gibraleon then sold him to Rodrigo de Leon, a merchant based out of Hispaniola. Rodrigo de

[247] AGI, Justicia 11, fols 17R – 20

Leon took Rodrigo to Hispaniola where he brought his case before the *audiencia*. All the men who held Rodrigo captive at one point can be seen in below in Figure 3.

Figure 7: Rodrigo's Captors from 1523 - 1532



In the figure above, each edge or line between individuals is the direction of Rodrigo's transferal. The edge between Rui Lopez and Cristobal Gonzalez, for example, does not depict a sale or interaction, but merely the direction of Rodrigo's captivity. Each arrow also represents temporal shift, beginning in 1523 when Rodrigo was freed. As the figure shows, Rodrigo changed hands approximately six times since he was granted his freedom in 1523 and was re-enslaved a few years later by Cristobal Gonzalez. He was sold four times since his arrival in the Caribbean in 1526 and lived on two islands, Cubagua and Hispaniola. Rodrigo's capture and subsequent sales demonstrate the rapidity with which a freed Black person's life could be upended with even *one* negative relationship.

At the beginning of the trial in Hispaniola, Rodrigo stood before the judges and recounted the details of his re-enslavement, just as he had done before Pedro de Herrera in Nueva Cadiz.

He spoke of his upbringing in Lisbon, being placed in the hands of the church there under the care of the vicar, his schooling under a cleric, and his time in Cape Verde. As a *mayordomo* (overseer), he came to know his father's estate. In a testament written with the public notary of Santiago, Cape Verde, Rodrigo's father freed him, his mother, his sister and an enslaved couple, Roque and Elena. Rodrigo explained that as a condition of his freedom, he had to work as the executor (*albacea*) of the Lopez estate for approximately three years before selling it and paying off its debts.[248]

Rodrigo re-stated that he had been illegally enslaved and sold by Cristobal Gonzalez, Rui Lopez's nephew. He told the court of his arrival in Cubagua and the punishment that he experienced at the hands of both Anton Lopez and Juan de la Barrera for pleading his case before the local court in Nueva Cadiz.[249] A year later in 1532, Rodrigo also revealed the brutality he experienced on a boat owned by Diego Caballero, the auditor of Hispaniola, several years prior. He recounted his poor treatment, telling the judges that one of his hands had been beaten with sticks.[250] It's not exactly clear when Rodrigo had been on Caballero's ship, but Caballero's factor, Alonso Diaz de Gibraleon, had purchased Rodrigo sometime after 1528. A year before the end of Rodrigo's first trial, Diego Caballero was granted a license to send two ships to Cubagua. Given Rodrigo's testimony, perhaps he was on one of them when he was maimed.[251] It

[248] AGI, Justica 11, fols 21v-21r, 26r

[249] AGI, Justicia 11, fols 22r

[250] Ibid.,, fols 45v, Rodrigo stated that "el contador diego caballero me quiere en la nao en sus navios que es en las islas perlas *y dentro en sus navios me ha hecho malos tratamiento y mancado de una mano a palos*." Emphasis is mine.

[251] AGI, Indiferente,421,L.12, fols.178v-179v

is important to note that Rodrigo mentioned he was on a ship, not a canoe, which were the typical maritime tools for pearl fishing. It is not immediately clear what Rodrigo was doing on Barrera's ship. That same year, 1527, Diego Caballero was also granted licenses for twelve enslaved Blacks to work in Cubagua. He also purchased licenses for fifty other enslaved Blacks to work on his *ingenio* in Hispaniola and was granted permission to have an enslaved Berber as a house servant.[252]

Diego Caballero appeared on a few other occasions throughout Rodrigo's testimony. For example, in one important exchange between Rodrigo de Leon, Rodrigo's new enslaver, and the judges, Leon's *procurador* requested that the judges allow Caballero to take Rodrigo out of the city to work on his sugar plantation. Once there, they would ensure he did not escape by placing him in irons or at least a shackle on one foot. In fact, Rodrigo de Leon had tried to remove Rodrigo from Hispaniola entirely as part of an attempt to isolate him and limit his access to the audiencia. Leon argued that he needed to take Rodrigo with him where his services were needed. He stated that he had purchased Rodrigo from a resident in Cubagua, Alonso Diaz de Gibraleon (Caballero's factor), and that he was "currently going there." The judges, however, prevented Leon from taking Rodrigo to Cubagua because his case was still ongoing.[253]

Shortly after the judges ruled that Rodrigo could not be taken off the island of Hispaniola, a man arrived bearing the most important testimony for Rodrigo to date. On June 4th, 1532 a thirty-year-old Sicilian mariner named Bernal Diaz de Trapana told the judges of the audiencia that he had left the islands of Cape Verde for Hispaniola some eight months prior. Trapana

[252]AGI, Indiferente,421,L.12, fols, 103v-104r, 105v-106r, 154v

[253] AGI, Justicia, 11, n.4, fols 24r – 25v

appeared to have known Rodrigo and his sister, stating that he had "resided on the island of Santiago for eleven years, more or less." According to him, Rodrigo and Catalina had been freed by Rui Lopez after his death and that they were regarded as "*horros y personas libres*." Trapana also claimed to have even seen Rodrigo move from working on one estate on the island of Santiago to another on Fogo, validating Rodrigo's claims about having worked on multiple islands of Cape Verde as a free man. Most importantly, however, Trapana revealed that he had spoken with Rodrigo's sister in Santiago prior to arriving in Hispaniola. To the mariner's surprise, Catalina told him that Rodrigo had been taken to the Caribbean through trickery. Then she gave Trapana her brother's *carta de alforria* (letter of manumission), which he brought with him to Hispaniola on both her and Rodrigo's behalf.[254]

On the surface, Bernal Diaz de Trapana's arrival in the Caribbean and his subsequent deliverance of Rodrigo's freedom papers appears serendipitous. Yet it was not blind luck working in Rodrigo's case but an extensive social network. While he was working as a slave in Cubagua, Rodrigo was spotted by a sailor named Vicente Fernandez. Fernandez also saw him on two separate occasions aboard a boat. The sailor did not know who Rodrigo's enslaver was, but he carried word of his whereabouts to Cape Verde in 1530. Once there, Fernandez found Catalina Lopez, Rodrigo's sister, and told her that he had seen her brother in Cubagua. Catalina had not known her brother was in the Caribbean working as a slave for half-a-decade prior to hearing from Fernandez. She only knew that she had not seen him for five years after he disappeared from the islands.[255]

[254] AGI, Justicia, 11, fols 27r – 27v

[255] AGI, Justicia 11, fols 37r-38r

Armed with this information, Catalina and her son Miguel went to the *juez ordinario* (municipal judge), Lope Hernandez, on the island of Fogo. She told the judge that a sailor named Vicente Fernandez approached her several days prior and informed her that Rodrigo was in Cubagua. She requested that his letter of manumission be given as proof of his freedom. Lope Hernandez determined that her request was of sound reason and ordered the public notary, Antonio Luis Pindola, to send the letter to the Ribeira Grande on Santiago. There, where so many sailors came from Castille to purchase enslaved Africans, they would wait to find someone to take the document to Rodrigo. A little more than a year later, sometime in late 1531, Bernal Diaz de Trapana agreed to take Rodrigo's *carta* to him in the Caribbean.[256] Rodrigo's large social network had finally worked to deliver him from his captivity.

Even after Rodrigo received his letter of manumission and it had been properly translated a few months later, the trial continued. Rodrigo de Leon demanded the money that he had paid for Rodrigo, one-hundred-forty gold pesos. For his part, Rodrigo was forced to find a local named Pedro Moreno who was willing to act as a guarantor for the price of his freedom. Even with his *carta* in hand, Rodrigo was still faced with uncertainty and had to be wary. For example, Diego de Caballero attempted to purchase Rodrigo despite the judges having ruled in his favor, something that Rodrigo feared, particularly after his brutal treatment on one of the *contador*'s ships.[257] Although a decision had been handed down by the audiencia in 1532, it would take an additional three years for it to be confirmed by the Council of the Indies in Madrid.

[256] AGI, Justicia 11, fols 37r-38r, 27r-27v

[257] AGI, Justicia 11, fols 45v – 47r

Rodrigo's testimony, paired with those of several witnesses, highlights how harrowing and uncertain life could be for the enslaved. There was no guarantee that Rodrigo would be set free despite numerous men providing evidence of his illegal enslavement. And it was clear that the men who held him captive were arguing in bad faith from the beginning. Alonso Lopez and Juan de la Barrera even conspired to concoct some form of psychological manipulation to prevent Rodrigo from further pursuing his case. Rodrigo de Leon attempted to ferry him off Hispaniola in a transparent ploy to limit Rodrigo's access to the judges of the audiencia. The judges halted Leon's plan to abscond with Rodrigo, but that did not stop him renting him out to Diego Caballero's *ingenio*, the same man that had him beaten on his ship in Cubagua and tried to levy his connections to lay claim to Rodrigo as his slave.

Moreover, Rodrigo's enslavement was not only physically brutal, but also emotionally traumatizing for him and those close to him. One can only imagine the mixture of emotions that ran through Catalina Lopez when she heard that her brother was alive. What had she felt or thought in the weeks, months, and years since Rodrigo's sudden disappearance? Was she horrified when she found out that he had been enslaved again? Perhaps she felt anger at the man that had forced him aboard a slave ship in the first place. She told the *juez ordinario* on Fogo that she had searched for her brother among the islands of Cape Verde, but to no avail. He had disappeared and, unbeknownst to her at that time, had been trafficked like thousands of other enslaved people to the growing Spanish colonies dotting the Caribbean. Having once been enslaved on Cape Verde herself, Catalina was probably no stranger to the dangers that freed and enslaved Blacks faced on the island. The predatory nature of the transatlantic slave trade made potential marks of them all.

One need only look at the testimony provided by the thirty-year-old pilot, Cristobal Sanchez, to see how rapacious early slave traders were. Cristobal Sanchez (not to be confused with Rodrigo's relative Cristobal Gonzalez) had been the pilot for Sancho de Urrutia's ship when it brought Rodrigo to the Caribbean. In 1532, after Bernal Diaz de Trapana presented Rodrigo's letter of manumission to the audiencia in Hispaniola, Cristobal Sanchez was among several others that came to the island to provide additional information. The pilot's testimony suggests that Rodrigo was not the only free or enslaved Black person in Cape Verde to be illegally re-enslaved or sold. Speaking before the judges, Sanchez claimed that Cristobal Gonzalez had sold "Rodrigo and other blacks much in the same manner that this witness (Sanchez) had purchased others." He said that the captives he acquired informed him that "they had not been purchased" implying that they had been acquired either through trickery, coercion, or force, but were not the property of the original seller, Cristobal Gonzalez. Knowing this did little to change his behavior, however. Sanchez admitted to "sending [the captives] to the ship for something and once they were inside securing them." He recounted how this came at a risk because some of the captives "were *ladinos* in [Cape Verde]."[258] The Spanish crown had expressly forbidden the trade in enslaved blacks that had resided in the Spanish or Portuguese realms for at least a year without a special license. The authorities made an exception for *bozales* who had recently been traded, however.[259]

[258] AGI, Justicia 11, fols. 34V

[259] Cortes, "La Liberación Del Esclavo," 18. *Ladinos* were considered acculturated Africans who spoke Spanish and were familiar with Iberian customs. *Bozales* were typically newly arrived enslaved Africans who were not accustomed to Iberian language, religion or customs.

It is telling that Sanchez's only concern was that there might have been some retribution for trading in *ladinos*. This suggests that he did not expect there to be any real punishment for selling enslaved people that had not been legally purchased – that is, kidnapping them. Or perhaps even trafficking more humans than he had licenses for.[260] He and several others, including his shipmate Bartolome Corral who purchased Rodrigo for 10,000 maravedis, were aware of Rodrigo's freedom and proceeded anyway, despite claims from a local barber that Rodrigo might put forth a legal plea in the future.[261] For his part, however, Sanchez appeared to lay at least some of the blame on Bartolome Corral, referring to the shipmaster as "*el maldicho*" (the evil or cursed) in reference to his bringing Rodrigo to the Cubagua.[262] Perhaps this was an attempt to clean up his character before the judges and to smear a potential enemy. Whatever his motives may have been, Sanchez's testimony revealed the unscrupulous nature of an already grotesque practice. Fortunately for Rodrigo, his social connections offered him a greater chance of being free than the *ladinos* that had been illegally sold alongside him.

A large network of interlinked people such as sailors, merchants, artisans, officials, and family helped Rodrigo to claw his way back to freedom after more than half a decade in the New World. Throughout his first and second trials, Rodrigo's witnesses revealed his transatlantic social network, providing details about the people that knew him and revealing their relationships with him. For example, Bernal Diaz de Trapana's presence in Hispaniola came about because of a sailor seeing Rodrigo in Cubagua. That seaman, Vicente Fernandez, must

[260] Vicenta Cortes argues that Sancho de Urrutia probably carried more captives than he had licenses for on his trip to Cubagua; Cortes, 15–18.

[261] AGI Justicia, 11 n.4, fols. 9v – 10v

[262] AGI Justicia, 11 n.4, fols. 35v

have known Rodrigo or at least heard of him through shared connections. In both of their pasts, there was likely a relationship of some sort to make Fernandez find Rodrigo's sister, Catalina, a journey that could take weeks to months depending on his route; Bernal Diaz de Trapana traveled for months to locate Rodrigo on Hispaniola, for example.

Moreover, Vicente Fernandez knew to locate Catalina, indicating a knowledge of Rodrigo's family. It is probable that some of this information came through Fernandez's own social network, where sailors, merchants, and other people provided details that he did not have – much like how the residents of Cape Verde told the sailors aboard Sancho de Urrutia's ship about Rodrigo. Indeed, because of the nature of social networks, Rodrigo was not only able to rely on people with whom he had a direct, positive relationship but was also able to derive resources and assistance from people with whom he had no relationship save through a shared bond. This is a direct reflection of how larger social networks can lead to positive social outcomes. Especially considering that there was no guarantee that Rodrigo would be released from bondage without his *carta de ahorria*. The Spanish colonial legal system provided a legal framework that allowed Rodrigo to pursue his liberty, but the actual vehicle for his freedom was the diverse relationships that he had formed.

Maritime networks were especially diverse, particularly among Spain's merchant fleets. By the late sixteenth-century, thousands of mariners sailed each year on eight- or nine-month voyages aboard Spain's naval fleet. A significant number of the sailors were not Spanish and free black sailors worked alongside them.[263] The men that bore witness for Rodrigo reflected the

[263] In 1595, for example, three black *marineros* sailed on the Spanish fleet to New Spain, AGI, Contratacion,5252,N.1,R.75; See Pablo E. Perez-Mallaina, *Spain's Men of the Sea: Daily Life on the Indies Fleets in the Sixteenth Century* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

diverse origins of the merchant community. Many of the sailors were Spanish, some were Portuguese and at least one, Bernal Diaz de Trapana, was Sicilian. Thus, people like Rodrigo and his sister Catalina had the opportunity to form relationships, even only temporary or weak ones, with numerous people of the sea by living at a center of Atlantic traffic like Cape Verde. Those relationships turned out to be crucial in assisting Rodrigo's bid for freedom.

Rodrigo's story is a remarkable tale that demonstrates the fragility of Black freedom in the Atlantic world. Black Spanish or Portuguese colonial subjects lived under the perpetual shadow of enslavement during the sixteenth century. Though the Spanish legal system gave enslaved people a legal personality, it was their relationships that dictated their lived experiences -- precarity was a social outcome, not just a legal one. A single negative relationship was enough to completely upend their lives. Rodrigo's trial is an example of this. The envious decisions of his cousin initiated a series of rapid, life-altering changes that left him enslaved in new lands far from his home and local community. But through various strong and weak relationships, Rodrigo was eventually able to regain his freedom. His story details how important having numerous and varied social relationships were for both free and enslaved people. Moreover, his case also adds additional detail and color to the complex and deeply interwoven social and commercial world of the early Atlantic. By focusing on the relationships that governed the lives of Black colonial subjects, the social fabric of the Atlantic becomes clearer. Such a focus gives us greater insight into how Black colonial subjects were simultaneously shaping the early Atlantic world all while being shaped by it. The final chapter will consider the enslaved black people relied on their social networks to launch rebellion.

Chapter 4

Resistance and Social Networks

Rebellions were among the most dramatic ways that enslaved Africans responded to their captivity. From the slave forts on the coast of West Africa to the islands of the Caribbean and the American mainland, enslaved people fought back against enslavement. Although historians have paid considerably less attention to revolt in the sixteenth century relative to later periods, the scholarship on resistance has given us tremendous insight into the social lives of enslaved black people.[264] While much has been done on the social history of slave rebellion, this chapter adds to that scholarship by considering how the linkages between individuals and groups informed the development and duration of revolt. It argues that social networks were the vehicles of revolt. Each of its two sections pays particular attention to how group structure facilitated or inhibited the flow and direction of information between rebellious actors and the significance of developing trusting relationships between individuals. Social relationships affected every facet of

[264] Carlos Esteban Deive, *Los Guerrilleros Negros: esclavos fugitivos y cimarrones en santo domingo*, First Edition (Fundacion Cultural Dominica, 1989); Deive, *La Esclavitud Del Negro En Santo Domingo*; G. Jean-Pierre Tardieu, *Cimarrones de Panamá: la forja de una identidad afroamericana en el siglo XVI*, 1st edition (Madrid : Frankfurt am Main: Iberoamericana Editorial Vervuert, S.L., 2009); Erin Woodruff Stone, "America's First Slave Revolt: Indians and African Slaves in Española, 1500–1534," *Ethnohistory* 60, no. 2 (2013): 195–217; María del Carmen Borrego Plá, *Palenques de Negros En Cartagena de Indias a Fines Del Siglo XVII* (Seville, Spain: Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos, 1973); Jane Landers, "The African Landscape of Seventeenth-Century Cartagena and Its Hinterlands," in *The Black Urban Atlantic in the Age of the Slave Trade (The Early Modern Americas)* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 149–64; Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*; Matt D. Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle against Atlantic Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); João José Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia* (Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1997); For recent scholarship on the Muslim revolt on Hispaniola see, Jane Landers, "Three Centuries of African Resistance in Española" (Unpublished Manuscript, 2021), 4–33.

enslaved black life in the Atlantic world; thus, studying the social network structure of resistance groups provides historians with useful ways to understand how enslaved black people launched their campaigns for freedom.

This chapter differs from the previous chapters in its temporal and regional focus. Through analyzing one of the earliest maritime revolts in Atlantic history, the first section of this chapter considers how the enslaved constructed their social networks to foment rebellion in the confines of a slave ship and it argues that the enslaved cleverly utilized their relationships to gather their forces and attack their enslavers. The second section looks to the maroon settlements in Panama. The Spanish colony of Panama was a hot bed of rebellion in the second half of the sixteenth century, as escaped slaves (*cimarrones* or maroons) launched a series of successful revolts that threatened Spanish control over the isthmus. It argues that social networks were critical vehicles for the development revolt. In addition, the second section shows how the structure of maroon social networks were pivotal in providing the necessary information to launch revolts but also provided the necessary resources to sustain them.

"Una noche tenebrosa y oscura" – A Revolt at Sea

In 1565, Bento Vaez, slave merchant and Portuguese resident of Seville, pled before the judges of the Casa de la Contratación to grant him new licenses to make up for the number of slaves he had lost at sea. The Casa originally granted Vaez licenses to traffic four hundred enslaved Africans to the Americas. In 1564, his ship *San Antonio* left the port of Sanlúcar de Barrameda in southern Spain before arriving to pick up the captives in São Tomé. The ship

master, Pedral Vaez, had purchased 400 men and women and "no more", stressed Bento Vaez. From São Tomé, the ship was bound for the Spanish colony of New Spain. But before they could get there, many of their captives broke free from their chains and killed several sailors. Vaez argued that because of the uprising it had been necessary to kill many of the enslaved. Of the 400 men and women that the *San Antonio* had taken from São Tomé, 102 were killed in the fighting. "They died with violence," Vaez said, "which was different than a natural death." Thus, according to the terms of the original license, Vaez thought he should be granted new licenses for the lives that had been lost.[265]

The revolt that Vaez described was but one example of a longer history of enslaved Africans fighting and dying at sea in the sixteenth century. For instance, a particularly early slave revolt was recorded in 1509 by Portuguese merchants coming back from West Africa. The document was brief. The merchants Joao de Ferreira and Alvaro Barroso did not mention the number of enslaved or how many of them had been killed, only that the sailors onboard managed to stop an uprising.[266] Slave merchants and their crews adapted methods to protect themselves

[265] AGI, Justicia,882,N.5 1567 – 1569, fol 1V;The trade in enslaved Africans was inherently violent. The process of making a person a slave was what Stephanie Smallwood called 'social violence.' Contrary to Bento Baez's attempt to distinguish between natural and violent deaths, all deaths at sea were violent deaths. Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 34–36. In addition, while this section investigates the origins of the revolt, we must always take into consideration the fact that slave traders often tried to explain shortfalls by blaming things like disease or revolt, when they had actually sold the enslaved. See, Linda A. Newson and Susie Minchin, *From Capture to Sale: The Portuguese Slave Trade to Spanish South America in the Early Seventeenth Century* (Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2007), 116.

[266] Luís de Albuquerque, Maria Emília Madeira Santos, and Maria Luísa Oliveira Esteves, eds., *Portugaliae Monumenta Africana / Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical ; [Directores Do Projecto, Luís de Albuquerque e Maria Emília Madeira Santos ; Coordenação, Maria Luísa Oliveira Esteves ; Realização, Centro de Estudos de História e Cartografia Antiga].*, vol. 5 (Lisboa: Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Decobrimentos Portugueses : Impr. Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 1993), sec. 156.

and keep their captives from rebelling. Every ship came equipped with shackles and weapons. They also learned to separate men and women. A pilot in 1540 reported that women were frequently kept away from enslaved men, as they might inspire them to revolt if they were together.[267] As early as the sixteenth century, enslaved Africans were thus transforming how the slave trade was conducted.

Yet, despite the history of maritime revolt in the sixteenth century, remarkably little research has been dedicated to it. Much of the historical research on insurrections at sea has been dedicated to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with a particular focus on the British Atlantic world.[268] Part of this is due to the source material. The sheer volume of enslaved people trafficked across the Atlantic in the eighteenth-century dwarfs the trade in the sixteenth century, even if recent scholarship has shown that more enslaved Africans were sold into slavery during the first century of the slave trade than has been previously acknowledged.[269] However, the focus on slave insurrections in the latter period has elided how maritime revolts in the sixteenth century played a role in the developing slave trade.

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[267] For reference to the shackling of slaves aboard a slave ship see John William Blake, ed., *Europeans in West Africa 1450 - 1560*, vol. I (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1942), 135.

[268] Eric Robert Taylor, *If We Must Die: Shipboard Insurrections in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, 1st edition (LSU Press, 2006); David Richardson, "Shipboard Revolts, African Authority, and the Atlantic Slave Trade," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2001): 69–92, https://doi.org/10.2307/2674419; Sylviane A. Diouf, *Fighting the Slave Trade: West African Strategies* (Athens, OH, UNITED STATES: Ohio University Press, 2003), http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/vand/detail.action?docID=1743700; Andrew Marcum and David Skarbek, "Why Didn't Slaves Revolt More Often during the Middle Passage?," *Rationality and Society* 26, no. 2 (May 2014): 236–62, https://doi.org/10.1177/1043463113513001.

[269] See Borucki, Eltis, and Wheat, "The Size and Direction of the Slave Trade to the Spanish Americas" for a detailed analysis on the size of the slave trade in the sixteenth century.

In addition, there has been little consideration for how captives utilized their social networks aboard a slave ship to foment rebellion. As this chapter shows, the social networks of enslaved people mattered tremendously on shipboard insurrections. For a revolt to occur, there had to be a few key social structures in place. Firstly, the enslaved had to have trusting bonds between liked-minded clusters of individuals, meaning that each group believed that the persons in their social circle were also willing to rebel alongside them. Sentiments of distrust or even antagonism among too many actors could derail a revolt before it started or lead to violence between them. Secondly, the social structure had to be such that each group or cluster was linked and familiar with the others through shared relationships. The links between groups were essential in carrying information between them and helping to coordinate.

In his testimony on behalf of Bento Vaez, one of the sailors from the *Santo Antonio*, Henrique Rodriguez, told the judges of the House of Trade in Seville that they had taken on four hundred enslaved Africans in São Tomé. The crew planned to sell the captives in New Spain. However, eight days out from São Tomé, on a dark night, "una noche tenebrosa y oscura", the enslaved Africans revolted. Rodriguez stressed that it was necessary for the men to take up arms against the captives. Many of the Africans grabbed "hatchets, rocks and sticks", and they proceeded to fight with the crew, intent on killing them. They fought all throughout the night, Rodriguez said, "until it was day." By the end of the fighting more than one-hundred Africans had perished and many more were severely injured. On the crew's end, several ordinary seamen had died, while many others were wounded.[270]

[270] AGI, Justicia,882, N.5 folios 15R-16v; The horrendous violence that took place on the *Santo Antonio* was part of a broader pattern in the trade in African humans. Even among members of the crew on slave ship, bonds of trust could be broken, and relationships could quickly deteriorate. In 1526, for example, the Spanish crown wrote a brief letter to the Portuguese king about an onboard insurrection. Instead of a slave revolt, the conflict occurred between

That the revolt took place at night is of interest, though it does not seem particularly out of line with to the broad patterns research on maritime revolts has revealed. Of the literature on slave ship insurrections, there does not appear to be any correlation between time of day and revolt. The conditions that made it more likely for enslaved people to rebel are difficult to identify. Enslaved people revolted whenever it appeared suitable for them, or the conditions appeared ripe for their success. In some cases, if disease decimated the crew, captive Africans took it as a chance to revolt and seize control of the ship. Or if a storm or damage to the ship occurred during their passage, captive African seized the opportunity to overthrow their captors.[271]

As the case continued to be litigated, the other crewmen revealed more details about that dark night. According to one witness, the ship left Spain and stopped in the islands of Cape Verde first before proceeding to São Tomé, a common practice for slave ships in the sixteenth century. Iberian ships frequently stopped at Cape Verde to pick up supplies and gather information before proceeding further down the coast. The ship's route demonstrates what David Wheat called the "fundamentally international nature of the transatlantic slave trade."[272] In addition, Bento Vaez, the shipowner, was part of a network of Portuguese merchants and sailors

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Portuguese and Spanish sailors on their way to Cape Verde to purchase slaves. Seven Portuguese men murdered the Spanish members of the crew and stole their goods, see AGI, Indiferente,421,L.11,folios 46r-46v. And in 1581, a captain at arms persuaded members of a slave ship returning from Peru to mutiny. In the ensuing violence, one of the mutineers was killed by the captain, see AGI, Contratacion,597, N.5 folios 1-4.

[271] Enslaved people revolted while ships were in port and at sea. More than half of enslaved revolts occurred while the slave ships were anchored off the coast, while nearly a third took place during the middle passage, Richardson, "Shipboard Revolts, African Authority, and the Atlantic Slave Trade," 181.

[272] Eagle and Wheat, "The Early Iberian Slave Trade to the Spanish Caribbean, 1500 - 1580," 58.

living in Seville. The neighborhood of Triana, for example, housed several Portuguese families involved in Atlantic commerce.[273]

Following São Tomé, the crew was scheduled to call to port at Santo Domingo in Hispaniola and then Veracruz, New Spain. On that dark night in November, during the first watch, enslaved Africans broke their chains and grabbed weapons. It is telling that the captives launched their revolt during the first watch, as the day had slipped into night and most of the crew would have probably been asleep or preparing for bed in their quarters. How might they have known this? In the cramped confines of the ship, it would have been difficult to tell night from day. One potential way might have been through the support of enslaved women.

The *Santo Antonio* took on four-hundred people, many of whom were women. Bento Vaez and the other crewmen did not reveal the exact number of women relative to men onboard, but their presence was noted. Previous scholarship has shown that the role of women was critical in the planning phase of a revolt. On ships that had insurrections, women appeared in greater proportions than normal, suggesting that larger composition of enslaved women relative to men in a social network lent itself to rebellion. Previous literature has not determined why this is the case. A Portugues pilot in 1540 suggested that the women egged the men on, encouraging them to act as warriors.[274] However, understanding women's participation from a social network

[273] In his study on Bento Vaez, Chaves makes small mention of the slave revolt on his ship, though pays it only limited attention Manuel Francisco Fernández Chaves, "La Consolidación Del Capitalismo Portugués En Sevilla. Auge, Caída y Resurgir Político Del Mercader Bento Váez, 1550-1580," in *Andalucía En El Mundo Atlántico Modernociudades y Redes* (Sílex, 2018), 210–16; Manuel Fernández Chaves, "Pilotos de naos, mercaders y traficantes de esclavos: fortuna y asentamiento de los portugueses en la Triana del siglo XVI," in *La Sevilla Lusa* (Sevilla: Enredars, 2020), 39.

[274] Richardson, "Shipboard Revolts, African Authority, and the Atlantic Slave Trade," 182; Blake, *Europeans in West Africa 1450 - 1560*, I:135.Richardson, 182, Portuguese pilot, 1540

perspective provides insight for how the revolt on the *Santo Antonio* might have begun. Firstly, men and women were rarely shackled together. Women were usually kept near the crew's quarters and the weapon's stores. Their physical proximity to the crew meant that the men frequently raped or sexually abused them. But they were also in a place to gather information from the crew and relate what they found out to the rest of the enslaved – like when the crew went to sleep or changed watch and where the weapons were located.[275]

The collective decision to launch the revolt on the first watch may have been made based on information the enslaved women relayed to their male co-conspirators. Because women carried information critical to the development and success of a rebellion at sea, they are likely to have been among the group that sociologists have called "initial adopters", that is the group that first adopted the idea of rebellion.[276] A successful revolt at sea required their buy-in before just about any other group. The more women that participated in the communication network, the more information that the rebels could utilize to their advantage. And if the anonymous Portuguese pilot is to believed, women were also crucial in getting other enslaved men to adopt the idea of revolt by encouraging them. Based on that logic, what one scholar has called the "minimal sufficient network" to foment rebellion likely required a greater ratio of women to men in the context of a slave ship.[277]

The gendered composition of the rebels' social network is, however, hard to reconstruct given how little is revealed about the number of men and women. But another categorical

[275] Taylor, *If We Must Die*, 88–92; Richardson, "Shipboard Revolts, African Authority, and the Atlantic Slave Trade," 182.Taylor 88 – 92, Richardson, 182

[276] Michael Suk-Young Chwe, "Communication and Coordination in Social Networks," *The Review of Economic Studies* 67, no. 1 (2000): 1.

[277] Chwe, 4.

component revealed itself and it was just as important: ethnicity. The ship had taken on captives from São Tomé, the main island in an archipelago that served as a trading post and base of operations in the South Atlantic much like Cape Verde did further north for the Upper Guinea coast. São Tomé fed African captives of diverse ethnicities from West Central Africa and Lower Guinea into the hungry mouths of Caribbean and South American ports. Originally settled by the Portuguese shortly after Cape Verde's founding in the second half of the fifteenth century, the archipelago developed an enslaved population and plantation system that would be replicated in the Caribbean basin, and later, in Brazil.[278]

The ship's artilleryman, Alvaro Hernandez, provided the names of three ethnic groups from different parts of Africa on the ship at the time of the rebellion: the Congolese, the Arara, and the Calabari.[279] The Arara on the slave ship would have been brought to São Tomé from the Slave Coast, a region encompassing the western half of the Bight of Benin (today, that includes southeast Ghana, Togo and Benin, and the southwestern coast of Nigeria). The Arara were an Ewe-speaking group from modern-Ghana and had likely been taken directly from the Kingdom of Allada or the surrounding areas. The Portuguese had established slave trading networks there

[278]Robert Garfield, *A History of Sao Tome Island, 1470-1655: The Key to Guinea* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992), 5–73; Alberto Vieira, *Portugal y Las Islas Del Atlántico* (Lisboa: Fundación Calouste Gulbenkian, 1992), 73–76, 89–91; Stuart Schwartz, "Introduction," in *Tropical Babylons: Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450-1680* (Chapel Hill and London: University of Chapel Hill Press, 2004), 23–24; Borucki, Eltis, and Wheat, "The Size and Direction of the Slave Trade to the Spanish Americas," 25–26; Gerhard Seibert, "São Tomé & Príncipe The First Plantation Economy in the Tropics," in *Commercial Agriculture, the Slave Trade & Slavery in Atlantic Africa*, Western Africa Ser. (Suffolk, United Kingdom: Boydell & Brewer, Limited, 2013), 69, 71, 77.

[279] AGI, Justicia, 882, N.5 folio 14r

only a decade or so before Bento Vaez's ship arrived to purchase the captives from Allada in São Tomé. The lusophication of Allada appears in records as 'arara' or 'arada'.[280]

The Calabari on the *Santo Antonio* derived from a coastal region of modern-day southeastern Nigeria near the Niger River Delta. By the mid-sixteenth century, a people called the 'Efik' by their neighbors had established themselves in towns along the Calabar River, which allowed them to traffic in goods and enslaved Africans from the coast to far inland.[281] The Congolese came to São Tomé by way of the Kingdom of Kongo, a monarchical state located in northern Angola. The states of West Central Africa, including the Kingdom of Kongo, had a long history of trade and cultural exchange with the Portuguese beginning in the late fifteenth century, when Portuguese sailors first arrived there.[282] For much of the sixteenth century, most of the 'Congolese' captives sold to the Portuguese were war captives taken from neighboring kingdoms, like the Ndongo Kingdom controlled by the Mbundu.[283]

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[280] Robin Law, *The Slave Coast of West Africa, 1550-1750: The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on an African Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 13, 116–19; Also see A. F. C Ryder, *Benin and the Europeans, 1485-1897* (London: Longman, 1977), 24–80.

[281] Randy J. Sparks, *The Two Princes of Calabar: An Eighteenth-Century Atlantic Odyssey* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 34–35.

[282] The relationships between the Portuguese and Central Africans lead to creolized communities Heywood and Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundations of the Americas, 1585–1660.*, 49.

[283] Linda M. Heywood, "Slavery and Its Transformation in the Kingdom of Kongo: 1491-1800," *The Journal of African History* 50, no. 1 (2009): 5; For more on the complex political history of Ndongo, see Linda M Heywood, *Njinga of Angola Africa's Warrior Queen* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

Figure 8: Allada and Calabar

The members of each group represented regions with diverse cultures, languages, and cosmologies. With these conditions in mind, this makes it more impressive that a revolt occurred in the first place. In addition, Hernandez revealed an important and complicating factor about the revolt. He alleged that there was conflict between the Congolese, "who wanted to fight," and the Arara and Calabari. According to Hernandez, the Arara and Calabari rose up as well, but they killed their Congolese counterparts because "they did not want to help or fight with them."[284]

[284] AGI, Justicia, 882, N.5, folios 13v -14r; On the conflict between the groups of rebels, Alvaro Hernandez said "otros esclavos quien querian pelear que eran de nacion Congos los esclavos que se alcaban y se levantaban que eran ardes y calavares los matavan por que no los querian ayudar ni pelear con ellos"

What exactly transpired between the groups is unclear. But there are a few things to consider. Firstly, we do not know the exact number of rebels on the slave ship, only the total number of captives taken on board. Hernandez's suggestion that the Arara and Calabari killed the Congolese might well be true, but the distribution of ethnic groups among the rebels is unclear. It is, however, doubtful that the Arara and Calabari killed *all* the Congolese, considering the number of captives on board and the number that were reported killed, such conflict between the captives would probably have been remarked upon more than once in a revolt that likely numbered in the hundreds.

Secondly, Hernandez mentioned that the some of the Africans had thrown themselves overboard and drowned at sea, though his account does not provide any information about the ethnicity of those that jumped. A *marinero*, Domingo Perez, provided additional information. The seaman stated that eighty or ninety of the enslaved died, suggesting that fewer than one-hundred-two enslaved had been killed. Of those, he noted that some had leaped from the *Santo Antonio* into the sea, where they drowned.[285] Another crewman stated that the crew killed many of the captives and that "out of fear of the Christians" the group of rebels threw themselves overboard.[286] Nearly every other witness stated that the enslaved themselves into the sea after a night of fighting, corroborating both his and Hernandez's accounts.[287] Though if Perez and the

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[285] Ibid., folio 38v; Domingo Perez stated that "Como los que se echaron a la mar serian ochenta o noventa esclavos poco mas o menos"

[286] Ibid., folio 41v

[287] AGI, Justicia, 882, N.5 fólios 2v – 45r

others were to be believed, the vast majority of the captives died fighting their enslavers or by suicide rather than amongst themselves.

This is not to say that conflict between enslaved Africans on the ship did not occur, only that Hernandez's account is probably incomplete. Within the cramped quarters of slave ships, sweltering heat, close bodies, and warm breath in the stale air could easily cause tempers to flare. Sometimes enslaved people killed one another beneath the decks over disputes.[288] And, as historian Eric Robert Taylor argued, the success of a revolt was ultimately determined by a numerical advantage among the enslaved *acting as a single unit*, which might explain why the revolt aboard the *Santo Antonio* failed.[289] Because although Bento Vaez's ship, a galleon, carried a higher-than-average number of Africans for the sixteenth century and certainly more enslaved Africans than crewmen, they lacked cohesion.[290] Indeed, many of the enslaved people on slave ships were not always willing to rebel, exhibiting responses that ranged from apathy to outright antagonism.[291]

Part of the conflict between the Arara-Carabli and Congolese groups may have derived from language barriers. It is likely that they struggled to adequately communicate with one another, and thus facilitating a successful transfer of information and coordination would have been incredibly difficult. Developing a social network with supporting relationships beneath the decks

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[288] Newson and Minchin, *From Capture to Sale: The Portuguese Slave Trade to Spanish South America in the Early Seventeenth Century*, 117–88; Marcum and Skarbek, "Why Didn't Slaves Revolt More Often during the Middle Passage?," 9.

[289] Taylor, *If We Must Die*, 54–56.

[290] Eagle and Wheat, "The Early Iberian Slave Trade to the Spanish Caribbean, 1500 - 1580," 51–53.

[291] Taylor, *If We Must Die*, 54–56, 94, 107.

of a slave ship while bound to strangers required a high degree of awareness and savvy. Moreover, building trusting bonds between groups would have been difficult. How could the Calabari move with certainty that the Congolese would support them if they rebelled? Research has shown that Africans from different cultural and linguistic groups struggled to coordinate even basic tasks together, thus making a revolt that included significant portions of other ethnic groups less likely to occur.[292]

Significant language barriers probably lead to one group of the rebels coordinating more tightly within their cluster. Slave trading patterns for West Central Africa suggest that most of the enslaved on the ship were probably Congolese.[293] Indeed, the Congolese were likely the "initial adopters" of the idea to rebel. Because they spoke the same language and were steeped in the same cultural norms, the Congolese would have exchanged information more readily between them in their social circles. This may have begun even before the *Santo Antonio* left São Tomé, while they were at shore or held in chains before boarding. Research has demonstrated that strong bonds, in the case of a communication network, help to facilitate the creation of common knowledge and may be better for coordinating than larger, more disperse social networks. Moreover, scholars have shown that someone's willingness to participate in a revolt is largely dependent on what that individual knows about their neighbor in their shared social network.[294] This is generally-backed by research showing that smaller groups were more prone to

[292] Marcum and Skarbek, "Why Didn't Slaves Revolt More Often during the Middle Passage?," 21.

[293] Between 1525-1550, about 80 percent of the annual number of enslaved imported to Sao Tome arrived from Congo/Angola. The overall proportion of enslaved people trafficked from the Congo/Angola region continued to increase in the following decades Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 99–100.

[294] Chwe, "Communication and Coordination in Social Networks," 1.

rebel than larger groups.[295] This probably had to do with it being easier to build bonds in a smaller group (i.e., where more people know of one another) and to know what each individual in their local group was willing to do. Meaning, among the enslaved on the ship, the captives could not all directly interact with one another. However, if each captive was surrounded by others that were willing to rebel, they become more likely to revolt.

The probability that a single ethnic group represented a significant portion of the rebels is bolstered by what might have been collective suicide by drowning in the sea. Perhaps the most well-known incident of group drowning occurred off the Atlantic coast of Georgia on St. Simons Island. A group of enslaved Africans believed to be Igbo marched into a nearby creek following their ship's arrival and drowned. The place of their disembarkation has come to be known and memorialized as Igbo Landing (alternatively spelled Ebo Landing).[296] Death by drowning was not an easy path to take regardless of the circumstances aboard a slave ship. That a noticeable number of the enslaved chose to do so, and that nearly every witness remarked on their collective suicide, should not be overlooked. Collective action such as group suicide suggests a relationship between the rebels built on a shared sense of identity.

The slave ship *Santo Antonio* and its crew completed their journey after that dark night in November. As this section has demonstrated, a social network perspective provides a thoughtful and unique way to interpret what led up to the revolt aboard the Santo Antonio in 1564. Understanding how the enslaved might have used their positions within the social framework of the slave ships to construct a revolt offers a unique lens to interpret their experiences. Moreover,

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[295] Marcum and Skarbek, "Why Didn't Slaves Revolt More Often during the Middle Passage?," 4.

[296] See Michael Angelo Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks the Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), chap. Six: 'I seen Folks Disappeah: The Igbo and West Central Africa'.

a social network perspective allows us more fully appreciate the difficulties in organizing a revolt and how clever and cunning the progenitors of the revolt must have been for it to launch. The following section adopts a similar network approach to consider how the enslaved used their social relationships to sustain revolt against Spanish authority in the Caribbean. To launch a single revolt was a unique social problem, sustaining revolt in ongoing conflict with Spanish authorities was another altogether.

A Terrible Alliance – The Panama Maroons and Pirates of the Caribbean

Maroons were deeply embedded into the social, political, and economic systems that governed the Spanish colony of Panama in the sixteenth century. They were fugitives forced to rely on guerilla tactics to maintain their freedom and to provide sustenance for themselves and their loved ones. To survive, maroons had to be master negotiators, skilled hunters, fighters, and exceptional community builders. They had to cultivate webs of supportive relationships both within their communities and outside of them. Their social networks linked them to Spanish-controlled cities, towns, and plantations, and were crucial for sustaining their resistance to Spanish colonial authority. As this section will show, these linkages carried valuable information and resources, such as the location, direction and timing of the mule trains that carried Spanish silver across the Isthmus. Furthermore, through their webs of overlapping relationships that extended to coasts, the Panama maroons wove pirates into their social networks as part of a strategy of building allies against the Spanish.

Africans were introduced to the Panama frontier beginning in the year 1523, with slave ships bringing about 500 or so to the Atlantic-side port city of Nombre de Dios.[297] One thousand more enslaved Africans arrived in 1525. Not all the enslaved remained in the Isthmus, however. Many were transported overland to Peru.[298] Over the course of the sixteenth century slaves normally numbered between three-thousand and five-thousand.[299] Most the enslaved Africans that arrived in Panama came, from the Upper-Guinea coast or Senegambia by way of Cape Verde.[300] Africans began liberating themselves and taking flight from fields, towns and cities in which they were enslaved almost as soon as they arrived in the Americas in the sixteenth century. In the case of Panamá, the first maroon *palenque* was established somewhere along the Atlantic coast of the isthmus in 1531 after a group of enslaved Africans working in the mines of Acla colluded to kill their owners before escaping to the ruins of a deserted city. In 1534, Nombre de Dios adopted the first measures to combat the threat of maroons. These new

[297] It is important to note, that black people had been in Panama before the first slave ships arrived in 1523. At least one African had accompanied Vasco Nuñez de Balboa when he claimed the South Sea (as the Pacific was known) for Spain, and Pedrarias de Ávila brought a group of black slaves to accompany him to Panama when he was named governor of the colony in 1514. Leslie B. Rout, Jr., *The African Experience in Spanish America: 1502 to the Present Day* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).
[298] Frederick Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru, 1524–1650* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1974), 30–31.

[299] Ward's point about slaves normally numbering between three-thousand and five-thousand is supported by Alonso Criado de Castilla, the senior judge of the city of Panama's, 1575 census data where he lists there being over 5,000 blacks in Panama. See Carol F. Jopling, *Indios y negros en Panamá en los siglos XVI y XVII: Selecciones de los documentos del Archivo General de Indias* (Antigua, Guatemala : South Woodstock, Vt: Plumsock Mesoamerican Studies, 1994) doc. 6.
[300] Green, *The Rise of Transatlantic Slave Trade in Africa: 1300 - 1589*, 89–90.

measures gave Spanish men permission to kill the enslaved that escaped and prohibited blacks from walking alone at night.[301]

As more Africans were introduced into Panama, the ability to effectively coordinate across ethnic lines and develop enough trusting bonds to revolt became increasingly important. For newly arrived Africans that did not speak Spanish or Portuguese, building a communication network to foment revolt posed difficulties. As the previous section demonstrated, communication networks were central for not only carrying information but also forcing individuals to conform to group behavior. However, significant numbers of enslaved Africans from closely related ethnic groups began to arrive in Panama during the second half of the sixteenth century, making it easier for them to build bridges between their social groups, which increased the potential for support and the probability of revolt. Research has shown that people who have a shared collective identity, culture, and language face "lower costs" of engaging in collective action than strangers.[302]

The lower social cost of rebelling with an in-group helps to explain the prevalence of certain ethnic groups among the maroons, not just their numeric majority alone.[303] For example, the Sapi, an ethnic group from the Sierra Leone region of the Upper Guinea coast, had a significant impact on the social and political landscape of Panama. As a group, Sapis came to

[301]María del Carmen Mena García, *La sociedad de Panamá en el siglo XVI* (Carmen Mena García, 1984), 402–3.

[302] Marcum and Skarbek, "Why Didn't Slaves Revolt More Often during the Middle Passage?," 8.

[303] Jane Landers provides a thorough analysis of the earliest slave revolt in the New World in 1526. The original adopters of the plan to revolt were Wolof. See chapter 1, "The Muslim War" in Landers, "Three Centuries of African Resistance in Española."

represent a large portion of the maroons in Panama by the 1570s.[304] In 1557, for example, the ships *San Francisco* and *Santa María* brought a total of forty-five slaves (including a one-year-old) and fifty-nine mules to Panama. Of the forty-five slaves, thirteen were Biafada or Sapi, five were Mandinga, four were Bran, and there was one Bijoho (perhaps a Hispanicization of Bijagó) and one man who had originated from Mozambique.[305] Enslaved Africans taken from the Guinea Bissau and Sierra Leone regions of the Upper Guinea coast comprised most of the newly arrived captives in the Spanish Caribbean and South American colonies from the 1550s onward. Primary among them were the Biafada, Sapi and Bran-speaking groups, who had developed extensive trade relationships that facilitated the development of a common trade-language on the coast of Africa.[306] These similar languages and customs, in addition to their numeric majority, helps to explain the prevalence of the Sapi among maroons in Panama.

Despite the importance of ethnicity in framing the willingness of groups to flee and rebel collectively and the difficulty in cross-group collaboration, maroon settlements (otherwise known as palenques) were normally heterogenous. Escaped slaves from numerous ethnic backgrounds lived alongside one another. How maroons structured relationships inside their communities mattered. Scholarship on social networks and rebellion has shown that individuals

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[304] Green, *The Rise of Transatlantic Slave Trade in Africa: 1300 - 1589*, 192.

[305] Jopling, *Indios y Negros*, 242-44.

[306] For data on ethnic origins of the enslaved see Wheat, *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean, 1570 - 1640*; Stephan Bühnen, "Ethnic Origins of Peruvian Slaves (1548-1650): Figures for Upper Guinea," *Paideuma* 39 (1993): 63–74; Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru, 1524–1650*, 40–43; See Brooks for the commercial and cultural relationships between the Sapi, Biafara and Bran groups in the Upper Guinea coast Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, 39–44.

in rebel groups make decisions based on *whose* behavior they consider during a revolt, which impacts the level of participation.[307] This meant that maroons were likely to consider actions from people who operated in a similar social circle as them, in which ethnicity played a role among a constellation of others. The social organization of maroon encampments reflects this. Indeed, in some cases, maroons arranged themselves into military regiments by nation, with the captain of each group being of the same ethnicity.[308] This type of network structure ensured cohesion in the overall group.

In addition, the leaders of maroon groups were often referred to as kings, and sometimes queens, by the Spanish. These designations could partly have to do with Spanish conceptions of social organization and political hierarchy, but in some cases the maroons themselves self-identified as African royalty. King Bayano, who led a large maroon community in Panama in the second half of the sixteenth century was said to have identified as a king.[309] In other places in the Americas, there were similar patterns of maroon leaders adopting royal status. Domingo Bohio, a contemporary of King Bayano but in Nueva Granada (Colombia), called himself King Benkos, claiming that he had been a ruler in his native land. Claims to a particular royal lineage could

[307] David A. Siegel, "When Does Repression Work? Collective Action in Social Networks," *The Journal of Politics* 73, no. 4 (October 1, 2011): 994, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381611000727.

[308] Jane Landers, "The Central African Presence in Spanish Maroon Communities," in *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora*, ed. Linda M. Heywood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 240, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511529108.010.

[309] García, *La sociedad de Panamá en el siglo XVI*, 414–15.

have been used by leaders as a means of acquiring legitimacy among the rank-and-file members of their own ethnic groups and building a large, loyal social network.[310]

Maroons developed strategies to construct social networks for both support and attack until they reached the height of their power and influence between the years 1549 and 1582. Felipe (also known as Felipillo) ushered in a period of intense maroon activity. In 1549, Felipe, a *ladino* (or Spanish-speaking and acculturated Black person) escaped from the Pearl Islands off the southern coast of Panama. He took thirty other enslaved blacks and some indigenous islanders from the surrounding fisheries and neighboring estates. Together, Felipe and the others fled to the Gulf of San Miguel and constructed a *palenque* roughly thirty leagues from the city of Panama.[311]

The style of their settlement was characteristic of many of the other *palenques* during the sixteenth century. Felipe and his fellow maroons built huts out of branches and palm leaves. They turned thick mats of leaves into shields by covering them in animal skins. They caught monkeys and used their intestines to string their bows. From their shackles and chains, they forged iron points for their arrows and spears. Prepared for war, Felipe and his followers sowed terror among the Spanish. They attacked estates along the coast, pillaged and burned sugar mills, killed Spaniards, and stole women, including indigenous and white women. It took two years to defeat them after they had already dealt great damage. The Spanish aimed to make an example

[310] Landers, "The Central African Presence in Spanish Maroon Communities," 239–42.
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[311] García, *La sociedad de Panamá en el siglo XVI*, 413; Enriqueta Vila Vilar, "Cimarronaje En Panamá y Cartagena. El Costo de Una Guerrilla En El Siglo XVII," *Cahiers Du Monde Hispanique et Luso-Brésilien*, no. 49 (1987): 79–80.

out of them by drawing and quartering one of the captured maroons. The rest were either hanged, burned, shot with arrows, or had their feet cut off.[312]

Unfortunately for the Spanish, the brutal punishments that they meted out towards Felipe and his followers seemed to have little effect. If anything, the problem seemed to have been getting worse – a problem worsened by how maroons utilized their social networks to foment rebellion.[313] In 1555, a Spanish-born traveler named Juan Garcia de Hermosilla visited Panama. Much to his displeasure, he found that the "black rebels, whom in those parts they call *cimarrones*" would often "go out on the highways steal merchandise and kill the merchants and muleteers." According to the traveler, the maroons came every day to Nombre de Dios and Panama to set houses on fire and carry off other enslaved Blacks. The year before his arrival, the maroons had killed eight men and the son of one of the colony's merchant elite. "Even today," he wrote, "[maroons] kill many Spanish …in Nombre de Dios at the beginning of the night."[314]

City officials in Casa de Cruces and Sante Fé also made complaints to the crown and its royal offices regarding the depredations of maroons. The residents of the towns did not have the means to adequately defend themselves against them, and officials looked towards the often-tightfisted crown for assistance.[315] To make matters worse, King Bayano appeared among the maroons during this period, uniting all of the maroon bands along the Atlantic coast. Much like

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[312] Roberto de la Guardia, *Los negros del Istmo de Panamá* (Ediciones INAC, 1977), 77–78.

[313] Brett Rushforth has shown how brute force actually encouraged the enslaved to rely on their social networks to rebel in Martinique: Brett Rushforth, "The Gauolet Uprising of 1710: Maroons, Rebels, and the Informal Exchange Economy of a Caribbean Sugar Island," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 76, no. 1 (2019): 80–82, https://doi.org/10.5309/willmaryquar.76.1.0075.

[314] Jopling, *Indios y negros en Panamá en los siglos XVI y XVII*, doc 6..

[315] Jopling, *Indios y Negros, docs. 115, 117*

Felipe before him, Bayano could speak Spanish and was considered *ladino*. He was seemingly revered by his subjects and even among the Spanish.[316]

At the height of his powers, Bayano was estimated to have around twelve-hundred maroons under his command – a truly remarkable number of followers. As the previous section demonstrated, getting enslaved people to revolt required incredible coordination and awareness of the social structure in different groups, Bayano's efforts were nothing short of momentous. Bayano and his followers constructed complex *palenques*. One of the major settlements was walled with controlled access via two pathways cut into the side of the hill. There were several homes inside the walls, and the empty spaces between the homes were used for food storage. There was even a church. Bayano and his warriors lived there, using it as a base of operations by which to launch attacks against Spanish towns and highways. The women, children and the elderly lived in the other settlement tucked away in the jungle.[317]

Fearing Bayano's attacks on the Isthmus, the Viceroy of Peru provided thirty-thousand pesos from the royal treasury to combat him. Half of the money was meant to fund the war against Bayano and the other half was meant to build a fortress on the Atlantic coast. Captain Pedro de Ursúa led the Spanish forces against the maroons. However, even while Ursúa was preparing his assault on Bayano's encampment in Panama's interior, Bayano's warriors attacked two mule trains full of clothing and other merchandise valued at four-thousand pesos.[318] The

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[316] Tardieu, *Cimarrones de Panamá*, 76, 93.

[317] Ruth Pike, "Black Rebels: The Cimarrons of Sixteenth-Century Panama," *The Americas* 64, no. 2 (2007): 247–48; Tardieu, *Cimarrones de Panamá*, 97. In his chapter on Bayano, Tardieu has an excellent graphical layout of Bayono's palenque and the surrounding land
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[318] Pike, "Black Rebels," 247–48.

conflict between Bayano and Ursúa lasted for several more years until Bayano and many of his followers were captured and re-enslaved in 1568. Remarkably, Bayano was remembered for his valiant character by his captors and was even be mythologized in a play[319]

The capture of Bayano did not stop maroons from attacking Spanish towns. The often-dispersed nature of maroon networks ensured that repressing *cimarronaje* through warfare was a difficult task. The structure of maroon networks was particularly important, as repression could sever connecting ties between groups and limit the direct participation of single individuals and their indirect impact on others.[320] However, maroons had diverse, overlapping ties, and the dispersal of their social networks often meant that killing or capturing the maroons in one encampment still left a viable communication and support network intact. For example, maroons frequently relied upon social ties to towns, villages, and *estancias* (farmlands), to gain information, get food, clothing, and even perform short-term work. Sometimes friends and family members even joined them in maroon settlements.[321] Further, scholarship has shown that maroons were able to construct informal exchange economies despite brutal violence by colonial administrators.[322] The ties that maroons had to communities under Spanish control highlights the importance of the different actors and their roles in sustaining rebellion.[323] Sustained rebellion

[319] Tardieu, *Cimarrones de Panamá*, 78..

[320] Siegel, "When Does Repression Work?," 998–1000.

[321] Ana Maria Silva Campo, "Through the Gate of the Media Luna: Slavery and the Geographies of Legal Status in Colonial Cartagena de Indias," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 100, no. 3 (2020): 396–97.

[322] Rushforth, "The Gauolet Uprising of 1710."

[323] Landers, "The African Landscape of Seventeenth-Century Cartagena and Its Hinterlands," 152–53.

requires that some actors remain off the frontlines and serve in supporting roles, often with direct or indirect links to the rebels themselves.[324] Thus the structure of maroon social networks, when paired with the numerous incoming enslaved Africans, ensured that maroon encampments reappeared like the many headed hydra in sixteenth-century Panama.

Several years after Bayano's decline, the senior judge of the city of Panama, Alonso Criado de Castilla, wrote a letter to the Spanish crown in which he reported that the dense forests that bordered Casa de Cruces allowed bands of maroons come to the town without being seen and take enslaved women. The maroons did not stop at stealing enslaved women, however, they also attacked and robbed mule trains filled with merchandise on the road between Nombre de Dios and the city of Panama, where Castilla was stationed. In addition, the maroons were organized into groups, each with its own captain. Over the captains reigned a "black king whom they all obeyed." However, Castilla's real fear was not just the maroons, whom he described as "always harmful" but their alliance with French and English pirates. "[W]hen they [maroons] are with the French and the English, with whom they have amity, they are very harmful, availing of the industry and arms of these foreigners, whereby [Panama] is exposed to great danger by these enemies."[325]

Criado de Castilla's concerns regarding alliances between maroons and pirates were well grounded in the realities of his time. Maroon depredations on the traffic between Nombre de Dios and Panama had increased in the years prior to his message and had reached a new height by the time he wrote his letter. Maroons increasingly raided towns, cattle ranges and farms, stole

[324] Sarah Elizabeth Parkinson, "Organizing Rebellion: Rethinking High-Risk Mobilization and Social Networks in War," *The American Political Science Review* 107, no. 3 (2013): 418–19.
[325] Jopling, *Indios y negros en Panamá en los siglos XVI y XVII*, doc 006.

enslaved people, and burned property in the latter half of the sixteenth century. Fear of maroon attacks even led the people of Nombre de Dios to consider abandoning the settlement altogether. Furthermore, the arrival of Francis Drake along the coasts of the Panama Isthmus in 1572 stoked new fears among the Spanish. While French and English pirates had been attacking Spanish shipping along the isthmus since the first half of the sixteenth century, and sometimes with the assistance of maroons, Drake was the most successful in using his alliance with maroons to his advantage.[326] The Panama maroons, experts at structuring and organizing social relationships to foment rebellion against the odds, folded pirates into their existing networks of exchange and resistance. Without the social networks that the Panama maroons relied upon to gather information and monitor the movement of valuable goods on the highways of the interior, pirates such as Drake would not have been successful in their attacks on the Isthmus.

English pirates such as Drake fed off the precious metals that indigenous laborers and enslaved Africans pulled from the rivers and mines of South America. Panama was an excellent target for piracy, as all the gold and silver from South America passed through the colony on the way to Spain.[327] Additionally, Panama's geographic location provided access to both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and free and enslaved blacks were pivotal in linking the commercial networks in the markets on the Atlantic coast with the those in Peru on the Pacic coast.[328] The Spanish feared that if one or more of its port cities were taken, their enemies could establish

[326] Pike, "Black Rebels," 255.

[327] Jopling, *Indios y negros en Panamá en los siglos XVI y XVII*, xiii.

[328] Rachel O'Toole, "Securing Subjecthood: Free and Enslaved Economies within the Pacific Slave Trade," in *From the Galleons to the Highlands: Slave Trade Routes in the Spanish Americas*, ed. Alex Borucki, David Eltis, and David Wheat (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2020), 149–75.

trade in the base of operations for war and commerce throughout the greater Caribbean and the Pacific.

Prior to the arrival of Francis Drake and the English, French pirates were the primary predators in the Caribbean during this early period, striking at Spanish settlements in the New World as early as the 1530s. The French dominated the era of piracy in the Caribbean from 1530 to 1560. By the 1570s, English pirates began to attack Spanish ports, eventually becoming a larger threat to Spanish colonies than the French.[329] The French struck Panama first in 1569. They attacked ships at the mouth of the Chagres River, and stole twenty-thousand *pesos* in gold and silver in In February of 1571, English pirates followed the French example, attacking several ships at the mouth of the Chagres River. They captured a slave named Pedro Mandinga to use him as guide into the interior, but he escaped and warned the city.[330]

From that point forward, the Spanish wrote frequently about French and English piracy. It did not take long for the English and French to ally themselves and attack Casa de Las Cruces further inland. While English and French pirates that targeted the Spanish were primarily motivated by gold, they were also driven by their own religious animosity towards Catholics. French and English pirates boarded a dispatch ship carrying messages from the King of Spain. They killed one man and wounded many others. The pirates singled out a friar who also happened to onboard the ship. They stripped him of his clothing and the proceeded to beat him as a means of humiliation.[331]

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[329] Kris E. Lane and Robert M. Levine, *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500-1750*, 1st edition (Armonk, N.Y: Routledge, 1998), 18.

[330] Irene A. Wright, ed., *Documents Concerning English Voyages to the Spanish Main, 1569-1580: I .Spanish Documents Selected from the Archives of the Indies at Seville; II. English ...*, 1st edition (Hakluyt Society, 1932), 3, 16–17.

From 1569 to 1571, the Spanish documented increasing aggression from pirates at sea as well as attacks by maroons on land. [332] Maroons were more than willing to work alongside pirates in their attacks on the Spanish, but only on agreeable terms. Groups of escaped slaves had cooperated with French, but their relationship soured. The French had treated them poorly, and negative relationships were incredibly difficult to repair. Drake was able to build trusting relationships with the marrons beginning in 1572.[333] Drake and his men first encountered a maroon named Diego before his attack on the Isthmus in 1572. Diego called out to Drake's pinnaces (light boats) when they were anchored off the Atlantic coast. Taken aboard, he informed Drake about Nombre de Dios, and the potential soldiers stationed there to protect it against maroons.[334] In this way, the first connection between English pirates and maroons was established. This encounter shows that maroons were proactive in engaging with pirates and sought to build alliances for their mutual benefit.

Moreover, the information that Diego shared was critical news, as Drake and his crew of seventy-three men had set sail from Plymouth earlier in the year with the intent to land at Nombre de Dios. Further, although it was but a brief encounter, Diego's brief interaction with Drake highlighted how significant social networks were for carrying information about potential danger. Following his meeting with Diego, Drake led a midnight raid against Nombre de Dios on

[331] Wright, 22–30.

[332] Wright, 3–36.

[333] Pike, "Black Rebels," 255–60.

[334] Philip Nichols and Francis Drake, *Sir Francis Drake revived.* ((Amsterdam: Theatrum orbis terrarum), 1973), 254–55. Please note that "Drake Revived" was written by the Sir Francis Drake's nephew of the same name.

July 29, 1572. At the time of Drake's attack, Nombre de Dios did not have troops garrisoned there probably because of the cost associated with maintaining them. Despite this, his attack was unsuccessful. In both English and Spanish accounts of the event, Drake was injured and his men were driven back by armed residents before stealing a ship and retreating to some nearby islands to rest and heal. During this time, Drake considered the words of Diego who confirmed reports that there was much gold to be had if the pirates would consider working with maroons.[335]

Diego's role in establishing this link is worthy of additional analysis. Though it seems as though was an escaped slave, we do not know where from. Moreover, he admitted to Drake that if he were to be caught by other maroons, he would be killed. Diego, by his own admission, had betrayed them on various occasions, seemingly under the will of the Spanish. There are only scant details of Diego's prior life, but his intimate knowledge of maroon-style house construction and how and where to find maroons provide further evidence that he had once been among them.[336] Perhaps in allying with Drake, whose name was among the "most pretious and highly honoured of them", Diego saw the opportunity to repair his relationship with other fugitive slaves.[337] Diego's relationship with Spanish authorities and other fugitive slaves bespeaks of the complex political and social landscape of the frontier.

In the weeks following his failed attempt to sack Nombre de Dios, Drake sailed to Cartagena on the Atlantic coast, of what is today Colombia, planning to attack it. The authorities had already been warned of his presence on the coast, however, and he was forced to retreat with

[335] Nichols and Drake, 266–69.

[336] Nichols and Drake, 274–75, 78.

[337] Nichols and Drake, 269.

only a few spoils.[338] He then returned to coast of Panama, dropping anchor in the Gulf of Darien so that the Spanish, who were now looking for them, would not find their ship. Equipped with three pinnaces, Drake took two of them towards the mouth of the *Rio Grande* while his brother John Drake took the last pinnace to find maroons. John Drake was successful, and the maroons would take Drake and his men to their encampment. By late September, Drake had come to live among them.[339]

The maroons allowed Drake and his men to remain among them until January of the following year when he prepared to leave. Sometime in mid-January Drake took a three-day journey deep into the interior of Panama under the guidance of Pedro Mandinga, whom he described as the "chiefe of our *Symerons*" and he and his men settled in a *palenque*. The three-day journey into the interior demonstrates how far the social networks of the Panama maroons stretched. Some research suggests that Panama maroons even established ties with maroons in Colombia in the late seventeenth century.[340]

Drake described the settlement as having a dike eight feet wide and a thick mud wall of ten feet high. The streets were organized and neat, and there were over fifty houses, suggesting a sizeable community... The maroons themselves were clean and dressed in Spanish clothing.[341]

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[338] Wright, *Documents Concerning English Voyages to the Spanish Main, 1569-1580*, 43–45.

[339] Wright, 278–82.

[340] Landers, "The African Landscape of Seventeenth-Century Cartagena and Its Hinterlands," 153.

[341] Maroons also grew their own foods in their settlements, and their economies were based around horticulture where people grew crops such as potatoes, bananas and cassavas, see M[a] del Carmen Borrego Pla, *Palenques de negros en Cartagena de Indias a fines del siglo XVII* (Sevilla: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, 1973), 27, 80–86; Maria Navarrete, "Cimarrones y Palenques En Las Provincias al Norte Del Nuevo Reino de Granada Siglo XVII," *Fronteras de La Historia* 6 (December 14, 2001): 116, https://doi.org/10.22380/20274688.703.

Following their stay in the *palenque*, Drake was led to the city of Panama. There, the maroons sent a former slave from the city, "in such apparel as negroes of Panamah doe use to warre" to obtain information about the mule trains carrying the King's gold. The spy returned and told them that the mule train would be on the road to Nombre de Dios that night. Hiding the bush, they laid in wait for the first mule carriers to come in sight. Unfortunately for the Drake, one of his men would cause them to be discovered by a passing horseman. Seeing them in the bush, the man turned around and warned the coming mule trains which returned Panama.[342]

Despite their failed attempt to take the mule trains, Pedro Mandinga pledged to fight alongside Drake to the death. Drake returned to the Atlantic coast, where maroons had built a village a few leagues inland from where he and his crew had anchored his ship. The Spanish saw this as an English attempt to develop a permanent settlement.[343] In March 1573 a French ship manned by Captain Le Tetsu appeared off the Atlantic coast. In perhaps a bit of desperation, Drake sought to enter an agreement with the Frenchmen. Drake's men had been depleted over the last few months, as he had lost more than half of them. The French captain had seventy men at his disposal, more than twice that of Drake, and he had a larger ship. Drake shared his plans with the French captain and the two came to terms. Sending for his maroon allies, Drake proceeded inland with twenty of Tetsu's men and fifteen of his own.[344]

During this venture, there was a spirit of distrust between the maroons and the French. The French were uncomfortably aware of how much their lives rested in the hands of the

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[342] Nichols and Drake, *Sir Francis Drake revived.*, 298–295.

[343] Pike, "Black Rebels," 258.Pike, "Black Rebels," 258.

[344] Nichols and Drake, *Sir Francis Drake revived.*, 316–17.

maroons. They feared that if the maroons decided to abandon them, they would not be able to find their way back to their ships. The maroons were also distrustful, likely due to prior experience with French pirates. As testament to his charisma, Drake was able to get both groups to work together by putting their trust in him. Together the groups marched from coast and headed overland to Nombre de Dios.[345]

When they came near to the city, they heard news of mules carrying gold coming from Panama. They hid in the bushes and waited by the road. True enough, three mule trains came up the road, numbering nearly two-hundred mules. Each carried nearly three-hundred pounds of silver, totaling to nearly thirty tons. The soldiers were beaten back after an exchange of gunfire and arrows and the mule trains were theirs. The men gathered all that they could carry and fled for the forests with some 200,000 pesos worth of loot. They left Captain Tetsu behind. He had been shot in the stomach and would later die. This story was corroborated by Spanish accounts. For their part, the Spanish troops were able to recover some of the stolen booty after capturing a French pirate named Jacque Laurens. Under torture, he helped the Spanish locate some of the hidden gold and silver. [346] Shortly after their final and successful raid on the Spanish and Pedro Mandinga and Drake parted ways.

The episode involving Pedro Mandinga and Francis Drake illustrates how critical social networks were in launching and sustaining revolt. Without the maroon Diego facilitating a meeting between Drake and the Panama maroons, such a successful attack on Spanish silver in Panama's interior probably never happens. Pedro Mandinga's time with Drake also shows how

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[345] Nichols and Drake, 318.

[346] Drake, "Sir Francis Drake Revived," 316-19; Wright, *Spanish Main*, docs. 30-31, p. 76-92.Nichols and Drake, 316–19; Wright, *Documents Concerning English Voyages to the Spanish Main, 1569-1580*, 76–92.

clever Panama maroons were in structuring their relationships such that they could receive information from some parties, but also prevent information from reaching other groups. Guarding against information seepage required tremendous organizational skill and significant trust between the people in a maroon social network. Thinking seriously about the links between the enslaved people that revolted both at sea and on land allows us to more fully appreciate the lives that they lead in their fights against captivity. Furthermore, situating the lives of enslaved Africans within the context of a social network allows to consider their circumstances and behavior from a much more human perspective.

Epilogue

The experiences of free and enslaved Africans that this dissertation examined are but a few of the many that mark their history during the early modern era. Africans and their descendants were integrated into larger systems of trade and exchange, through their relationships with Europeans and other Africans. By analyzing social networks during this period, this dissertation uncovered the unique ways that Africans were a part of the social fabric of the early Atlantic. Moreover, the patterns of social interaction established in the sixteenth century continued into the latter periods. For example, in 1622, a newly appointed *oidor* (judge) from the *audiencia* of Santo Domingo led proceedings against Diego Fernández de Argote, the governor of Santa Marta, and several other men for crimes of resistance against his predecessor Gaspar Narváez y Valdelomar. In addition to the high-ranking people prosecuted for the governor and his conspirators' behavior, Catalina, a *criolla negra,* and Bartolome de los Reyes, a *mulato,* were also tried. Through a series of shared relationships, both Catalina and Bartolome became a part of the governor's network of conspirators and criminals which included the auditor of Riohacha, several men of rank, and a slave merchant.[347]

Several years prior to the investigation, Gaspar Narváez y Valdelomar, then a judge for the royal audiencia in Santo Domingo, was dispatched from his station on Hispaniola to Riohacha, a pearl-fishing town on the northern coast of Colombia. Valdelomar came to Riohacha to investigate "fraud and collusions" regarding the illegal sale of enslaved Africans. In his investigation, Valdelomar revealed a network of illegal activity connecting multiple residents and officials. The judge found that in 1614, the governor of Santa Marta allowed a Portuguese

[347] AGI, Escribanía 755A, folios 1v – 4v

shipowner, Manuel Sanchez, to sell captives from Angola in Riohacha without a license. Half a dozen men were involved in the trade, including the auditor of Riohacha, Manuel Sanchez de Sevilla.[348] Contraband was a problem that developed in the *gobernación* of Santa Marta (which included Riohacha) in late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, originating in the port city of Santa Marta before spreading to other parts of the Caribbean.[349] The governor was taking clear advantage of this history.

Armed with this information, Valdelomar imprisoned the governor and his men in a room in his home in Riohacha. However, the governor and his men did not plan to be prisoners or await any punishment from the judge. Two men, don Diego de Macarriegas and the *mulato* Bartolome de los Reyes broke down one of the walls of the house, allowing the prisoners to escape. A man close to the governor, Pedro Vizcaíno, convinced him to take the current judge Valdelomar prisoner. They kidnapped the *oidor* and forced him onto a canoe meant for pearl fishing. Don Diego de Maldonado, another one of the conspirators, received food, drink, and clothing from Catalina, seeking assistance from her after he fled the makeshift prison.[350]

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[348] Escribanía 755A, fólios 10r – 10v.

[349] Miranda Vázquez, *La gobernación de Santa Marta (1570-1670)*, 50–52; Smuggling and group infighting occurred around the Caribbean, in particular on islands such as Hispaniola, see Juan José Ponce Vázquez, *Islanders and Empire: Smuggling and Political Defiance in Hispaniola, 1580-1690* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020); The patterns of illicit trading continued from this period onward, tying officials and contrabandists together along the northern coast of Venezuela into the eighteenth century: Jesse Cromwell, *The Smugglers' World: Illicit Trade and Atlantic Communities in Eighteenth-Century Venezuela* (Williamsburg, Virginia : Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute and University of North Carolina Press, 2018); For an excellent discussion on piracy during this period and within the broader Caribbean, see Lane and Levine, *Pillaging the Empire*.

[350] Escribanía 755A, 4v – 9r.

After some armed conflict, the governor's men were caught and in the ensuing investigation they were sentenced for their crimes. Both Bartolome and Catalina also faced judgement for supporting the governor and his allies. Bartolome de los Reyes was punished publicly and banished for two years. Catalina was also punished publicly, but she was banned from Riohacha for a period of six years.[351] Surviving documents detail little else about Catalina and Bartolome, and do not directly explain why their punishments were different. But thinking relationally, we can make some deductions. First, individuals within a shared social network provided support to one another, thus it follows that Catalina gave shelter and food to Diego de Maldonado. Catalina's help toward Maldonado during such an intense encounter suggests that the two shared a strong relationship, as she could be punished. Perhaps she stood to gain something from her relationship with him, or she may have already gained benefits through him in the past. Indeed because of her connection with Maldonado, we must consider what information and resources her bond with him conferred to her over the course of their relationship.

Bartolome, along with Diego de Macarriegas, assisted the entire group of men who broke down the wall to release the governor and his men. As chapter four demonstrated, individuals were more willing to participate in revolt or resistance if there was a strong relationship between participants, alongside a belief in the likelihood of the revolt's success. Perhaps Bartolome was encouraged by Diego Fernandez de Argote's position as the governor? The previous chapter argued that belief in an individual's leadership abilities and status may have made it easier to build trusting and supportive relationships in order to rebel against authority. The bond between Bartolome and the others was strong enough for Bartolome to risk his life and his freedom to

[351] Escribanía 755A, 5v, 11r, 288r, 298r.

come to their aid. Like Catalina, Bartolome's participation raises questions about what he stood to gain by taking the risk to assist the governor and his men, and what kind of relationship he maintained with them.

Catalina and Bartolome's trials reflect the primary questions that this dissertation sought to answer, namely, what free and enslaved Black people's social relationships can reveal about their lives. My research uncovered that social network analysis can be a critical means of interpreting how Afrodescendants fit into the patchwork of actors that made up the early Atlantic world. The first chapter demonstrated how West Africans utilized their social positions to develop favorable relations with European monarchs. In addition, it argued that the structure of relationships—not just their existence—was critical to the success of *lançados* as traders in places such as Senegambia and Guinea-Bissau. Familial relationships allowed them to situate themselves in a unique position to facilitate the exchange of resources between two socially distant groups.

Chapters two and three explored the role of social relationships and the benefits that they conferred and argued that free and enslaved Black people in the Iberian world could live any number of lives depending upon the size, structure and composition of their social network. These chapters also demonstrated that free and enslaved Black people operated in social networks in which the power dynamic worked against them. In the case of Rodrigo Lopez, his standing as a freed Black man in Cape Verde made him susceptible to re-enslavement despite his social status as one of the island's elite and his diverse and sizeable social network. The precarity that free Black people in the Atlantic world were subject to resulted from the kinds of relationships (positive or negative) that they had with the people in their community; it was a social outcome. Further, the bonds between individuals within a social network can confer

resources, as larger networks typically contain a greater reserve of potential supporters. In Rodrigo Lopez's case, this large network ultimately helped to free him.

The potential for support was also an important factor in Black people's decisions to pursue rebellion. As chapter four demonstrated, shared bonds needed to be strong and the belief in support and success had to be consistent, without which revolts were unlikely to take place and even more likely to fail. This last chapter also urges historians to think more critically about how and why enslaved Africans cultivated and structured their social relationships when they decided to fight for their freedom. Launching revolts was no easy feat, particularly at sea. In addition, managing a sustained revolt in the form of maroon communities required extensive networks of communication and support. It also required careful management of how relationships were structured between their community and broader Spanish society so that critical information, such as the location of a settlement, did not flow to the Spanish.

This dissertation proposed new ways to think about the lives of people like Catalina, Bartolome de los Reyes, Rodrigo Lopez, maroons, and African elites where they appeared in sixteenth century archival records. Because records are often limited, I endeavored to situate them within as much social context as possible by looking at the relationships that connected them to a much broader world. As a result, this research revealed the extent to which social relationships impacted how Africans experienced the early modern Atlantic world and how important Black and Afro-descended people were as agents in developing colonial societies.

The information required to reliably reconstruct the social networks of free and enslaved Blacks in the Atlantic world was not insignificant. Since the data on slavery are incomplete and there are large gaps in national archives concerning the history of Black populations, this research is complex. Often, mere fragments and anecdotes about Black people's lives survive in

these archives, yet analyzing these fragments through a critical lens, such as social network analysis, deepens our understanding of the monumental moments of their everyday lives. Adopting historical social network analysis as an additional analytical tool opens a vast terrain of new and innovative ways to interpret the early history of African populations in Latin America and the broader Atlantic world. This can be applied to many kinds of historical data to reconstruct relationships—writs of sale, testaments, witness testimony in court cases, census data, marriage, birth, and death records to name a few. By focusing on the bonds between individuals and not just the individuals themselves, identifying the relationship can be enough to link one person to a rich history that did not include them in earlier narratives, which was the case for Catalina in Riohacha.

Sixteenth-century archives compel historians to develop new methods for understanding how under-examined populations played pivotal roles in the early history of the Atlantic. Documenting previously unexplored connections and uncovering little-known relationships creates a fuller, more nuanced picture of a period too few historians dare themselves to study. Moreover, bridging narratives through social linkages is exciting, as it deepens understanding of our subjects' humanity. Research that conveys how individuals fit into the larger, and often impersonal structures that governed colonial societies creates vivid, more human pictures of the world that they once occupied. This is especially important for Africans and their descendants, whose histories are so central to the story of Latin America. By adopting new techniques, we can add new layers and nuances to their collective pasts. Lastly, by adopting a social network perspective to the study of history, historians add to a rich field of analysis by focusing on the

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